



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 41
Issue 1012

"The Lake of Fire – the Second Death" Is Symbolic (i.e., Not Literal)

by — De L. Trefethen

... This is the second death – the lake of fire (Unveiling 20:14, CV¹).

Key Points:

"The Lake of Fire and the Second Death" are for purifying and transforming.....8517
"The Lake of Fire and the Second Death" are God's Great Reset.....8518
The Second Death undoes all the work of the first death....8518

The "lake of fire" is the death of death.8518
The "lake of fire" is the further manifestation of the love of God.....8522
To any Greek, a "lake of fire and brimstone" would mean a "lake of divine purification.".....8522

The spirit of God tells us from the very first verse what to expect from the book of the Unveiling / Revelation.



the wild beast, and those worshiping its image. Living, the two were cast into the lake of fire burning with sulphur (19:20).

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, which God gives to Him, to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly; and He signifies it, dispatching through His messenger to His slave John (Revelation 1:1).

And the Adversary who is deceiving them was cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the wild beast and where the false prophet are also. And they shall be tormented day and night for the eons of the eons (20:10).

Signify: be a symbol of; a thing or concept denoted by a sign.

And death and the unseen were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death – the lake of fire (:14).

Symbol: something used to represent something else.

And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (:15).

Thus, the Lake of Fire "signifies" something else, i.e., it is NOT a literal fire.

Yet the timid, and unbelievers, and the abominable, and murderers, and paramours, and en-

We find "the Lake of Fire" recorded several times in the Unveiling.

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And the wild beast is arrested, and with it the false prophet who does the signs in its sight, by which he deceives those getting the emblem of

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1. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references throughout are from the CV.



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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 41, No. 1012 – March 18, 2024

Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);

- union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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chanters, and idolaters, and all the false – their part is in **the lake burning** with fire and sulphur, which is **the second death** (21:8).

What is “the Lake of Fire” a symbol of then?

Keeping in mind that this book is a book of *symbols* – meaning the thing spoken of is symbolic of something that is NOT literal, w “the Lake of Fire” is NOT a material thing.

The verse says that “the Lake of Fire” **IS** “the Second Death.” Thus, “the Lake of Fire” is NOT a literal fire, nor is “the Second Death” a literal death.

“The Second Death” does NOT signify dying a second time, and because this does NOT signify dying a second time, we can conclude that this death is of a different character and nature than the first death.

No one will literally die a second time. So then, what kind of death is “the Second Death”?

In Scripture, fire is often used figuratively – to purify, or purge. Therefore, we can see by inference that “the Lake of Fire – the Second Death” is for purifying and transforming.

We should come to understand that this purging is what God’s judgment accomplishes – to make right all that is wrong.

“Death” and the “Unseen” (*i.e.*, the grave²) are cast into the Lake of Fire. The “Unseen” is defeated when ALL that are in it are resurrected, and Death is NO more when ALL who have died are vivified. Death and the Grave are set right via “the Lake of Fire – the Second Death.”

What would be the purpose in dying a second time? We know that God’s “judgement” is corrective – to right all that is wrong. We know that “fire” in Scripture is for purifying. We know that Scripture states that God is a “consuming fire.” What gets consumed by God’s all-consuming fire? Everything that is wrong, *i.e.*, death and the grave are consumed by the resurrection of ALL and the vivification of ALL – that is what the Consummation is all about.

God’s “Lake of Fire-Second Death” sets ALL things - RIGHT.

2. [Editor:] “G86, *hadēs* ... properly *unseen*, that is, “Hades” or the place (state) of departed souls. – SEC

“The English word is from the Anglo-Saxon *hel*, Genitive case *helle* = a hidden place, from the Anglo-Saxon *helan* = to hide.” – E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), *CB*, App. 131



Rightly Dividing Israel's Prophetic Kingdom – With Special Emphasis on The Overlooked Pre-Millennial “Kingdom of the Heavens” (A Comprehensive Compilation)

Editors: Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., André Sneidar

342 pages
1st Ed., A4 (8.3” x 11.7”),
87 chapters, with charts
and appendices, from 22
authors.

See [order form](#) under
“Compilations.”

There are enormous amounts of prophecy that were given to Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures that are yet to be fulfilled. Most believers simply follow some version of Christendom’s eschatology, futilely attempting to force the enormity of Israel’s prophetic scene into a few extremely abridged time periods. From this shallow vantage point, it is believed that more time has passed in God’s ages than remains. This couldn’t be further from the truth. Multiplied millennia remain, more than have yet transpired, for the fulfillment of all of the glorious plans that God has revealed in His Word. Far from being near the “end” of something prophetic, the span of God’s eonian plan is immense, and our placement is early in its timeline. Much more of God’s prophetic program remains than man’s feeble eschatologies allow.

The intention herein is to present an alternative view to the confusing message of the traditional Evangelical concept of prophecy, thus opening the door to a consideration of the idea of a Pre-millennial Kingdom as the fulfillment of many of God’s promises to Israel to have their kingdom in the Earth.

All of the material in this book, taken together, is a wonderful resolution to the confusion of the conventional religious theology that has muddled the minds of sincere Bible students for centuries. While we may live in the Secret Administration, that doesn’t necessarily mean that God’s Word regarding His plans for Israel must be a mystery to us.

We might coin “*the Lake of Fire – the Second Death*” as **God's Great Reset**. Selah.

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God's seconds are never duplicates of the first, but are always better, higher and more powerful than the firsts, and used to counterbalance all of the action of the firsts, and MUCH MORE – He always saves the best until last.

All Bible statements prove that the two deaths are absolutely unlike, and that the two are opposite and antagonistic.

The Second Death undoes all the work of the first death in the same manner that the last Adam undid all the work of the first Adam. Not to nullify the purpose being wrought out by the plan of God in the firsts, but to bring a release from the firsts in a MUCH MORE manner of majesty and glory and power and scope of coverage, into the greater and glorious things of God.

Creation was made subject to vanity for a purpose!

Sin was allowed for wise ends, but when those ends have been secured it will have to cease to exist. The purpose is not nullified, but the means whereby the purpose has been executed shall be done away.

— J. Preston Eby
“The Fire of God and the Second Death”
[Bible Student's Notebook 137](#)

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Interestingly, our word “fire” comes from the Greek word *pur*. Our words “purify” and “purge” come from this root. We see instances in the Old Testament where fire is indeed used to purify.

So, could it be that the “*Lake of Fire*” is the presence of God – as when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush – purifying and refining instead of tormenting? One thing we do know: the “*Lake of Fire*” will fulfill God's purposes in some way, and we do not read of any of its participants remaining there “forever and ever.”

I never could understand how God, Who is a God of love, could torment forever in fire those who did not accept Jesus Christ as Savior in this short lifetime. I can fully understand the “*Lake of Fire*” if its purpose is refinement and purification: consistent with the love of God, and with His ultimate goal of saving all creation at the end of the ages.

— Bob Evely
“God's Will for All to Be Saved”
(excerpt, Tidbits of Truth) [Bible Student's Notebook 913](#)

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The “*last*,” or “*final enemy*” (EB), that He will “*destroy*,” or “*abolish*” (CV, HCSB, PNB), is “*death*.” This will be done with the “*Lake of Fire*” – the death of death.

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
“The Consummation & Christ's Consummate Rule”
[Bible Student's Notebook 957](#)

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Many see God's judgments as an end within themselves, rather than a means to an end. There are coming some wonderful days in the future, days of divine judgment, when God shall apply the refiner's fire to His creation. As in the due process of gold's and silver's refinement, these days will remove all of the stains, disgraces and sins of the “*former things*.”

Refinement's purging fire is indeed a most gracious act, producing a gloriously positive loss. It will remove all that wishes to be forgotten – “*the former things are passed away*.”

Fire is such a wonderful blessing to our daily lives. We make profitable use of it every day. The only dangerous fire – one that is to be feared – is a fire that is out of control. Be assured that the God Who “*is Love*” (I John 4:8, 16), and Whose love is a “*consuming fire*” (Hebrews 12:29) – is not out of control. As Fanny Crosby wrote in her hymn, He “doeth all things well.”

(see **LAKE OF FIRE**, last page)



Editor's Desk

2023 in Review

It's very humbling to begin another year of publication. Thinking back, we are thankful that 2023 was a fruitful year for this work. We certainly offer heartfelt thanks to all of those who so *faithfully* co-labor with us to make this work possible.

New Titles



Boxes of new books coming in from our printer.

In 2023 we were grateful to have had 11 new titles and/or editions released by Bible Student's Press, bringing our total published works to 560.

Growing Contacts



Post Office hods of new orders awaiting the mail carrier.

Since we began publishing, we have been keeping a database of those who have ordered our literature. In 2023 we had 764 new contacts, an average of 2 per day. This brings our list at the end of the year to 11,066. It is indeed humbling to have a slow, yet steady

interest in the truths that we share.

We know that some of our contacts are merely curious concerning a particular theme. But we rejoice nevertheless that these literature "seeds" are scattered out remotely across the nation and even the world.

We personally know the power that the printed page has had on our own lives, and how many books have had a lasting impact on us. We have seemingly stumbled across many of these at a used bookstore, or yard sale. Thus, we have no doubt that the tens of thousands of books that are now out there, even if they are not yet in the hands of those who appreciate and embrace their truths, are simply awaiting divine germination.

eBooks

Finally, after many years of steady requests from our readers, in 2023 the process began of making eBooks



Our Collection of eBooks

available. This was the result of a tremendous labor of love from our beloved associate Steve Martin, who is spearheading this invaluable project. 16 titles are currently available through [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Meetings

2023 saw two wonderful gatherings for study and fellowship. We are truly thankful to our gracious host, Will Marshall, who held a conference in Birmingham, AL in January, and Jim Burson who, due to very



limited housing, hosted a small invitation-only men's retreat at his cabin in Amesville, OH in October. We are also thankful for those who sacrificed to travel and join us for these times together.

Also, at the end of April, André Sneidar came up from VA for a week for his annual visit to work on



Andy & Clyde with our host Will Marshall.

publishing projects. We schedule this to spearhead new projects as well as for much needed fellowship.



Birmingham Gathering.



Amesville, OH



Our host Jim Burson preparing homemade soup.

During his visit Steve Martin came over for a day, and among other things, Nathan gave us a tour of the airport.



Johnstown airport.

A Local Expansion

Because of the lack of housing here at the Abbey, Stephen Hill acquired additional living space just down the road. At the beginning of 2023, he purchased a duplex about a minute's drive right down the road.

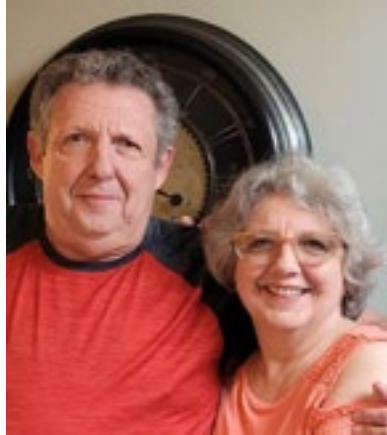
Half of the year was dedicated to remodeling it into nice living quarters for the family under his immediate care.



The Hill Abbey.

New Family Members

2023 also brought us new family members – long-“lost” ones at that! Through DNA testing, both Cindy and Janet found



Cindy & Roger.

older half-brothers that they never knew that they had. They reached out to both, and amazingly they were open to relationships, and that has progressed wonderfully. Janet’s brother Joe lives locally here in PA, and Cindy’s brother Roger lives in NC. You can’t have enough family. You can’t have enough people to love, and be loved by.

This whole DNA experience gives us something else to look forward to in the resurrection: meeting all of the family members whom we never even knew that we had!



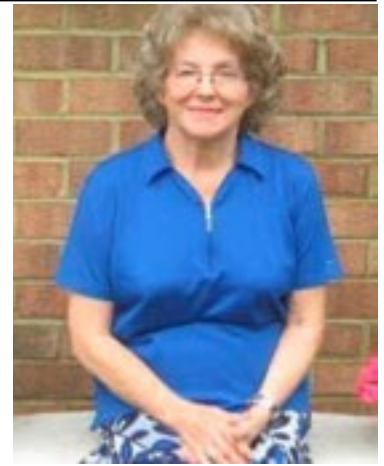
Janet & Joe.

The Normal Trials of Life

Humanity is born to misery (Job 5:7, CV).

As with all of our readers, we here have not been exempted from our own share of that which is “*common to all humanity*” (I Corinthians 10:13, TCNT). The normal trials of life are the steady lot of us all, and as for the seniors of our household, we are more keenly

aware of our mortality (“*to die shall you be dying*” – Genesis 2:17, CV). This past year we have contended with CKD, skin cancer, a frozen shoulder, the flu, pneumonia, gout, and a torn rotator cuff; howbeit, these are minor trials compared to what other dear saints have had to face.



Shirley Hyde (1938-2023)

Year’s end brought the experience of the final work of mortality – death.



Charlene “Charlie” Close
(1952-2023)

Cindy painfully said “goodnight” to both her oldest sister (November 26), and to her precious mother (December 28). Although hard, there is a steadfast expectation, knowing that our final enemy, death, will one day be destroyed, and life will gloriously break forth for *all*, in

resurrection! So, for now we merely say, “Good night, we will see you two in the morning!” And what a morning that will be! Indeed, the best is yet to come!

With love and appreciation,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
The Pilkington Abbey
Paint, PA

TOPICS:

Major: Editor’s Desk; Year in Review;

Minor: Abbey; Death; Family; Meetings; Resurrection; Trials

LAKE OF FIRE (continued from page 8518)

In the Bible, fire is presented as having a purging effect. It does so many things: it cleanses, frees, reduces, refines. The “lake of fire” is but the further manifestation of the love of God – of the love of His consuming fire – and it is defined by John as “the second death” (Revelation 21:8). Paul teaches us that, “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (I Corinthians 15:26).

That’s what the “lake of fire” is – it is “death.” So, it shall be destroyed; and the only way to “destroy” death is by “resurrection”! The “lake of fire” is just a part of the transition from death to life.

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
“The Divine Crisis”
[Bible Student’s Notebook 930](#)

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The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death
(I Corinthians 15:26).

The Greek word *theion* translated “brimstone” is exactly the same word *theion* which means “divine.”... The verb derived from *theion* is *theioo*, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See *Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon*, 1897 Edition). To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a “lake of fire and brimstone” would mean

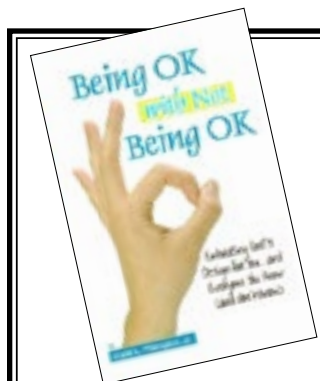
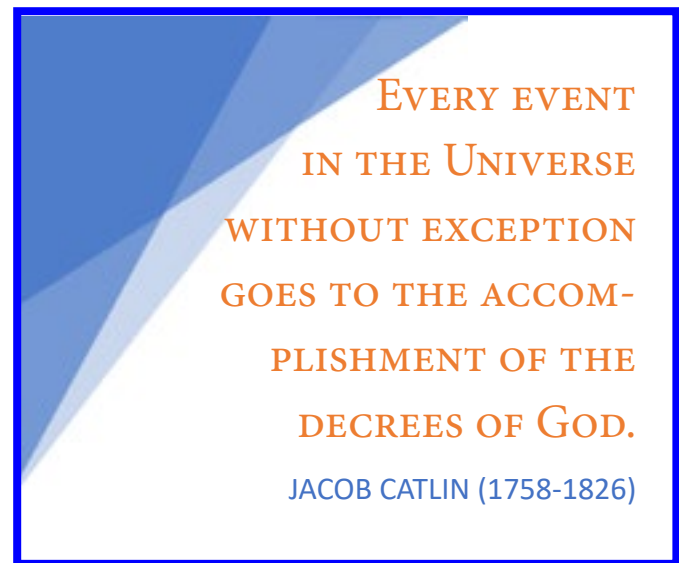
a “lake of divine purification.” ... Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it.

— Charles H. Pridgeon (1863-1932)
“The Lake of Fire and Brimstone”
[Bible Student’s Notebook 531](#). Taken from [Is Hell Eternal, or Will God’s Plan Fail?](#) (1920)
see [order form](#) under “Other Authors”

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: Lake of Fire; Second Death
Minor: Grave; Hell



Being OK with Not Being OK – Embracing God’s Design for You ... and Everyone You Know (and Don’t Know)

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

For now, you’re broken, and you aren’t going to be “fixed.” Granted, you may have some days that are better than others, some circumstances that seem to indicate that you are “OK,” but the wearisome cycle simply will recur.

Thus it is by design – by divine design. Father is bringing you to a place where you are OK with not being OK, where you simply rest in His current purpose and plan in your training and development for that grand and magnificent culmination that He has so wonderfully and skillfully designed especially for you – in your next life.

I have read it completely three times. I always refer back to certain chapters. – FL

When I read it, it was like I could breathe again. Your calming words lead me to a greater realization. – OH

Thank you for this! It brought such peace and rest to me, and brought a greater understanding of God’s great love for all His creation. That He alone is in control of everything is mind boggling to say the least! – NM

So fantastic! Such peace!! – Australia