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The Second Death.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

The Second Death.

Topics.

- He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.
 - The beast and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire.
 - The first resurrection.
 - The dead are raised to the second death.
 - Tormented day and night.
 - The lake which burns with fire is the second death.
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NOTE: the purpose of this document is not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to put the words the Second Death into their context to discover whether it symbolises eternal death or everlasting torment, agony and suffering for all eternity.

HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL NOT BE HURT BY THE SECOND DEATH

- **Revelation 2:11:** 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*.

Here we are told that those who hold fast to their faith will not be hurt by the second death. This implies that those who do forsake their faith will be hurt the second death. Some believe that the only those living during Christ's millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords will be affected by the second death, but the message is for the churches so it must apply to our present age and not just to those who live during Christ's millennial reign. The phrase the second death also implies that there is a first death this of course refers to natural death (i.e., mortal death) that comes to all mankind when life departs from the physical body. The following verses will show that the second death takes place at the great White Throne Judgment when the sea, hades and death give up the dead and those that are judged unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire (a symbol of eternal death) (i.e., utter destruction and total extinction). The Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is that the second death has no power over those that have been raised in the first resurrection when Christ returns in glory (Rev. 20:5-6).

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THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET ARE CAST ALIVE INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE

- **Revelation 19:20-21:** Then the *beast* was captured, and with him the *false prophet* who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were *cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone* ²¹And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Prior to these verses Jesus is pictured riding on a white horse with flaming eyes, clothed in a robe dipped in blood with armies clothed in white linen following him on white horses. The Lord is seen with a sharp sword coming out of his mouth and ruling and striking down the nations with a bar of steel. Clearly this is all very figurative and symbolic biblical language (Revelation 19:14-17).

So why would we suddenly think that the Lake of Fire is a real lake of fire when it is amongst such symbolic language. The Lake of Fire is also called the second death which means it is a symbol of some form of death. Jesus has already told us that the second death has no power over those who have part in the first resurrection so we know that those who are resurrected to eternal glory when Christ returns will be safe from the second death. But what is the second death? To find the answer to this we need to look at what fire symbolizes, since the second death is also called the Lake of Fire. Fire destroys towns, cities, forests etc., and its fiery flames totally destroy all forms of life that they touch therefore fire is a perfect symbol of utter destruction since everything it touches turns to ashes which are blown away in the wind never to be seen again. We already know that the Lake of Fire is also called the second death so putting all this together the Lake of Fire symbolises eternal death (i.e., total extinction). This means that the beast and the false prophet and those who worship them are destroyed forever.

NOTE: brimstone refers to sulphur and sulphur dissolves to absolutely nothing whatever is thrown into it, so when the word brimstone is added to the word fire it not only magnifies the finality of the total and utter destruction of the fire, but also magnifies God's utter disdain for those who are cast into the Lake of Fire.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

- **Revelation 20:4-6:** I (John) saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they *lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.* ⁵But the *rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.* This is the *first resurrection.* ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the *first resurrection.* Over such the *second death has no power,* but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

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John in this vision sees two things:

1. The faithful in Christ who have been resurrected in the first resurrection ruling and reigning with Christ as kings and priests during his millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords over the nations.
2. The raising of the dead to the second death takes place at the end of Christ's reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

So, far we have learned that:

- The second death has no power over those who have part in this first resurrection.
- Those who attain to the first resurrection live and reign with Christ during his millennial reign on earth.
- At the end of this glorious new age the second death and the Lake of Fire takes place.

THE DEAD ARE RAISED TO THE SECOND DEATH

- **Revelation 20:10-15:** they (the nations from the four corners of the earth) (v8) marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ¹¹Then I saw a *Great White Throne and Him who sat on it,* from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the *dead, small and great, standing before God,* and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of*

Life. And the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

¹⁴Then death and hades were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

From this group of verses, we learn that all that have died and were not resurrected in the first resurrection are resurrected after the Lord Jesus Christ glorious millennial reign. At the end of Christ's millennial reign God Himself descends to earth on a great White Throne and the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead and they stand before the throne of God. If a person's name has been blotted out of the Book of Life they are cast into the Lake of Fire.

For those whose names are found in the Book of Life other heavenly books are opened and they are judged according to what is written in these books according to their works and deeds. Some are counted worthy and others are cast into the Lake of Fire (a symbol of eternal death) (i.e., total extinction).

TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT

The words, "They will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (v10) are the only words in the entire Bible that could be taken to mean that people will be tormented forever and ever (especially if a person already has a preconceived mindset that this is what the Bible teaches). Before we look further at this verse it will help to consider the following five golden rules in establishing Bible doctrine:

1. Doctrine should never be established on one or two verses (especially if they contradict the majority of other verses).
2. Doctrine should never be built from Scriptures that are full of figurative language and extreme symbolism.
3. Single verses should always be kept in the context of the surrounding verses, the chapter and the overall picture of the Bible.
4. Doctrine should never be established from parables since they are a story that teaches a moral or principal of life.
5. Scriptures should never be lifted out of their context and united with other verses that have also been lifted out of their context.

It is not only a very dangerous exercise to build doctrine when these five rules are ignored, but it is how most false teaching throughout history has been established. In verse ten we are told that when the devil, the beast and the false prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone they are tormented day and night forever and ever.

Forever: in these verses comes from the Greek word (aion) and from Strong's Concordance can refer to an age, a period of time or to an eternal age without end or to the world and the Jewish Messianic period (present or future) and the word brimstone means sulphur, which totally dissolves to nothing anything placed in it. Fire throughout the Bible is a symbol of total destruction and total extinction since fire destroys everything in its path until it is utterly consumed. When the word brimstone is added to the word fire (i.e., fire and brimstone) it magnifies two things, firstly God's utter disdain for those in focus and secondly it magnifies their utter destruction.

NOTICE: John says only the devil, the beast and the false prophet are tormented day and night forever. This is the only Scripture in the entire Bible that could be taken to imply eternal torment, and it only mentions the devil, the beast and the false prophet being the tormented ones, not all mankind.

This chapter begins: with John seeing and angel descending from heaven holding a key and a great chain and seizing a dragon and binding him up in prison for a thousand years, obviously angels do not need literal keys and chains to lock a dragon up in a prison. This chapter is full of very symbolic language even the thousand years symbolize a long period of time and a new age. Therefore to view the words, "The devil, the beast and the false prophet will be tormented day and night forever and ever literally when eternal torment is not taught anywhere else in the Bible and doctrine should never be built on one or two verses at the expense of the multitudes of verses that teach a different idea or concept is a very dangerous excise especially when the verse sits amongst such symbolic and figurative language to accept it as a literal statement. It is more fitting and harmonizes far better with all other Scriptures concerning the fate of the wicked to view this in the following two ways:

1. As biblical lofty language to graphically highlight the extreme distain, disgust, wrath and anger God has against everything that is evil and brings harm to other humans.
2. As illustrative and pictorial language to strikingly depict the absolute and utter destruction of everything that is evil and that opposes God and His will, His plans and His purposes.

For further information see the titles:

- Torment and Tormented in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- Language (includes lofty language of the Bible).
- In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE LAKE WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE IS THE SECOND DEATH

- **Revelation 21:5-8:** Then *he who sat on the throne* said, "Behold, I make all things new." And he said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."⁷ "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."⁸ "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which *burns with fire and brimstone* which is the *second death*."

The statement, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things" (v7) does not mean, "He who overcomes sin shall inherit all things." If we could reach this glorious state of perfection and sinlessness Christ died for no reason, rather it means that, "Those who hold fast their faith and faithfully follow Christ until he returns shall inherit all things." They shall inherit all things means that they will inherit eternal life and everlasting glory in contrast to the those who deliberately and consciously deny God and the Lord Jesus Christ and those who are corrupt being cast into the Lake of Fire which burns with fire and brimstone meaning they will be judged to eternal death (i.e., utter destruction and total extinction).

The Lake of Fire is also called the Second Death so the focus is death eternal and not of those outside of Christ existing in some form of conscious spirit state and being painfully and cruelly tortured by eternal evil spirit creatures called demons in a place full of fiery flames which will forever burn their bodies for all eternity so that they will never be free of the most extreme agony (as some believe). This is a gross misunderstanding of the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades, and the English word hell and a gross miss-understanding of these Scriptures and a gross miss-representation of the nature and character of God. Fire utterly consumes everything in its path and will continue burning until everything is totally destroyed, add the word brimstone (i.e., sulfur which dissolves to nothing anything put into it) to the word fire and it expresses the following two things:

1. Absolute annihilation, destruction and extinction.
2. God's utter disdain for this particular group of people.

CONCLUSION

We began this study not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to put the expression, "The second death" into its context to discover whether it symbolises eternal death in the grave or everlasting torment, agony and suffering for all eternity. We have found that these verses do not teach that the dead outside of God's Kingdom exist as some kind of conscious eternal spirit creature for all eternity in a lake of flaming fire to suffer the most extreme agony for all eternity, but rather that the Lake of Fire is a symbolic picture of eternal death (i.e., total and utter extinction).

NOTE: since much of this is controversial to traditional Christian teaching it should be mentioned that Christ will not cast anyone who has been faithful to him out of his eternal Kingdom simply because they did not understand ETERNITY. It is interesting to notice after Christ's death and resurrection most New Testament writers simply state that we will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life. This is because it is not having a clear understanding of ETERNITY that will determine our eternal fate, but believing we will be resurrected to it and our faithfulness in Christ.

For further information, see the titles:

- Death (What happens when we Die) in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.