A HOPE IN HELL

by

C.J.E. LEFROY

1998
Dedication

To Sally in the Age to Come
and Katie in This Age
C.J.E. Lefroy

Born in Gloucestershire in 1925, John Lefroy was educated at Wellington College and Clare College, Cambridge. It was whilst at Cambridge that he was converted to become a follower of Jesus Christ – the event which was to direct the rest of his life.

He was ordained as an Anglican Priest in 1950 and served curacies at St. Matthew's, West Ham and All Soul's Langham Place, both in London.

Staying in London to become Vicar of Christ Church, Highbury, he worked there until his retirement in 1990.

John Lefroy was known as a clear thinking and, in many ways an uncompromising evangelical teacher. The thesis of this book, therefore, is striking because of its unorthodox and compassionate nature.

Unfinished at the time of his death in 1998, it may raise as many questions as it answers about the nature of hell and the afterlife. It certainly provides evidence of a life spent on a sincere, disciplined and scholarly quest for truth.

Elizabeth Lefroy Watt
A Brief Summary of Chapters 2-15

2. **Puzzles:** certain discrepancies are evident in English translations of the Old Testament, namely, that circumstances are declared to be eternal which prove to be not so. On examination these discrepancies are discovered to be connected with the Hebrew word ‘olam.

3. **Names:** in which the significance of given names of God and humans is shown, especially el’olam for God.

4. **The God of Ages:** in which one chief manner of God’s working is by means of progressive ages. Eleven examples are given.

5. **Ages:** in which it is established that a Biblical Age is of limited but unspecified duration.

6. **Can Eternal Life Be Everlasting?:** in which it is shown that eternal life is everlasting because it is the life of God.

7. **The Broad Way:** in which it is shown that the conviction of sin is wrought by the Holy Spirit after death and after the resurrection of the unjust.

8. **Doing Time:** in which it is shown that God’s punishments often have a prescribed time limit.

9. **The Resurrection-Harvests:** in which it is shown that the three harvests of the Law are types of the three resurrections.

10. **What About Hell?:** in which it is shown that hell is a place of corrective punishment of the false religionists amongst humankind.

11. **Who Are These?:** in which it is shown that hell discharges its inmates after they have served their sentence and these at once go to Jesus for cleansing.

12. **Conditional Immortality:** in which it is shown that the annihilation of the wicked is against Scripture.

13. **The Will of God:** in which it is shown that God’s will is that all should be saved and this will is accomplished.

14. **The Purpose of The Ages:** in which it is shown that the church of the firstborn brings salvation to humankind and fallen angels in the next ages.

15. **Why Be Saved Now?:** in which is shown the benefit of salvation in this present age. The alternatives that ultimately await are not heaven and hell but receiving worship with Jesus as His bride or offering worship as His servants.
1. Introduction

With the help of the beautiful Holy Ghost, I hope to show that He does not endorse the doctrine of eternal hell, and that this doctrine is nothing but a longstanding misreading of Scripture by the church. It was the north London poet, Stevie Smith in her poem “How do your see?” (‘The Collected Poems’: Allen Lane, 1978) who expressed this widely held objection to the perceived teachings of Jesus Christ:

And the penal sentences of Christ. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And then saddest of all the words in Scripture, the words, they went away into everlasting punishment. Is this good? Yes, nowadays certainly it is very necessary before we take the idea of Christianity, the words of our Lord to make them good, when often they are not very good, to see what the ideas are and the words, to look at them... Does the beautiful Holy Ghost endorse the doctrine of eternal hell? Love cruelty, yes, he must do this For he is your God.

I have attempted in this book to resurrect an early Christian doctrine that hell is like a prison from which the inmates are ultimately discharged when their sentence is served and their repentance achieved. As the Psalmist wrote:
‘There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in misery and chains, because they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bands apart. Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness, and for His wonders to the sons of men! For He has shattered gates of bronze, and cut bars of iron asunder.’ (Psalm 107:10-16)

The doctrine of eternal punishment was endorsed by the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 AD, in my opinion, unscripturally. The Council said, among other things: ‘...if anyone says or thinks that the punishment of demons and impious men is only temporary and will one day have an end... let him be anathema.’ The traditional doctrine of everlasting punishment can be traced back to this statement, although there are some historical grounds to believe that it is an interpolation. So there are 1400 years of tradition to be overthrown. It continues to this day in the Roman Catholic Church, for instance. Article 1035 of their Catechism (1994) states: ‘The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, “eternal fire”. The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs’.

The anathema was directed chiefly against the teachings of Origen, a Biblical theologian of Alexandria (c.163-c.254) who had written in his commentary on the Apostle Paul’s Letter to the Romans: ‘He that despises the purification of the word of God, and the doctrine of the gospel, only keeps himself for dreadful and penal purifications afterwards; that so the fire of hell may purge him in torments whom neither apostolic doctrine nor gospel preaching has cleansed, according to that which is written of being “purified by fire”. But how long this purification which is wrought out by penal fire shall endure, or for how many periods or ages it shall torment sinners, he alone knows to whom all judgement is committed by the Father... But we must remember that the Apostle would have this text accounted as a secret, so that the faithful and perfect may keep their perceptions of it as one of God’s
secrets in silence among themselves, and not divulge it everywhere to the imperfect and those less capable of receiving it.’

This investigation or Bible study has been undertaken with the conviction which our Lord expressed in His Sermon on the Mount: 'Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 5:18-19); and also that of the Apostle Paul: 'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching’ (2 Timothy 3:16).

Martin Luther's “95 Theses” lit the fuse of a theological explosion that shattered a mindset that had hardened over a similar period. Perhaps my words may be read by a second Luther who will be able to detonate a land mine under the concept of everlasting punishment.

2. Puzzles

Now that I have retired, I attempt the Times crossword each day. I usually win on Mondays and lose on Saturdays. Other days, it is evens. Another routine I have is to read my Bible daily, not just because I am supposed to, being a clergyman, but also because I am hooked on it. I keep on finding new and exciting facts about life and death in it: especially about death. I am getting close to it, being well past the seventy mark.

My Bible is the New American Standard Bible (NASB). I have tried most of the versions in English and American English. I was reared on the Authorised Version, was taught theology from the Revised Version, and switched to the Revised Standard Version as soon as it was published; upgraded to the New International Version, dipped into the Moffatt, Weymouth, and Phillips translations. I have read the Living Bible paraphrase, tasted the good prose of the Jerusalem, New English, and Knox Bibles. But now I am using the NASB because I am told it is the version that nearly achieves its stated aim of adhering as closely as possible to the original languages and making the translation in a fluent and readable style according to current English usage.

I do not always manage to read my daily chunk, because I am disabled, and sometimes feel very tired, but I fail my puzzle more often than my Scripture reading. I had encephalitis in 1957, long before the mad cows thought of getting it. My first wife, Sally, saved me from the knacker’s yard, through her faithful prayers added to those of many friends. Very sadly, I could not do the same for her when she developed breast cancer.

But during my illness I went up to the edge of death. I was unconscious for six weeks and often on the danger list. Altogether, it left me paralysed on the left side, which is why I become fatigued.

Shortly after Sally’s death in 1989, the Head Mistress of the parish school in Islington where we were serving had a vivid dream about her. She saw Sally entering her study at the school and saying “Tell him to write a book”. To reinforce these words, they appeared over Sally’s head in clear black letters. What you are reading is my attempt to follow these instructions.

I wanted to share with you one of the most exciting, and, I may say, mind-blowing discoveries I have made in the course of my reading of the Bible. It’s not fair to call it a new discovery, because it was around in the early days of the Christian faith and surfaced again in the last century in the books of my spiritual pin-up, Andrew Jukes, a Victorian clergyman. But I have added in a few bits and pieces of my own.

May I introduce to you Andrew Jukes briefly? He was born in Bombay in 1815, the eldest child of a doctor. In 1827, he was sent to school at Harrow. He left in 1832 and received a commission in the army of the East India Company and was posted to Poona. While there he experienced a call to the ministry and returned to England to enter Trinity College, Cambridge in 1838 and in 1840 won the important Hulsean Prize. In 1842, he was made Deacon to serve in St John’s Church, Hull. At that time he began to have scruples about Infant Baptism and after discussion with his Vicar and Bishop, left the Church of England and was re-baptised by a Baptist minister.

He then gave himself to study, and in 1847 the first of some thirty titles listed in the British library catalogue was published. At the time he was ministering to a house church in Hull that eventually built him a chapel, opened in 1866. The next year, he published The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things.

It is this work which forms the basis of my thesis. It caused bitter controversy in his congregation and led to a breakdown in the author’s health. He left Hull in 1868 and eventually settled near his son in Highgate in 1869. He sought to return to the Church of England and received permission to officiate
as a Deacon from the Bishop of London.

His ministry was in speaking – he was a participant in the Broadlands Conferences, the first of which was held in 1871; counselling – he wrote many letters of spiritual direction; and as an author. This ministry continued until his death in 1901.

His writings were popular with the early Plymouth Brethren, among whom were Edmund Gosse’s parents. In *Father and Son* he (Gosse) recalls: ‘There was, for instance, a writer called Jukes, of whose works each of my parents were inordinately fond, and I was early set to read Jukes aloud to them. I did it glibly, like a machine, but the sight of Jukes’ volumes became an abomination to me, and I never formed the outline of a notion what they were about.’ I side with the parents.

I hope you will be able to follow me along the track that Jukes has blazed. I have put a map, in the form of a Summary of the main chapters of this work, which precedes my Introduction in Chapter 1. At the end, I hope that you will agree with me that God is a far nicer person to have running the cosmos than Stevie Smith thought Him to be!

It all starts with a little word, which the Americans write as ‘forever’ but which we over here, in Europe, know as two words ‘for ever’. Scattered through the Old Testament are matters that are said to last ‘forever’. In our ordinary understanding ‘forever’ indicates a period of time that is endless. For instance, a dictionary definition is ‘always, at all times’. On examination of these matters, these statements from the Bible do not seem to be accurate. These matters do not last always. This jars in my mind, because I trained as a mathematician, and am used to distinguishing between infinite quantities and finite quantities. And they are definitely not the same breed. ‘Forever’ speaks to me of infinity.

**Here are six examples of these puzzling matters.**

1. 1 Samuel 1:22 – Hannah says to her husband Elkanah: ‘I will bring Samuel, that he may appear before the Lord, and stay there *forever*.’

Later, she explains this to mean ‘as long as he lives’ (v.28). This is a clear example where *forever* cannot have the meaning of ‘always’. The context itself explains it to mean at most ‘for life’.

2. 2 Kings 5:27 – The prophet Elijah tells his deceitful and greedy servant Gehazi that as a punishment: ‘The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your descendants *forever*’. Biblical leprosy is described in Leviticus 13. It is a skin disease. Luke, who was a physician, calls it by the Greek word *lepra* (Luke 5:12 – ‘there was a man full of *leprosy*; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”’)

*Lepra* was the technical term in Luke’s day for *psoriasis*, a family of non-fatal skin diseases. The disease for which the English word ‘leprosy’ is now used is a formidable affliction in which the bodily extremities become numb, decay and may fall off. It is a form of *elephantiasis* (See *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, article ‘Leprosy’). These two diseases must not be confused.

Biblical leprosy, *psoriasis*, made the sufferer ceremonially unclean or unholy, as other circumstances could. Eating certain foods, touching a corpse, a bodily discharge of blood or semen each made the perpetrator unholy. He or she was therefore excluded from all worship and social intercourse. (e.g. 2 Kings 15:5 – ‘The Lord struck the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death. And he lived in a separate house.’)

Biblical leprosy came to an end, in its ceremonial sense of making the sufferer unholy, with the end
of the ceremonial law: ‘The priesthood being changed, there takes place a change of the law also’ (Hebrews 7:12). In its medical sense as psoriasis it still continues. Jesus had commanded the Twelve Disciples: “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (Matthew 10:8). They continued to obey each of these orders after Pentecost, with the exception of the command to cleanse the lepers. They could not, because there were none: Biblical leprosy, as a ceremonial disease, no longer existed, after Jesus’ death.

We can compare, for example, the cessation of the distinction between ceremonially clean and unclean foods, which also had disappeared. Jesus had declared all food clean (Mark 7:19). After His resurrection, he rebukes Peter for forgetting this (Acts 11:9 – ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy’.) In the same way, Gehazi’s legacy of leprosy to his descendants also disappeared. So leprosy did not remain in Gehazi’s family ‘forever’.

3. 1 Chronicles 15:2 – ‘No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of God, and minister to Him forever.’

The last definite reference to the Ark of the Covenant in the Bible is in 1 Kings 8:1-11, which describes its installation in the Temple by Solomon. Afterwards, Jeremiah refers to a long tradition of mourning for its absence: “And it shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land,” declares the Lord, “they shall say no more, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ And it shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall it be made again.” (Jeremiah 3:16, c.626 BC). Thereafter there is silence. Clearly the Levites did not continue to carry the ark ‘for ever’ because it was not there.

In the same category as this reference are a great number of instructions about the ceremonial worship in the Tabernacle – some are ‘forever’: regulations for dress (Exodus 28:43), and for food (Exodus 29:28). Some perpetual: for washing (Exodus 30:21); and some permanent: the grain offering (Leviticus 6:18). All these instructions ceased to be fulfilled when Jewish sacrificial worship ceased. So these instructions were not ‘forever’, perpetual or permanent.

4. Jonah 2:6 – “I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever.”

These words are part of Jonah's prayer from the stomach of the fish. We know he was there only for three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17) and Jesus himself endorses this fact. So ‘forever’ is an apparent inaccuracy.

5. Isaiah 32:14 – ‘...because the palace has been abandoned, the populated city forsaken. Hill and watchtower have become caves forever, a delight for wild donkeys, a pasture for flocks...’

J. Barton Payne in his Encyclopaedia of Biblical Prophecy (pg.18, Hodder & Stoughton, 1973) says of this passage: ‘It speaks of the overwhelming character of Sennacharib’s attack on Jerusalem in 701 BC by proclaiming “the hill and the watch-tower shall be dens for ever.”’ Leupold, accordingly calls attention to “the relative use of the term ‘forever’ in this context”; and Girdlestone quotes the same passage, adding “We know that the continuation of the desolation here implied will come to an end, for the very next verse points to Restitution - ‘Until the Spirit be poured upon us.’ In other words, these three authors, Barton Payne, Leupold and Girdlestone are each pointing out that, in this verse ‘forever’ must stand for a limited and not an infinite period of time.

6. Jeremiah 25:9 – “Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,” declares the Lord, “and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them, and make them a horror, and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.”
J. Barton Payne says of this passage “in similar fashion it anticipates ‘desolations of ‘olam’ – perpetual desolations – at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, but then two verses later limits Judah’s exilic period to 70 years.” Here he is recognising again that ‘olam must stand for a limited period, in this case, of 70 years.

Could Jesus have been wrong in His endorsement of every letter of the Old Testament? No! There must be another explanation of these passages.

‘OLAM

The word ‘forever’ and also ‘perpetual’, ‘everlasting’, and ‘permanent’ are used in the NASB to translate phrases in the Old Testament which contain the Hebrew noun, ‘olam. The word ‘olam occurs in the text of each of the examples cited above. (See also the list in the Appendix 1).

I should explain that I tried to learn Hebrew from a correspondence course when I was given a period of sabbatical leave and I rely on the authority of others, in particular, Andrew Jukes. I had learned that written Hebrew may omit the vowels from the words; in which case these have to be supplied by the reader. So the verb ‘alam which means ‘to conceal, hide’ will look like the noun ‘olam. Both will be written in Hebrew script as ‘lm (‘ is a rough breathing).

Davidson’s Hebrew Lexicon gives these meanings for ‘lm:
1. (VERB) to hide, conceal
2. (NOUN) a time hidden, indefinite, or unlimited

Here are some examples of the Verb usage:
1. Leviticus 4:13 (margin) – ‘the matter is hidden from the eyes of the assembly’.
2. Leviticus 5:2 – ‘If a person touches any unclean thing ... though it is hidden from him…’
3. 1 Samuel 12:3 – ‘...from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it?’ (lit. ‘that I should hide my eyes at him?’).

It is then a short step to give the Noun the meaning ‘time hidden’ and to translate it as ‘forever’ as in the six examples above. But these same examples show that ‘olam must express a limited and not an infinite time. (The Lexicon should not have included the word ‘unlimited’ in its definition!) So ‘forever’ is not an appropriate translation for ‘olam.

‘Olam could be more truly translated into English by an indefinite word such as ‘age’ which indicates an indeterminate but limited, and not an everlasting, period. This word, in Bible translations of ‘olam, would then represent its sense more closely, not as an everlasting period of time, but as a limited, but unspecified period. We could say that what is hidden in ‘olam is, not ‘everlastingness’, but the duration of the period in question.

These are the clues that started me off on my quest to discover how long is ‘for ever’. 
3. Names

After our first child had miscarried, Sally prayed that we should not have any other child who did not grow up to honour God. We now have four children, named: ‘May Yahweh raise up’, ‘Beloved’, ‘Gift of Yahweh’, and ‘God is satisfaction’. You would recognise them as ‘Jeremy’, ‘Dave’, ‘Matt’ and ‘Lizzy’. We believed in the importance of the meaning of names to human beings, because God seemed very concerned about them.

God sent an angel to Zacharias to tell him to call his son ‘John’ (‘Yahweh has favoured’), to Mary to call hers ‘Jesus’ (‘Saviour’), and in a dream to her husband, Joseph, He confirmed this. Isaiah was told to call one of his children ‘Maher-shalal-hash-baz’. Isaiah’s son (‘swift is the booty, speedy is the prey’) was a sign that, before the boy could speak, the Assyrians would deliver Israel from the threats of Damascus and Samaria.

Zacharias’ son, John the Baptist, as a forerunner of Jesus the Messiah (Mark 1:1-3) was a sign that God’s favour would lead to his salvation. He was born six months before Jesus (Luke 1:26); preached ahead of Jesus the same call to repentance (Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17); and was martyred at the outset of a year which terminated in Jesus’ crucifixion (Matthew 14:10; 27:50), and so he preceded his cousin, Jesus, through his journey through life from birth to death, a true forerunner. These three boys, sons of Isaiah, Zacharias, and Mary (with Jesus being so in a unique way), were God’s ‘words of promise’ made flesh.

God does not only give names to people; He also changes them at significant moments for their bearers. Abram (‘exalted father’) has his name changed to Abraham (‘father of a multitude’) at the time when God establishes His covenant with him. Jacob (‘supplanter’) is called Israel (‘may God prevail’) after his wrestling-match with God. Simon (‘hearing’) receives the name Cephas/Peter (‘rock’) from Jesus at his first sight of him.

The meaning of someone’s name expresses the character of its bearer, as Abigail, Nabal’s wife recognised: “... Nabal (fool), for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him”, she said of her husband (1 Samuel 25:25).

What is true of man is also true of God. Each one of the names of God revealed to us discloses an aspect of His inner divine nature. We discover this when Moses tried to find out for what sort of God he was acting in leading Israel out of Egypt. He had seen the plagues he had to call down on Pharaoh; he had passed on God’s order to the Levites to kill three thousand of their friends and relations in order to stem the orgy in honour of the golden calf. He must have wondered with what sort of God he was dealing. So he prayed: “Show me Thy glory” (glory is the outward evidence of the inner, holy nature). In response, God said to Moses (Exodus 33:12-34:9): “I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you”...then the Lord proclaimed: “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; Who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, Who forgives iniquity, and transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished”.

The name of the Lord is equated with the nature of His character that is shown to be compassionate, gracious, and so on.

God’s son, Jesus, frequently followed the same self-revelatory characteristic: ‘I am the good shepherd’; ‘I am the bread of life’; ‘I am the resurrection’; ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’; ‘Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls’: all these He said on different occasions, exposing His inner nature to His hearers by His use of names. Much that no man had discovered about his Creator is made known to us in this way.

One of the names of God, used first at Genesis 21:33, is el ‘olam: ‘Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in
Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God (el ‘olam’). We already have found out that ‘olam is often mistranslated in the English Bible. If it is mistranslated in one of the names of God, it will have the effect of misrepresenting to us His character. The Bible translators will be libelling God to us. As I write this, the local church to which I belong is having to sort out a problem with one of its members who has been spreading false rumours that one of the staff has been flirting. A bad name destroys influence. How much worse is it to give God a bad name? It is to break the third commandment: ‘You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain’. As we shall see, I believe that the church in general has given God a bad name that has turned many people away from Him. This is another reason why I am writing this book.

What does the name el ‘olam signify? ‘el’ which is often and rightly translated ‘God’, primarily means ‘power’. (See Genesis 31:29 – “It is in my power (el) to do you harm”); and ‘olam as we have seen, has the meaning of ‘age-long’ – an indeterminate but limited period – and not ‘everlasting’ as the NASB translates it here. The name cannot be a reference to the time-scale of God’s being, because it is self-evident that He is eternal in His being and this is revealed to us in other ways, as we shall see. el ‘olam cannot mean that God exists only for a limited and unknown period, that He is ‘age-long’ only. Thus these two words joined, as one of the names for God, reveal to us a particular aspect of His inner nature. If we misunderstand the name, we run the risk of misunderstanding an aspect of the very character of God himself.

Another occurrence of this name is in Isaiah 40:28 – ‘The Everlasting God (el ‘olam), the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired’. Here this name is associated with creation, in other words with God’s actions rather than with His being. el ‘olam shows that He is God Who expresses His power (el) by means of ages (‘olam). So the name discloses a truth, not of His nature, but of His manner of working.

This name echoes Hebrews 1:1-2 (margin) – ‘God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets by many portions and in many ways, in these last these days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the ages.’

Again, there is a suggestion of this name of God, el ‘olam, in connection with creation in the same way, in Psalm 90:2 – ‘Before... ever Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world even from everlasting (‘olam) to everlasting (‘olam) thou art God (el)’. We meet this same suggestion again in Isaiah 40:28 – ‘Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God (elohim ‘olam), the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not become weary or tired.’ Elohim is the first name for God used in the Bible. Here the title elohim ‘olam is used of the powerful creator of the earth.

It is interesting that God, who ‘created man in His own image’ (Genesis 1:27) ‘has also set eternity (‘olam) in their heart’ (Ecclesiastes 3:11). ‘olam is part of man’s inner being as it is of his Creator’s.

What, then, does this name of God el ‘olam reveal to us as to His inner divine nature? It reveals this: the manner of His creative activity. God acts through the course, or by means, of ages – an indeterminate and limited periods of time. That is, He implements His purposes progressively in an ordered manner, stage by stage.

Is this borne out in practice?
4. The God of Ages

What does God do? What is His occupation? Which are the works that God may be achieving through His age-working mode of operation? God first of all reveals Himself as a Creator – ‘the Creator of the ends of the earth’ (Isaiah 40:28). Under this activity, we include the upholding of His creation (Hebrews 1:3) as Sustainer.

In the second place, God is a Saviour – ‘we have fixed our hope on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of believers.’ Through the person of His Son, He is ‘the Saviour of the world’ (John 4.42). This work was finished at the moment of the death of Jesus (‘When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit’ – John 19.30). Nothing remains to be done for the accomplishment of salvation but for the individual to receive it by faith and allow it to be worked out in his life.

Thirdly, God is ‘Judge of all the earth’ (Genesis 18.25). This final judgement remains in the future (‘When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats’ – Matthew 25:31-32).

God is not schizoid: He is acting as creator, saviour and judge in all His acts. Jesus Christ revealed these three activities of God in His ministry. He created wine (John 2:1-11) to rectify the shortage, perhaps brought about by His arrival with His disciples; and bread (John 6:1-14) to satisfy the needs of His disciples at the end of a day’s ministry showing himself to be a Creator. He healed, cleansed, forgave, exorcised and raised the dead, in demonstration that He was a Saviour. He refused to act as a judge (‘But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?”’ – Luke 12:14) during His incarnation on earth because His time to judge had not yet come. This will occur at His return to earth (“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom” – 2 Timothy 4:8).

We shall now see that God operated in each of His three offices of creator, saviour and judge, by stages: the restorative creation, in seven ‘days’; the judgement of Pharaoh in ten plagues; and the moral restoration of sinners also in stages. We should expect that the same mode of operation to be revealed in His other actions.

We have already noticed that one of the Names of God, el ‘olam, translated as ‘the Everlasting God’ (Genesis 21:33) can be more precisely rendered in English as ‘the God who expresses His power through ages’ or perhaps more colloquially ‘the God who works in stages’. I wanted to find out if this was really a true description of the way in which God set about His affairs. I began looking through my Bible. I did not have very far to go to find the first example!

1. GOD AS CREATOR

Here we have a clear example of God's working method through ages: it is shown in this account of the creation of the universe, which shows him creating, (and, it would seem, restoring), the earth in seven ages called ‘days’:

**Genesis 1:1** – ‘In the beginning God created (bara) the heaven and the earth (eretz)”.

I have put a few of the Hebrew words used in brackets following the translation, in the hope that it may help to make things more clear to some readers. Bara signifies a distinctly creative act by God: the lexicon has ‘create by producing something new’. It is here used of the creation of the Cosmos. It occurs again of animal life in the sea and air in 1:21, and of mankind in 1:27, and of the cessation of His creative actions in 2:3.
Genesis 1:2 – ‘And the earth (eretz) was waste (tohu) and void (bohu)’.

Now compare this with what Isaiah says about the creation of the earth. Isaiah 45:18 – ‘God formed the earth (eretz) and made it, He established it, He did not create it a waste place (tohu), but formed it to be inhabited’. Isaiah is telling us that the original form of the earth when it was created was not, repeat not, ‘waste’ (tohu) but that it was made to be lived in.

So, something has happened to the earth between verse 1 and verse 2, to cause it to become waste, because it is now described as tohu and bohu. What was this? To learn about this, we now need to read about Jeremiah's vision of the same scene: ‘I looked on the earth (eretz), and, behold, it was formless (tohu) and void (bohu)’ (Jeremiah 4:23).

Jeremiah is describing the earth in a state of ruin exactly as it is described in Genesis 1:2. He is seeing history repeating itself in his own times and drawing a parallel between the earlier events of Genesis Chapter 1 and future judgement he foresees coming on Israel for its own ungodliness.

Move on to verse 27: ‘Thus says the Lord, the whole land (eretz) shall be a desolation; yet I will not execute a complete destruction’. So, after its creation with the rest of the universe, the earth came under God's judgement and was brought to a state of ruin, yet, if the parallel is complete, this was not a final judgement. To continue the parallel we may suppose this judgement was on account of its original inhabitants, whoever they may have been, because Isaiah told us that the earth was ‘formed to be inhabited’.

Genesis 1:2 – ‘And darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters’.

It would appear that the desolation of judgement had been effected by a flood, as it would be again later on in Noah's day (“And behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish” – Genesis 6:17).

Each flood is mentioned in 2 Peter: Noah’s flood in 2:5-9; and the earlier flood, which ‘destroyed the world at that time’ in 3:3-7.

2 Peter 2:5-9 – ‘If God ... did not spare the ancient world (archaiou kosmou), but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgement.’

This is a judgement of a world of mixed population; of the eight godly members of Noah’s family, whom God preserves; and of the unrighteous, whom He reserves for a future Day of Judgement. It happened in the ancient world at the time of Noah.

2 Peter 3:3-7 – ‘Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth (ge) was formed out of water and by water, through which the world (kosmos) at that time was destroyed (apoleto), being flooded with water. But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved
for fire, kept for the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men’.

The time of this flood is nearer to the time of creation and it became part of the process of the formation of the earth by water. It resulted in the destruction of the ‘world at that time’ that is, contemporary godless society who were living on the earth. It differs from Noah’s flood in its time-setting which was before the creation of Adam; and its scope which was total, leaving no survivors to continue unlike the eight of the succeeding deluge. Thus, God’s activity described in Genesis 1:2b–2:1 must have been, primarily, one of restoration of His creation, the earth, which had become waste under His judgement.

The creation/restoration of the wasted earth is progressive, achieved in seven ages called ‘days’. Each stage is ‘good’ and the completed work ‘very good’. The whole process illustrates God the Creator/Redeemer operating outwardly as el ‘olam, the Age-working God to restore His fallen and judged natural creation. It is a vivid image of the manner in which He works inwardly upon His fallen creation of humanity to the place where He can call it ‘very good’.

2. GOD AS SAVIOUR

The purpose of God’s covenant with humankind was to mend their relationship that had been broken by Adam’s disobedience and consequent expulsion from Eden. This Testament (as it used to be known) was revealed in three major stages, through Abraham, through Moses and through Jesus.

Abraham

The life of Abraham, the archetypal believer, was divided by God into sections. He was born in Ur of the Chaldees (‘Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot. And Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans’ – Genesis 11:27-28). His father then began to emigrate to Canaan, but settled down en route in Haran (the place), where Terah died. Abraham had now lost his father and his birthplace. God thereupon told him to continue the journey his father had begun.

Leaving his own family and fatherland, aged 75, he set out with his wife, who was also his half-sister, Sarai, and his orphaned nephew and this time they arrived in Canaan. There, God appeared a second time and promised to give the land to his descendants.

After an unfortunate visit to Egypt to escape a famine, there was a quarrel between Abraham and Lot’s employees, as both men has grown rich. Lot chose to move on to the Jordan valley, while his uncle stayed put, for a final separation from his family.

Then God expands His promise to include Abraham’s future descendants (‘And the Lord said to Abram, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.” – Genesis 13:14-16).

After refusing to enrich himself at the expense of others, God reappears to him and promises security and wealth, but Abraham chooses instead to ask for an heir. He is promised both an heir and as many descendants as there are visible stars. He believes God and thereupon is accounted righteous by Him. God makes a covenant with him and defines the geographical limits of His promise, from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Because God delays in granting an heir, Sarai suggests that Abraham, aged 85, helps Him on by taking her Egyptian slave-girl, Hagar to provide a substitute for her own seventy-five year old barren womb. The birth of Ishmael, the next year, is the result of this expedient. God appears to Abraham
again thirteen years later, when he is aged 99, and adds to His covenant its sacramental sign of circumcision and specifies that Sarai, who is ten years younger, is to be the mother of his heir, in token of this He changes her name to Sarah.

Abraham had been showed to be also the first prophet in the pages of the Bible by his ability to pray effectively for the healing of Abimelech’s womenfolk (“Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours” – Genesis 20:7). Amos was to say ‘Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.’ (Amos 3:7). In pursuance of this principle, God says to himself, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” (Genesis 18:17). His intention was to destroy the cities of the plain where Lot lived. Abraham’s response was to exact from God a promise that if there were ten righteous people found in Sodom, the city would be spared. Sadly there were not, but the two angelic companions of God go to the city to extract righteous Lot, his wife and two daughters. His wife does not last long and his two daughters, through their incest, breed the Moabites including Ruth an ancestress of Jesus, and the Ammonites.

After Isaac’s birth, God’s great test of Abraham takes place on Mount Moriah, the apogee of the sacrifices he has been asked to make. Isaac must have voluntarily submitted to this action, being strong enough to carry the wood for the sacrifice up the mountain for his aged father.

Now I am interested in the boundaries between the stages of Abraham’s life, the transition points between the sections. They seem to me to have been marked by loss or separation – a kind of death:

1. Genesis 11:31 Abraham leaves his birthplace, Ur
2. Genesis 11:32 Abraham’s father dies
3. Genesis 12:4 Abraham leaves Haran
4. Genesis 13:11 Abraham and Lot separate
5. Genesis 14:23 Abraham declines the booty
6. Genesis 17:24 Abraham is circumcised
7. Genesis 22:10 Abraham offers Isaac

I hope that it may be evident that Abraham’s life was punctuated by a series of ‘bereavements’ after which God spoke to expand and explain His covenant. His old life was gradually stripped away from him as the new life was revealed and experienced.

Abraham had believed God’s promise to give a son, and through him, many descendants, although both he and his wife were barren. God entered into relationship with him on the new ground of his faith, instead of the old one of obedience, as it had been from Adam’s time.

God also gave him a glimpse of the covenant, promising by it to give his descendants territory from the Nile to the Euphrates (Genesis 15:18). (Historically, this been fulfilled only very partially, and not simultaneously: Joseph ruling Egypt for the Pharaoh, Daniel ruling Babylon for the king, and the land between Egypt and Babylonia being controlled by David and Solomon for a time during the period between these men).

Later, God discloses more of His covenant to Abraham. His male descendants are to be circumcised as a sign of the covenant with them; the covenant will be everlasting (‘age-long’) and focussed in one descendant or ‘seed’ (Genesis 17:7, Galatians 3:16): Jesus Christ.

When Abraham’s descendants had become a new nation in Egypt, they were invited to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Their existence showed that God had justified Abraham's faith in God's promise that he would ‘become a great and mighty nation’ (Genesis 18:18). Now that God had been proved to be faithful on His side to a covenant promise, the time had come to put to the test
the other partner to the covenant: Mankind.

Moses
So God speaks to the nation of Israel through its leader, Moses. His life falls into three parts:

1. 40 years of education in Egypt ended by his rash attempt to deliver his people by his own strength.
2. 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd ended by his meeting with God at the burning bush.
3. 40 years of leadership of Israel through the desert ended by his death on Mount Nebo.

“‘If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples’” – Exodus 19:5. The ground of their relationship reverts from faith to obedience. Mankind is again put to the test. Israel accepts this condition: ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do!’ But there are ten commandments to be kept this time instead of the one commandment to abstain from the tree of knowledge.

Moses makes seven ascents of Mount Sinai in Arabia to receive God’s instructions for Israel’s life and worship:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ascent</th>
<th>Descent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exodus 19:3</td>
<td>Exodus 19:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exodus 19:8</td>
<td>Exodus 19:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Exodus 20:21</td>
<td>Exodus 24:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exodus 24:9,12,15</td>
<td>40 days and nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exodus 32:31</td>
<td>Exodus 33:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Exodus 34:4</td>
<td>Exodus 34:29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These Ten Commandments spoken by God Himself, and thereafter written by Him on stone, are soon expanded into the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21:1 – 23:33; 24:4,7) and again into the Book of the Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy, The Pentateuch: ‘This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it’ – Joshua 1:8). Israel proves to be totally incapable of keeping to mankind’s side of the covenant in obeying the Law. Eventually, the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel foretell of a new covenant.

Jesus
Jeremiah sets out the character of the New Covenant: “‘Behold, days are coming,’” declares the Lord, “‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,’” declares the Lord. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbour and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord’, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more’” (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Covenant will be unbreakable, inward, and personal and under it, sin will be forgotten.

Ezekiel sets out the mode of operation of the New Covenant: “‘I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances’” (Ezekiel 36:25-27). God will give a
new heart and a new Spirit under the New Covenant and cause the people to be obedient to His laws. In other words, God assumes the responsibility of ensuring that those within the covenant keep their side of it as well as for His own part! So clearly it cannot be broken. The two sides are later brought together in the person of Jesus, the God-man. Isaiah twice calls him The Covenant: Isaiah 42:6 – “And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations”; and in Isaiah 49:8 – “Thus says the Lord, “In a favourable time I have answered You, and in a day of salvation I have helped You; and I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people””.

It is this New Covenant that Jesus inaugurates with His blood on the Cross, which He dramatises in the Last Supper; and to which He gives effect at Pentecost. God’s plan of salvation for the world, the Covenant, was unfolded in stages: to Abraham, to Moses, to Jeremiah, to Ezekiel, and through Jesus

3. GOD AS JUDGE

God's judgement of Pharaoh for his refusal to allow Israel to worship were ten plagues:

1. Exodus 7:14-25 Blood
2. Exodus 8:1-15 Frogs
3. Exodus 8:16-19 Gnats
4. Exodus 8:20-32 Insects
5. Exodus 9:1-7 Pestilence on livestock
6. Exodus 9:8-12 Boils
7. Exodus 9:13-35 Hail and fire
8. Exodus 10:1-20 Locusts
9. Exodus 10:21-29 Darkness
10. Exodus 11:1-12:36 Death of first-born

The cumulative effect of the plagues was to cause Pharaoh to release Israel and to ask for Moses’ blessing (“Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, “Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the Lord, as you have said “Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also” – Exodus 12:31-32). This was in final response to God’s original command and threat “’You shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my son, my first-born’. So I said to you, “Let My son go that he may serve Me”; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your first-born.’” – Exodus 4:22-23. The series of plagues had forced Pharaoh’s capitulation to God’s original demand.

We now look at some other examples of the God of Ages working His purposes out in stages.

4. GOD AS GUIDE

Numbers 33:1-49 – in this passage, the record of the journeys of Israel from Egypt to the Jordan, Moses lists 42 encampments. This is an example of God working in stages in the 40-year Exodus of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land, a journey which could have been accomplished in eleven days (‘It is eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea.’ – Deuteronomy 1:2). Instead He led them by the pillar of fire and cloud to make 42 stages in the journey.

God’s purposes were to test Israel (‘And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not’ – Deuteronomy 8:2); and to eliminate the rebels from among them (‘Your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me’ – Numbers 14:29).

5. GOD AS SANCTIFIER

Under the Law, purification for ceremonial defilement was effected not only by sacrifice, and washing, but also by the passage of time, that is, purification took place in stages. Here are the
requirements of ceremonial purification arising out of eight conditions of ceremonial defilement:

1. **Leviticus 12:1-4** – *Purification at the beginning of a male life.*
   After the birth of a son, his mother was ceremonially unclean for 7 days, until his circumcision, and then remained unclean a further 33 days ‘until the days of her purification are completed’ (v.4). That her purification had been effected by the passage of these 40 days is clear from the fact that she was then free to come to present the burnt offering and sin offering which completed her cleansing. So the purification was effected through the passage of 40 days.

2. **Leviticus 12:5** – *Purification after the beginning of a female life.*
   This purification was effected through the passage of 80 days.

3. **Leviticus 14:1-20** – *Cleansing after leprosy.*
   The process, which lasted for eight days, is called a ‘day’ (v.2). Thus cleansing was effected by washing in water, shaving, and by shedding of blood in sacrifice, in 1 ‘day’ of 8 days.

   This purification involves washing with water for 7 days and a sin offering and a burnt offering.

5. **Leviticus 15:16-18** – *Purification from issue of semen (ejaculation).*
   The man bathes and is unclean till evening: that is, the elapse of time involved is a few hours (a day in Jewish reckoning).

6. **Leviticus 15:19-24** – *Purification from female issue (menstruation).*
   Purification is by the passage of time alone, namely 7 days.

7. **Leviticus 15:25-30** – *Purification from pathological female issue.*
   This is by the passage of 7 days and a sacrifice.

Each person who became ritually unclean by contact with any of these defiled persons was cleansed by washing and waiting for some hours until evening.

   After entering a dwelling where there had been a death, or after touching a corpse or human bone in the open or touching a grave. Purification was by being sprinkled by a clean person on the third and seventh days, and by washing his clothes and bathing on the seventh day. The purification was effected through washing and the elapse of 7 days.

It is clear from these examples, that, under the Law, blood-sacrifice, washing in water, and the passage of time are the three ceremonial agents involved in the purification process in various measures.

In this process of purification, the washing in water speaks of the ministry of the Holy Spirit (‘“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit’ – John 7:38-39); the sacrifice of the ministry of the Son (1 Peter 1:2 – ‘…according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood…’); and the elapse of time of the ministry of the Father (‘there is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven – Ecclesiastes 3:1; “‘But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone”’ – Matthew 24:36; “…it is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority”’ – Acts 1:7) who controls the salvation
timetable.

It is noteworthy, in contrast to the purification process which takes differing periods of time for differing conditions of uncleanness, that forgiveness which followed the offering of a sin offering (Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10); of a trespass offering (Leviticus 5:13, 16, 18); or of a guilt offering (Leviticus 6:6-7; 10:22) was granted immediately after the blood required was shed with no elapse of time.

This summary should make clear that the elapse of a mandatory period of time had an essential part in the purification process in the Old Testament.

6. GOD AS LIBERATOR

Leviticus 25:2-55 – ‘When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the Lord. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest’.

Each seventh year in the Jewish calendar was a sabbath (rest) year for the land, in which it lay fallow. (‘During the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard’ – Leviticus 25:4). In this year, Israelites alone received release from their debts (‘At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts ...From a foreigner you may exact it, but your hand shall release whatever of yours is with your brother’ – Deuteronomy 15:1, 3).

After seven sabbaths, the fiftieth year was proclaimed as a year of Jubilee (lit. ‘a time of shouting’), a year of liberty in which families reassembled, no work was done, possessions which had been sold could be redeemed, the poor had to be given hospitality, bond servants were released, and slaves were redeemed. It was the ‘acceptable year of the Lord’ (Luke 4:19) of Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth – a year of redemption. It came after a preparation of an age of ages, as it were. Like the sabbatical years, the Year of Jubilee began on the Day of Atonement. But unlike the sabbatical years, it was for all the inhabitants of the land, Israel and alien alike (‘You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family – Leviticus 25:10).

7. GOD IN WORLD HISTORY

When the ‘God in heaven, who reveals mysteries’ made known to King Nebuchadnezzar ‘what will take place in the latter days’ (Daniel 2:28), he revealed its course through his dream of ‘a single great statue’ made of four materials: gold, silver, bronze and a mixture of iron and clay. This, Daniel explained, as representing the King’s empire of Babylon and its three successors, which were to prove to be, progressively, the Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires. God shows that He is working through four stages in imperial politics.

8. PREPARATION FOR THE INCARNATION

Matthew and Luke's gospels show how the Incarnation was prepared for genetically by setting out the genealogies of Jesus through Joseph and Mary.

Matthew 1:1-17 – this traces the descent of Jesus from Abraham, the Father of faith, through Joseph (His legal father) and David, God's chosen King of Israel. It is divided into three sections of fourteen generations each (v.17), which is reminiscent of the forty-two stages of the exodus. The first sentence ‘the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ’ echoes the phrase of Genesis 5:1 – ‘This is the book of the generations of Adam.’ The six sets of seven generations recall the six ‘days’ of Genesis 1. They
show that God prepared for the Incarnation by which the fall of mankind was restored, in generations or stages as He had also restored the earth in stages.

We note that, to achieve this pattern, three names are omitted from the second set, Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah (see 1 Chronicles 3:11,12); and in the third group there are, in fact, only 13 and not 14, names given. The pattern and not the historicity is dominant.

**Luke 3:23-38** – this traces Jesus’ ascent from Joseph (who stands in here for Mary as her legal husband) through Adam to God. Here there are 77 generations, falling into 11 sets of 7 generations perhaps suggesting the stages of the formation of the Second Adam from the First Adam.

9. THE COSMIC LIFE OF GOD THE SON

In Micah 5:2, a prophecy of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, we are told that ‘His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity (‘*olam*’). These ‘goings forth’ are described by a series of birth-announcements, which are usually partial quotations of Psalm 2:7 – ‘I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, “Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee.”’

Hebrews 1:3-5: ‘When He had made purification of sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become as much better than the angels, as He had inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, “Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee”? And again, “I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me”? And again when He brings the first-born into the world, He says “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”’

Here the quotation from Psalm 2 is placed between a reference to Christ’s Ascension: ‘He sat down’; and His Nativity: ‘when He brings the first-born into the world.’ So it reinforces what is said in sections 1 and 4 below

1. **Luke 2:10-12** – ‘Today ... there has been born for you a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord.’

This announcement by the angel to the shepherds marked the division between Christ's pre-incarnate life and His human life.


This announcement by God the Father at Christ's baptism marked the division between His private life and His public ministry in the Spirit.

3. **Acts 13:33** – ‘God raised up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm “Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee”’.

This announcement by Paul about the resurrection marks the division between Christ's human life and death and His 40 days of risen life on earth.

4. **Hebrews 5:5** – ‘Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He Who said to Him, “Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee”’.

This announcement concerning the Ascension marks the division between Christ's risen life and His priestly intercession in His glorified body after His return into heaven.

So there are five ‘ages’, each one a form of birth into a new kind of life in Christ's history: the pre-incarnate life; His first ‘going forth’ at Bethlehem leading to His incarnate, private life of thirty years. His second ‘going forth’ in the Jordan leading to His ministry and passion and death of three years;
His third ‘going forth’ from the tomb leading to His risen life of 40 days; His fourth ‘going forth’ on the Mount of Olives followed by His present, priestly ascended life of intercession. There remains at least one ‘age’ to come, when he returns as Judge.

So Christ exemplifies in His cosmic history the character of His Father revealed in His name *el 'olam*, the One who shows His power in ages.

**10. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

The Revelation sets out what St. John has been shown by the risen Christ of ‘the things which are and the things that shall take place after these things’ – Revelation 1:19. However the book may be interpreted, it is clear to the reader that it shows that history between the Ascension and the Return is structured in a progressive and staged manner. The seven letters are followed by the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls of wrath interposed in four visions. As in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, God reveals that world history moves under His hand in a progress of stages.

**11. MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Matthew 5:3-9*
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

In these seven sayings at the start of the Sermon on the Mount, there is a progression in spirituality, from poverty in spirit to sonship of God.

*Romans 5:1-5*
‘Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained this grace in which we stand, and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.’

St. Paul defines stages of development here from faith to love: faith, justification, peace, tribulation, perseverance, proven character, hope, and love.

*2 Peter 1:3-8*
‘God's divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

St. Peter, as St. Paul, sets out stages of spiritual development for Christians, also beginning with
faith and ending with love, but by another route: faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly-kindness and love. For, as God created/restored the material creation in seven stages, so He restores/creates His new creation in stages (‘if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come’ – 2 Corinthians 5:17). Peter's own moral development is witness to this mode of transformation.

We have examined eleven ways in which el ‘olam, the God of Ages, can be seen as working by ages in His creative/redemptive activity. These substantiate the meaning of God’s name el ‘olam as God of Ages, the God who works by means of ages.

1. Psalm 45:6-7 ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever (‘olam) and ever; a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness.’

2. Psalm 103:17 ‘But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting (‘olam) to everlasting (‘olam) on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children.’

3. Psalm 105:8 ‘He has remembered His covenant forever (‘olam), the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.’

4. Psalm 110:4 ‘The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, “Thou art a priest forever (‘olam) according to the order of Melchizedek.”’

5. Isaiah 55:3 ‘Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting (‘olam) covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.’

6. Daniel 12:2 ‘And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting (‘olam) life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting (‘olam) contempt.’

7. Amos 9:11 ‘In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old (‘olam).’

1. Hebrews 1:8-9 ‘But of the Son He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever (eis tonaiona tou aionos), and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of His kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.’

2. Luke 1:50 “And His mercy is upon generation after generation (eis geneas kai geneas) toward those who fear Him.”

3. Luke 1:70,72 “As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old (ap ‘aionos) to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant.”

4. Hebrews 5:6 ‘Just as He says also in another passage, “Thou art a priest forever (eis ton aiona) according to the order of Melchizedek.”’

Hebrews 6:20 ‘Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever (eis ton aiona) according to the order of Melchizedek.’

Hebrews 7:21 ‘For they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, “The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘Thou art a priest forever…’ (eis ton aiona).”’

Hebrews 7:24 ‘…but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever (eis ton aiona), holds His priesthood permanently.’

5. Hebrews 13:20 ‘Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal (aionios) covenant, even Jesus our Lord…’
6. Matthew 25:46 “And these will go away into eternal \((aionios)\) punishment, but the righteous into eternal \((aionios)\) life.”

7. Acts 15:16-18 ‘After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old \((ap’ aion os)\).’
5. Ages

Now that we have identified the virus which has penetrated into many translations of the Bible into English and indeed as far as one of the very names of God himself, we need to pursue our hunt for the meaning of ‘forever’ from the Old Testament into the New to find out if the New Testament has also been infected. As I expect you know, the Bible was written originally in two main languages, Hebrew for the Old Testament, and Greek for the New, with a smattering of Aramaic in each Testament.

There are many quotations of the Old Testament in the New. I have placed a table of seven of them which contain our word for ‘age’, ‘olam, in Appendix 1 at the end of this book.

1. The first is a quotation of Psalm 45:6 – ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever (‘olam) and ever (‘olam). This occurs in Hebrews 1:8 – ‘Thy throne, O God is forever (aion) and ever (aion)’. So we have found that the equivalent Greek word in the New Testament to the Hebrew word ‘olam, is aion.

We can see from these two verses above, that each word, ‘olam and aion, has been translated ‘forever’ in the NASB. But we discovered, in Chapter 1, that ‘olam is better translated as ‘age’ or ‘age-long’ rather than by ‘forever’ which last word suggests an endless period of time. How, do we find, is aion translated in the New Testament?

aion is usually translated by one of three words: age, world, or ever (or by its negative form never). (You will find a complete list in Appendices 4 and 5 at end of this book).

Here is a selection of examples:

Age
Matthew 12:32 – ‘And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.’

The parallel in Mark 3:29 is: ‘But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal (aionios) sin...’. So, it would appear that ‘eternal' and ‘this age and the age to come’ can be equivalent expressions.

In my opinion ‘age’ is the most suitable translation of aion.

World
Mark 4:19 – ‘The worries of the world.’

‘World’ is a confusing translation for aion, because the word is also used to translate kosmos (which means society organised apart from God as in Matthew 4:8 – ‘Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory’) and oikoumene (which means the habitable earth as in Matthew 24:14 – ‘And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.’). When ‘world’ is used to translate aion it can be taken to mean ‘the age when the earth is inhabited’ as in Matthew 4:19.

Hebrews 1:1-2 – ‘God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.’

Hebrews 11:3 – ‘By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.’
Here we see that the plural of the word, which has been translated ‘age’ in Hebrews 6:5 (‘And have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come’), is given as, first, ‘world’ and secondly ‘worlds’ in the same epistle. Surely this is confusing?

**Ever**

There is a multiplicity of expressions containing *aion* that are translated ‘ever’, or phrases with this word. I cannot better the note of Andrew Jukes that I would like now to reproduce from *The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things*, pg. 61:

‘Every scholar knows that the expressions *eis tois ainois* (to the ages), *eis aiona aionos* (to age of age), *eis aiona aionon* (to age of ages), and *eis tous aionas ton aionon* (to the ages of ages), are unlike anything which occurs in the heathen Greek writers. The reason is, that the inspired writers, and they alone, understood the mystery and purpose of the ‘ages’. They, or at least the Spirit that spoke by them, saw that there would be a succession of ‘ages’ a certain number of which constituted another greater ‘age’. It seems to me that when they simply intended many ‘ages’, they wrote *eis tous aionas* or ‘to the ages’. When they had in view a greater and more comprehensive ‘age’, including in it many other subordinate ‘ages,’ they wrote *eis aiona aionon*, that is ‘to the age of ages.’ When they intended the longer ‘age’ alone, without regard to its constituent parts, they wrote *eis aiona aionos*, that is ‘to an æonial age’; this form of expression being a Hebraism, exactly equivalent to *eis aiona aionion*: like ‘liberty of glory’ for ‘glorious liberty’ (Romans 8:21) and ‘body of our vileness’, for ‘our vile body’ (Philippians 3:21). When they intended the several comprehensive ‘ages’ collectively, they wrote *eis tous ton aionon*, that is ‘to the ages of ages’. Each varying form is used with a distinct purpose and meaning.’

So it would appear that ‘ever’ ‘forever’ ‘forever and ever’ and suchlike are not accurate translations of phrases containing *aion*.

As we examine these examples, it becomes clear that translations of phrases with *aion* including the word ‘age’ are frequent, but translations using ‘ever’ and other words suggesting an endless period are more frequent, making 62% of the occurrences. We can see that *aion*, or a phrase containing it, is sometimes translated in a manner which implies that an endless span of time is in mind; and sometimes by a word suggesting a limited, but unknown period. This pattern of its translations occurs throughout the New Testament. Which meaning is correct? Does *aion* stand for a limited or unlimited period?

2. The second quotation is from Psalm 103:17 found in Luke 1:50. Luke renders the ‘*olam* phrase as ‘generation after generation’. Now a generation is a limited but indeterminate period of time and so this is a particularly apt translation for our understanding of ‘*olam*.

4. There are four quotations of Psalm 110:4 in Hebrews each one literally ‘unto the age’ suggesting that the Christ Melchizedek priesthood endures for an age, possibly This Present Age, lying between His two Advents.

5 & 6. These quotations show the ‘*olam* phrases translated by the adjective *aionios*.

7. Here there is not an exact translation: the intention of the ‘*olam* phrase may be given by Luke’s ‘from of old’.

**THE LENGTH OF AN AION**

Let us now see how Matthew used *aion* to convey the sense of Jesus’ teaching. Jesus spoke in Aramaic and Matthew put what he heard into Greek for us.

In Matthew 12:32 Jesus says ‘Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven
him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age (\textit{aion}), or in the age (\textit{aion}) to come.’

In Matthew 13:40 Jesus says ‘As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.’

First, Jesus speaks of an ‘age to come’ implying that the age had not yet begun, but would have a beginning at some time in the future. Secondly, of the ‘end of the age’, implying that the age would end at a definite time. So, if He spoke both of a beginning and an end of an \textit{aion}, an \textit{aion} must be of limited, even though unknown, duration.

1 Corinthians 10:11 – ‘Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.’

St. Paul says that he was living at a time when the ages were ending. Ages are like a group of people, born on different days, but all killed simultaneously in some tragedy. They overlap in their lives which all end together.

So the word \textit{aion} is translated in the New Testament, in the same way as the word \textit{’olam} has been translated in the Old Testament. Each word stands for period of time that is of limited but unspecified duration. But neither word is always translated in such a way as to make this meaning plain in the NASB.
6. Can Eternal Life Be Everlasting?

We have discovered *aion* to be used to mean ‘a limited but unspecified period’. *aionios* is the adjective formed from it. Usually *aionios* is translated by the word ‘eternal’ in the NASB. A dictionary definition of ‘eternal’ is ‘that which always has existed and will exist’, in other words, that which has no limits to its duration. So, ‘eternal’ is a misleading rendering of the word *aionios*, which is derived from a word that has to do with a limited but unspecified period.

Let us examine a passage that will help to make the meaning of *aionios* clear. The word occurs twice in it:

**Romans 16:25-26**

‘Now to Him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past (*chronois aioniois*) but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God (*aioniou theou*) has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever. Amen.’

On the first occurrence of *aionios* here, it is in apposition to times (*chronois*), and on the second to God (*theou*). The same word (in two different grammatical cases) in the same sentence is likely to bear the same meaning on each occurrence.

Times *aionios* (long ages past) cannot mean ‘everlasting’ times because the times to which reference is made are the times during which the gospel was ‘kept secret’. The gospel is now made known and the period in which the gospel was hidden has ended; and therefore that period is not everlasting. So the translation that is offered by the NASB: ‘long ages past’* is a fair, but loose, rendering of the words *chronois aioniois*, which stand for times which are limited but unspecified’.

*This is the first of three occasions on which the NASB does not translate *aionios* as ‘eternal’. The two others are 2 Timothy 1:9 – ‘who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity *(chronon aionion)*; and Philemon 15 – ‘For perhaps he was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever *(aionion auton)*.’* 

We turn now to the other occurrence of *aionios* in Romans 16:25-26: God *aionios* (the eternal God). If *aionios* bears the same meaning as on its first appearance, which was of a ‘limited and unspecified time’ it cannot mean ‘everlasting’ here, as it has been translated. So for this occurrence of *aionios* the NASB translation ‘eternal’ is inexact. What, then does *aionios* here mean?

*aionios theos* is the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament name of God, *el ‘olam*. We have seen that this name of God expresses an aspect of the character of God, namely that He is a God who works by means of, or in, ages. So, likewise, *aionios*, the adjective of *aion*, should mean ‘working by means of ages’ – or ‘in stages’. *aionios* is descriptive of character and not of duration, of a process and not of a period; it is qualitative and not chronological. *aionios describes the quality of a period within ‘This Age and the Age to Come’ in which God’s mode of operation is by subordinate ages.* And so, God *aionios*, means ‘God, who works in ages’. This is in line with William Barclay’s definition: *aionios* does not mean *lasting for ever*; it means such as befits God, or such as belongs to God, or such as is characteristic of God. (*Daily Study Bible* on Matthew 19: 16-22).

Returning to the first occurrence of *aionios* in Romans 16:25-26, *chronois aioniois*, this now, more
consistently, may be translated as ‘times of working in ages’. Here it refers to the whole Old Testament chronology that we have discovered to be just such a period. We are familiar with this concept in drama, when a play may be divided into Acts and these sub-divided into Scenes. The aion is a Scene and the chronos is an Act.

If we are correct in saying that aionios is describing the quality or character of a period of time and not its length, does this mean that eternal life (zoe aionios) is not everlasting, but of a limited duration? No, it does not.

We have the authority of Jesus for this: ‘Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.’(Luke 20:34-36).

St. John gives us two definitions of eternal life:

1 John 5:20 – ‘We are in Him Who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.’

Here John equates eternal life with Jesus Christ himself.

John 17:2-3 – ‘Even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.’

Here John equates eternal life with the intimate personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, that is, our Saviour. So Jesus Christ is the life of the ages as He is the life of this Present Age (‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.’ – John 14:6).

St. Paul tells us that the knowledge of Jesus Christ gives us spiritual maturity: ‘…we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.’ – Ephesians 4:13.

St. Peter tells us that the knowledge of Jesus Christ brings all we need for a godly life: ‘Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.’ – 2 Peter 1:3; and also for a fruitful life: ‘For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ – 2 Peter 1:8.

It would appear that eternal life, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is the opportunity to receive spiritual wisdom, revelation, to become mature Christians, receiving everything needed to become godly, useful, and fruitful. So we can expand the definition of aionios to say that aionios describes the quality of a period within ‘This Age and the Age to Come’ in which God’s saving activity is by means if subordinate ages.

Now we can turn to Jesus Himself to answer our question: Is eternal life everlasting? “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.” – John 6:54-57. Our ‘eternal’ life, that is to say, our spiritual life is derived from the life of Jesus himself, which is, in turn, derived from His Father and resides in His blood. He is the only one who possesses immortality (athanasia lit. deathlessness): ‘Who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light’ – 1 Timothy 6:16. Also He ‘abolished death, and brought life and
immortality (aphtharsia lit. incorruption) to light through the gospel’ – 2 Timothy 1:10. So we see that eternal life – ‘the life of the ages’ - is immortal, being the life of Jesus derived from his Father.

We can see this too in the statement in Hebrews 7:15-16 – ‘And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible (akatalutos) life.’
7. The Broad Way

The presence of God has always brought conviction of sin to the conscience of the sinner; in the garden of Eden to Adam and Eve: ‘And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. And he said, “I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”’ – Genesis 3:8-10.

Conviction came through the prophet Nathan, to David in his adultery: ‘Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.”’ – 2 Samuel 12:13.

In the temple too, Isaiah cried out: ‘“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”’ – Isaiah 6:5.

In his boat, doubting Peter had the same experience through the presence of Jesus aboard: ‘But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”’ – Luke 5:8.

The adulterous Pharisees in the temple slunk out at Jesus’ challenge: ‘But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her… and straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” And she said, “No one, Lord.”’ – John 8:7-11.

Jesus said that after Pentecost the Holy Spirit would continue this ministry: ‘“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgement; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”’ – John 16:7-11.

And so He does – by Paul, to Felix the governor: ‘…and as Paul was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgement to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you.”’ – Acts 24:25.

And, more dramatically, the Spirit acts by Peter on the liars Annas and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11); and on the blasphemer, Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:20-23) who were each judged by a sudden death.

DIVES AND LAZARUS

Jesus reveals how this process of conviction of sin continues after death, in the account of the lives and deaths of a rich man (‘dives’ in Latin) and a poor man called Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). This is almost the only occasion on which He reveals what will happen to an individual after her or his death, except to His fellow-sufferer on a cross: ‘And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”’ – Luke 23:43.

When Dives died, his body was buried. His soul was in Hades. This is the Greek word used in the New Testament for the Hebrew word, Sheol. (When St. Peter quotes David’s prophecy about Jesus in Psalm 16:8-11, he says: ‘Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.’ Psalm 16:10 reads: ‘Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol’). Sheol/Hades is the state of the disembodied soul in which it waits for its resurrection body.
As the resurrection lies in the future for these men, Dives and Lazarus, both the last judgement and the possibility of hell also lie in the future for them. Dives’ flame and the pain that it brings belong to Hades and not to hell.

It would seem that conviction of sin is a process which will continue until that sin is expunged by repentance: it begins when the sin is committed, by alerting the conscience, unless this is hardened (‘But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today”, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.’ – Hebrews 3:13).

Sin may affect the fleshly body through God’s judgements of sickness or death: ‘For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgement to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep’ – 1 Corinthians 11:26-30. Remember also St. John’s prayer (‘Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers’ – 3 John 2) where he links health of body and soul.

Of course, not all sicknesses are caused by sin in the sufferer. This is quickly seen in the case of Job. His illness was brought about by an attack of Satan.

After death, as we have seen, sin continues to affect the soul in Hades. Then, after the resurrection of the unjust, it will affect the resurrection body, as Jesus describes, in Gehenna: “‘And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.’” – Matthew 5:29.

To sum up: the conscience is convicted of sin; then, the body in sickness; then the soul in Hades; and lastly the (resurrection) body and the soul in Hell: “‘And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.’” – Matthew 10:28.

‘Eternal (aionios - age-working) judgement’ is listed among the elementary teachings of the faith. ‘Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement (Hebrews 6:1-2). This is what Dives is experiencing. Incidentally, it shows that it is not possible to escape the pains of conscience through suicide.

The purpose of conviction of sin in the conscience is to produce moral behaviour: ‘For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.’ – Romans 2:14 -16; in the natural body, to lead to salvation: ‘I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.’ – 1 Corinthians 5:5; and in Hades to produce repentance. This is a clear example of God making use of Satan to achieve a man’s salvation. And if Satan, why not hell? Some of these remarks call for elaboration.

God’s purpose is that we all should become holy, as He is: ‘because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy”’ – 1 Peter 1:16; ‘and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” – Ephesians 4:24. If we have not appropriated the full salvation from sin obtained for us by the redemption of Jesus Christ, justification from the guilt of sin: ‘having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’ Romans
5:1; and sanctification from the taint of sin: ‘By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all’ – Hebrews 10:10; both gifts received by faith, and allowed these gifts to be worked out in a holy life, like a loving father, God will continue to correct us until we become holy.

It is noteworthy in Biblical history that sickness of body and mind frequently led to a change of heart.

Miriam’s leprosy brought repentance to her and her brother (Numbers 12).
Snakebite caused the Israelites to confess their sin (Numbers 21:6,7).
Tumours made the Philistines return the ark (1 Samuel 5:6-12).
Sickness made Hezekiah repent (2 Kings 20:3).
Unspecified trouble brought the Corinthian adulterer to repentance (1 Corinthians 5:1-8; 2 Corinthians 7:8-12).

These examples show how bodily troubles, in particular, sickness, may lead to a change, expressed in confession and repentance.

If we now return to the soul of Dives in Hades, we notice two points: first, that his relationship with Abraham, which he had disregarded on earth, becomes paramount; they address each other as ‘Father Abraham’ and ‘Son’ – secondly, there is a remarkable change of heart in Dives. While on earth, he was selfish and ignored the troubles of Lazarus at his gate: in Hades he develops a concern for his five brothers who seemed to have shared his former egocentricity.

Is it not possible that the pains of Hell in the resurrected body would have a like effect on an unrepentant sinner?

THE RESURRECTION BODY

In his description of the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, St. Paul says that God chooses the kind of resurrection body He will give (v.38) to each soul. These resurrection bodies will differ from one another in two ways:

First, as in the animal kingdom, there are differing kinds of bodies for beasts, birds and fish, so in the resurrection bodies of the righteous and the wicked. This is corroborated by what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:17-18 – “I said to myself ‘God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man’, for a time for every matter and for every deed is there. I said to myself concerning the sons of men, “God has surely tested (exposed) them in order for them to see that they are (but) (in and of themselves) beasts.”’ In other words, God’s future judgement of mankind will expose some of us as having a bestial nature.

The resurrection bodies of the righteous will be like that of Jesus, human in form: ‘Beloved, now are we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.’ – 1 John 3:2. But, is this why Jesus called Herod a fox (Luke 1:32), and the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees serpents and vipers (Matthew 23:33); and why St. Paul called the Judaizers dogs (Philippians 3:2)? Or St. Peter and St. Jude the unrighteous ‘unreasoning animals’ (2 Peter 2:12; Jude 10)?

Secondly, as in the celestial realm, celestial bodies differ in magnitude of brightness, so the resurrection bodies of the righteous will differ in glory: Jesus shines as the sun, as at His Transfiguration (‘He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.’ Matthew 17:2); and as in heaven (‘in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its
strength.’ Revelation 1:16); and the saints like stars (‘And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.’ Daniel 12:2-3).

Our souls will be clothed with resurrection bodies which will manifest what we have made of our souls in our lifetime on earth, whether we have succumbed to animal nature, as Nebuchadnezzar’s soul to those habits of the ox during his madness; or been changed from one degree of glory to another by the working of the Holy Spirit within so that we become like the man within ourselves and so our resurrection bodies are like the body of Christ, like that of the True Man – Jesus Christ.

THE TIME OF TRIAL

‘Do not bring us to the time of trial.’ This is the latest revision by the Church of England in 1998 of the translation of the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, which is given as ‘Do not lead us not into temptation’ in the NASB (Matthew 6:13).

The Greek verb is uniquely in the aorist subjective, whereas the first five petitions are in the aorist itself. This is because it is a negative petition, the only one in the prayer. Luke, too, has the same subjunctive (Luke 11:4). Both versions, therefore, exclude the possibility of a repetition of the time of trial, as the tense implies a ‘one-off’ action that is not repeated.

The verb ‘bring’ has the sense of causing movement from one place to another, so the petition is asking God the Father not with His own hand to bring us into temptation.

The only parallel to this petition occurred in Gethsemane, when Jesus told his disciples “‘Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak or sick (asthenes – Matthew 26:41). This was the occasion of Jesus’ second encounter with Satan - the opportune time - (‘And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.’ Luke 4:13) when the ruler of the world came to confront him (‘“I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”’ – John 14:30) and test him by sickness, and if found wanting, to kill him. He, the Passover Lamb, was examined to ensure that he was ‘without blemish’. Both in the wilderness and in the Garden, angels ministered to him after his ordeals with Satan.

The testing against which we are to pray is not the proving of faith such as God brought Abraham into (‘Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham.’ – Genesis 22:1) – a joyful and strengthening experience (‘Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.’ – James 1:2-3); but it is deliverance from the final ordeal of Satan – the hour of testing – which is firmly located on earth (‘Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.’ – Revelation 3:10).
8. Doing Time

I am a descendant in the twelfth generation of Antoine L’Offroy, a Huguenot refugee from Cambrai who settled in Canterbury about 1586. My great-grandfather, Captain Benjamin Lefroy RN won a medal in the Baltic War, and was engaged in the suppression of the slave trade on the West African coast. My daughter possesses an elephant’s tooth that was given to him by a chief in the hope of acquiring one of his nine daughters to become one of his wives. They were a formidable tribe, two of them becoming headmistresses of girls’ schools, one in London and one in Canada. My grandfather, Christopher, one of their three brothers, also emigrated to Canada and became Postmaster of Vernon, British Columbia. An extract from his local newspaper, *Vernon News* for 1912: ‘On Monday morning, Postmaster Lefroy met the public for the first time in the new Dominion government building and was kept busy all day allotting boxes and distributing keys.’

Two years later he and his eldest son, Ben, my father, the latter erring over his age, had enlisted in the Canadian Mounted Rifles and had sailed for France. There being little call for mounted riflemen on the Western Front, my father transferred into the Royal Flying Corps. After training, he was posted as a test pilot to St. Omer in October 1917. This involved testing each aircraft as it was delivered to the front and suggesting minor modifications to make it more battle-worthy. In June 1918 he was posted to 43 Squadron, who were flying Sopwith Camels and who had been moved to join 1 Squadron to face Baron von Richthoven’s ‘circus’ across the front. On 8th September he was called to fill a gap in one of the flights scrambling into action. He had to take an old machine, the only one available, which had been used for towing targets. He was shot down going to the aid of a fellow pilot. He managed to land his aircraft safely behind the German lines, despite having been hit three times in the leg. He was taken prisoner and hospitalised.

After the Armistice, two months later, he was sent to a hospital in Oxford. Here Captain Lefroy’s brother-in-law, the Rev Johnnie Magrath, was Provost of The Queen’s College. I have a vivid memory of kissing him through his long white beard, which totally hid his clerical neckwear, at his lodgings in the early 1930s. He had been elected Provost under the unreformed statutes and had life tenure, unless he married. Uncle Johnnie prevailed upon my father to accept a place at the College to read a war degree course of two years.

My mother’s brother, Godfrey Elton was a Fellow of the College. Later, Ramsay MacDonald created him a baron for his services to the Independent Labour Party to whose *Newsletter* my mother contributed book reviews. Later still he became a founding member of the BBC’s Brain Trust broadcasts, a non-political precursor of the current *Any Questions*? He invited my father to his parents’ house, Burleigh Court, near Stroud for a vacation reading party. My mother was at Lady Margaret Hall; when she became engaged to my father, she was sent down from Oxford for this misdemeanour. I was born at Burleigh in 1925 and celebrated my seventieth birthday there, as the Court is now a three star hotel.

Sadly, my parents’ marriage did not work out, and my mother became a single parent of my sister and myself in the early ‘30s. At first, we lived with great-aunt Margaret Fletcher at her house in Oxford. She was a daughter of the last Rector of Carfax, the church at the centre of the city, which had to be demolished on account of early traffic problems. Its clock tower remains. The Rector had the distinction of being, to date, the last man to be tried for heresy by the university. He had allowed Bishop Colenso, an advocate of the Higher Criticism of the Bible, to preach from his pulpit. He escaped the fate of Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer, who were burned outside Balliol College for another heresy. Aunt Margaret had, possibly in reaction to such liberalism, converted to the Roman Catholic Church. She founded the Catholic Women’s League; she also designed the soft square cap worn with women’s academic dress that she had tried out on my mother’s auburn hair. Another of Aunt Margaret’s early feminist triumphs was to have studied art, unchaperoned, in Paris.
On my father’s side there was another great-aunt living in Oxford, great-aunt Blanche who had been headmistress of Edgehill School in Canada, and later housekeeper to Uncle Johnnie at Queen’s until his death. In Eights’ week my mother would take us to watch the bumping races from the College barge, with its figurehead of a great red eagle. Aunt Blanche was as devout an Anglican as Aunt Margaret a Catholic. When I became vicar of Highbury, in north London (Arsenal territory), my archdeacon, George Timms remembered her good works as a lay visitor for St Alban’s, Holborn.

With the aid of her Corona portable typewriter and legacies from her parents my mother managed to provide for us. I gained scholarships at Wellington and Clare that smoothed my educational path in days before state grants. The timetable at the boarding school was so rigid that the staff used to boast that they knew what each boy was doing at every moment of the term. Most of my time at Wellington my study/bedroom was close to a great clock that struck the quarters through out daylight hours. There were also synchronised clocks in each classroom and public room. I was more conscious of time than a Swiss railwayman. The OTC drummed into us that parade at 1400 hours meant that we were present and ready at 1355 hours. Katie reminds me of the baptism of a granddaughter at which we arrived at the beginning of the service preceding the baptismal service; and several times we have caught the train departing before the one on which we intended to travel. At school each term seemed to be a sentence to twelve weeks to solitary confinement (this is the point to which I have been leading).

The prophet Micah’s last written words are: ‘Who is a God like Thee, Who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever.’

Micah 7:18-20 – ‘Who is a God like thee, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger for ever because He delights in steadfast love…. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old.’

Micah tells us that God is not one Who punishes eternally. His punishments are not everlasting. Nor are our sins. It is only His love that is eternal.

This is borne out by an examination of the divine punishments of God's people in This Age of history, when we find that, very often, a definite period of time was attached to the sentence (like the twelve weeks of school term). We know that God will be the same in the Age to Come. * This is, I understand from a lawyer, a principle of natural justice.

* If it is asked if there will be the elapse of time as we know it in the Age to Come, we can draw attention to these intervals mentioned in the Revelation: ‘And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour…’ (Revelation 8:1). See also: ‘And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind.’ (Revelation 9:15).

Let us look at some of the sentences handed down by the heavenly judge.

**The Exodus**

When God punished the Israelites for grumbling in the desert, He sentenced them to remain in the wilderness as shepherds (‘And your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they shall suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness.’ – Numbers 14:33) i.e. until all the rebels had died and the rebellion eradicated, that is, for forty years.

40 years
The Judges
Because the Israelites failed to expel the people and joined in their idolatry, God withdrew his promise to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan (Judges 2:2-3, 10-15). He punished the Israelites by subjugating them for varying periods to their enemies and simultaneously by raising up judges who, in their lifetime, delivered them from their oppressors (Judges 2:16-19). We notice that their saviours were judges. This is the list of their servitudes:

| Judges 3: 7-11 | Mesopotamian | 8 years |
| Judges 3:12-30 | Moabites | 18 years |
| Judges 3:31-5.31 | Philistines & Canaanites | 20 years |
| Judges 6:1-8.3 | Midianites | 7 years |
| Judges 8:33-10.5 | Usurpation of Abimelech | 3 years |
| Judges 10:6-12.1 | Ammonites | 18 years |
| Judges 13:1-16.31 | Philistines | 40 years |

The Monarchy
When David was given a choice of punishment for his sin in numbering the Israelites, he was given three choices. Each one had a time attached to it: three years’ famine; three months' defeat, or three days’ plague (1 Samuel 24:13).

James cites this case of Elijah ('Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.' – James 5:17). James learnt the period of judgement, not from the Old Testament, but from his brother's sermon in Nazareth ('“But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land…”’ – Luke 4:25).

The Exile
One of the reasons for the Babylonian exile was the failure to observe the sabbath rest of the land: ‘He (Nebuchadnezzar) carried away to Babylon ... to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths.’ See also Leviticus 26:14, 33-35 – ‘If you do not obey Me ...you I will scatter among the nations ...then the land will enjoy its sabbaths.’ Another reason for the exile of the Israelites was their persistent idolatry. God sentenced them to exile in Babylon for seventy years (‘And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.’ – Jeremiah 25:11). There is no record, after their return, that they committed idolatry again.

Ezekiel 4:4-6 – “As for you, lie down on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; you shall bear their iniquity for the number of days that you lie on it. For I have assigned you a number of days corresponding to the years of their iniquity, three hundred and ninety days; thus you
shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year.”

There is no agreement among commentators as to which periods these two intervals of 390 and 40 years correspond. We may note that the punishments are both for idolatry and that they are proportional to the iniquity in God’s eyes.

390 years and 40 years

Daniel 4:32 – When God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his pride by causing him to live with and eat as an ox (‘You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognise that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes’) he became humble and acknowledged God. We can draw the conclusion from these two latter instances that God's punishments could be not only retributive but also reformative.

Seven ‘periods of time’

THE GOSPELS

Jesus himself suggests, in the Sermon on the Mount, that punishments will be limited in accordance with the offence.

Matthew 5:26 – “I tell you the truth, you will not get out (of prison) until you have paid the last penny (quadrans).”

This is said in the context of penalties of ‘fire of hell’ (v.22) and ‘hell’ (v.29) suggesting that they too may be proportionately retributive in measure to the offence.

Matthew 18:34-5 – At the end of the parable of the unmerciful servant, “‘And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall my heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.’”

Luke 12:59 – He makes this point again: “‘I say to you, you shall not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.’”

Luke 12:47-48 – “‘And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.”

The principles laid down seem to be: first, that the severity of the punishment (imprisonment with beating or torment) is exactly equivalent to the severity of the misdemeanour and secondly, that the offender is released from prison at the end of his punishment.

The Passion

Jesus’ whole incarnate life was a ‘taking away the sin of the world’ (John 1:20). At the beginning of his ministry of three years, He was about thirty years old (Luke 4:23). This process reached its climax at the cross as Peter states: ‘He himself carried our sins up to the cross’ (1 Peter 2:24, margin).

Jesus said that His passion would endure as long as Jonah’s: “‘Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’” (Matthew 12:40). Reckoning backwards from the resurrection ‘very early on the first day of the week’ (John 16:2 – our Easter Sunday) we arrive at the beginning of the fifth day of the previous week (our Maundy Thursday). Since the Jewish method of counting was inclusive, a part
being reckoned as the whole, the three days and three nights that ended with the resurrection could have begun at any point before nightfall on the Thursday.

In the above example, Jesus is referring to Jonah 1:17–2:9.
1:17 – ‘The Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.’
2:1 – ‘Then Jonah prayed to the Lord from the stomach of the fish…’
2:2 – ‘and he said “I called out of my distress to the Lord, and he answered me. I cried to the Lord for help from the depth of Sheol; Thou didst hear my voice.”’
2:3 – ‘“For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Thy breakers and billows passed over me.”’
2:4 – ‘“So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Thy sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward thy holy temple.’”
2:5 – ‘“Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, weeds were wrapped around my head.”’
2:6 – ‘“I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever (‘olam), but Thou hast brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God.”’
2:7 – ‘“While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to Thee into Thy holy temple.”’
2:8 – ‘“Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness…”’
2:9 – ‘“But I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord.”’

The expression ‘the heart of the earth’ in Matthew 12:40 (‘“For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”’) is a combination of the phrases ‘the heart of the seas’ (v.3) and ‘the earth with its bars’ (v.6) which represents all the places where the fish took him. These are: Sheol (v.2), expelled from God's sight (v.4), death (v.5) and the pit (v.6).

We can see the betrayal (or ‘handing over’) of Jesus by Judas into the hands of men (‘The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men’ Luke 9:44) and the power of darkness (‘“While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.”’ – Luke 22:53) as the point at which He became their prisoner in ‘the heart of the earth’ and was carried through successive experiences of powerlessness as Jonah had been. The experiences included the agony in Gethsemane, the betrayal and arrest, the desertion of the disciples, the examination before Annas, the trial before Caiaphas, Peter's denials, the questioning before the council, the two appearances before Pilate, the questioning by Herod, the scourging, the mocking by Caiaphas' officers, Herod's soldiers, and Pilate's soldiers, and the six hours of the crucifixion.

Then followed the descent to the pit: 1 Peter 3:18-20 – ‘Christ ... having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient…’ and to Sheol: 1 Peter 4:6 – ‘The gospel has... been preached even to those who are dead.’

The anguish and sickness of Jesus’ soul in Gethsemane lasted for three hours (Matthew 26:38-45) and were illuminated by the full Passover moon to the disciples; the anguish of His body alone for three hours (9 a.m. to noon) was seen by all in the morning sun (‘And it was the third hour when they crucified Him. ...and when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour.’ – Mark 15:25, 33); and the anguish of His spirit for three hours (noon to 3 p.m.) was visible only to his Father as the great darkness covered the land.

The number three (as it was with David) is characteristic of these periods of redemptive suffering of Jesus’ life:
Private life 30 years
Ministry 3 years
Betrayal 3 days and nights including:
Agony in garden 3 hours
Agony on Cross in light 3 hours
Agony on Cross in dark 3 hours

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Judas
Jesus had said in His High priestly prayer: ““Not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled”’ (John 17:12). This could be translated ‘Not one of them was lost but the son of loss’. The question is: what is it that Judas lost?

He certainly lost his office: ‘His office (episcopos) let another man take’ (Acts 1:20). He lost his reward. We cannot imagine that his name is now on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. Is it Matthias, or Paul? ‘The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.’ (Revelation 21:14)

But did he lose his soul? His act of betrayal was endorsed by Jesus: ‘And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, “What you do, do quickly.”’ (John 13:27).

He repented, he confessed his sin and made restitution – ‘Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse (metamelomai as in Matthew 21:29), and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders’ (Matthew 27:3-4). God requires no more for forgiveness. His suicide was the concomitant of Satan’s exit from his lodging in Judas, as was the self-destruction of the Gadarene swine at the departure of the demons (‘And He said to the demons, “Begone!” And they came out, and went into the swine, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.’ – Matthew 8:32).

Jesus had also said of Judas (‘that man’): “‘The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good (kalos) for him if that man had not been born.’” (lit. Matthew 26:24). Who is the ‘him’? Is it Jesus or Judas? Jesus has been called ‘Him’ already in the sentence and Judas is called ‘that man’ twice. If it is Jesus who, for the second time, is called ‘him’, Jesus is saying that it would have been kalos for Jesus Himself if Judas had not been born.

But we need to remember Psalm 69:25 – ‘May their eyes grow dim so that they cannot see, and make their loins shake continually... May their camp be desolate; may none dwell in their tents.’ This was quoted by St. Peter of Judas: ‘For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his homestead be made desolate, and let no man dwell in it’; and, ‘His office let another man take.’ (Acts 1:20). But the same Psalm is also quoted, (Psalm 69:23) by St. Paul about Israel Romans 11:10 – ‘Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever.’

Paul goes on to say of Israel ‘thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.”’ (Romans 11:26). It is reasonable to suppose that if the same passage is applied to Judas as to Israel their ends should not be dissimilar.

Ananias and Sapphira
Acts 5:1-11 – Their sins were covetousness and lying, the Fall of the new creation of the church. The Holy Spirit, acting through Peter, brought judgement of physical death upon them as God had on
Adam and Eve in their spirits on the first humanity.

**Elymas**

Acts 13:6-12 – This Jewish sorcerer opposed Paul as he and Barnabas responded to the request of Elymas' patron, the proconsul of Cyprus to hear the word of God. The Holy Spirit through Paul judged him with blindness (as Paul himself had suffered on the Damascus road: v.11 ‘for a time’ - *achri kAIROI*). When Sergius Paulus saw what happened, he became Paul's first convert and Paul himself changed the name Saul by which he was known to Paul (‘little’) to mark the beginning of his ministry to convert the gentiles.

**REVELATION**

We read: ‘They (the locusts) were not given power to kill them (those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads), but only to torture them for five months’ - another limited punishment – Revelation 17:10.

**SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>3 years, 3 months, 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahab</td>
<td>3 years and six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exile</td>
<td>70 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus’ Passion</td>
<td>30 years, 3 days and nights, 3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elymas</td>
<td>A time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsealed</td>
<td>5 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident that God does not retain His anger for ever but often attaches a limiting time to His punishments.
9. The Resurrection–Harvests

THE DOOR

Often, in the last war, I had to travel by train from Oxford to Semley station in Dorset. The timetabling involved an enforced wait of about an hour at Salisbury each journey. I used to occupy myself in walking the half-mile to the Close whither I was strangely drawn, even past the strong attraction of Beech’s second-hand bookshop and on through the mediaeval High Street gateway. Once inside the Close I felt at home. Ten years later I was to marry in the cathedral, Sally, at that time a schoolgirl living in the Close at her parents’ home, No.21. This house originated in the 13th century as a canony, to which its winter draughts attested. It was modified in each successive century, and when she lived there was a fascinating jumble of rooms, and rather scary for her to go to bed in winter darkness over its creaking floors. Later still, I returned to the Close after Sally’s death: it proved to be also a place where I could be healed from my great bereavement - of wife, of home, of work and of family. I could, in addition, learn to live as a disabled person on my own for the first time. I was fortunate to have my neighbour’s – Ted Heath – ex-housekeeper, the excellent Sheila Webb, to help. The High Street gate was a doorway to married life and also to widowhood for me.

If our spiritual life is made up of distinct ages, how do we progress from one age to the next? Jesus Christ, our forerunner (‘Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us’ – Hebrews 6:20) who is also the door (‘Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep’ – John 10:7) shows us the way. In Chapter 4 we saw that the cosmic life of the Son was divided by a series of ‘births’ into succeeding ages, each implying a ‘death’ to the preceding age.

Death and resurrection are intimately linked in the eternal life of the Son. When a human receives this life this linkage is valid for him too. (‘Always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.’ – 2 Corinthians 4:10). The dying of Jesus and the resurrection life of Jesus are concurrent experiences for His disciples (‘that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death…’ – Philippians 3:10-11), as they were for their Master on the Cross. That is why he is told to take up his own cross each day. (‘And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”’ – Luke 9:23). As St. Paul testified: ‘I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.’ – 1 Corinthians 15:31. He experienced, as well as teaching, the close linkage between dying and powerful living.

Having experienced ‘death’ in this age, the promise is that we shall also experience a resurrection into the life of Christ’s resurrection. (‘For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.’ – Romans 6:5). At the beginning of his Christian life the Christian experienced a mystical sacramental death to his old life of sin in baptism (‘Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.’ – Colossians 2:12). Earthly life itself closes with an experience of physical death with the sure hope of a subsequent resurrection into the eternal life of the Age to come.

And who is to say that the Second Death is not also a gateway into the life of a subsequent age? The Second Death is the lake of fire (‘death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire’ – Revelation 20:14). It is not for the overcomers (‘He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.’ – Revelation 2:11) who share in the first resurrection (‘blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.’ – Revelation 20:6). But this Death is for ‘the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral
persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.’ – Revelation 21:8).

Readers of the Bible are accustomed to the way in which the culture of the Old Testament prepares the mind for the understanding to grasp the truths of the Gospel set out in the New Testament:

_The New is in the Old concealed – The Old is in the New revealed._

When John the Baptist said ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ (John 1:29), his hearers were able to recall the ram caught in a thicket provided by God as a sacrifice in place of Isaac: and when John the Seer wrote of seeing ‘a Lamb standing, as if slain’ (Revelation 5:6), his readers could attribute to their risen Lord the efficacy of the Passover sacrifice.

The three harvest festivals of the barley harvest, the wheat harvest and the grape harvest were feasts of obligation for adult male Israelites (Deuteronomy 16:16). Jesus saw harvest as a picture of the effect of evangelisation: “Do you not say, “There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true, “One sows, and another reaps “I sent you to reap that for which you have not laboured; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.”’ – John 4:34-38. “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.” – Matthew 9:37-38.

Eternal life is the life of the Age to Come: yet its entrance is in This Present Age. As a human life is conceived and lives nine months in the womb and then enters into this life: so eternal life is conceived in This Age and then we are born by resurrection of the body into the eternal life of the Age to Come. Resurrection of our body is the doorway between the two Ages.

**THREE RESURRECTIONS**

1 Corinthians 15:22-23 – ‘As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then those who are Christ's, at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to God and Father’.

St. Paul describes three resurrections: one for Christ and two for mankind:

1. Christ at Easter
2. ‘They that are Christ’s’ at the Second Advent
3. ‘The rest’ at the Delivering up of the Kingdom

**THE TWO RESURRECTIONS FOR HUMANKIND**

There are a number of passages that teach that the resurrection of the dead of humankind will be divided into two parts.

Luke 20:35 – Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age (the Age to Come), and the resurrection ‘out of (lit.) the dead…’

This states that the life of the Age to Come is only for those worthy of it. Also that this resurrection is only a partial resurrection as it is a resurrection ‘out of the dead’ and not ‘of the dead’.

John 5:28-29 – ‘All who are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement.’
Acts 24:15 – ‘Having a hope in God ... that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.’

Philippians 3:11 – ‘...in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.’

St. Paul’s ambition was to attain unto the ‘out-resurrection out of the dead’ (lit.) by which phrase he implies that there is a selective and partial resurrection of the dead preceding the final resurrection of the remainder of the dead.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – ‘The Lord Himself will descend from heaven ... and the dead in Christ shall rise first.’

Revelation 20:4-6 – ‘I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.’

The subjects of this first resurrection, the Just, are categorised as the holy, the martyrs and those who have not worshipped the beast or have not received his mark.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION
The people of the first resurrection are described as those who are Christ’s, martyrs, those who have not worshipped the beast, worthy to attain the resurrection age, righteous, those who do good, and blessed and holy.

The consequence of the first resurrection is entry into the thousand years, often known as The Millennium, which must stand at the beginning of the resurrection life of the Age to Come, to be recompensed and to reign with Christ.

The recompense after the first resurrection of the worthy righteous is described in 2 Corinthians 5:10 – ‘We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad’. Christ describes it thus: ‘“You (one who entertains the needy) shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the righteous”’ – Luke 14:14.

THE SECOND RESURRECTION
The people of the second resurrection are those who have done ill, wicked, ‘the rest’.

The consequence of the second resurrection is shame, ‘age-working’ contempt, and judgement (‘And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.’ – Daniel 12:2).

The judgement after the second resurrection is described in Revelation 20:11-12 – ‘I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away... and I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.’

To understand how these three resurrections are typified by the three harvest festivals of the Law, it
will be convenient to set them out in their context in the calendar.

A PARTIAL JEWISH CALENDAR

1st month – Nisan
14 Preparation of the Passover and the Paschal sacrifice
15 Passover Sabbath and the first day of Unleavened Bread
16 Waving of the Barley sheaf – First-fruits
21 End of Feast of Unleavened Bread

3rd month – Sivan
6 Feast of Weeks – Waving of two leavened loaves of wheat

7th month – Tishri
1 Blowing of Trumpets
10 Day of Atonement
15 Feast of Tabernacles
22 Close of the Feast

THREE HARVESTS

Resurrection of the spirit (‘Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”’ – Matthew 9:37-8; and also: “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.’” – John 4:35); and resurrection of the body are each compared to harvest-time. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, the harvest is the consummation of the age (Matthew 13:39) when the resurrection of mankind begins. Christ’s resurrection is called a first-fruit of the harvest (1 Corinthians 15:22).

In the Old Testament, the Jews kept three harvest festivals: Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles. It was required by the law that all Jewish men attended these: ‘Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God ... at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths’ – Deuteronomy 16:16. At each of these festivals offerings were ceremonially ‘waved’.

1. Unleavened Bread

‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord.’ – Leviticus 23:10,11.

This wave offering was a sheaf of barley (the first crop the year). It was offered on the day after the Passover sabbath, viz. Nisan 16, which was to become the day of Christ’s resurrection. St. Paul identifies this day with the wave offering of First fruits (‘But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits’ – 1 Corinthians 15:23). It fell within the eight days of Feast of Unleavened Bread. The waving of the offering suggests the resurrection life of Christ, and its association with unleavened bread his sinless life.

2. The Feast of Weeks

This feast was held a week of weeks after Passover (7 x 7 +1 = 50 days), in the inclusive Jewish method of counting, so it is also known as Pentecost, from the Greek word for fifty.

Pentecost is the birthday both of the Old and New Testament Churches. It was the day on which the
Law was given: Exodus 19:1 – ‘In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.’ So they arrived at Sinai 46 days after the first Passover, which was on the 14th day of the first month (Exodus 6 – ‘And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.’) Three days later God descended to the mountain and spoke the Commandments: Exodus 19:11 – ‘… and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people’. This brings us to 50 days after Passover. It was when Israel became God's nation: Exodus 19:6 – ‘And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. “These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”’

Pentecost was also the day when the Holy Spirit brought the Church into being (Acts 2:1 – ‘And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.’) the contemporary expression of God's nation or kingdom.

The wave offering at Pentecost was two leavened loaves of wheat.

Leviticus 23:15-18 – ‘Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the (Passover) sabbath from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days and ye shall offer a new meal offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth parts of an ephah: they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, for first fruits unto the Lord.’

This was the only occasion in the year on which leavened and not unleavened bread was offered as a sacrifice: it was offered as a wave offering in conjunction with 7 one-year old lambs, one bull and two rams with their grain offerings and libations as a burnt offering; one goat as a sin offering; and two lambs as peace offerings.

The two leavened loaves typified the offering life of the (Old and New Testament) church made acceptable to God by its association with the blood sacrifices which represent differing aspects of Christ's full sacrifice on the cross.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles

This feast is also called the Feast of the Ingathering at the end (or turn) of the year (Exodus 23:16; 34:22); The Feast (1 Kings 8:2; 2 Chronicles 5:3; 7:8,9; & John 7:2); and the Feast of the Lord (Leviticus 23:39).

Leviticus 23:33,36,39,42 – ‘On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles... seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire... when you have gathered in the fruits of the land... you shall dwell in booths seven days.’

There were three special marks of this feast: the celebrants lived in tabernacles made of boughs of trees during its course; it lasted for seven days; and it had a peculiar series of offerings associated with it (Numbers 29). The boughs of trees were also used by worshippers for waving for joy at the (post-Mosaic) ritual of pouring out of water from Siloam (possibly derived from Isaiah 12:3 – ‘Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.’) on the great day of the Feast referred to in John 7:37. When the multitude were ‘cutting branches from the trees’ and ‘took the branches of the palm trees ... and began to cry out “Hosanna!”’ (Matthew 12:12; John 12:13) they were acknowledging Jesus to be ‘the spring of salvation’ of Isaiah. The palm branches, which were made into the tabernacles, symbolised the human body (John 1:14 margin: ‘The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us’). If we associate the branches with the tabernacles and their waving with resurrection we construct an image of the worship of resurrected people.
This reminds us of the Levites, the tribe who were themselves a wave offering: ‘Aaron then shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, that they may qualify to perform the service of the Lord.’ (Numbers 8:11), a type of a resurrection people engaged in worship.

We now detail the sacrifices that were offered at the Feast, which are set out in Numbers 29:

**Tishri 1:**
The Feast of Trumpets  
Burnt offering - 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs and their associated grain offerings  
Sin offering - 1 goat  
Burnt offering of the new moon and associated grain offerings  
Continual burnt offering and associated grain offering  
Associated libations

**Tishri 10:**
The Day of Atonement  
Burnt offering - 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs and their associated grain offerings  
Sin offering - 1 goat  
Sin offering of atonement  
Continual burnt offering and associated grain offering  
Associated libations

**Tishri 15:**
The Festival of Tabernacles – 1st day  
Burnt offering - 13 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs and their associated grain offerings  
Sin offering - 1 goat and its associated grain offering and libation  
Continual burnt offering and associated grain offering  
Associated libations

**Tishri 16:**
The Feast of Tabernacles – 2nd day  
Burnt offering - 12 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs and their associated grain offering  
Sin offering - 1 goat and its associated grain offering  
Associated libations

**Tishri 17:**
The Feast of Tabernacles – 3rd day  
As above except 11 bulls

**Tishri 18:**
The Feast of Tabernacles – 4th day  
As above except 10 bulls

**Tishri 19:**
The Feast of Tabernacles – 5th day  
As above except 9 bulls

**Tishri 20:**
The Feast of Tabernacles – 6th day  
As above except 8 bulls

**Tishri 21:**
The last great (7th) day of the Feast  
As above except 7 bulls

Seventy bulls in all were offered, corresponding to the 70 nations of the world (listed in Genesis 10), as some Jews think. The decreasing number of sacrifices offered through the week may typify the spread of the gospel through this age until ‘the fullness of the Gentiles has come in’ (Romans 11:25).

Passover or Pentecost were feasts which foreshadowed single events, the Crucifixion and the outpouring of the Spirit which followed. The Feast of Unleavened Bread and this Feast, which each
lasted for a whole week, foreshadowed not a single event, but an age, the Gospel Age (‘And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come’ – Matthew 24:14) and the Resurrection Age (‘For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven’ – Matthew 22:30).

The three resurrections sub-divide the Age to Come, which began with the Resurrection of Christ, into three lesser ages. First, from the Resurrection of Christ until the resurrection of the just at His Second Coming, which we can call the Gospel Age, when the gospel is proclaimed throughout the earth. During this period, the Age to Come penetrates This Present Age by means of mediation of the Kingdom of God amongst the resurrection people of Christ, His Church. Secondly, from the resurrection of the just until the resurrection of the unjust, which appears to correspond to the period what is often called The Millennium, in which the just receive their rewards. The resurrection of the unjust will initiate the Last Judgement when the unjust receive their deserts in the Great Tribulation or hell.

I am well aware that there are diverse interpretations of these events: please do not take my statements as dogmatic, but as tentative expressions of my current understanding.

**SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waving of sheaf of barley</th>
<th>16 Nisan</th>
<th>Resurrection of Christ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waving of two leavened loaves</td>
<td>6 Sivan</td>
<td>Resurrection of the just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waving of palm branches</td>
<td>21 Tishri</td>
<td>Resurrection of the evil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. What About Hell?

Once I failed to keep a promise that I had made to Sally, and it was important to her. That night, in my sleep, the Lord took me to hell. From what I remember, it was not so much a place as a state of my soul, a state from which I desperately longed to quit as fast as possible. I knew that if I were to stay in an unrepentant condition, I would suffer loss from the inheritance of eternal life that Jesus had promised to me. The experience was indescribable, literally. As soon as we were both awake the next morning, I fulfilled my promise. Although the purpose of this book is to show that hell does not last for ever, I am certain that all its inmates wish to leave directly. They feel about it as did the demons – the devil’s angels – that infested Legion: ‘They begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss’ – Luke 8:31. As we shall see, those who believe themselves to be Christians are not exempted from the danger of hell.

After Sally’s death, I met, at a lecture on Christian Healing, a lady whom I will call Ann. She was seeking the kingdom of heaven and I pointed her to Jesus who had said ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep’ (John 10:7). At that time she was in a relationship with a clergyman which had both spiritual and physical aspects to it. He claimed that their friendship would continue to be a help to each of them in their separate spiritual pilgrimages. I disagreed, although her husband was fully aware of what was happening. The clergyman was regularly receiving communion.

I remembered St. Paul’s warning in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30: ‘Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.... For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgement to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep’ (i.e. have died). As I prayed for Ann that she might be released from her friend’s influence, it seemed to be right to ask that the words of St. Paul might be operative.

That very night the clergyman became severely sick and was taken to hospital. I heard later that he made a full confession to another clergyman. Not long after he died at peace with God. Ann, although distressed, was released from a besetting temptation and they each were free to continue their pilgrimages, he in the Age to Come and she in this Present Age. I believe that this clergyman’s experience was similar to another described in this epistle: ‘I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus’ (1 Corinthians 5:5). His sickness had brought him to repentance and salvation.

The word ‘hell’ is used in the Authorised Version of the New Testament to translate three Greek words, hades (10 times), Gehenna (11 times), and tartaroo (once at 2 Peter 2:4, which we shall not consider at present). As Hades and Gehenna are quite distinct in biblical thought, this is another example of a misleading translation in an English Bible. However, the New American Standard Bible keeps the distinction between the Greek words in its translation.

We learn all that we know about Gehenna as a place that God has prepared for punishment after death from eleven statements in the Gospels from the lips of Jesus. It is important to notice that Jesus never mentions this subject to outsiders, but only to his disciples, real or false.

Jesus first talks about hell three times in his Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:22, 29-30 – “But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool!’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell... And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your
whole body go into hell."

‘The fiery hell’ is, literally, ‘the Gehenna of fire’. He is speaking of it with the express purpose of warning His hearers, the disciples, if at risk, they should take immediate steps to avoid being thrown into Gehenna. Three times this is repeated (vv. 24, 29, 30). ‘First, be reconciled’; ‘If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out’; and ‘If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off’. The habit of some of his later followers of threatening outsiders with the pains of Gehenna has no ground in Jesus’ own teaching.

We must consider, first, the meaning of the expression ‘Gehenna of fire’.

GEHENNA

What is Gehenna? It is a Hebrew word meaning the ‘Valley of the son(s) of Hinnom’. It lay just outside Jerusalem (‘The Valley of Ben-hinnom, which is by the entrance of the Potsherd Gate’ – Jeremiah 19:2) and it was where Topheth ‘the place of burning’ had been situated, at which the Israelites had sacrificed their children to the idol of Molech (Josiah also defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the sons of Hinnom – ‘that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech’ – 2 Kings 23:10. According to Ellicott’s Commentary ‘the valley of the son(s) of Hinnom is possibly and more suitably translated as ‘the valley of the sons of shrieking’).

Three significant events had occurred in this Valley:

1. 2 Chronicles 28:3 – ‘Moreover, Ahaz burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom, and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel.’

2. 2 Chronicles 33:6 – ‘Manasseh made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; and he practised witchcraft, used divination, practised sorcery, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking Him to anger.’

These two events show that Gehenna was an unclean place of the occult worship with human sacrifice by fire to a false Ammonite god Moloch (‘Solomon followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites’ – 1 Kings 11:5 – ‘You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Babylon’ – Acts.7:43).

So, when Jesus spoke of a person being thrown into the Gehenna of fire, he was saying that it was as if that person was being offered as a sacrifice in idol-worship. St. Paul says that idol-worship is demon-worship (‘What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things that the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.’ – 1 Corinthians 10:19-20).

Jesus, in calling the place of punishment ‘Gehenna’, was saying that ‘the whole body’ of the offender who had sinned with tongue or eye was, as it were, to be offered as a sacrifice to Satan, the prince of demons. By contrast, St. Paul urged the Roman Christians in a manner of true worship ‘to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship’ – Romans 12:1.

It appears that if men or women do not use God’s gift of a body in holy service to him, but rather defile it, God will allow this misuse to proceed to its ultimate conclusion as an unholy sacrifice to the evil one.

3. Jeremiah 19:1-11 – ‘Thus says the Lord, “Go and buy a potter's earthenware jar... then go out to the
valley of Ben-hinnom, which is by the entrance of the potsherd gate; and proclaim there the words that I shall tell you, and say... because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods... and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal... days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter. Then you are to break the jar... and say: ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Just so shall I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot again be repaired.”’

This third significant event to have happened in Gehenna was the breaking by Jeremiah of an earthenware jar, as a symbol of the irreparable judgement by the Babylonians coming on Jerusalem and its people for their idolatry, when Gehenna would be filled with corpses of citizens of Jerusalem and become the valley of Slaughter. So Jesus was also saying that a person consigned to Gehenna, like a broken jar, had lost the purpose for which he or she had been created. (Against this, we know the hope that Israel was restored to rebuild a new Jerusalem after the seventy years of exile in Babylon, during which time the desire to commit idolatry had been expunged from the national character.)

Returning to Jesus’ words about Gehenna:

Matthew 10:28 – ‘And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.’

Jesus makes clear that in hell (Gehenna) both soul and body can be destroyed. He must be speaking here of the resurrection body because the possibility of entrance into hell does not arise until after death and the resurrection of the wicked. The word ‘destroy’ does not mean annihilate so much as to lose the purpose or integrity of being. It is used, for example, of a disability of the natural body (‘And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.’ – Matthew 5:29); or of a ruined wineskin (‘Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined.’ – Matthew 9:17); or of a lost coin (‘And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost.’).

Mark 9:47-48 – ‘And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’

When Jesus was speaking of the risks in causing offence to children, He adds a further detail to His description of Gehenna, which is taken from Isaiah 66:24 – ‘Then they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be abhorrence to all mankind.’

‘A worm’ is a term for a human being humiliated in judgement: the prophetic Psalm 22 puts these words into the lips of Jesus ‘But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people’ (v. 6). And Job said ‘How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman? How much less man, that maggot, and the son of man, that worm!’ – Job 25:4,6.

So, when Jesus said ‘hell, where their worm does not die’ He could have been speaking of the survival of people sentenced, rather than of the continuance of punishment inflicted; and saying that hell does not finally annihilate its inmates, its worms do not die. We shall discuss later God’s purpose to save all humankind.
FIRE

We must now try to discover why Jesus calls the valley, ‘the Gehenna of fire’ and not, for instance, the Gehenna of idolatry or the Gehenna of the Potsherd, or, even, the Gehenna of Moloch. He must have been drawing attention to hell’s leading characteristic. We can, at once, eliminate one of fire’s leading effects, total destruction, because of what we shall see about God’s plan.

John the Baptist had made clear one purpose of fire when he declared “And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” – Matthew 3:12.

Fire was, for him, part of the purification process in harvesting grain as it had been for Malachi in the smelting of precious metal (‘And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.’ – Malachi 3:3).

St. Paul sees the fire proving the quality of human works but not destroying the worker: ‘Each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work… If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.’ – 1 Corinthians 3:13,15.

St. Peter sees that the primary quality which is thus tested is faith (‘the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ – 1 Peter 1:7).

Matthew 18:8-9 – “And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire.” And in v.9: “And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell.”

Jesus is saying that any bodily suffering in this Present Age is preferable to the bodily suffering to be experienced in Gehenna in the Next Age. I think that I can partially understand this saying from my own experience. At one time in my life, I was living with an inner burden of guilt after an episode of unchristian behaviour. Although I had been reconciled with those I had hurt, I was still conscious of God’s displeasure with my conduct: I prayed hard that God would restore the joy of my salvation. Shortly afterwards, I contracted the encephalitis which already I have mentioned. When I regained consciousness after about six weeks, I discovered I was paralysed on the left side, but my inner guilt had been replaced by the joy I had known in the earlier days of my Christian experience. This joy has enabled me to cope with hemiplegia now for thirty-eight years. Subsequently, as I have described, I was given a taste of hell in a dream. I continually realise that it is better to live now without a useful arm and a leg than that God should have to throw my whole body into Gehenna after death to deal with my past hypocrisy.

As we have seen earlier, aionios describes a limited but unspecified age in which the quality God’s mode of operation is by subordinate ages. What is God doing by aionios fire? According to the Baptist and his predecessor, Malachi, it is a work of salvation through judgement and purification. Jesus equates this aionios fire with the lake of fire. He tells us that it has been prepared for the devil and his angels: “‘Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’”’ [that is, demons or unclean spirits], Matthew 25:41; and ‘the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever’ – Revelation 20:10.
Later, He reveals to us that it is to this lake of fire to which also the ‘beast’ and ‘the false prophet’ are consigned; also ‘death and Hades’ (Revelation 20.14) and anyone those name was not found written in the book of life (Revelation 20.15). These are categorised as ‘the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death’ – Revelation 21:8.

This is ‘eternal punishment’ (“‘And these will go away into eternal punishment’” – Matthew 25:46). St. Paul calls it ‘eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power’ – 2 Thessalonians 1:9; and in Hebrews 6:2 it is called ‘eternal judgement’.

A reading of the New Testament indicates that fire occurs in two contexts, the nature of God, and an agent of testing. Each person of the Trinity is associated with fire. The Father: ‘Our God is a consuming fire’ (Hebrews 12:29); the Son: ‘His eyes were like blazing fire... His face was like the sun shining in its brilliance.’ (Revelation 1:14-16; 2:18; 19:12); and, the Spirit: ‘And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God’ (Revelation 4:5).

OUTER DARKNESS AND ETERNAL FIRE

Darkness and fire in God’s judgement are brought together by the prophet Nahum in his description of the fate of the heathen city of Nineveh: (Nahum 1:3,6 – ‘The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet.... Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken up by Him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him. But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, and will pursue His enemies into darkness.’

Darkness is God’s environment (‘Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.’ – Psalm 97:2); as also is fire – ‘For the Lord your God is a consuming fire’ – Deuteronomy 4:24.

Fire is, as we know, a testing agent, used to try the quality of the Christian’s works: - ‘Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.’ – 1 Corinthians 3:11-12; and of his faith: ‘The proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ – 1 Peter 1:7.

Fire tests a man’s life works, whether they are works of faith, like gold, or works of wood, not bearing good fruit. The fruit are these deeds: saying ‘you fool’ (Matthew 5:22); ‘doing evil’ (Matthew 13:41); ‘being wicked’ (Matthew 13:49); ‘causing one of the little ones who believes in me to sin (Matthew 18:6); failing in works of mercy (Matthew 25:41,ff.). This fire is ‘eternal’ (age-working – Matthew 18:8); the eternal fire of hell is of fire of limited and unspecified duration, as we have seen ‘eternal’ to imply. Punishment may be being plunged into the presence of God without the protection afforded by his Son, as were the guards of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego:

Daniel 3:22-25 – ‘For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials, “Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king. “Certainly, O king.” He answered and said, “Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!”’
PICTURES OF JUDGEMENT

The wheat and the tares – Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43:
This parable refers to the period of the ‘consummation of the age’ (v.40) at the time of the Second Advent of Christ: ‘Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ – Matthew 24:3. Its scope is the world (v.38). The Agents of judgement are angels (v. 41) who separate the sons of the kingdom from the sons of the evil one, who commit lawlessness. In other words they separate those who obey the King and his law from those who disobey.

Those who commit lawlessness, the sons of the evil one, are gathered out of the kingdom by the angels and cast into the furnace of fire where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth and the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom.

The dragnet – Matthew 13:47-50:
This is also set at the consummation of this age, and again the agents are the angels (v.49). The dragnet is the rule of the King, exhibited in the Church in the world and enclosing that part of the world where its influence has reached. The scope of the separation differs from the wheat and the tares, where it is the world. Here it is the visible church that is sorted out. Again the angels gather out the wicked from among the righteous and cast them into the furnace of fire.

The marriage feast – Matthew 22:1-14:
Three invitations to the feast are extended: first, by slaves to those already invited (v.3) which is refused; secondly, by other slaves to the same guests after the animals have been butchered and ‘everything is ready’ - this invitation is ignored (v.5) and the city is destroyed; thirdly, by slaves who go to the main highways to invite as many as they can find, both evil and good. After this, the seats are filled.

Then the king discovers a gatecrasher who is not properly dressed. He is bound and thrown into outer darkness (v.13).

The three invitations are extended by Jesus and his disciples, before the crucifixion; by the early church before the fall of Jerusalem; and the third invitation is still being made by the church.

The host saw the gatecrasher ‘not (ou) dressed in wedding clothes’ (v.11) and said to him ‘Friend, how did you come in here not (me) having wedding clothes?’ (v.12). The change in the negative word in the Greek indicates a definite act of will in the gatecrasher, as it were; ‘You are determined not to wear them’.

The guest does not accept the authority of his host. His punishment was the same as the faithless Jews (‘But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ – Matthew 8:12); and the idle servant (‘And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ – Matthew 25:30). It is the place of exclusion to which unworthy guests are committed.

Now follow three pictures containing an absent lord:

The ten virgins – Matthew 25:1-13:
This parable emphasises the responsibility of the individual members of the kingdom to be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom by possessing the mystic oil of he Holy Spirit. Otherwise they will not be recognised and will be shut out from the feast.

The talents – Matthew 25:14-30:
The parable emphasises the responsibility of the members of the kingdom to be a faithful stewards of
the spiritual gifts that they have received. Otherwise they will not be rewarded but as we have already learned, they will be cast out into outer darkness; that is, they will be excluded from the feast.

The sheep and the goats – Matthew 25:31-46:
Here Jesus is describing the effect of His return on the life, not of an individual, or of the church, but on the life of the nations. Jesus is initiating his rule over the earth. He obliterates all the old divisions and introduces his new one: ‘How did you treat my brethren?’ The sheep enter the eternal life of the kingdom on earth, not heaven, prepared for them; the goats depart from Jesus into the eternal punishment of the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

SODOM
Jude 7: ‘Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.’

Jude tells us that Sodom and Gomorrah are an example of punishment of eternal fire. These cities were Gentile cities: all God’s people – Lot and his family – had been removed before the judgement began.

Ezekiel 16:53–63: ‘“Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own captivity, in order that you may bear your humiliation, and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them. And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state. As the name of your sister Sodom was not heard from your lips in your day of pride, you have borne the penalty of your lewdness and abominations,” the Lord declares. For thus says the Lord God, “I will also do with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Before your wickedness was uncovered, so now you have become the reproach of the daughters of Edom, and of all who are around her, of the daughters of the Philistines… those surrounding you who despise you. Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both your older and your younger; and I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant. Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord, in order that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done,” the Lord God declares.’

Ezekiel says that Sodom will be restored, after humiliation and shaming and bearing the penalty will become a consolation, God will do to her as she has done to him. He will establish His covenant with her and forgive her for everything.

If the punishment of Sodom is indeed an example of the punishment of eternal fire, it suggests that eternal fire will ultimately lead to repentance, restoration and forgiveness.

THLIPSIS
In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus threatens with hell those who do not keep the commandments in their hearts, for instance regarding a woman with lust (‘“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”’ – Matthew 5:27-29).

In his letter to the church at Thyatira, Jesus describes His punishment of an adulteress and her lovers:
‘Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds’. (Revelation 2:22).

The punishments for these acts of adultery were sickness for the woman and great tribulation for the men. The woman’s punishment tallies with Paul’s sentence on the Corinthian incest: ‘In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus’ – 1 Corinthians 5:4,5.

If we compare Christ’s teaching on earth in Matthew’s Gospel with His teaching from heaven in John’s Revelation, we find that this punishment for the man takes place in Gehenna. So Great Tribulation is equated with Gehenna. On two other occasions in the New Testament we read of ‘great tribulation’ (thlipsis megale – Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14). We shall be looking at the latter reference in the next chapter.

The remaining reference is Matthew 24:21-22 – ‘For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short’.

Jesus appears to locate this tribulation on earth some time before His return. It is ‘a’ great tribulation and not ‘the’ great tribulation. It would, therefore, appear to be a foreshadowing of hell in the Age to Come; rather as the life of the church on earth is intended to be a foreshadowing of the kingdom of heaven.

The Greek word thlipsis in the New Testament, is translated by a range of words in the NASB: affliction (19), tribulation (18), trouble (1), anguish (1), persecution (1), and distress (1).

If it is correct to identify ‘the great tribulation’ with hell, we may learn more of its character by examining the meaning of thlipsis

The basic meaning of thlipsis seems to be ‘pressure’. It is first used in Jesus' explanation of the parable of the sower (‘When trouble – words underlined translate thlipsis – or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away’ – Matthew 13:21). Then at the end of the discourse in the Upper Room, He says: “‘In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world.’” – John 16:33. The disciple is squeezed between the pressure of the received Word within himself as the parable suggests; and the world outside in which he is set as the discourse teaches.

John says that he shared this experience: ‘I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus.’ – Revelation 1:9. And Jesus tells the church that He knows about its thlipsis: “‘I know your affliction and your poverty - yet you are rich!’” – Revelation 2:9.

Paul and Barnabas told some of the early converts (Acts 14:22): ‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.’ thlipsis is a necessary experience for the Christian on The Way.

We experience it in several ways from life in a hostile environment:

Persecution: thlipsis is associated with persecution: ‘yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.’ (Matthew 13:21) and translated by the word: ‘So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.’ (Acts 11:19).
Confiscation of property: ‘Exposed to persecution ... you ... joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.’ (Hebrews 10:33-34).

Prison: ‘Exposed to insult and persecution ... you sympathised with those in prison.’ (Hebrews 10:33-34).

Thlipsis also comes to Christians through sharing the life of a common fallen humanity:

Poverty: ‘Out of the most severe trial their overflowing joy and extreme poverty welled up in extreme generosity.’ (2 Corinthians 8:2 cf. v.13 – ‘For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality...’).

Marriage: ‘Those who marry will face (many) troubles in this life.’ (1 Corinthians 7:28).

Bereavement: ‘Look after orphans and widows in their distress.’ (James 1:27).

Thlipsis for the Christian comes also from within the Christian community through shared experience of living – e.g. from the words of St. Paul:

‘I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart.’ (2 Corinthians 2:4).
‘I ask you ...not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.’ (Ephesians 3:13).
‘It was good of you to share in my troubles.’ (Philippians 4:14).
‘I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's sufferings, for the sake of his body, which is the church.’ (Colossians 1:24).

Christ's victory over thlipsis is manifest in His followers’ experience of joy and character formation:

‘In all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.’ (2 Corinthians 7:4).
‘In spite of severe suffering you welcomed the message with joy given by the Holy Spirit.’ (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
‘In all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith.... How can we thank God enough for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?’ (1 Thessalonians 3:7,9).
‘Suffering produces perseverance.’ (Romans 5:3).
‘We boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.’ (2 Thessalonians 1:4).
‘Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.’ (2 Corinthians 4:17).

We see that thlipsis can have many beneficial consequences: joy, sympathy, glory, perseverance, and faith among them. These are character-forming qualities.

Finally thlipsis will be part of God’s judgement: ‘You are storing wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath ... There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil.’ (Romans 2:5-9).

From all these passages, we see that thlipsis is a result of God’s judgement: it is like imprisonment, being burned, hungry and thirsty and, most importantly, it is character-forming and therefore reformative. If we add these insights to what we have learned from Jesus’ title for hell of Gehenna, we gain a picture of a place of punishment which is painful, reformative, and from which the inmates are released after serving their sentences.
WHO GOES THERE?

Jesus taught that God His Father had the sole authority to commit to hell (‘‘But I will warn you whom
to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!’’

Spoken to his disciples:
1. Matthew 5:22 – ‘‘Whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.’’

2. Matthew 5:28 – ‘‘But I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has
committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out,
and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your
whole body to be thrown into hell.’’

3. Matthew 25:32, 41-45 – ‘‘And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate
them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats... Then He will also say to
those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for
the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave
Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me;
sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, saying, ‘Lord,
when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take
care of You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do
it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’’

Spoken to the scribes and Pharisees within the crowds and his disciples:
4. Matthew 23:15 – ‘‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea
and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of
hell as yourselves.’’

5. Matthew 23:29,33 – ‘‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of
the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous... You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall
you escape the sentence of hell?’’

It is noteworthy that when Jesus spoke to the crowds about hell, He made clear that He was not
speaking to them but only to the scribes and Pharisees among them. So Jesus spoke about hell, only
to His disciples and to the scribes and Pharisees within the crowds and to no one else.

Revealed to St. John:
6. Revelation 19:20 – ‘‘And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed
the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and
those who worshipped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with
brimstone.’

7. Revelation 20:10 – ‘‘And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and
brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night
forever and ever.’

8. Revelation 20:15 – ‘‘And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown
into the lake of fire.’

9. Revelation 21:8 – ‘‘But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and
immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with
fire and brimstone, which is the second death
We see that those in danger are:

Hypocrites
   Disciples who have murder in their hearts
   Disciples who have adultery in their hearts
   Those who fail to succour the needy

Satan and his subjects
   The devil
   The fallen angels (demons)
   The beast (fallen rulers)
   The false prophet (teachers of false religion)
   Worshippers of Satan (‘All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.’ – Revelation 13:8).

Persecutors of Jesus
Those whose names are not in the book of life, that is:
The unrighteous (‘May they be blotted out of the book of life, and may they not be recorded with the righteous.’ – Psalm 69:28).

Those who do not struggle for the gospel (‘Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.’ – Philippians 4:3).

Those who do not overcome (‘He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.’ – Revelation 3:5).

The unclean, liars, idolaters (‘Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.’ – Revelation 21:27).

It appears that hell is a place for punishment for those who have turned aside from following God, whether angels by rebellion, or Jews by hypocrisy, or Christians by hypocrisy or giving up the struggle.
11. Who Are These?

In the book of the Revelation, there are four references to the Blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

1. Revelation 1:6 – ‘To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.’

From the context, it is clear that ‘us’ includes both John and the seven churches of Asia. The Blood has released them, i.e. the Church, from their sins to become a priesthood.

2. Revelation 5:9 – ‘And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”’

This is the lyric of the song that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing at the throne of God. It declares that the Blood was the purchase price for God of the Church, which is drawn from all social groupings of mankind. These first two references concur in ascribing to the Blood the redemption from the nations of the world a new nation of priests to God the Father.

3. Revelation 7:14 – ‘And I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”’

We shall spend some space in consideration of this third statement. It comes in the context of the remaining reference to ‘great tribulation’ (= θλίψις μεγαλή) which is found in Revelation 7:13-17:

“One of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in white robes, who are they, and from where have they come?” And I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the centre of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes.”’

First, the Elder tells St. John that the great multitude has come out of the great tribulation. On this occasion, the definite article is attached to the phrase. There, in that great tribulation, they have been weeping and have experienced hunger, thirst, and heat from the sun. This experience tallies with what has been revealed to us of hell, which we saw in the last chapter that ‘the great tribulation’ to be.

Secondly, the Elder says that their first action on release from the great tribulation is to wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is a figurative way of saying that they personally appropriate the redemption of their sins by Jesus in his crucifixion. *

* It is relevant to adduce the incident which Dr. Maurice Rawlings describes in his book Beyond Death’s Door (1979, Sheldon Press, London). In the course of resuscitating a patient from heart failure by a very painful technique, the man said: “Don’t stop! ... Don’t you understand? I am in hell. Each time you quit, I go back to hell! Don’t let me go back to hell! How do I stay out of hell? Pray for me.” Dr. Rawlings adds that he prayed and that the man became a strong Christian. The man was wrong in calling his experience hell‘: it was Hades he has visited.

They
are seen to have experienced in the Age to Come what St. John and the churches had done earlier in
this Present Age This would appear to lend support to what has been called the doctrine of the Second
Chance. This doctrine teaches that it will be possible after death to avail of the merits of Christ’s
sacrifice, if not already appropriated. Those who do so have, indeed, missed out on incorporation in
the Bride, but not on heaven itself.

Thirdly, the Elder tells St. John that this great multitude are now serving God day and night in his
sanctuary.

There are two groups of God’s servants in Revelation 7:

1. 144,000 sealed slaves (doulos) from the 12 tribes (Revelation 7:1-8; Dan – the judge – is absent). These 144,000 are said to possess four distinctive marks in Revelation 14:1-5 – ‘I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had His name and His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.’

These four marks are as follows:

1. *Their position relative to Jesus*: they are ‘with’ (meta) the Lamb and follow Him wherever He
goes.

2. *Their occupation*: they sing a new song that no one else can learn.

3. They are *firstfruits*: of the true Pentecost, which foreshadows the resurrection of the just.

4. *Their status*: is blameless.

They surely typify the redeemed church, the Bride of Christ.

2. The second group is a great multitude from every nation (Revelation 7:9-17):

1. *Their position relative to Jesus*: they are ‘before’ (enopion) Him. They have emerged from the
Great Tribulation to wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Presumably their robes previously
were filthy, denoting that they were sinful. So could not the Great Tribulation be Hell?

2. *Their occupation*: crying out with a loud voice.

3. *With palm branches*: They are part of the third resurrection-harvest of the unjust, foreshadowed at
the feast of tabernacles.

4. *Their status* is ‘washed’.

It is traditional to say that there will be two groups of humanity in the Age to Come, the Saved and
the Lost, the Sheep and the Goats, those in Heaven and those in Hell.

It would appear to be more consistent with revealed truth to say that the two groups in the coming age
are first those in Heaven, the Church, the Bride of Christ, those in an intimate relation with the Lamb,
singing the new song next to Him and, secondly, a great multitude, those who *have come out of* Hell and stand in front of Him but can only shout His praises.

Christ, as all husbands, shares His rank and status with His bride, by virtue of a mystical union. The prophecy of Zechariah will be fulfilled (12:8) – ‘In that day ...the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord’.

Another distinguishing mark between the 144,000 and the great multitude will therefore be that the former *receive worship* as His Bride with Christ, like the faithful Christians at Philadelphia (‘I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars... I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.’ – *Revelation* 3:9) and the latter *offer worship* to Christ and His Bride.

The choice is yours: either to receive worship with Christ, as His Bride at His side; or to offer worship with the great multitude in front of Christ. Whether you are washed in this present age with the church from your sins (‘To Him who loves us, and released – or, washed, AV – us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.’ – *Revelation* 1:5-6); or you are washed in the next age with the great multitude who have come out of the great tribulation and wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, is up to you.

The blood of Christ is the blood of God’s eternal covenant (‘Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord...’ – *Hebrews* 13:20), and is operative in successive ages, from the patriarchal age through the age of Mosaic law, the gospel age right on to the Age to Come.

4. *Revelation* 12:11 – ‘And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.’

The last mention of the Blood is as joined with the testimony of those who did not shrink from death to form the weapon which would overcome Satan, the blood of the saints and the blood of the Lamb, intermingling to defeat this enemy.

There are four enemies: sin, sickness, Satan and death. Jesus has vanquished each:
1. Sin: ‘now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’ (*Hebrews* 9:26).
2. Sickness: ‘He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases.’ (*Matthew* 8:17).
3. Satan: ‘since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.’ (*Hebrews* 2:14).
4. Death: ‘there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’ (*Revelation* 21:4).

Satan has been ‘rendered powerless’ through the Incarnation; he will continue to exist in ‘the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’ (*Matthew* 25:41). I do not know whether he will ever be released.
12. Conditional Immortality

Some have tried to escape from the horrors of everlasting punishment by suggesting that, among other reasons, ‘the second death’ means ‘annihilation and the cessation of existence.’*


‘Annihilation seems to me (as to many others) the only alternative to heaven which is compatible with the faith that God is love.’*

*Foundations David L. Edwards (Hodder & Stoughton) p.292

We need to hear what Andrew Jukes* says to this who puts it better than I:

The view therefore which has been accepted by some believers, as more in accordance with Scripture than the popular notion of never-ending torments, that they who abuse their day of grace will, after suffering more or fewer stripes, according to the measure of their transgressions, will be utterly annihilated by the “second death,” though a great step in advance of the doctrine of endless woe, is not a perfect witness to the mind of God, nor the true solution of the great mystery. God has not made man to let him fall almost as soon as made, and then, in a large proportion of his seed, to sin yet more, and suffer, and be annihilated; but rather out of and through the fall to raise him even to higher and more secure blessedness; as it is written, “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;” not all at once, but through successive ages, and according to an appointed order, in which the last even as the first shall be restored by the elect; for Christ is not only the “First,” but also “with the last,” and will surely in the salvation bring into view some of His glories, not inferior to those which are manifested in the salvation of the “first-born,” who are “His body”. He is the “First,” both out of life and out of death, and as such He manifests a peculiar glory in His elect firstborn. But He is also the “Last,” and “with the last,” and as such He will display yet other treasures hid in Him, for “in Him are hid all treasures,” and “riches unsearchable,” which He will bring to light in due season. Their own conversion ought to give believers hope of this ... For what is conversion but a passage, first through waters, then through fires; a change involving a “death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness”; the death not annihilating the fallen spirit, but rather being the appointed means for bringing forth and perfecting the new life... why then should the judgement of the “second death,” which is the working of the same ministry of condemnation on the non-elect be annihilation? Will not the judgement, because God changes not, in them, as in the elect, be the means of their deliverance?

*The Restitution of All Things p.83
13. The Will of God

The Letter to the Romans contains the fullest statement of the Christian gospel by the man to whom it was revealed by God: ‘For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.’ – Galatians 1:11-12. He describes himself as ‘set apart for the gospel of God ... eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel...’ – Romans 1:1,15-16. Part of that gospel is set out in:

Romans 5:12-21 – this passage draws a parallel between Adam and Jesus Christ in salvation history.

I place my comments in parentheses:

12. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...

13. For until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed (taken into account) when there is no law.

14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, (men received the punishment of sin although it had not been taken into their account) even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offence of Adam, (they had not disobeyed a direct order from God) who is a type of Him that was to come (Jesus Christ).

15. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. (Jesus Christ achieved by his obedience far more than Adam by his disobedience).

16. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgement arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift (of righteousness) arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

17. For if, by the transgression of the one (Adam), death reigned through the one; much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, even Jesus Christ.

18. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgement arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift (of righteousness) arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

19. For if, by the transgression of the one (Adam), death reigned through the one; much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, even Jesus Christ.

20. And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

21. That, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The significant statement is made in verse 18: ‘So then as through one transgression, there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through the one act of righteousness (Jesus Christ's crucifixion) there resulted justification of life to all men (the universal effect of Adam’s deed is parallel to Christ’s).

19. For as through the one man's (Adam's) disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One (Jesus Christ) the many will be made righteous (the contrast between the act of an individual and the status thereby conferred on a multiplicity of human beings).

20. And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

21. That, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The result of Adam’s sin is, in fact, all man die in their own turn. Therefore, the result of Christ’s act of righteousness is that all men are, in fact, justified in their own turn.

This truth had been anticipated by God’s repeated promises in the Old Testament: ‘and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ – Genesis 12:3; see also: ‘and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.’ – Genesis 22:18. Peter refers to these promises in his speech in Solomon's Portico: ‘it is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, “And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”’ – Acts 3:25. He explains
this to mean ‘the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time’ (Acts 3:21).

St. Paul explains God’s will thus: ‘He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up (lit. reheading) of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him…’ – Ephesians 1:9-10. And again: ‘through His Son to reconcile (lit. reconcile back again) all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.’ – Colossian 1:20.

God’s desire and purpose ultimately to save all humankind is one of the great themes of the Bible as is shown by a consideration of the following selection texts which afford corroboration of the above passage in Romans 5.

1. Matthew 12:31 – ‘Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.’

2. Luke 20:38 – ‘Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him.’

3. John 1:29 – ‘The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”’

4. John 3:17 – ‘God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.’

5. John 12:3 – ‘“I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”’

6. 1 Corinthians 15:22 – ‘As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.’

7. 2 Corinthians 5:19 – ‘God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.’

8. Ephesians 1:9,10 – ‘God made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times have reached their fulfilment - to bring all things in heaven and earth together under one head even Christ’

9. Philippians 2:10-11 – ‘At the name of Jesus every knee should bow ...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.’

10. 1 Timothy 2:4 – ‘God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.’

11. Titus 2:11- ‘The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.’

12. 2 Peter 3:9 – ‘The Lord is patient with you not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.’

13.1 John 2:2 – ‘Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world (= cosmos ‘universe’, angelic and human).

14. 1 John 4:14 – ‘We have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world.’

15. Jude 7:7 – ‘Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in
undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.’

But see Ezekiel 16:53-55 – ‘Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own (i.e. Jerusalem’s) captivity, in order that you may bear your humiliation, and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them. And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.

Here it is said that the punishment of Sodom was to bring humility and shame as a preliminary to its restoration.

The Apostles’ Creed contains the phrase ‘I believe in the forgiveness of sins’ which suggest, that there was general acceptance in the Early Church that the sins of the whole universe would be remitted.
14. The Purpose of The Ages

God’s intent was ‘that the manifold wisdom of God now might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the purpose of the ages which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ (Ephesians 3:10-11 margin).

That is, now that the gospel was being preached, the angelic inhabitants of heavenly places should learn the wisdom of God through watching God’s dealings with the church on earth.

St. Paul had said (Ephesians 3:1-11) that the mystery of the Gospel, which had been hidden from other men in former generations, was made known to him by revelation. His calling was to preach this gospel to the Gentiles: that is, to tell them that they could be fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise with Israel in the Church.

He goes on to say that this unification of two long-separated peoples, Jewish and Gentile, in the one new body of Christ, the Church, was being watched by ranks of angels, rulers and authorities in and from heavenly places.

These surely must include the rebel angels, who are in such need of the knowledge of God’s plan for the restitution of all things. In Job 1 and 2, we read of their leader, Satan, how he ‘roams about on the earth and walks about on it’, considering the behaviour of God’s servants. According to St. Peter, he continues this practice in our own day – ‘your adversary, the devil, prows about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.’ – 1 Peter 5:8. When these angels are thrown into the age-long fire, which is being prepared for them (Matthew 25:41) including Satan, in his serpent’s body (Revelation 20:2), may they not follow the example of proud Nebuchadnezzar, with his beast’s heart, and be humbled?

God had made known the gospel to Paul by direct revelation; Paul had made it known by preaching and writing to the Gentiles, bringing about the growth of the Church; the development of the Church makes the gospel known to the angels.

Angels are called ‘watchers’ (Daniel 4:13,17 – ‘I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven... “This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes, and sets over it the lowliest of men”’); cf. ‘For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.’ – 1 Corinthians 4:9. They specially watched the incarnate life of Christ - ‘he was beheld by angels’ – 1 Timothy 3.16; and they long to look into things announced in the preaching of the gospel (1 Peter 1:12 – ‘It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven... things into which angels long to look.’

As the history of Israel, with the Law and the Prophets, set out in the Old Testament, demonstrate the gospel to its readers: ‘For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.’ – 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. So the history of the Church, acted out in the world and in time, demonstrates it to the watchers in heaven – the angels.

In the future, church members may be involved in bringing the gospel to the rebellious angels – ‘Do you not know that we shall judge angels?’ – 1 Corinthians 6:3; as Jesus had done to the spirits in prison – ‘In which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison.’ – 1 Peter 3:19.
The introduction to the book of Job (Job 1:6-12) describes God and the angels gathering to discuss the inhabitants of earth. God initiates a dialogue with the chief of the rebel angels about Job, holding up his obedience to, and reverence for God as an example to the disobedient and self-important spirit. Satan accuses Job of self-interested motives.

Thereupon God allows Satan a limited power to test Job’s motives: in the end, the test has the result of perfecting Job’s faith (‘let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.’ – James 1:4), and vindicating God’s faith in Job. We are not told of Satan’s reaction. But it was a battle won for God in the war in heaven (Revelation 12:7-12).

So, it would appear that ‘the purpose of the ages’ included the extension of the scope of the gospel to the heavenly places where sin originated in the rebellion of Satan. This is described in Ezekiel 28:11-19, where ‘the King of Tyre’ proves to be a cherub (Satan) who guarded God (v.14), was originally blameless (v.15), but lifted up in vanity and cast down to the ground (v.17).

Ezekiel 28:11-19 – ‘Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendour. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified, and you will be no more.”’

AN ALLEGORY
In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul draws an allegory between the two Ages of the Old Covenant, inaugurated on Mount Sinai in Arabia, and of the New Covenant, inaugurated in the Upper room in Jerusalem, and the two wives of Abraham and their offspring:

Galatians 4:21-31 – ‘Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written, “Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labour; for more are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband.” And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise, but as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.” So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.”

Hagar, the slave, represents the Old Covenant, when God’s people, were born like Ishmael, according
to the flesh. This is a Past Age.

Sarah represents the New Covenant, when His people are born like Isaac of promise according to the Spirit. This is the Present Age.

When Sarah had died, Abraham took a concubine, Keturah, and had six sons by her (‘Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah.’ – Genesis 25:1-2).

If Paul had continued his allegory, to what Age would he have likened Keturah? Surely, the Age to Come. Keturah’s sons are born after the death of Sarah, this Present Age, they are generated by a greater act than Isaac had been (Romans 4:16-8 – ‘For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, “A father of many nations have I made you”) in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”’

Abraham was fruitful in the Past Age of the Old Covenant as Father of the Jews. He is more fruitful in this Present Age as Father of Gentile believers. In the Age to Come, is he to be more fruitful yet? Let us see.

**FIRSTFRUITS**

How will God reconcile all His creatures to himself? To answer this question we need to look first at two different Hebrew words bikkur and reshith which are each (confusingly) translated by the same English phrase ‘first fruits’ in the NASB. Both words occur in Leviticus 23.

*bikkur* means first fruits which are ‘first in time’ – like ‘firstborn’ – the eldest child. *reshith* means first fruits that are first in rank – like ‘first lieutenant’.

1. Leviticus 23:10-11 – ‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits (reshith) of your harvest to the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.’

14 Nisan was Passover; 15-22 Nisan was the Feast of Unleavened Bread; the offering of the first fruits, first in rank, the wave offering of a barley sheaf, took place on 16 Nisan, the day after the Sabbath, the day of Christ’s resurrection. Christ Himself is called the first fruits of the resurrection of the dead (‘But each in his own order (rank): Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,’ 1 Corinthians 15:23).

2. Leviticus 23:17 – ‘You shall bring in from your dwelling places two loaves of bread for a wave offering, made of two tenths of an ephah; they shall be of fine wheat (‘And you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest.’ – Exodus 34:22) flour, baked with leaven as first fruits (bikkur) to the Lord.’ This was the wave offering at Pentecost, which we have seen in Chapter 9 to represent the offering of the Church, the first fruits, the first in time, of mankind to become God’s household (‘So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household.’ – Ephesians 2:19).

St James called the church ‘a certain first fruits of his creatures’ (James 1:18 – margin).

First fruits, of the first sheaf of barley to be reaped, were, then, offered during the feast of unleavened
bread, on the day on which Christ would be raised and become the first fruit, the first in rank, of all men to be raised from the dead. In addition, first fruits, of two loaves of leavened wheaten bread, were offered on the Feast of Pentecost, on the day on which the Holy Spirit of the risen Christ would come on His disciples to create His new body, giving them the power of His salvation and so becoming the first fruits, the first in time, members of the Church ‘raised up with him, through faith’ (Colossians 2:12).

Not only do Christ and His Church share the title of ‘first fruit’ but also they share the title ‘first-born’. It is said of Christ ‘He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead’ (Colossians 1:18); and is said of the church that it is ‘the church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven.’ (Hebrews 12:23).

The names ‘first fruits’ and ‘first-born’ clearly imply that there is other fruit gathered later and other children born later. There will be other siblings to Christ and His church.

Who are the ‘first-born’? Before answering this question, we need to remember God’s covenant promise to Abraham: ‘In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’ (Genesis 22:18). ‘Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.’ (Galatians 3:16). So God’s promise is that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in Christ. He will become the source of blessing to all the nations.

Christ is, too, the first-born, as we have seen; and He is first-born in a double sense. He is God’s only-begotten Son (John 3:16), born out of God’s life in heaven. But he is also ‘the first-born from the dead’ (Colossians 1:18) out of the death of the grave.

In the Law, the first-born possessed duties and privileges in his family. He was sanctified to God (Exodus 13:2) to offer sacrifices (Exodus 24:5; Numbers 3:12,13; 8:16); but he could lose his birthright (1 Chronicles 5:1). He had the duty as a near kinsman to redeem the property of one of the family who had become poor or the person of one who had sold himself into slavery (Leviticus 25:23-55); and he received a double portion of his father’s inheritance as a reward for his pains (Deuteronomy 21:17). All these services of sacrifice and redemption, Jesus has performed for His brethren. Christ is the first-born out of heaven which is life and also out of the grave which is death. But there are others… who?

One answer is ‘Israel’: ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is My son, My first-born.”’ (Exodus 4:22). Here we need to look at Paul’s testimony in 1 Timothy 1:16 (margin), again sadly translated as: ‘I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those destined to believe in Him for eternal life.’ The Greek has a genitive and ‘for those destined’ should be replaced by ‘of those destined’. St. Paul is saying that he, in his conversion, is an example of the manner in which those destined to believe in Jesus Christ (i.e. the Jews) would be converted later.

So he is saying that his conversion was a first example, ‘one untimely born’ (1 Corinthians 15:8) of how many of his fellow-Jews would come to faith in Christ. He had been transformed by the sight and voice of the risen Christ in glory (Acts 9:1-19). When Christ returns to earth in His glory and with a loud cry ‘thus all Israel shall be saved’ (Romans 11:26). At this same event the church on earth will ascend to meet Jesus Christ and the church in Hades will be raised and ascend also (1 Thessalonians 4:14-15). Israel will then continue to spread the knowledge of their now-recognised Messiah in the place of the Church that has been withdrawn from earth to the side of Christ. As first born and first fruits Israel will fulfil the covenant promise to become a blessing to all the nations on earth. Isaiah’s prophecy will be fulfilled: ‘It will come to pass in the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains… and all nations will stream to it...’ (Isaiah 2:2-4). The Lord’s sending out of the Twelve with power (Luke 9:1-2) and the Seventy (or Seventy-two) with
the Name (Luke 10:1,17) foreshadow these missions to gather the Church in This Age by spreading the gospel in the world and of Israel in the Age to Come to bring the nations to the Lord. Twelve is the number associated with God’s people, twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles of Christ. Seventy is the number associated with the nations of the world (as we have already noticed in Chapter 9). There is an equal probability for the number seventy-two, which the Revised Version margin, New English Bible, Jerusalem Bible and the New International Version adopt. Seventy is chosen by the Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version, New English Bible margin, and the Jerusalem Bible margin. Both numbers are associated with the number of gentile nations, therefore, and the symbolism stands.

The uncertainty may have arisen early. The Septuagint version of the table of nations in Genesis 10 lists seventy-two nations: whereas the Jews usually reckoned there to be seventy. Moses in his song (Deuteronomy 32:8) said: ‘When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance... He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.’ The number of the children when they entered Egypt was seventy (Genesis 46:27).

St. Peter tells of another proclamation, that of Christ in Hades to the spirits in prison: ‘In spirit Christ went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison, who once were disobedient… for the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to God.’ (1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6). The spirits in prison seem to have been the disobedient angels – ‘For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (tartarus) and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgement…’ 2 Peter 2:4).

So Christ spoke both to angels and men when he was in Hades (‘Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.’ – Acts 2.27). So it is that the first-born, Christ, His Church, and His people Israel carry the news of His redemption to the world, the nations and into Hades.
15. Why Be Saved Now?

Traditional eschatology suggests that after death and resurrection, the judgement follows when humankind is divided into the lost and the saved – the saved being those who have had a personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The saved spend eternity in heaven and the lost spend eternity in hell.

If it is true that ultimately all are saved, as we have been arguing we may ask why be saved in this life (and endure the Christian disciplines of taking up the cross daily) when, in the end, we shall be united with those who reach heaven by the steep and narrow Christian path without having had to tread it. Is this really so?

Revelation 7:14 called our attention to an exodus from hell to Jesus Christ for cleansing in His blood. Those who come out are delivered from thirst, scorching heat and tears, all of which are characteristics of the pains of hell (‘the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ – Matthew 8:12).

How are the great multitude now occupied? Worshipping God with a loud voice and serving Him before His throne.

How are the 144,000 occupied?

Standing with the Lamb on mount Zion, singing a new song (Revelation 14:1-5). Thus the great multitude and the 144,000 are distinguished by provenance, relationship and activity: by provenance, from hell or from divine sealing; by relationship to Jesus Christ: in front of (‘Behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands’ Revelation 7:9), or with (‘Behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. Revelation 14:1) him; and by activity: shouting and offering worship (Revelation 7:10) or singing and receiving worship with Jesus (Revelation 14:3). We remember that Jesus had promised that He would compel the false Christians in the church of Philadelphia to worship the faithful ones (‘Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie… behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you.’ Revelation 3:9).

Finally: there will certainly be in eternity two groups: not, one in heaven and one in hell. But two in heaven: one by the side of the Lamb, His Bride, and one in front of Him, His servants.

Perhaps the ninth Anathema of the Emperor Justinian against Origen at the second Council of Constantinople may now be laid to rest or still better, transformed into a beatitude: “If anyone says or thinks that the punishment of demons and impious men is only temporary and will one day have an end… let him be blessed.”
APPENDIX 1 – 7 Old and New Testament Texts

1. Psalm 45:6-7 ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever (‘olam) and ever; a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness.’

2. Psalm 103:17 ‘But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting (‘olam) to everlasting (‘olam) on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children.’

3. Psalm 105:8 ‘He has remembered His covenant forever (‘olam), the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.’

4. Psalm 110:4 ‘The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, “Thou art a priest forever (‘olam) according to the order of Melchizedek.”’

5. Isaiah 55:3 ‘Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting (‘olam) covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David.’

6. Daniel 12:2 ‘And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting (‘olam) life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting (‘olam) contempt.’

7. Amos 9:11 ‘In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old (‘olam).’

1. Hebrews 1:8-9 ‘But of the Son He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever (eis ton aiona tou aionos), and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of His kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.’

2. Luke 1:50 “And His mercy is upon generation after generation (eis geneas kai geneas) toward those who fear Him.”

3. Luke 1:70,72 “As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old (ap’aionos) to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant.”

4. Hebrews 5:6 ‘Just as He says also in another passage, “Thou art a priest forever (eis ton aiona) According to the order of Melchizedek.”’

Hebrews 6:20 ‘Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever (eis ton aiona) according to the order of Melchizedek.’

Hebrews 7:21 ‘For they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, “The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘Thou art a priest forever’ (eis ton aiona).”’

Hebrews 7:24 ‘but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever (eis ton aiona), holds His priesthood permanently.’

5. Hebrews 13:20 ‘Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal (aionios) covenant, even Jesus our Lord…’

6. Matthew 25:46 “‘And these will go away into eternal (aionios) punishment, but the righteous into eternal (aionios) life.’”

7. Acts 15:16-18 ‘After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old (ap’aion os).’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 3:22</th>
<th>Deuteronomy 5:29</th>
<th>1 Chronicles 16:41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 6:3</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 12:28</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 17:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 6:4</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 13:16</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 17:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 9:12</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 15:17</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 17:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 9:16</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 23:3</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 17:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 13:15</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 23:6</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 17:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 17:7</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 28:46</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 17:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 17:7</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 29:29</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 22:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 17:13</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 32:7</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 23:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 17:19</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 32:40</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 23:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 21:33</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 33:15</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 28:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 48:4</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 33:27</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 28:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 49:26</td>
<td>Joshua 4:7</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 28:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 3:15</td>
<td>Joshua 8:28</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 29:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 12:14</td>
<td>Joshua 14:9</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 29:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 12:17</td>
<td>Joshua 24:2</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 2:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 12:24</td>
<td>Judges 2:1</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 5:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 14:13</td>
<td>1 Samuel 1:22</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 6:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 29:9</td>
<td>1 Samuel 2:30</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 7:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 31:16</td>
<td>1 Samuel 3:13</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 7:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 40:15</td>
<td>1 Samuel 3:14</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 7:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 3:17</td>
<td>1 Samuel 13:13</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 9:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 6:18</td>
<td>1 Samuel 20:15</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 13:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 6:22</td>
<td>1 Samuel 20:23</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 20:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 7:34</td>
<td>1 Samuel 20:42</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 20:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 7:36</td>
<td>1 Samuel 27:8</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 30:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 10:9</td>
<td>1 Samuel 27:12</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 33:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 10:15</td>
<td>2 Samuel 3:28</td>
<td>Ezra 3:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 16:29</td>
<td>2 Samuel 7:13</td>
<td>Ezra 9:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 16:31</td>
<td>2 Samuel 7:16</td>
<td>Nehemiah 2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 16:34</td>
<td>2 Samuel 7:24</td>
<td>Nehemiah 9:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 17:7</td>
<td>2 Samuel 7:25</td>
<td>Nehemiah 13:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 23:14</td>
<td>2 Samuel 7:26</td>
<td>Job 7:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 23:21</td>
<td>2 Samuel 7:29</td>
<td>Job 22:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 23:31</td>
<td>2 Samuel 12:10</td>
<td>Job 41:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 23:41</td>
<td>2 Samuel 22:51</td>
<td>Psalms 5:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 24:3</td>
<td>2 Samuel 23:5</td>
<td>Psalms 9:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 24:8</td>
<td>1 Kings 1:31</td>
<td>Psalms 9:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 24:9</td>
<td>1 Kings 2:33</td>
<td>Psalms 10:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 25:32</td>
<td>1 Kings 2:45</td>
<td>Psalms 12:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 25:34</td>
<td>1 Kings 8:13</td>
<td>Psalms 15:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 25:46</td>
<td>1 Kings 9:3</td>
<td>Psalms 18:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 10:8</td>
<td>1 Kings 9:5</td>
<td>Psalms 21:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 15:15</td>
<td>1 Kings 10:9</td>
<td>Psalms 24:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 18:8</td>
<td>2 Kings 5:27</td>
<td>Psalms 24:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 18:11</td>
<td>2 Kings 21:7</td>
<td>Psalms 25:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 18:19</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 15:2</td>
<td>Psalms 28:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 18:23</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 16:15</td>
<td>Psalms 29:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 19:10</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 16:17</td>
<td>Psalms 30:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 19:21</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 16:34</td>
<td>Psalms 30:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 25:13</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 16:36</td>
<td>Psalms 33:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 37:18</td>
<td>Psalms 106:48</td>
<td>Psalms 136:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 37:27</td>
<td>Psalms 107:1</td>
<td>Psalms 136:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 41:12</td>
<td>Psalms 111:5</td>
<td>Psalms 136:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 41:13</td>
<td>Psalms 111:8</td>
<td>Psalms 136:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 44:8</td>
<td>Psalms 111:9</td>
<td>Psalms 136:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 45:2</td>
<td>Psalms 111:10</td>
<td>Psalms 138:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 45:6</td>
<td>Psalms 112:6</td>
<td>Psalms 139:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 45:17</td>
<td>Psalms 113:2</td>
<td>Psalms 143:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 48:8</td>
<td>Psalms 115:18</td>
<td>Psalms 145:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 48:14</td>
<td>Psalms 117:2</td>
<td>Psalms 145:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 49:8</td>
<td>Psalms 118:1</td>
<td>Psalms 145:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 49:11</td>
<td>Psalms 118:2</td>
<td>Psalms 145:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 52:8</td>
<td>Psalms 118:3</td>
<td>Psalms 146:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 52:9</td>
<td>Psalms 118:4</td>
<td>Psalms 146:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 61:4</td>
<td>Psalms 119:44</td>
<td>Proverbs 8:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 61:7</td>
<td>Psalms 119:52</td>
<td>Proverbs 10:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 71:1</td>
<td>Psalms 119:93</td>
<td>Proverbs 23:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 72:17</td>
<td>Psalms 119:98</td>
<td>Proverbs 27:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 72:19</td>
<td>Psalms 119:111</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 1:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 73:12</td>
<td>Psalms 119:112</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 1:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 73:26</td>
<td>Psalms 119:142</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 2:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 75:9</td>
<td>Psalms 119:144</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 3:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 77:5</td>
<td>Psalms 119:152</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 3:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 78:66</td>
<td>Psalms 121:8</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 12:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 78:69</td>
<td>Psalms 125:1</td>
<td>Isaiah 9:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 79:13</td>
<td>Psalms 125:2</td>
<td>Isaiah 14:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 81:15</td>
<td>Psalms 131:3</td>
<td>Isaiah 24:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 85:5</td>
<td>Psalms 133:3</td>
<td>Isaiah 25:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 86:12</td>
<td>Psalms 135:13</td>
<td>Isaiah 26:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 89:1</td>
<td>Psalms 136:1</td>
<td>Isaiah 30:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 89:2</td>
<td>Psalms 136:2</td>
<td>Isaiah 32:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 89:4</td>
<td>Psalms 136:3</td>
<td>Isaiah 32:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 89:28</td>
<td>Psalms 136:4</td>
<td>Isaiah 33:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 89:36</td>
<td>Psalms 136:5</td>
<td>Isaiah 34:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 89:37</td>
<td>Psalms 136:6</td>
<td>Isaiah 34:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 89:52</td>
<td>Psalms 136:7</td>
<td>Isaiah 35:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 90:2</td>
<td>Psalms 136:8</td>
<td>Isaiah 40:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 92:8</td>
<td>Psalms 136:9</td>
<td>Isaiah 40:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 93:2</td>
<td>Psalms 136:10</td>
<td>Isaiah 42:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 100:5</td>
<td>Psalms 136:11</td>
<td>Isaiah 44:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 102:12</td>
<td>Psalms 136:12</td>
<td>Isaiah 45:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 103:9</td>
<td>Psalms 136:13</td>
<td>Isaiah 46:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 103:17</td>
<td>Psalms 136:14</td>
<td>Isaiah 47:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 104:5</td>
<td>Psalms 136:15</td>
<td>Isaiah 51:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 104:31</td>
<td>Psalms 136:16</td>
<td>Isaiah 51:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 105:8</td>
<td>Psalms 136:17</td>
<td>Isaiah 51:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 105:10</td>
<td>Psalms 136:18</td>
<td>Isaiah 51:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 106:1</td>
<td>Psalms 136:19</td>
<td>Isaiah 54:8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Genesis 3:22
Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever…”

Genesis 6:3
Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

Genesis 6:4
The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Genesis 9:12
And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations…”

Genesis 9:16
“When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

Genesis 13:15
“…for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.”

Genesis 17:7
“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.”

Genesis 17:8
“And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 17:13
“A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

Genesis 17:19
But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”

Genesis 21:33
And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God.

Genesis 48:4
‘…and He said to me, “Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.”’

Genesis 49:26
“The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.”

Exodus 3:15
And God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.”

Exodus 12:14
“Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.”
Exodus 12:17
“You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance.”

Exodus 12:24
“And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever.”

Exodus 14:13
But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.”

Exodus 29:9
“And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and bind caps on them, and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute. So you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.”

Exodus 31:16
‘So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.’

Exodus 40:15
“…and you shall anoint them even as you have anointed their father, that they may minister as priests to Me; and their anointing shall qualify them for a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations.”

Leviticus 3:17
“It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.”

Leviticus 6:18
“Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat it; it is a permanent ordinance throughout your generations, from the offerings by fire to the Lord. Whoever touches them shall become consecrated.”

Leviticus 6:22
“And the anointed priest who will be in his place among his sons shall offer it. By a permanent ordinance it shall be entirely offered up in smoke to the Lord.”

Leviticus 7:34
“For I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their due forever from the sons of Israel.”

Leviticus 7:36
‘These the Lord had commanded to be given them from the sons of Israel in the day that He anointed them. It is their due forever throughout their generations.’

Leviticus 10:9
“Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you may not die…it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations…”

Leviticus 10:15
“The thigh offered by lifting up and the breast offered by waving, they shall bring along with the offerings by fire of the portions of fat, to present as a wave offering before the Lord; so it shall be a thing perpetually due you and your sons with you, just as the Lord has commanded.”

Leviticus 16:29
“And this shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you….”

Leviticus 16:31
“It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute.”
Leviticus 16:34
“‘Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year.’ And just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so he did.’

Leviticus 17:7
“And they shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.”

Leviticus 23:14
“Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.”

Leviticus 23:21
“On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.”

Leviticus 23:31
“You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.”

Leviticus 23:41
“You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.”

Leviticus 24:3
“Outside the veil of testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations.”

Leviticus 24:8
“Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before the Lord continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel.”

Leviticus 24:9
“And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the Lord's offerings by fire, his portion forever.”

Leviticus 25:32
“As for cities of the Levites, the Levites have a permanent right of redemption for the houses of the cities which are their possession.”

Leviticus 25:34
“But pasture fields of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their perpetual possession.”

Leviticus 25:46
“You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another.”

Numbers 10:8
“The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations.”

Numbers 15:15
“As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the Lord.”

Numbers 18:8
‘Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, “Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, I have given them to you as a portion, and to your sons as a perpetual allotment.”
Numbers 18:11
“This also is yours, the offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel; I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it.”

Numbers 18:19
“All the offerings of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer to the Lord, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord to you and your descendants with you.”

Numbers 18:23
“Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance.”

Numbers 19:10
“And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; and it shall be a perpetual statute to the sons of Israel and to the alien who sojourns among them.”

Numbers 19:21
“So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening.”

Numbers 25:13
“…and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the sons of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 5:29
“Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!”

Deuteronomy 12:28
“Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, in order that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.”

Deuteronomy 13:16
“Then you shall gather all its booty into the middle of its open square and burn the city and all its booty with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt.”

Deuteronomy 15:17
“…then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. And also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.”

Deuteronomy 23:3
“No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord…”

Deuteronomy 23:6
“You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days.”

Deuteronomy 28:46
“And they shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever.”

Deuteronomy 29:29
“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”

Deuteronomy 32:7
“Remember the days of old, consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you, your elders, and they will tell you.”

Deuteronomy 32:40
“Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, as I live forever.”
Deuteronomy 33:15
“And with the best things of the ancient mountains, and with the choice things of the everlasting hills…"

Deuteronomy 33:27
“The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and He drove out the enemy from before you, and said, ‘Destroy!’”

Joshua 4:7
“…then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.”

Joshua 8:28
‘So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation until this day.’

Joshua 14:9
“So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God fully.’”

Joshua 24:2
And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.’”

Judges 2:1
Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you…”’

1 Samuel 1:22
But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “I will not go up until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord and stay there forever.”

1 Samuel 2:30
“Therefore the Lord God of Israel declares, ‘I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever’; but now the Lord declares, ‘Far be it from Me… for those who honour Me I will honour, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.’”

1 Samuel 3:13
“For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them.”

1 Samuel 3:14
“And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”

1 Samuel 13:13
And Samuel said to Saul, “You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, for now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.”

1 Samuel 20:15
“And you shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.”

1 Samuel 20:23
“As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever.”

1 Samuel 20:42
And Jonathan said to David, “Go in safety, insomuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord will be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'” Then he rose and departed, while Jonathan went into the city.
1 Samuel 27:8
Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites; for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur even as far as the land of Egypt.

1 Samuel 27:12
So Achish believed David, saying, “He has surely made himself odious among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever.”

2 Samuel 3:28
And afterward when David heard it, he said, “I and my kingdom are innocent before the Lord forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner.”

2 Samuel 7:13
“He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

2 Samuel 7:16
“And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”

2 Samuel 7:24
“For Thou hast established for Thyself Thy people Israel as Thine own people forever, and Thou, O Lord, hast become their God.”

2 Samuel 7:25
“Now therefore, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant and his house, confirm it forever, and do as Thou hast spoken…”

2 Samuel 7:26
“…that Thy name may be magnified forever, by saying, ‘The Lord of hosts is God over Israel’ and may the house of Thy servant David be established before Thee.”

2 Samuel 7:29
“Now therefore, may it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue forever before Thee. For Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken; and with Thy blessing may the house of Thy servant be blessed forever.”

2 Samuel 12:10
“Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.”

2 Samuel 22:51
“He is a tower of deliverance to His king, and shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.”

2 Samuel 23:5
“Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things, and secured; for all my salvation and all my desire, will He not indeed make it grow?”

1 Kings 1:31
Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, and prostrated herself before the king and said, “May my lord King David live forever.”

1 Kings 2:33
“So shall their blood return on the head of Joab and on the head of his descendants forever; but to David and his descendants and his house and his throne, may there be peace from the Lord forever.”

1 Kings 2:45
“But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord forever.”

1 Kings 8:13
“I have surely built Thee a lofty house, a place for Thy dwelling forever.”
1 Kings 9:3
And the Lord said to him, “I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”

1 Kings 9:5
“...then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’”

1 Kings 10:9
“Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness.”

2 Kings 5:27
“Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your descendants forever.” So he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

2 Kings 21:7
Then he set the carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the Lord said to David and to his son Solomon, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever.”

1 Chronicles 15:2
Then David said, “No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of God, and to minister to Him forever.”

1 Chronicles 16:15
“Remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations...”

1 Chronicles 16:17
“He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant...”

1 Chronicles 16:34
“O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

1 Chronicles 16:36
“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting.” Then all the people said, ‘Amen,’ and praised the Lord.

1 Chronicles 16:41
And with them were Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the Lord, because His lovingkindness is everlasting.

1 Chronicles 17:12
“He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever.”

1 Chronicles 17:14
“But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.”

1 Chronicles 17:22
“For Thy people Israel Thou didst make Thine own people forever, and Thou, O Lord, didst become their God.”

1 Chronicles 17:23
“And now, O Lord, let the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant and concerning his house, be established forever, and do as Thou hast spoken.”

1 Chronicles 17:24
“And let Thy name be established and magnified forever, saying, ‘The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and the house of David Thy servant is established before Thee.’”

1 Chronicles 17:27
“And now it hath pleased Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue forever before Thee; for Thou, O Lord, hast blessed, and it is blessed forever.”
1 Chronicles 22:10
“He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.”

1 Chronicles 23:13
The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was set apart to sanctify him as most holy, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister to Him and to bless in His name forever.

1 Chronicles 23:25
For David said, “The Lord God of Israel has given rest to His people, and He dwells in Jerusalem forever.”

1 Chronicles 28:4
“Yet, the Lord, the God of Israel, chose me from all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be a leader; and in the house of Judah, my father's house, and among the sons of my father He took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel.”

1 Chronicles 28:7
“And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he resolutely performs My commandments and My ordinances, as is done now.”

1 Chronicles 28:8
“So now, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek after all the commandments of the Lord your God in order that you may possess the good land and bequeath it to your sons after you forever.”

1 Chronicles 29:10
So David blessed the Lord in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, “Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever.”

1 Chronicles 29:18
“O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Thy people, and direct their heart to Thee…”

2 Chronicles 2:4
“Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, dedicating it to Him, to burn fragrant incense before Him, and to set out the showbread continually, and to offer burnt offerings morning and evening, on sabbaths and on new moons and on the appointed feasts of the Lord our God, this being required forever in Israel.”

2 Chronicles 5:13
‘…in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord saying, “He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,” then the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud…’

2 Chronicles 6:2
“I have built Thee a lofty house, and a place for Thy dwelling forever.”

2 Chronicles 7:3
And all the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the Lord, saying, “Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

2 Chronicles 7:6
And the priests stood at their posts and the Levites, with the instruments of music to the Lord, which King David had made for giving praise to the Lord… “for His lovingkindness is everlasting”… whenever he gave praise by their means, while the priests on the other side blew trumpets; and all Israel was standing.

2 Chronicles 7:16
“For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”
2 Chronicles 9:8
“Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the Lord your God; because your God loved Israel establishing them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness.”

2 Chronicles 13:5
“Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?”

2 Chronicles 20:7
“Didst Thou not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and give it to the descendants of Abraham Thy friend forever?”

2 Chronicles 20:21
And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, “Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

2 Chronicles 30:8
“Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the Lord and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the Lord your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you.”

2 Chronicles 33:4
And he built altars in the house of the Lord of which the Lord had said, “My name shall be in Jerusalem forever.”

Ezra 3:11
And they sang, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, saying, “For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever.” And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

Ezra 9:12
“So now do not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters to your sons, and never seek their peace or their prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your sons forever.”

Nehemiah 2:3
And I said to the king, “Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?”

Nehemiah 9:5
Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, “Arise, bless the Lord your God forever and ever! O may Thy glorious name be blessed and exalted above all blessing and praise!”

Nehemiah 13:1
On that day they read aloud from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and there was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God…

Job 7:16
“I waste away; I will not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are but a breath.”

Job 22:15
“Will you keep to the ancient path which wicked men have trod…”

Job 41:4
“Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him for a servant forever?”

Psalms 5:11
But let all who take refuge in Thee be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; and mayest Thou shelter them, that those who love Thy name may exult in Thee.
Psalms 9:5
Thou hast rebuked the nations; Thou hast destroyed the wicked; Thou hast blotted out their name forever and ever.
Psalms 9:7
But the Lord abides forever; He has established His throne for judgement,
Psalms 10:16
The Lord is King forever and ever; nations have perished from His land.
Psalms 12:7
Thou, O Lord, wilt keep them; Thou wilt preserve him from this generation forever.
Psalms 15:5
He does not put out his money at interest, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.
Psalms 18:50
He gives great deliverance to His king, and shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.
Psalms 21:4
He asked life of Thee, Thou didst give it to him, length of days forever and ever.
Psalms 24:7
Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!
Psalms 24:9
Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!
Psalms 25:6
Remember, O Lord, Thy compassion and Thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been from of old.
Psalms 28:9
Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance; be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.
Psalms 29:10
The Lord sat as King at the flood; yes, the Lord sits as King forever.
Psalms 30:6
Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, “I will never be moved.”
Psalms 30:12
That my soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever.
Psalms 33:11
The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.
Psalms 37:18
The Lord knows the days of the blameless; and their inheritance will be forever.
Psalms 37:27
Depart from evil, and do good, so you will abide forever.
Psalms 37:28
For the Lord loves justice, and does not forsake His godly ones; they are preserved forever; but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off.
Psalms 41:12
As for me, Thou dost uphold me in my integrity, and Thou dost set me in Thy presence forever.
Psalms 41:13
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.
Psalms 44:8
In God we have boasted all day long, and we will give thanks to Thy name forever. Selah.
Psalms 45:2
Thou art fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Thy lips; therefore God has blessed Thee forever.
Psalms 45:6
Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.
Psalms 45:17
I will cause Thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the peoples will give Thee thanks forever and ever.

Psalms 48:8
As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish her forever. Selah.

Psalms 48:14
For such is God, Our God forever and ever; He will guide us until death.

Psalms 49:8
For the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever…

Psalms 49:11
Their inner thought is, that their houses are forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they have called their lands after their own names.

Psalms 52:8
But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever.

Psalms 52:9
I will give Thee thanks forever, because Thou hast done it, and I will wait on Thy name, for it is good, in the presence of Thy godly ones.

Psalms 55:22
Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

Psalms 61:4
Let me dwell in Thy tent forever; let me take refuge in the shelter of Thy wings. Selah.

Psalms 61:7
He will abide before God forever; appoint lovingkindness and truth, that they may preserve him.

Psalms 66:7
He rules by His might forever; His eyes keep watch on the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

Psalms 71:1
In Thee, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be ashamed.

Psalms 72:17
May his name endure forever; may his name increase as long as the sun shines; and let men bless themselves by him; let all nations call him blessed.

Psalms 72:19
And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.

Psalms 73:12
Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth.

Psalms 73:26
My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalms 75:9
But as for me, I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

Psalms 77:5
I have considered the days of old, the years of long ago.

Psalms 77:7
Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favourable again?

Psalms 78:66
And He drove His adversaries backward; He put on them an everlasting reproach.

Psalms 78:69
And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has founded forever.
Psalms 79:13
So we Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture will give thanks to Thee forever; to all generations we will tell of Thy praise.

Psalms 81:15
“Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him; and their time of punishment would be forever.”

Psalms 85:5
Wilt Thou be angry with us forever? Wilt Thou prolong Thine anger to all generations?

Psalms 86:12
I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Thy name forever.

Psalms 89:1
(A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.) I will sing of the lovingkindness of the Lord forever; to all generations I will make known Thy faithfulness with my mouth.

Psalms 89:2
For I have said, “Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness.”

Psalms 89:4
“I will establish your seed forever, and build up your throne to all generations.” Selah.

Psalms 89:28
“My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him.”

Psalms 89:36
“His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me.”

Psalms 89:37
“It shall be established forever like the moon, and the witness in the sky is faithful.” Selah.

Psalms 89:52
Blessed be the Lord forever! Amen and Amen.

Psalms 90:2
Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Psalms 92:8
But Thou, O Lord, art on high forever.

Psalms 93:2
Thy throne is established from of old; Thou art from everlasting.

Psalms 100:5
For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Psalms 102:12
But Thou, O Lord, dost abide forever; and Thy name to all generations.

Psalms 103:9
He will not always strive with us; nor will He keep His anger forever.

Psalms 103:17
But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children,

Psalms 104:5
He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever.

Psalms 104:31
Let the glory of the Lord endure forever; let the Lord be glad in His works;

Psalms 105:8
He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations,

Psalms 105:10
Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant,

Psalms 106:1
Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalms 106:31
And it was reckoned to him for righteousness, to all generations forever.

Psalms 106:48
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, “Amen.” Praise the Lord!

Psalms 107:1
Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalms 110:4
The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, “Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Psalms 111:5
He has given food to those who fear Him; He will remember His covenant forever.

Psalms 111:8
They are upheld forever and ever; they are performed in truth and uprightness.

Psalms 111:9
He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever; holy and awesome is His name.

Psalms 111:10
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

Psalms 112:6
For he will never be shaken; the righteous will be remembered forever.

Psalms 113:2
Blessed be the name of the Lord From this time forth and forever.

Psalms 115:18
But as for us, we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forever. Praise the Lord!

Psalms 117:2
For His lovingkindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord is everlasting. Praise the Lord!

Psalms 118:1
Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalms 118:2
Oh let Israel say, “His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

Psalms 118:3
Oh let the house of Aaron say, “His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

Psalms 118:4
Oh let those who fear the Lord say, “His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

Psalms 118:29
Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalms 119:44
So I will keep Thy law continually, forever and ever.

Psalms 119:52
I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O Lord, and comfort myself.

Psalms 119:89
Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.

Psalms 119:93
I will never forget Thy precepts, for by them Thou hast revived me.

Psalms 119:98
Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine.

Psalms 119:111
I have inherited Thy testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart.

Psalms 119:112
I have inclined my heart to perform Thy statutes forever, even to the end.
Psalms 119:142
Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth.
Psalms 119:144
Thy testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.
Psalms 119:152
Of old I have known from Thy testimonies, that Thou hast founded them forever.
Psalms 119:160
The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting.
Psalms 121:8
The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.
Psalms 125:1
(A Song of Ascents.) Those who trust in the Lord Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.
Psalms 125:2
As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever.
Psalms 131:3
O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever.
Psalms 133:3
It is like the dew of Hermon, coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing… life forever.
Psalms 135:13
Thy name, O Lord, is everlasting, Thy remembrance, O Lord, throughout all generations.
Psalms 136:1
Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalms 136:2
Give thanks to the God of gods, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalms 136:3
Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalms 136:4
To Him who alone does great wonders, for His lovingkindness is everlasting;
Psalms 136:5
To Him who made the heavens with skill, for His lovingkindness is everlasting;
Psalms 136:6
To Him who spread out the earth above the waters, for His lovingkindness is everlasting;
Psalms 136:7
To Him who made the great lights, for His lovingkindness is everlasting:
Psalms 136:8
The sun to rule by day, for His lovingkindness is everlasting,
Psalms 136:9
The moon and stars to rule by night, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalms 136:10
To Him who smote the Egyptians in their first-born, for His lovingkindness is everlasting,
Psalms 136:11
And brought Israel out from their midst, for His lovingkindness is everlasting,
Psalms 136:12
With a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for His lovingkindness is everlasting;
Psalms 136:13
To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder, for His lovingkindness is everlasting,
Psalms 136:14
And made Israel pass through the midst of it, for His lovingkindness is everlasting;
Psalms 136:15
But He overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalms 136:16
To Him who led His people through the wilderness, for His lovingkindness is everlasting;
Psalms 136:17
To Him who smote great kings, for His lovingkindness is everlasting,
Psalms 136:18
And slew mighty kings, for His lovingkindness is everlasting:
Psalms 136:19
Sihon, king of the Amorites, for His lovingkindness is everlasting, 
Psalms 136:20
And Og, king of Bashan, for His lovingkindness is everlasting, 
Psalms 136:21
And gave their land as a heritage, for His lovingkindness is everlasting, 
Psalms 136:22
Even a heritage to Israel His servant, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. 
Psalms 136:23
Who remembered us in our low estate, for His lovingkindness is everlasting...
Psalms 136:24
And has rescued us from our adversaries, for His lovingkindness is everlasting;  
Psalms 136:25
Who gives food to all flesh, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. 
Psalms 136:26
Give thanks to the God of heaven, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. 
Psalms 138:8
The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of Thy hands. 
Psalms 139:24
And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. 
Psalms 143:3
For the enemy has persecuted my soul; He has crushed my life to the ground; He has made me dwell in dark places, like those who have long been dead. 
Psalms 145:1
(A Psalm of Praise, of David.) I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy name forever and ever. 
Psalms 145:2
Every day I will bless Thee, and I will praise Thy name forever and ever. 
Psalms 145:13
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endures throughout all generations. 
Psalms 145:21
My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord; and all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever. 
Psalms 146:6
Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever... 
Psalms 146:10
The Lord will reign forever, Thy God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord! 
Psalms 148:6
He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away. 

Proverbs 8:23
“From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. 
Proverbs 10:25
When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous has an everlasting foundation. 
Proverbs 22:28
Do not move the ancient boundary which your fathers have set.
Proverbs 23:10
Do not move the ancient boundary, or go into the fields of the fatherless...
Proverbs 27:24
For riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.

Ecclesiastes 1:4
A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.
Ecclesiastes 1:10
Is there anything of which one might say, “See this, it is new”? Already it has existed for ages which were before us.
Ecclesiastes 2:16
For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man as with the fool, inasmuch as in the coming days all will be forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die!
Ecclesiastes 3:11
He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.
Ecclesiastes 3:14
I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him.
Ecclesiastes 9:6
Indeed their love, their hate, and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.
Ecclesiastes 12:5
Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective. For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street.

Isaiah 9:7
There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this
Isaiah 14:20
“You will not be united with them in burial, because you have ruined your country, You have slain your people. May the offspring of evildoers not be mentioned forever.”
Isaiah 24:5
The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.
Isaiah 25:2
For Thou hast made a city into a heap, a fortified city into a ruin; a palace of strangers is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.
Isaiah 26:4
“Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock.
Isaiah 30:8
Now go, write it on a tablet before them and inscribe it on a scroll, that it may serve in the time to come as a witness forever.
Isaiah 32:14
Because the palace has been abandoned, the populated city forsaken. Hill and watchtower have become caves forever, a delight for wild donkeys, a pasture for flocks…
Isaiah 32:17
And the work of righteousness will be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.
Isaiah 33:14
Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless. “Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?”

Isaiah 34:10
It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall be desolate; none shall pass through it forever and ever.

Isaiah 34:17
And He has cast the lot for them, and His hand has divided it to them by line. They shall possess it forever; from generation to generation they shall dwell in it.

Isaiah 35:10
And the ransomed of the Lord will return, and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Isaiah 40:8
The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Isaiah 40:28
Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable

Isaiah 42:14
“I have kept silent for a long time, I have kept still and restrained Myself. Now like a woman in labour I will groan, I will both gasp and pant.”

Isaiah 44:7
“And who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to Me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place.”

Isaiah 45:17
Israel has been saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation; you will not be put to shame or humiliated to all eternity.

Isaiah 46:9
“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me…”

Isaiah 47:7
“Yet you said, ‘I shall be a queen forever.’ These things you did not consider, nor remember the outcome of them.”

Isaiah 51:6
“Lift up your eyes to the sky, then look to the earth beneath; for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants will die in like manner, but My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness shall not wane.”

Isaiah 51:8
“For the moth will eat them like a garment, and the grub will eat them like wool. But My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation to all generations.”

Isaiah 51:9
Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not Thou who cut Rahab in pieces, Who pierced the dragon?

Isaiah 51:11
So the ransomed of the Lord will return, and come with joyful shouting to Zion; and everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Isaiah 54:8
“In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord your Redeemer.

Isaiah 55:3
“Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.”
Isaiah 55:13
“Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up; and instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up; and it will be a memorial to the Lord, for an everlasting sign which will not be cut off.”

Isaiah 56:5
To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.

Isaiah 56:11
And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each one to his unjust gain, to the last one.

Isaiah 57:11
“Of whom were you worried and fearful, when you lied, and did not remember Me, nor give Me a thought? Was I not silent even for a long time so you do not fear Me?”

Isaiah 57:16
“For I will not contend forever, neither will I always be angry; for the spirit would grow faint before Me, and the breath of those whom I have made.”

Isaiah 58:12
“And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will raise up the age-old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell.”

Isaiah 59:21
“And as for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the Lord: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring,” says the Lord, “from now and forever.”

Isaiah 60:15
“Whereas you have been forsaken and hated with no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, a joy from generation to generation.”

Isaiah 60:19
“No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory.”

Isaiah 60:20
“Your sun will set no more, neither will your moon wane; for you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be finished.”

Isaiah 60:21
“Then all your people will be righteous; they will possess the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.”

Isaiah 61:4
Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations, and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.

Isaiah 61:7
Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs.

Isaiah 61:8
“For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; and I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.”

Isaiah 62:6
On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves…

Isaiah 63:9
In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them; and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.
Isaiah 63:11
Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them…

Isaiah 63:12
Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, Who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name…

Isaiah 63:16
For Thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not recognise us. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Thy name.

Isaiah 63:19
We have become like those over whom Thou hast never ruled, like those who were not called by Thy name.

Isaiah 64:4
For from of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, neither has the eye seen a God besides Thee, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.

Isaiah 64:5
Thou dost meet him who rejoices in doing righteousness, Who remembers Thee in Thy ways. Behold, Thou wast angry, for we sinned, we continued in them a long time; and shall we be saved?

Jeremiah 2:20
“For long ago I broke your yoke and tore off your bonds; But you said, ‘I will not serve!’ For on every high hill and under every green tree You have lain down as a harlot.

Jeremiah 3:12
“Go, and proclaim these words toward the north and say, ‘Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the Lord; ‘I will not look upon you in anger. For I am gracious,’ declares the Lord; ‘I will not be angry forever.’”

Jeremiah 5:15
“Behold, I am bringing a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel,” declares the Lord. “It is an enduring nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language you do not know, nor can you understand what they say.”

Jeremiah 5:22
“Do you not fear Me?” declares the Lord. “Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, an eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.”

Jeremiah 6:16
Thus says the Lord, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls.” But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’

Jeremiah 7:7
“…then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.”

Jeremiah 10:10
But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure His indignation.

Jeremiah 17:4
“And you will, even of yourself, let go of your inheritance that I gave you; and I will make you serve your enemies in the land which you do not know; for you have kindled a fire in My anger which will burn forever.”

Jeremiah 17:25
‘…then there will come in through the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city will be inhabited forever.’

Jeremiah 18:15
“For My people have forgotten Me, they burn incense to worthless gods and they have stumbled from their ways, from the ancient paths, to walk in bypaths, not on a highway;”
Jeremiah 18:16
To make their land a desolation, an object of perpetual hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and shake his head.

Jeremiah 20:11
But the Lord is with me like a dread champion; therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will be utterly ashamed, because they have failed, with an everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten.

Jeremiah 20:17
Because he did not kill me before birth, so that my mother would have been my grave, and her womb ever pregnant.

Jeremiah 23:40
“And I will put an everlasting reproach on you and an everlasting humiliation which will not be forgotten.”

Jeremiah 25:5
‘…saying, “Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the Lord has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever…”’

Jeremiah 25:9
“…behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,” declares the Lord, “and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them, and make them a horror, and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.”

Jeremiah 25:12
“Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,” declares the Lord, “for their iniquity and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.”

Jeremiah 28:8
“The prophets who were before me and before you from ancient times prophesied against many lands and against great kingdoms, of war and of calamity and of pestilence.”

Jeremiah 31:3
The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.”

Jeremiah 31:40
“And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, or overthrown anymore forever.”

Jeremiah 32:40
“And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.”

Jeremiah 33:11
‘…the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, “Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the Lord. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first,” says the Lord.

Jeremiah 33:17
For thus says the Lord, “David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel…”

Jeremiah 35:6
But they said, “We will not drink wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, ‘You shall not drink wine, you or your sons, forever.’”

Jeremiah 49:13
“For I have sworn by Myself,” declares the Lord, “that Bozrah will become an object of horror, a reproach, a ruin and a curse; and all its cities will become perpetual ruins.”
Jeremiah 49:33
“And Hazor will become a haunt of jackals, A desolation forever; No one will live there, Nor will a son of man reside in it.”

Jeremiah 50:5
“They will ask for the way to Zion, turning their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.”

Jeremiah 51:26
“And they will not take from you even a stone for a corner nor a stone for foundations, But you will be desolate forever,” declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 51:39
“When they become heated up, I shall serve them their banquet and make them drunk, that they may become jubilant And may sleep a perpetual sleep And not wake up,” declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 51:57
“And I shall make her princes and her wise men drunk, Her governors, her prefects, and her mighty men, That they may sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake up,” declares the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts.

Jeremiah 51:62
‘…and say, “Thou, O Lord, hast promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.”

Lamentations 3:6
In dark places He has made me dwell, like those who have long been dead.

Lamentations 3:31
For the Lord will not reject forever,

Lamentations 5:19
Thou, O Lord, dost rule forever; Thy throne is from generation to generation.

Ezekiel 16:60
“Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.”

Ezekiel 16:63
“…in order that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done,” the Lord God declares.

Ezekiel 25:15
Thus says the Lord God, “Because the Philistines have acted in revenge and have taken vengeance with scorn of soul to destroy with everlasting enmity…”

Ezekiel 26:20
“…then I shall bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I shall make you dwell in the lower parts of the earth, like the ancient waste places, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited; but I shall set glory in the land of the living.”

Ezekiel 26:21
“I shall bring terrors on you, and you will be no more; though you will be sought, you will never be found again,” declares the Lord God.

Ezekiel 35:5
“Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end…”

Ezekiel 35:9
“I will make you an everlasting desolation, and your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

Ezekiel 36:2
Thus says the Lord God, “Because the enemy has spoken against you, ‘Aha!’ and, ‘The everlasting heights have become our possession…’”
Ezekiel 37:25
“And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever.”
Ezekiel 37:26
“And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever.”
Ezekiel 37:28
“And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.”
Ezekiel 43:7
And He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die,
Ezekiel 43:9
“Now let them put away their harlotry and the corpses of their kings far from Me; and I will dwell among them forever.”
Ezekiel 46:14
“Also you shall provide a grain offering with it morning by morning, a sixth of an ephah, and a third of a hin of oil to moisten the fine flour, a grain offering to the Lord continually by a perpetual ordinance.”
Daniel 9:24
“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.”
Daniel 12:2
“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”
Daniel 12:3
“And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”
Daniel 12:7
And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.
Hosea 2:19
“And I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion…”
Joel 2:2
A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, so there is a great and mighty people; there has never been anything like it, nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations.
Joel 2:27
“Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is no other; and My people will never be put to shame.”
Joel 3:20
But Judah will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem for all generations.
Amos 9:11
“In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old…”

Obadiah 1:10
“Because of violence to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever.

Jonah 2:6
“I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, but Thou hast brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God.”

Micah 2:9
“The women of My people you evict, each one from her pleasant house. From her children you take My splendour forever.”

Micah 4:5
Though all the peoples walk each in the name of his god, as for us, we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

Micah 4:7
“I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcasts a strong nation, and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on and forever.”

Micah 5:2
“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”

Micah 7:14
Shepherd Thy people with Thy sceptre, the flock of Thy possession which dwells by itself in the woodland, in the midst of a fruitful field. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old.

Habakkuk 3:6
He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, the ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting.

Zephaniah 2:9
“Therefore, as I live,” declares the Lord of hosts, The God of Israel, “Surely Moab will be like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah… a place possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation. The remnant of My people will plunder them, and the remainder of My nation will inherit them.”

Zechariah 1:5
“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?”

Malachi 1:4
Though Edom says, “We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins”; thus says the Lord of hosts, “They may build, but I will tear down; and men will call them the wicked territory, and the people toward whom the Lord is indignant forever.”

Malachi 3:4
“Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Appendix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 12:32</td>
<td>A V</td>
<td>Ephesians 2:7</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 13:22</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Ephesians 3:9</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 13:39</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Ephesians 3:11</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 13:40</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Ephesians 3:21</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 13:49</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Philippians 4:20</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 21:19</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Colossians 1:26</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 24:3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1 Timothy 1:17</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 28:20</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1 Timothy 6:17</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 3:29</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>2 Timothy 4:10</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 4:19</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2 Timothy 4:18</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 10:30</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Titus 2:12</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 11:14</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Hebrews 1:2</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 1:33</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Hebrews 1:8</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 1:70</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Hebrews 6:5</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 18:30</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Hebrews 7:17</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 4:14</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Hebrews 7:28</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 6:51</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Hebrews 9:26</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 6:58</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Hebrews 11:3</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 8:35</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Hebrews 13:8</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 8:51</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Hebrews 13:21</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 9:32</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1 Peter 1:23</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 10:28</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>1 Peter 1:25</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 11:26</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>1 Peter 4:11</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 12:34</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>1 Peter 5:11</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 13:8</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>2 Peter 3:18</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 14:16</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>1 John 2:17</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 3:21</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2 John 2</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 15:18</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Jude 13</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 1:25</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Jude 25</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 9:5</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Revelation 1:6</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 11:36</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Revelation 1:18</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 12:2</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Revelation 4:9</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 16:27</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Revelation 4:10</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 1:20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Revelation 5:13</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 2:6</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Revelation 5:14</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 2:7</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Revelation 7:12</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 2:8</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Revelation 10:6</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 3:18</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Revelation 11:15</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 8:13</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Revelation 14:11</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 10:11</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Revelation 15:7</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Corinthians 4:4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Revelation 19:3</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Corinthians 9:9</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Revelation 20:10</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Corinthians 11:31</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Revelation 22:5</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galatians 1:4</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galatians 1:5</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians 1:21</td>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians 2:2</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 5

A. αἰῶν – an age

Matthew 12:32 – “And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.”

Matthew 13:22 – “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

Mark 4:19 – “and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

Mark 10:30 – “but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age (καιρῷ), houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.”

Luke 16:8 – “And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.”

Luke 20:34-5 – ‘And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage”

Romans 12:2 – ‘And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.’

1 Corinthians 1:20 – ‘Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?’

1 Corinthians 2:6 – ‘Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away…’

1 Corinthians 2:8 – ‘the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory…’

1 Corinthians 3:18 – ‘Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise.’

2 Corinthians 4:4 – ‘in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.’

Hebrews 6: 4,5 – ‘For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.’
B. Plural

1 Corinthians 10:11 – ‘Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends (τελη) of the ages have come.’

Ephesians 3:11 – ‘This was in accordance with the eternal purpose (the purpose of the ages) which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

Hebrews 1:1-2 – ‘God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world (the ages).’

Hebrews 11:3 – ‘By faith we understand that the worlds (ages) were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible’

C. συντελειασ του αιωνοσ – end of the age

Matthew 13:39 – ‘and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.’

Matthew 13:40 – “Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age”

Matthew 13:49 – “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous.”

Matthew 24:3 – ‘And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”’

Matthew 28:20 – ‘teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’

D. απ αιωνοσ – from an age

Luke 1:70 – ‘As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old.’

Acts 3:21 – ‘whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.’

Acts 15:18 – ‘says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.’

E. απο των αιωνων – from the ages

Ephesians 3:9 – ‘and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things…’

Colossians 1:26 – ‘that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints.’
F. εἰς αἰωνα – unto an age; εἰς τον αἰωνα – unto the age

Jude 13 – ‘wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.’

G. εἰς τοὺς αἰωνας – unto the ages

Luke 1:33 – ‘and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.’

Romans 1:25 – ‘For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.’

Romans 9:5 – ‘whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.’

Romans 11:36 – ‘For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.’

2 Corinthians 11:31 – ‘The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.’

*Galatians 1:5 – ‘to whom be the glory for evermore. Amen.’

Hebrews 13:8 – ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.’

H. εἰς αἰωνας αἰωνῶν – unto ages of ages

Revelation 14:11 – ‘And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name’

J. εἰς τον αἰωνα – unto the age

Matthew 21:19 – ‘And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, “No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered.’

Mark 3:29 – ‘but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin…’

Mark 11:24 – ‘And He answered and said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” And His disciples were listening.’

Luke 1:55 – ‘As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.’

John 4:14 – “but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

John 6:51 – “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.”
John 6:58 – “This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.”

John 8:35 – “And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.”

John 10:28 – “and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.”

John 11:26 – “and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

John 13:8 – ‘Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”’

John 14:16 – “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever…”

2 Corinthians 9:9 – ‘as it is written, “He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness abides forever.”’

Hebrews 5:6 – ‘Just as He says also in another passage, “Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”’

Hebrews 6:20 – ‘where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’

Hebrews 7:17 – ‘For it is witnessed of Him, “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”’

Hebrews 7:21 – ‘(for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, “The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, ‘Thou art a priest forever’”)…’

Hebrews 7:24 – ‘but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.’

1 Peter 1:25 – ‘But the word of the Lord abides forever. And this is the word which was preached to you.’

1 John 2:17 – ‘And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.’

2 John 2 – ‘for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:…’

K. εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων – unto the ages of the ages.

*Romans 16:27 – ‘to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.’

*Philippians 4:20 – ‘Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.’

*1 Timothy 1:17 – ‘Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.’
2 Timothy 4:18 – ‘The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.’

Hebrews 13:21 – ‘equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.’

1 Pet. 4:11 – ‘Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.’

Revelation 1:6 – ‘and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.’

Revelation 1:18 – ‘and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.’

Revelation 4:9 – ‘And when the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever.’

Revelation 4:10 – ‘the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying…’

Revelation 5:13 – ‘And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honour and glory and dominion forever and ever.”’

Revelation 7:12 – ‘…saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”’

Revelation 10:6 – ‘…and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer…’

Revelation 11:15 – ‘And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”’

Revelation 15:7 – ‘And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.’

Revelation 19:3 – ‘And a second time they said, “Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever.”’

Revelation 20:10 – ‘And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.’

Revelation 22:5 – ‘And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.’
M. εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος – unto the age of the ages

*Hebrews 1:8 – ‘But of the Son He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of His kingdom.”’

N. εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεάς τῶν αἰῶνων – unto all the generations of the age of the ages

*Ephesians 3:21 – ‘to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to *all generations forever and ever. Amen.’

P. εἰς ημέραν αἰῶνος – unto a day of age

2 Peter 3:18 – ‘but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the *day of eternity. Amen.’

Q. εκ τοῦ αἰῶνος – from the age

John 9:32 – “*Since the beginning of time* it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.”

Galatians 1:4 – ‘who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us *out of this present evil age*, according to the will of our God and Father…’

R. κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου – according to the age of this world

Ephesians 2:2 – ‘in which you formerly walked *according to the course of this world*, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.’

S. ἐπὶ τῶν αἰῶνων – before the ages

1 Corinthians 2:7 – ‘but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory.’

T. ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν αἰῶνων καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας – before all the age and now and unto all the ages

Jude 25 – ‘to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, *before all time and now and forever. Amen.’

U. τὸν νῦν αἰῶν – the present age

1 Timothy 6.17 – ‘Instruct those who are rich in *this present world* not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.’

2 Timothy 4:10 – ‘for Demas, having loved *this present world*, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia…’

Titus 2:12 – ‘instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in *the present age*’
V. εν τούτῳ τῷ αἰωνὶ οὔτε εν τῷ μέλλοντι – in this age nor in the one coming

Matthew 12:32 – “And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.”

W. εν τῷ αἰωνὶ τοῦτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ εν τῷ μέλλοντι – in this age but also in the coming one

Ephesians 1:21 – ‘far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.’

X. εν τῷ αἰωνὶ τῷ ερχοµενῷ – in the coming age

Luke 18:30 – ‘who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.’

Y. εν τοῖς αἰσιν τοῖς ἐπερχοµενοῖς – in the oncoming ages

Ephesians 2:7 – ‘in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.’

Z. συντελεία τῶν αἰωνῶν – end of the ages

Hebrews 9:26 – ‘Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’
APPENDIX 6

Matthew 24:9
Matthew 24:21
Matthew 24:29
Mark 4:17
Mark 13:19
Mark 13:24
John 16:21
John 16:33
Acts 7:10
Acts 7:11
Acts 11:19
Acts 14:22
Acts 20:23
Romans 2:9
Romans 5:3
Romans 8:35
Romans 12:12
1 Corinthians 7:28
2 Corinthians 1:4
2 Corinthians 1:8
2 Corinthians 2:4
2 Corinthians 4:17
2 Corinthians 6:4
2 Corinthians 7:4
2 Corinthians 8:2
2 Corinthians 8:13
Ephesians 3:13
Philippians 1:16
Philippians 4:14
Colossians 1:24
1 Thessalonians 1:6
1 Thessalonians 3:3
1 Thessalonians 3:7
2 Thessalonians 1:4
2 Thessalonians 1:6
Hebrews 10:33
James 1:27
Revelation 1:9
Revelation 2:9
Revelation 2:10
Revelation 2:22
Revelation 7:14
APPENDIX 7

Matthew 13:21 – ‘yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.’
Matthew 24:9 – ‘Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name.’
Matthew 24:21 – ‘for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.’
Matthew 24:29 – ‘But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken…’

Mark 4:17 – ‘and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.’
Mark 13:19 – ‘For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall.
Mark 13:24 – ‘But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light…’

John 16:21 – ‘Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world.
John 16:33 – ‘These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.’

Acts 7:10 – ‘and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.’
Acts 7:11 – ‘Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it; and our fathers could find no food.
Acts 11:19 – ‘So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.
Acts 14:22 – ‘strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”’
Acts 20:23 – ‘except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.’

Romans 2:9 – ‘There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek…’
Romans 5:3 – ‘And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance…’
Romans 8:35 – ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?’
Romans 12:12 – ‘rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer…’

1 Corinthians 7:28 – ‘But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.’

2 Corinthians 1:4 – ‘who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.’
2 Corinthians 1:8 – ‘For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life.’

2 Corinthians 2:4 – ‘For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.’

2 Corinthians 4:17 – ‘For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison…’

2 Corinthians 6:4 – ‘but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses…’

2 Corinthians 7:4 – ‘Great is my confidence in you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort. I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.’

2 Corinthians 8:2 – ‘that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.’

2 Corinthians 8:13 – ‘For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality…’

Ephesians 3:13 – ‘Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.’

Philippians 4:14 – ‘Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.’

Colossians 1:24 – ‘Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions.’

1 Thessalonians 1:6 – ‘You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit…’

1 Thessalonians 3:3 – ‘so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this ’

1 Thessalonians 3:7 – ‘for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith…’

2 Thessalonians 1:4 – ‘therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.’

2 Thessalonians 1:6 – ‘For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you…’

Hebrews 10:33 – ‘partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.’

James 1:27 – ‘This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.’

Revelation 1:9 – ‘I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.’

Revelation 2:9 – ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.’

Revelation 2:10 – ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.’

Revelation 2:22 – ‘Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.’
Revelation 7:14 – ‘And I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”’
Bibliography


