


ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

ETERNAL DESTINIES & THE LAKE OF FIRE

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GOD HIS ANGELS & HIS SAINTS THOSE WHO'S NAMES ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET SATAN

1. THE NEW JERUSALEM NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

This is the home of God the saints and the faithful angels. It is readily understood that after the thousand years of John 20 and the "passing away" or "removal in liquid fire" of the cursed earth and the former heavens according to John's vision a new planet not preserved by sea appeared in place of the former. This was constructed with the purpose of God dwelling on earth. It was constructed to free humanity from any crying or pain. It was constructed with endless life in view.

The detail is set out in a distinct file-but it is known that this manner of life is not just eternal but diurnal for there is no night in the glorious place. It will have dimensionality not dissimilar to that of our present earth. We have no notice of fish for there are no seas and there is no death. Life is no longer dependent on eating but is sustained by the Lord through His word. Saints are nourished by fruit from the "tree of life" and the four seasons we presently have are replaced by twelve in which fruit in abundance grows. The former earth which even in the millennium could not escape the curse will be eclipsed by the glory of this latter in which there is no curse.

The highest joy and privilege of this foundation of eternity is that His saints or servants shall delight to "see His face". The gentle glorious light of God shines instead of sun and artificial illumination by night.

It is difficult to argue that the "tree of life" is to be returned to this cursed earth" during the millennium. The whole subject of what is translated the "healing of the nations" will be dealt with under this topic in the file.

Among the "continuities" of the New Jerusalem life and its paradise on **the new earth** which God promises is a means of doing service to God. The concept of "tree" allies the idea of the cross and the idea of a "resting place" or seat". The eternal purpose for the leaves is not pharmaceutical-nor is there sickness in heaven. They are not to be supposed to be the heavenly equivalent of "prayer handkerchiefs" or "alternative medicine"-they are leaves which are as useful in **worship** as for such provision as delights residents of the eternal city in their times of fellowship. Most striking of the entire subject the LORD is planning something "wooden" (ξύλος) in heaven as a vivid reminder of His **cross** with the joy and peace of which we are suited for His company and refreshing to our brethren.

2. THE LAKE OF FIRE

This is the place of trial of the beast and false prophet.(Apocalypse 19.20) and the place of ultimate torment of the devil (Apocalypse 20.10) It is spoken of in five Apocalypse contexts.

The examination of each is the subject of a separate study but what is significant about it is that it comes into play at the very threshold of the millennium.

The fact of the first consuming fire is that **it burned of itself**. Brimstone is the name for a deadly element which was anciently supposed to have averting and purificatory power. Brimstone equally was allied to divine judgment as its name was virtually "divine hallowing"-inducing awe of God. The "lake of destructive (καίωμενην) fire" is at the heart of the divine judgment.

The text of **Apocalypse 20 14-15** demands the interconnection of what I call dimension. **"Death and Hell were cast into the 'lake of fire'.** This does mean that the place where rebellious dead had been held with fear and immediate awareness of the ultimate destiny was merged with fire of this ancient and ultimate sanction in such a fashion that Hades had no longer TOPOS- regionality or a "famous place in

the universe"(such as earth enjoyed) but from the Judgment Throne this destiny that swallows life exacts its irreversible and inexorable penalty in finality.

Hell, which was said to be "under the earth". **Philippians 2.10** is related to the historic earth. Its continued relationship to the ultimate divinely prepared fiery dispersion of this present earthly world and the "age on age" fire of judgment appears to be what we read in **Apocalypse 20.14** "Then death and hell were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death" The endless flight from God ("departure" or "walk away of rebellious humanity" **Matthew 25.31**) is the destiny of those whose names are not written in the book of life. Ultimately the "lake of fire" is the destiny of "death" and "Hades" (i.e. of rebellious angels and unrepentant humanity) is the setting for the torment of three beings who defied the living God at the climax of all history (the devil the beast and the false prophet) **Apocalypse 20.10** and those who live unrepentant and without God-given faith in lives marked by committing the seven sins of the **Apocalypse 21 8**. They shall have their part in the "lake of fire" which is the ultimate judgment when life ceases in the second death –the nemesis that men and demons fear.

3. THEABYSS-Luke 8.31

The 1000 year abode of the devil. In the days of Alexander CRUDEN who developed his famous concordance the word "Abyss" is absent. The very concept of an "Abyss" is very foreign to our thinking. Another *Apocalypse reference* to the "Oil abyss" or well gives it some modern connectivity especially to fear of death.

In Apocalypse 9 we have three references to one from the sky with a key for the "shaft (φρεαρ–well) of the abyss. In this case there can be little doubt but that the products appearing as a result of the activity of industry connected to the abyss {termed "locusts"-like battle horses with a difference -they appear to be what we would term "modern combat aircraft". The matter of some significance is that their king is Apollyon-the devil-who is described as the angel of the Abyss. This then is an earthly abyss that Satan the god of war uses to destroy and kill. This **shaft of the earth Abyss** is the world-wide oil industry.

Now to deal with the full meaning of the term "Abyss" we have an illuminating use in **Luke 8.31** where the demons Christ expelled do not wish to enter "The Abyss". This might mean the "Sea" (bottom)as in Mark's account but it is far more likely to mean what it says. There is a holding place of demons where they await judgment with trembling-it is called TARTARUS.**2Peter2.4** The Greek word **ἄβυσσος** means "without bottom". There is no respite from the state of "Fallen" angels.

The "Prince of the power of the air" is consigned for 1000 years to the "Abyss" The "Abyss" is part of Creation but not necessarily of the dimensionality of our world. From **Matthew 8.16 Mark 5.11** and **Luke 8.32** (cf also **Matthew12.43-45** and **Luke 10.17-20**) we learn that the **Abyss is feared by "demons"** and that "(Fallen) Angels" are **bound** in Tartarus (**2Peter2.4**). In **Apocalypse 20.3** it is said to be a **"sealed area"** from which no return to earth is possible. Its constitution appears to be more deeply related to a lengthy lesson in divine sovereignty than in simply awaiting judgment and that lesson relates to the incorrigible pride of rebellious spirits and Satan. God has left himself an option to subject His angels not just to the university of the church but in their sin and further learning in the abyss for Christ appeared in **Tartarus** (Hades/Hell) and heralding His victory as Son of God after the deadly assaults of Satan **2Peter2.4** related to the first rebellion and the disorder promoted by rebellious angels prior to the flood.

(1)Satan fell when he was expelled from his heavenly ministry; (2) he fell as an accuser losing his authority under the ministry of Christ **Luke 10.18** and (3) he will fall again at the threshold of the millennium. (4)He will finally be cast in the lake of fire. **Apocalypse 20.10**

Satan's ambitions should be shattered by his term in Hell-but as **Apocalypse 20.7** shows his pretensions will have remained un-humbled. The world over which he had earlier taken rule will have been brought to its most glorious state ever when he will be loosed to revisit it since a people will then live who have not known his devices or testing. As **Apocalypse 20.7** shows his will to deceive the "newly ordered world" and those who had spent an idyllic life without the interference of devil or demons is unspent.

4. HELL

Josephus in his "Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades" refers to the Jewish doctrine of the division of Hades into Hell and the Lake of Fire. **Through resurrection** Josephus held that the souls of men would transmigrate to other bodies. This renewal we as Christians can postulate of Christ at His resurrection so that both then for those who appeared to many as such evidence and now upon our death when we receive a building of God we are in the good of His resurrection and live with Him in every sense.

We rejoice that Christ has the keys of "death and hell" **Apocalypse 1.18 and that when He brought sons to glory he used these Hades keys.** . Right at the outset of Revelation and sorting our view of the future the Holy Spirit assures us that Christ can deal with this area or dimension of reality. Peter shows us exactly this point through his evident knowledge received from the LORD Himself that Christ had actually been to Tartarus after His resurrection **2Peter2.4**

Paul speaks of "things under the earth" (καταχθονιον) bowing the knee to Christ. **Philippians 2.10** As entombment was the means of burial among Jews he is not speaking of bodies in the physical grave but rather a realm of "gods" lower than the earth but in attachment to it. Mankind has pooh-poohed these ancient ideas and I suppose our enlightenment scholars would argue that Paul has adopted a Greek cosmology. I believe Paul was correct and what he is saying is that Hell though in a different dimension is related to this earth and its destiny in such a fashion that at death translation to it is automatic for those who like the angels who rebelled know no repentance and die in sin. cf **Matthew 25.41**

I have developed within a separate file what our LORD has to say about the question of whether man lives on in Hell after the second death or if all being becomes extinct as the revered John Stott teaches.

As to our fuller understanding of this realm in its eternal association-Hell's perpetual association with the "Lake of Fire" becomes a matter of first importance. cf **Apocalypse 20.14** "Death and Hell were cast into **the lake of fire**" or "eternal fire" which "has been prepared" for the devil and his angels".

(πυρ το αιωνιον το ητοιμασμενον τω διαβολος μαι τοις αγγελοις αυτου) is the fearful place where angels and men in wicked rebellion are destined to be "cast".

If we assume that Hell can be opened to deliver to judgment we are not equally to assume that "the Lake of Fire" has a way out. It is like the difference between circling a planet from which astronauts can re-emerge and a black hole from which there is no escape but rather dissolution. In Apocalypse 20.10 we read that before the judgement the beast and false prophet **had been cast into the lake of fire** and it would appear that the words "they will have been tested" Βασισθεσονται refers to the Beast and False Prophet who have of course later to face the throne of judgment. **The "day and night" torture is a testing on the opposition to Christ-the βασιμος or "touchstone" which is of a temporal nature until the final judgment.** The "for ever and ever" speaks of eras passing on earth and of many lifetimes. **It is not eternal else these escape the judgment of the Throne which is impossible for "every knee shall bow".** Thus Rev20.14 is the final sanction, namely when death and hell are cast into the Lake of fire. There is no time measure applied-it is the ending for all eternity of rebellion-it represents a lost "eternal life" and a cessation of being and the "losing of one's own soul" as our Lord said. It is death-the "second death" from which none emerges either to "life" or to a "third death". Jesus in John3.16 used the word "perish". Solomon used the words "The spirit of man is **the candle of the Lord**" to be lit and extinguished. Three times Solomon couples "Hell" with "Destruction" and so the Jewish association of Josephus on the "Lake" and the "Pit" of Hades is in concord with Solomon and he is in agreement with what our Lord showed John in Apocalypse 20. Moses said "I set before you blessing and cursing -life and death". Jesus said "Whosoever believes in Him should not perish" and in parallel "Fear not him that can kill the body but Him that can kill both **body and soul** in Hell." From these determinations there is no appeal or argument.

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For a more wide-ranging treatment see "Christianity and Time Monograph No.10