

# “Burn On or Burn Up?”

by Andrew Patrick

A ready answer by the Holy Scriptures for Robert Whitefield  
who recently published

“A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO THE DOCTRINE SOUL SLEEP AND  
THE BURN UP DOCTRINE (ANNIHILATION)”

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(Ezekiel 3:6-9, Luke 12:11-12, Acts 5:27-29, 1 Peter 3:15-17)

“The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. *Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.”

(Jeremiah 23:28-30)

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## **An Answer to Robert Whitefield: Burn On or Burn Up?**

By Andrew Patrick

Robert Whitefield recently distributed a new publication titled “A Biblical Response to the Doctrine Soul Sleep and the Burn Up Doctrine (Annihilation).” However, he has not stated to whom he is responding, and thus this is left to the reader’s imagination.

Yet this format does allow his statements to be analyzed, and where he has put forth questions these may be answered. For it is written, that we must “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2) and yet in another place we are told to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). Therefore, let us heed the admonition of the apostle Paul who instructed us to “prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

**Act 17:11 KJV**

(11) These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

### **Part I: Introduction**

Robert has chosen to attack what he calls “two separate doctrines” in combination, namely, what he terms: “soul sleep”, that is, that death is a state of insensibility and unconsciousness; and “the burn up doctrine”, meaning that the wicked shall be “burnt up” (annihilated) in the final judgment. Is it reasonable to combine these two beliefs?

Although many modern theologians attempt to separate these statements from each other, we do agree in this one point: they are properly treated as a single unit, for if death is to have any meaning at all, it must be the cessation of life and all consciousness. Any other definition would defy the commonly understood meaning of the word, and be a form of “life.” Thus, if death is truly death, then the state of death is constant regardless of the cause of death, whether one has perished by sword, water, fire, or any other means.

In contrast, any other theology must insist that man cannot truly die, that he is “immortal” without the gift of eternal life. Yet if man is immortal, why would he be called “mortal” (see Job 4:17) and why would we be told that Christ only hath immortality (see 1 Timothy 1:17, 6:16) and that immortality is a gift, to be put on in the last day, at the resurrection of the dead, when the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our body? (see Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 15:53-54, 2 Corinthians 4:11).

**Rom 6:21-23 KJV**

(21) What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

(22) But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

(23) For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Following Robert's lead, I will also combine the doctrines of "soul fly" and "soul fry" (the teachings that men ascend to heaven when they die or suffer conscious punishment before the judgment) with the doctrine of the "immortal soul", for the acceptance of one begs the other. The two doctrines stand or fall together. If the dead are conscious, then death is without meaning, and if man is immortal, then he cannot be destroyed.

Joh 3:16 KJV

(16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Is eternal life an innate quality of man, or is it the gift of God? Paul said it was a gift, and Jesus clearly stated that it was not something possessed by man already, but without it he should perish (see Romans 6:21-23 and John 3:16, above). Thus, we shall begin our analysis of his paper comparing these two teachings. On one hand, man is mortal but shall be resurrected to judgment, either to receive the gift of eternal life or to be utterly destroyed by fire, or on the other hand, man is already immortal, shall ascend into bliss or suffer punishment *before* judgment, without requiring eternal life as the gift of God, and shall live for ever whether it be it in bliss, discomfort, angst, agony, or boredom.

## Part II: Who Holds to these Beliefs?

Robert has attempted to paint anyone who would disagree with the "immortality of the soul" as being associated with "Jehovah's Witnesses", "Mormons", and "Seventh Day Adventists." He then labels these as "cults" and "false religions" and for good measure names one "Arnold Murray" as a "false teacher."

What are these groups and who is Arnold Murray? Is his information accurate? Does it really matter? For the Christian it makes no difference what men say, but rather it is more important to consider the words of scripture. But Robert seems to feel that this does matter, so we shall consider this angle.

Pope Leo X, "Apostoloici regimis", Monday, December 19th, 1513

"Damnamus et reprobamus omnes assertentes animam intellectivam mortalem ess."

(We do condemn and reprobate all who assert that the intelligent soul is mortal.)

The first irony lies in the fact that "immortality of the soul" is a **Catholic** doctrine. It is plainly taught in the **Islamic** Koran, and before this it was the doctrine of the Greek philosophers, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, all of these being **pagan** religions. It is also a cornerstone of the modern **New Age** movement. In contrast, the innate mortality of the human soul and the resurrection of the dead is a uniquely **Jewish and Christian** doctrine. By his own measure, Robert is teaching a doctrine held by those he labels as "cults" and "false religions."

The second irony is observed when Robert recognized that the Anabaptists taught the "sleep of the soul" and the annihilation of the wicked, because these Christians (called "Anabaptists" because they baptized by immersion, esteeming not the infant sprinkling of the Catholics) are the primitive Baptists of the Protestant Reformation. Robert claims to be Baptist himself, and thus he seems to have unknowingly attacked his own heritage.

For those of us that will abide by the scriptures only, the association suggested by Robert is of little consequence and no real effect. The proclamation of a sixteenth-century Pope has no weight, and Plato is not gospel. The question we all should be asking is, “What saith the scripture?”

### **Part III: The Sleep of Death: What Saith the Scripture?**

Robert has created a listing of at least ten passages of scripture that speak against his position, citing from the books of Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, John, Acts, and 2 Peter. Yet his statement is misleading, because he seems to think that these scriptures were a complete or comprehensive summary of “difficult scriptures” for his doctrine. A more accurate listing would include totals that would number in the hundreds.

Because of this massive volume of scriptural support, not every verse can be given in this answer. For example, within the introduction of this paper, eight passages have been cited as support against the “immortal soul” but not one of these was acknowledged by his list. Ironically, even after creating such a limited “list” Robert has failed to address any of the points that he himself assigned to his opponent, which should be enough by itself to count as a “loss” within the realm of an apologetic argument. When one makes up an argument for a perceived opponent, one ought to be able to answer it.

This short list that Robert has purposely neglected will be quoted within an appendix for the benefit of the reader, and we will proceed to examine the seven arguments that he has raised concerning the state of death until Christ’s return, which in contrast, actually does seem to be a complete listing of “proof texts” supporting his position. Since he has chosen these for himself, we must assume that he has put his best foot forward.

#### **Question One: Genesis 35:18**

Gen 35:18-19 KJV

(18) And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

(19) And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem.

Robert asks:

“Genesis 35:18 speaks of the death of Rachel in giving birth to her last child, Benjamin. This verse tells us that her soul departed. Why? It departed because when the body dies then the soul and spirit continue on.”

The question itself is an example of circular logic: Robert assumed the very thing he sought to prove. The scripture is clear enough: Rachel died, and she was no longer with them. This remains a common euphemism for death unto this very day. As spoken in Genesis 2:7, God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man *became* a living soul. When Rachel still had the breath of life, she was a living soul. When she died, she was with them no longer, and she was *not*.

What Robert will be at a loss to find is any evidence within the pages of the Bible that would establish that Rachel exists in any conscious state until the resurrection of the dead. To the contrary, the Bible affirms that souls die, and as stated by Ezekiel:

Eze 18:4 KJV

(4) Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: **the soul that sinneth, it shall die.**

Eze 18:20 KJV

(20) **The soul that sinneth, it shall die.** The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Robert said that “when the body dies then the soul and spirit continue on.” The Holy Ghost spoke through Ezekiel and says that the soul that sinneth shall die, and the New Testament reminds us that all have sinned (Romans 3:23, 5:12, 1 John 1:10).

If we were to examine the Hebrew text behind the word “soul” as used in both Genesis 2:7 and Genesis 35:18, we would find that this same word *nephesh* (soul) is also used for beasts and all things that have breath of life. For example,

- “the moving creature that hath life” (Genesis 1:20)
- “every living creature that moveth” (Genesis 1:21)
- “the living creature” (Genesis 1:24)
- “every living creature” (Genesis 2:19)
- “every living creature” (Genesis 9:12)

Although the English typically reserves the word “soul” to refer to men, it is not improper to use the word in reference to fish, birds, and beasts, just as the word “creature” can refer to men as well.

Num 31:28 KJV

(28) And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: **one soul of five hundred**, *both* of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep:

Rev 16:3 KJV

(3) And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: **and every living soul died in the sea.**

Mar 16:15 KJV

(15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel **to every creature.**

This meaning can still be observed in the well recognized distress call “SOS” which stands for “save our souls.” When this call is received on the open water, it is a request for immediate aid to save their lives, not an urgent call for a preacher.

Psa 37:36 KJV

(36) **Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not:** yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

At this point, it is incumbent upon Robert to prove by scripture that Rachel herself exists in a conscious state. If he cannot do this, then this particular challenge is defeated.

## Question Two: Luke 23:43

Luk 23:42-43 KJV

(42) And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

(43) And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Robert states:

“Luke 23:43 speaks of Jesus hanging on the cross between two thieves. One seems to repent and turn to Jesus to be saved. He cries out for Jesus to remember him and Jesus tells him that today this man would be with Jesus in Paradise. He did not say I will come for you at some point but today referring to that very day that the thief and Jesus died.”

Jesus did not tell the thief that he would be with him that day. As the text cited above correctly says, he said, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” “Shalt” is the giving of a command or a decree, and when such a pronouncement is made, it does not necessarily indicate the date of fulfillment.

Essentially, Robert is reading this verse as if it were either translated as:

1. “Verily I say unto thee, to day wilt thou be with me in paradise” or
2. “Verily I say unto thee, thou wilt be with me in paradise this day.”

But, for the moment, let us examine the various contradictions that his interpretation would create, and it will become apparent why our Authorized Text is translated as such.

First, Jesus could not have been in paradise within *the last remaining hours* of that Passover day in 30 A.D., because Jesus himself promised that he would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights (see Matthew 12:39-40). If Robert is correct, then Jesus lied, making him a false prophet and not a perfect savior for our sins.

Mat 12:39-40 KJV

(39) But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

(40) For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; **so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

**Contradiction One:** Robert says Jesus was in Paradise *that day*, but Jesus said he would remain in the heart of the earth *for the next three days and nights*.

Second, the apostle Peter, speaking by the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, told thousands that Jesus was the Christ, and that his soul was not left in hell, but that God had raised him up on the third day. Jesus could not have been in hell *and* paradise at the same time.

Act 2:29-32 KJV

(29) Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

- (30) Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;
- (31) He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, **that his soul was not left in hell**, neither his flesh did see corruption.
- (32) This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

**Contradiction Two:** Robert says that Jesus was in Paradise that day, but Peter says that Jesus was in hell for the next three days and nights, but his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption, and God raised him up after that time.

Third, immediately after his resurrection, on the first day of the week, Jesus himself told Mary that he had not yet ascended to his Father. He forbade Mary to touch him when he had not yet ascended, yet later in the evening he instructed people to touch him, proving that he ascended to the Father sometime between those two points. Christ our Passover was also our wave sheaf offering (see Leviticus 23:11-16).

**Joh 20:17-20 KJV**

- (17) Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father:** but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God.
- (18) Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.
- (19) Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.
- (20) And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

**Luk 24:36-40 KJV**

- (36) And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.
- (37) But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.
- (38) And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
- (39) Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.
- (40) And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

**Contradiction Three:** Early on the first day of the week, Jesus said he had not yet ascended to his Father, but Robert insists that Jesus must have already been in Paradise.

Paradise cannot mean hell. Paul speaks of paradise as the “third heaven” and Jesus speaks of paradise as being a reward to him that overcometh, containing the tree of life (see 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4, Revelation 2:7). Revelation also tells us that this tree of life, i.e. “paradise”, will be in the Holy City that descends out of heaven after the final judgment of the dead (see Revelation 22:2).

Plainly speaking, if Robert is correct, then Jesus and Peter are liars, or we must believe that heaven is in hell, and we might as well insist that black is white and up is down (see Isaiah 5:20-21). Given that his interpretation has created so many plain contradictions

already, perhaps we should look again at this verse, reading it a little more carefully, paying more attention to both the context and the grammar this time around.

Luk 23:42-43 KJV

- (42) And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.  
(43) And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt** thou be with me in paradise.

**Evidence from Context:** In the context of this passage, the thief tells us the time to which he is referring, for he plainly requests, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” Jesus has not yet come into his kingdom, which is plainly proved by the whole scripture. We are exhorted to pray “thy kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10, Luke 11:2) and we are plainly told that his kingdom shall be established at his coming.

Mat 16:28 KJV

- (28) Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see **the Son of man coming in his kingdom.**

Luk 19:11-15 KJV

- (11) And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, **and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.**  
(12) He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, **and to return.**  
(13) And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.  
(14) But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.  
(15) **And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom,** then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

1Co 15:22-24 KJV

- (22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.  
(23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's **at his coming.**  
(24) Then *cometh* the end, **when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God,** even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

2Ti 4:1 KJV

- (1) I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead **at his appearing and his kingdom;**

Christ has not yet returned, and he has not yet come into his kingdom. The request made by the thief was not to be taken down off the cross, but to be remembered at the latter day, when Christ the Lord would come into his kingdom.

1Th 2:19 KJV

- (19) For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? **Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?**

1 Thessalonians 2:19 also happens to be a troublesome verse for the “Pre-tribulation Rapture” theory, because it affirms that we will be in His presence at His coming. If Paul meant to say that we would be in the presence of the Lord when we died, or when we were to be “raptured” seven years *before* Christ’s coming, then why would he speak thus?

**Evidence from the Grammar:** The passage is translated “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” If this sentence is diagrammed, the “to day” modifies the “shalt,” not the “with me in paradise.” The common application of this principle is witnessed when a check is issued for payment: the date printed on the check represents when the promise is made, which may or may not be the same day as when the check is redeemed.

Many people seem to have difficulties understanding English grammar, especially the difference between “shall” and “will,” so please bear with me as I demonstrate their meaning from scripture. To begin, I will show that “shall” cannot be freely interchanged with “will” without dramatically changing the intended meaning.

Exo 20:4 KJV

(4) **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image**, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

Exo 32:7-8 KJV

(7) And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*:

(8) They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I **commanded** them: **they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it**, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Did God say that Israel would not make any graven image? Or did he issue a command or a decree that they should not make any graven image? If one were to substitute the word “wilt” (or “will”) in Exodus 20:4, God would be proved a liar. If additional evidence is needed, one need only consult any decently thick dictionary to discover that “shall” and “will” have two different definitions.

**Additional Evidence from Grammar:** Specifically, I will demonstrate the intended meaning of “to day shalt” using three scriptural examples. Our first example is from the book of Genesis.

Gen 2:17 KJV

(17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: **for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

Gen 3:19 KJV

(19) In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: **for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.**

Gen 5:5 KJV

(5) And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: **and he died.**

God promised that man would be subject to death in the day he took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). After Adam violated the command and triggered the conditions, this sentence was implemented and made sure, and God further defines death for Adam, saying “unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). This promise was fulfilled after nine hundred and thirty years, when we are told that Adam died (Genesis 5:5).

Our second example is found in the book of Samuel:

1Sa 18:21 KJV

(21) And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, **Thou shalt this day be my son in law** in *the one of the twain*.

In this second case where Saul promises David that he shall be his son in law, a great many events occur between the date of the promising (“this day”) and the actual fulfillment (“be my son in law.”)

1. Saul commands his servants to commune with David secretly (verse 22)
2. David talks with the servants (verse 23)
3. The servants relay the messages back to Saul (verse 24)
4. Saul puts forth a challenge to David (verse 25)

1Sa 18:26 KJV

(26) And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: **and the days were not expired**.

Verse 26 is sufficient evidence alone to demonstrate that becoming the “son in law” did not actually occur the same day the promise was issued, of “Thou shalt this day ... be my son in law in one of the twain” because it says the days (plural) were not expired. However, we still have more events that happen in between:

5. David and his men kill 200 Philistines (verse 27)
6. David presents his trophies to the king (verse 27)
7. Saul gives David Michal his daughter to wife (verse 27)

How far away did these Philistines live? How long did it take to gather enough people to kill 200 Philistines, or alternatively, for David to fight 200 Philistines all by himself while his men harvested the foreskins? And considering the circumstances, wouldn't Michal at least insist that David take a bath before they had a royal wedding? It is inconceivable that Saul expected all of these events to take place before the day expired at sunset.

Our third example is in the book of Kings:

1Ki 2:37 KJV

(37) For it shall be, *that* **on the day thou goest out**, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that **thou shalt surely die**: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

Concerning Solomon, was he prophesying that Shimei would meet at untimely death before the end of the day if he were to cross the brook Kidron? Solomon was a wise man,

so surely he wouldn't make an unlikely prediction or a promise that he had no power to keep. However, after three years Shimei did break the conditions of his safe conduct, and the following events occurred (starting in 1 Kings 2:39):

1. Shimei travels to Achish by way of saddled ass (verse 40)
2. Shimei locates his servants and brings them back again (verse 40)
3. Solomon is informed of these events (verse 41)
4. Solomon sent and called for Shimei (verse 42)

I challenge anyone to demonstrate that it is possible to travel from Jerusalem to Achish, recover at least two servants (even if the king turns them over to him) and return by the same route, all before the end of the day, all by saddled ass. Even if this were possible, Solomon would have to be informed of the event and summon Shimei to his presence, and during all of this time, Shimei was *still* alive.

What did Solomon say to Shimei after all of this had taken place?

1Ki 2:41-43 KJV

- (41) And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.
- (42) And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, **Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die?** and thou saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard *is* good.
- (43) Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

Even if one wanted to dispute the sentence structure of verse 37, Solomon clearly restates his intended meaning in verse 42: "on the day thou goest out .... thou shalt surely die." Shimei did not make Solomon a liar, but rather he was killed. The promise (sentencing) was made sure when the conditions were met (that very day) even though the fulfillment did not occur that very day.

1Ki 2:46 KJV

- (46) So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that **he died**. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

What were Robert's words on this again?

"He did not say I will come for you at some point but today referring to that very day that the thief and Jesus died."

But what does our scripture say?

Luk 23:43 KJV

- (43) And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt** thou be with me in paradise.

Contrary to Robert's commentary, Jesus spoke only concerning when he issued his decree, and said nothing concerning the actual day of its fulfillment, his ascent into

paradise, or his second coming. Robert's interpretation would contradict the very words of Jesus and Peter themselves and cannot be correct.

Further implications of the grammatically correct reading of this verse also indicate that this promise of salvation was given to this thief as the direct consequence of his repentance on that cross, evidenced by the contrite words he had spoken that very day in the presence of the Lord. This was not a pre-existing promise, and this was not a mere prediction, but it was issued on the very authority of one that could be none other than God himself.

A grammatically incorrect translation of "Today you will be with me in paradise" would weaken Christ's statement to that of a mere prediction, making Jesus appear to make a promise that he was unable to keep, for the scriptures themselves tell us that Jesus was not in paradise that day.

### Question Three: Revelation 6:9-11

#### Rev 6:9-11 KJV

- (9) And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:
- (10) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?
- (11) And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

Robert comments:

"Revelation 6:9-11 says that the 5th seal has been broken giving the time frame for what is happening. Neither the judgment nor the resurrection has taken place. In this account we find under the altar the souls of those who have been martyred while living on the earth during the tribulation. Notice that they are not a sleep and they are aware of what has happened and can even talk."

The book of Revelation is a vision, and the images it contains are highly symbolic. In the previous verses (Revelation 6:1-8) horses are running about, and he who sits on the fourth horse is named Death. I ask, does Robert maintain that these are literal horses, and that Death is actually a real person?

Symbolic elements of a vision cannot be interpreted to contradict clear scripture, or to form otherwise strange and unknown doctrines that lack scriptural support. The martyrs that were slain are not stored under an altar, whether it be upon the earth or in heaven, but if this were indeed the case, they hardly seemed to be in a state of bliss. Will Robert also claim that this must be a literal altar instead of a symbol? If so, where is this altar upon which people have literally been sacrificing *human* martyrs?

Besides this, if one must grasp at an isolated element of a prophetic vision in an attempt to establish doctrine as to the denizens of heaven, should he not interpret all visions as such, and apply them equally? After all, with such logic he could also prove that "**all dogs go to heaven.**"

Act 10:9-12 KJV

- (9) On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:
- (10) And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,
- (11) **And saw heaven opened**, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:
- (12) **Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth**, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

Notice here that this vision is given before the judgment and resurrection has taken place. It does not seem as if any of these beasts are in a sleep. This vessel descends from heaven and is received up again into heaven (Acts 10:16) so surely this is also a proof that these departed martyrs shall be united with their dear pets in heaven, is it not?

Such is the foolishness that naturally results from Robert's forced interpretation, which must also require that horses reside in heaven, in four colors (see Revelation 6:1-8).

Yet, let us consider his theory, and see what results. If these are indeed actual and literal conscious souls and not symbols, this verse would prove that they had yet to be avenged, for they cry out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" This would contradict Robert's stated position of conscious punishment before (or without) judgment as he states later on in his essay.

Additionally, contrary to his assertion, **this verse indicates that the dead do sleep**, for after they cry, they are told that they should "rest yet for a little season" until their fellow servants be killed as they were. It is also abundantly clear that these martyred saints are not portrayed as in "paradise" or "present with the Lord."

When Death rides a pale horse, we should hardly be surprised when martyred saints cry out "How long?" and are told to rest a while longer. This is a literary device commonly known as "personification" when things can speak that must normally be silent. Did not also the blood of Abel cry out from the ground? (See Genesis 4:10.)

Gen 4:9-10 KJV

- (9) And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?
- (10) And he said, What hast thou done? **the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.**

Psa 114:3-6 KJV

- (3) **The sea saw *it*, and fled:** Jordan was driven back.
- (4) **The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.**
- (5) What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?
- (6) Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?

Hab 2:11-12 KJV

- (11) **For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.**
- (12) Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!

Within a few verses in Revelation, same chapter, the kings of the earth are **speaking to the rocks**. Do these rocks have ears to hear? Does this prove that rocks are sentient beings with consciousness? I think not. This is a vision, and these *symbols* have meaning.

Rev 6:15-16 KJV

- (15) And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;
- (16) **And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us**, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

Robert's proposed interpretation has already contradicted itself, because it would also establish that the saints are not avenged nor in bliss, and even if they had been raised for "shooting" that one specific scene of Revelation, they were still told that they should go back and rest until a later time. This altar is not in heaven, for these martyrs were slain *upon the earth*, and clearly no one was being tortured in hell to avenge their blood.

Like the images of the horsemen before, this is a symbolic image. The dead were not judged, nor avenged, and as the scripture plainly saith, the dead know not any thing, not even that they are dead, and their memory is forgotten. Read the scripture.

Ecc 9:5-6 KJV

- (5) For the living know that they shall die: **but the dead know not any thing**, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.
- (6) **Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished**; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun.

#### Question Four: Luke 16:19-31

Robert writes:

"Luke 16:19-31 which is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Soul Sleep proponents want to force this in as a parable. For the sake of argument let us say that it is a parable (the author believes it to be real events described by Jesus). In the parable you still have two people that are dead and the description given is not of people who are asleep but alert, knowing things that have happened and talking which is very similar to the Revelation 6:9 passages."

There is no need to "force" the story of Lazarus and the rich man to be a parable, because by the very definition of scripture itself, Jesus did not speak to the multitudes except by parable. Jesus was speaking, a multitude was present, therefore Jesus spoke in parable. This is not difficult math.

Mat 13:10-15 KJV

- (10) And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
- (11) He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
- (12) For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

- (13) **Therefore speak I to them in parables:** because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.
- (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:
- (15) For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Mat 13:34-35 KJV

- (34) **All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:**
- (35) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Rather, one must question the motive of any one that would insist that this story would be a historical account, because this would create the following problems:

1. Jesus would have broken prophecy (contradicting Matthew 13:34-35)
2. Punishment is inflicted without judgment (contradicting Hebrews 9:27)
3. Salvation can be obtained by poverty, without the blood of Christ (see John 14:6)
4. Receiving good things would be a condemnation to hell (see Luke 16:25)
5. Abraham is the lord of hell and receives petitions from the dead (see Luke 16:24)

However, since the scripture cannot be broken, and if we accept Jesus as Christ, then we must also accept that he fulfilled every prophecy regarding himself, including the prophecy that Jesus would speak to the multitude in parables, and only by parables (see Psalm 119:160, John 10:35, Matthew 13:34). Thus, this is a parable.

Can one expect someone to understand the meaning of a parable if they stubbornly insist that it cannot be a parable at all? And is it not written that Jesus spoke in parables, “because seeing they see not, hearing they hear not, neither do they understand?” What is the point of attempting to explain a parable to someone who refuses to see the obvious, whose eyes have been blinded because they loved not the truth? (See Matthew 13:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:10.)

2Th 2:10-11 KJV

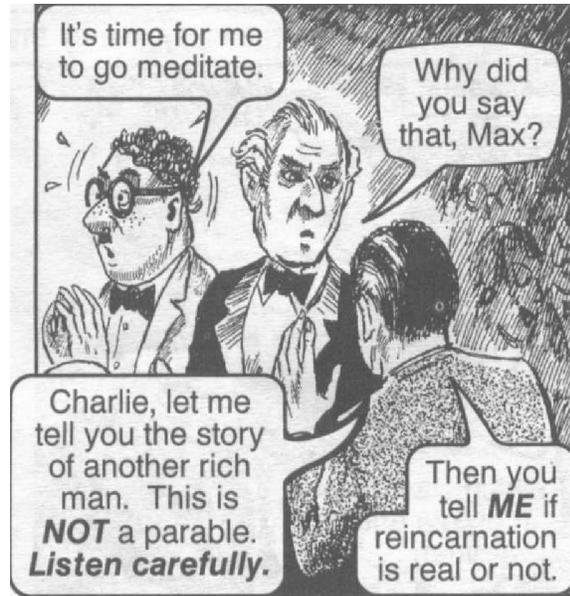
- (10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; **because they received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved.
- (11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

Typically, rabid “hellfire and brimstone” preachers must grasp at this parable and insist that it is no parable at all, but a historical account, for they otherwise lack scriptural support for their doctrine, rejecting the clear teaching of scripture that the dead are plainly dead, praise not the Lord, and don’t even know that they’re dead, that life is a vapor that vanishes away (see Psalm 115:17, Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, and James 4:14).

Their typical response is to state “This is not a parable” on their own authority without any proof at all. This tactic is well demonstrated in the Chick tract “**The Trap**” published

by **Chick publications**. In this single booklet, this flawed “because we say so” argument is used not once, but three separate times. It never seemed to enter their heads that they might need to demonstrate why this one single story would be a “beyond-the-grave history” while all others are parables.

Yet, even though Robert has declared that he personally believes that this is a true account, he has been willing to admit “for the sake of argument” that perhaps it may be a parable, yet he still argues as if this is not a parable, but rather a doctrinal dissertation concerning the state of the dead. Regardless, let us answer his questions, lest he be considered wise in his own conceit (see Proverbs 26:5):



- **Why are the two characters awake?** Because how are they supposed to talk otherwise? Without a conversation, the meaning of the parable cannot be illustrated.
- **Why do they know things that happened?** How would they talk coherently if they had amnesia, and how else would the rich man reveal his identity??
- **Is this similar to Revelation 6:9?** Hardly so, and in fact, if both passages were to be interpreted literally they would plainly contradict one another, for the saints of Revelation cried “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (see Revelation 6:10)

But since Robert has admitted (for the sake of argument, at least) that this passage is a parable, I will ask him a few questions:

1. Who is Lazarus, or rather, whom does he represent? Why is he associated with dogs that desire crumbs from the rich man’s table? (Compare Matthew 15:25-27, Mark 7:26-28, and Luke 16:20-21.)
2. Why did Jesus use the name Lazarus? Was this before or after he raised an actual Lazarus from the dead? (Compare Luke 16:31, John 11:1-12:17). Was this name calculated to rub salt in the Pharisee’s wounds, or was it prophetic?
3. Who is the rich man? Why does he wear purple and fine linen, and why does he have five brothers? Why does he call Abraham father, and why do they have Moses and the prophets? What is his name, and whom does he represent? (See Genesis 29:32-30:20, Genesis 35:23, 49:8-12, Matthew 3:9, Luke 3:8, John 8:39, 8:53). What color is the blood of the grape?
4. In Judges 9, after the sons of Jerubbaal were slain, Jotham speaks to a multitude in parable (see Judges 9:7-15). In this parable, the trees speak to one another, and seek to elect a king. The trees speak, the olive tree speaks, the fig tree speaks, the vine speaks, and the bramble speaks. Is this an indication that trees are

- sentient and have awareness? After all (to echo Robert's words) in the parable the trees are not asleep, but alert, knowing things that have happened.
5. In the parable of Judges 9, the bramble even has the power to summon fire to devour the cedars of Lebanon (see verse 15). Is this a proof that trees are suffering in tree hell right this moment as we speak?
  6. Based upon your answers to questions four and five, is the imagery and setting used to illustrate a parable sufficient to establish what would otherwise be considered a pagan doctrine that is otherwise contradicted in the bible? Is a parable allowed to establish doctrine that contradicts fifty scriptures? How about ten scriptures? What if it would only contradict five?
  7. Whom was Jesus targeting with this parable? (See Luke 16:14.)
  8. What is the meaning of this parable? (See Luke 16:14-18, see also Luke 20:9-20.)

**Luk 16:14-16 KJV**

- (14) And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.
- (15) And he said unto them, **Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.**
- (16) The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

**Question Five: 1 Peter 3:18-20**

**1Pe 3:18-20 KJV**

- (18) For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
- (19) By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
- (20) Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Robert says:

“1 Peter 3:18-20 speaks of the events that took place after Jesus died. Notice he did not go to sleep and wait for the Father to resurrect Him but He went to the spirits, which can be argued to be demons only or demons and dead people. The main point is if Jesus did not fall into soul sleep why should we expect to.”

Ironically, it seems that just several paragraphs earlier Robert was arguing that Jesus was in paradise during those three days and nights. Does he not realize that he is contradicting himself?

Regardless, where does this verse say that Jesus was “going to the spirits” while he was dead? This verse says nothing of the sort. It plainly says that he was “quickened by the Spirit” and “By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” His death

alone appeared as defeat, but by his resurrection (“quicken by the Spirit”) he preached to the spirits in prison, proclaiming victory over death and the devil.

1Pe 3:18-20 KJV

- (18) For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, **but quickened by the Spirit:**
- (19) **By which also he went and preached** unto the spirits in prison;
- (20) Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

It seems that many of these “questions” would resolve themselves if people knew how to diagram sentences, or alternatively, if they were not so eager to twist them about to try to create support for their traditions and philosophy of the “immortal soul.”

Mar 7:7-9 KJV

- (7) Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.
- (8) For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.
- (9) And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Col 2:8 KJV

- (8) Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

### Question Six: 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

1Th 5:9-11 KJV

- (9) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
- (10) Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
- (11) Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Robert writes:

“1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 which gives us a great promise. 1. We are not destined to undergo wrath. 2. Whether we are awake or asleep that is whether we are alive or dead verse 10 promises that we will live together with Christ. It did not say we would sleep or be in a separate place than Christ. It goes on to tell us to encourage each other with these things.”

It would do Robert a great service if he read the scripture more carefully. If the dead are living together with Christ, according to his doctrine, then why does Paul say that they “should live together with him” in the future tense? In the same book Paul also writes:

1Th 2:19 KJV

- (19) For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? **Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?**

Paul has not said a word that would establish that the dead are already with Christ. Also to establish context, still in this same chapter, Paul speaks plainly of the hope of the dead, and he names this hope as nothing other than a *literal* resurrection.

1Th 4:13-18 KJV

- (13) **But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep**, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
- (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.
- (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord **shall not prevent them which are asleep**.
- (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
- (17) Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: **and so shall we ever be with the Lord**.
- (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

If the loved ones of these brethren were already with Christ, according to Robert's doctrine, why would Paul not assure them of such? Rather, so that we would not be ignorant concerning death, he assured us that even as Jesus died and rose again, likewise those which sleep in Jesus shall rise again, and rather than those who remain going before, that they would precede us only by a *mere moment*. And thus he states, "so shall we ever be with the Lord" and in another place he tells us that we must be changed and put on incorruption at the last trump, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (see 1 Corinthians 15:50-53).

1Co 15:50-54 KJV

- (50) **Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.**
- (51) Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
- (52) **In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
- (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and **this mortal** *must* put on immortality.

This clearly speaks of the same event, and Paul tells us that we shall not inherit the kingdom of God until we be changed, and that this change does not occur until the resurrection of the dead. Paul refers to death as a "sleep" that lasts until the resurrection.

1Co 15:54-55 KJV

- (54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and **this mortal** shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
- (55) **O death, where *is* thy sting?** O grave, where *is* thy victory?

If death were as Robert suggests, then Paul's statement would be meaningless, for death would have no sting to inflict, for we would be immortal and with the Lord as soon as we be dead, and would have no need of the resurrection.

Yet whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him, at his coming and his kingdom, and so shall we ever be with the Lord, for we have his promise of the resurrection unto eternal life, and Robert's objection serves as no obstacle to this plain and simple teaching of the whole scripture.

### Question Seven: 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

2Co 5:6-8 KJV

- (6) Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:  
(7) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)  
(8) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Robert comments:

“2 Corinthians 5:6-8 tends to teach the same promise as above that when a person leaves the body they are in the presence of the Lord. Those who hold to soul sleep would have us not only ignore verse 7 but to do the opposite and that is to walk by sight rather than by faith.”

What of Robert's charge that the resurrection of the dead is by sight and not faith? This accusation is absolutely nonsensical, for the true faith putteth the resurrection, and the true Christian lives by faith, in hope of the resurrection of the dead. We have evidence that this resurrection shall come, but it has not yet been seen. Its substance is faith. Robert seems to be totally unaware of the biblical meaning of “faith” (see Hebrews 11:1).

Heb 11:1 KJV

- (1) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

But true Christians are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, for we know that even if we should die, Christ will raise us up again at that last day, and we shall scarcely even know that we had died. **One must first die before one can be raised to life.**

1Co 15:35-36 KJV

- (35) But some *man* will say, **How are the dead raised up?** and with what body do they come?  
(36) **Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:**

Robert's comment also demonstrates that he has forgotten the very premise that he has challenged, namely, that the dead sleep in unconsciousness and insensibility. **The dead do not wait** for resurrection **because they do not know** that they are dead (see Ecclesiastes 9:5). Their next instant of consciousness is that of life. “Absent from the body” is a clear euphemism for death, and Paul has already clearly preached that we shall be present with the Lord at his coming, when we are changed, **and not before** (see 1 Corinthians 15:50, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 4:17).

Robert has also obscured this passage by omitting the surrounding relevant content of this scripture, which continues to read:

2Co 5:9-10 KJV

- (9) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.  
(10) **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;** that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

When shall we be present with the Lord? Paul seems to indicate that this happens when we appear before the judgment seat of Christ, which also agrees with all of the earlier statements that we have previously referenced, and also with Daniel, who prophesied that judgment will be given to the saints upon Christ's return (see Daniel 7:22).

Dan 7:21-22 KJV

- (21) I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;  
(22) Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

But Robert neglected not only the important verses immediately following, but also the context directly preceding his proof text, and this is also important:

2Co 5:1-4 KJV

- (1) For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.  
(2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:  
(3) **If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.**  
(4) For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, **that mortality might be swallowed up of life.**

Robert teaches that “when the body dies then the soul and spirit continue on” yet Paul tells us that if we were to die, and this earthly tabernacle were to be destroyed, we must put on an eternal house, and that thus clothed we shall not be found naked. In this description, he uses the same language in his first letter to the Corinthians, that this “clothing upon” means “that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

1Co 15:52-53 KJV

- (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, **and the dead shall be raised incorruptible**, and we shall be changed.  
(53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, **and this mortal *must* put on immortality.**

Contrary to Robert's assertion, no one will be “present with the Lord” without a body. Paul says that we shall not be found naked, and that we shall not be unclothed, but that this body shall be put on at the resurrection of the dead, and not before.

1Co 15:42-44 KJV

- (42) So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; **it is raised in incorruption:**  
(43) It is sown in dishonour; **it is raised in glory:** it is sown in weakness; **it is raised in power:**

(44) It is sown a natural body; **it is raised a spiritual body**. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

**We are not given a spiritual body when we die**, but when we are raised from the dead. There's no sense arguing with me about this: one must take up their objections with the apostle Paul, and ultimately with the author of the Holy Bible.

Again, Robert's theology of the "immortal soul" collapses on itself, because he must insist that we shall be found naked, streaking about heaven (or hell) without bodies, inheriting the kingdom of God without immortality, possessing life in ourselves without requiring the gift of eternal life.

#### Part IV: What is the "Burn Up" doctrine?

Robert writes:

"What is the burn up doctrine or as some call it annihilation? It is the belief that the wicked after death, resurrection and judgment will be completely destroyed, burned up or annihilated never to be remembered again."

I believe that John the Baptist preached the "burn up" doctrine prior to Christ's ministry.

##### Mat 3:9-12 KJV

- (9) And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
- (10) And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
- (11) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:
- (12) Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; **but he will burn up the chaff** with unquenchable fire.

Jesus also taught a "burn up" doctrine, for as trees and chaff are burnt up and are no more, likewise tares that are gathered and burnt shall cease to exist.

##### Mat 13:29-30 KJV

- (29) But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.
- (30) Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, **and bind them in bundles to burn them**: but gather the wheat into my barn.

This was no new doctrine, but plainly taught in the Old Testament, for if there is one thing consistent in these descriptions, it always pictures the wicked as something that can be "burnt up" and destroyed. Not once are the wicked spoken of as being boiled, stewed, roasted, pickled, preserved, or as being some sort of item that can endure a fire.

##### Psa 37:18-20 KJV

- (18) The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

- (19) They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
- (20) **But the wicked shall perish**, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs: **they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.**

Isa 1:28-31 KJV

- (28) And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and they that forsake the LORD **shall be consumed.**
- (29) For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.
- (30) For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.
- (31) **And the strong shall be as tow**, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both **burn** together, and none shall quench *them*.

Mal 4:1-3 KJV

- (1) For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, **shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up**, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
- (2) But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.
- (3) And ye shall tread down the wicked; **for they shall be ashes** under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.

I would have to say, that this “burn up” doctrine sure seems biblical to me. “Consumed” is a word that is pretty easy to understand. When something is consumed by fire, it is “burnt up.” Is the Holy Spirit really so incompetent that it cannot summon appropriate words to describe its intended meaning?

Robert continues:

“Those who hold to the burn up doctrine tend to hold to soul sleep is because if the wicked after judgment are burned up then what happens to them in the intermediate state or after death. If the wicked are not asleep awaiting the resurrection to be judged and done away with then what are they doing? If they are wicked then they cannot be enjoying life with God. If soul sleep is the wrong doctrine then the wicked dead must be undergoing some type of punishment now.”

Do not the scriptures speak of death, saying that there the wicked cease from troubling?

Job 3:11-22 KJV

- (11) **Why died I not from the womb?** *why* did I *not* give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?
- (12) Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?
- (13) For now should I have lain still and been quiet, **I should have slept: then had I been at rest,**
- (14) With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;
- (15) Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:
- (16) Or as an hidden untimely birth **I had not been;** as infants *which* never saw light.
- (17) **There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest.**
- (18) *There* the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

- (19) The small and great are there; and the servant *is* free from his master.  
(20) Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter *in* soul;  
(21) **Which long for death**, but it *cometh* not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;  
(22) Which rejoice exceedingly, *and* are glad, **when they can find the grave?**

Robert concludes:

“Since the burn up doctrine does not believe in eternal punishment or hell then there are a few verses that they will have to accurately deal with to hold to their position.”

Anyone who believes the wicked shall be “burnt up” or “annihilated” truly believes in eternal punishment, for if the sentence is death (and the scripture affirms that it is) then the second death must be eternal, for otherwise the wicked would come back to life, and the punishment would be *temporary*. Likewise, how would the wicked be burnt up if hell were not cast into the lake of fire? (See Revelation 20:14.)

What part of “**destroy** both soul and body in hell” is difficult to understand?

Mat 10:28 KJV

(28) And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to **destroy both soul and body in hell**.

Rev 20:14-15 KJV

(14) **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.**

(15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Those that believe the “Burn On” doctrine must maintain that not even God himself is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Yet, if the wicked shall “burn up” then they shall die, and not rise, they shall be consumed, and be no more.

It would be nice if the proponents of the “immortal soul” would refrain from such an ignorant slander as accusing their opponents of “not believing in eternal punishment.”

Similar to his previous section, Robert has assembled a group of “questions” that we have an opportunity to answer. Interestingly enough, there is not one Old Testament verse among them. They shall be numbered eight through fifteen and addressed henceforth.

### **Question Eight: Matthew 23:33**

Mat 23:33 KJV

(33) *Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Mat 23:33 GNT-TR

(33) οφεις γεννηματα εχιδων πως φυγητε απο της κρισεως της γεεννης

Robert writes:

“Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and He asked them how they would escape the sentence of hell? Well if hell is another word for the grave that would not make sense because everyone will be brought out of the grave at resurrection, so that is not a sentence. Hell here is the Greek word Geena which means a place of future punishment.”

Since our antagonist pretends to understand Greek, I have included the Greek source text along with our traditional English translation. The answer to his question is simple and brief, for is it written,

Rev 20:14 KJV

(14) **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.**

The final judgment is also the final grave, the grave to end all graves. In the judgment, the wicked shall be burnt up and do not rise. As spoken by the prophet Malachi, they shall be turned to ashes (see Malachi 4:3, above). I do not understand why this was supposed to be a difficult question.

However, since Robert is interested in the nuances of the Greek γεεννης, I will point out that its Hebrew origin is taken from the valley of Hinnom, and this was a valley outside Jerusalem where trash and even dead bodies were taken to be “burnt up” and “consumed” and would be “no more” so this is the most fitting figure for ultimate destruction of body and soul in the day of judgment.

### **Question Nine: Matthew 10:28**

Mat 10:28 KJV

(28) And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Robert comments:

“Matthew 10:28 the same Greek word is given for hell which gives the idea that God has the power and ability to sentence someone to punishment in this place called hell.”

What is the proposed problem here? I find it rather strange that someone of Robert’s position would be willing to quote this verse, seeing that he does not seem to believe that God can destroy *both* soul and body in hell. Perhaps I do not understand his question.

### **Question Ten: Mark 9:43-48**

Mar 9:43-48 KJV

(43) And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

(44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

(45) And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

- (46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.  
(47) And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:  
(48) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Robert comments:

“Mark 9:43-48 once again is the same Greek word. Is this verse teaching us to cut off our hand, foot or pluck out an eye so that we can prevent going to the grave as the burn up doctrine wants us to believe, when they believe that everyone will go to the grave. Of course we are being warned to not end up having to suffer eternal punishment. Notice 4 times these verses mention unquenchable fire.”

It is difficult to follow his reasoning here. What is he objecting to? Yes, “everyone will go to the grave” once, but some will be killed twice. Is this not the plain teaching of scripture? (See Hebrews 9:27-28, also Revelation 20:14 and Mark 10:28, quoted above.)

Heb 9:27-28 KJV

- (27) **And as it is appointed unto men once to die**, but after this the judgment:  
(28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

I am not sure what he means to imply by “Notice 4 times these verses mention unquenchable fire.” Has it occurred to him that if a fire is not quenched, it shall completely consume its fuel? This is the normal meaning of “quench” and “not quenched” which can be verified from any English dictionary.

If he wishes to further study “unquenchable fire” I would suggest that he examine the prophecy in Isaiah 34, where a fire burns that “shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever” which then is described as being fated to “lie waste” and becomes the habitation of all sorts of wilderness animals, thorns, nettles, and brambles. It must be a peculiar brand of brainwashing that would influence someone into thinking that if a fire was not quenched, that it would be unable to consume its fuel.

Isa 66:22-24 KJV

- (22) For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.  
(23) And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.  
(24) And they shall go forth, **and look upon the carcasses of the men** that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

I thought it might also help if he could see the quotation to which Christ refers, which clearly speaks of the burning of dead bodies of men, which would literally render them to ash, or consumed by the larvae of insects. Again, this is yet *another* evidence supporting the “burn up” doctrine.

## Question Eleven: Matthew 25:31-46

### Mat 25:31-46 KJV

- (31) When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
- (32) And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:
- (33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
- (34) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- (35) For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
- (36) Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
- (37) Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?
- (38) When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?*
- (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
- (40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.
- (41) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:
- (42) For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:
- (43) I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.
- (44) Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?
- (45) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.
- (46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Robert comments:

“Matthew 25:31-46 this is the separation of the sheep (believers) and the goats (unbelievers). Notice that the goats in verse 41 have to depart, are accursed and are cast into the eternal fire and it says that is the place prepared for the devil and demons. Also verse 46 gives two routes for people. 1. The goats or the wicked go to eternal punishment. 2. The sheep or the believers go to eternal life. By the way the Greek word for eternal is the same in both cases.”

It would help if Robert would clearly state his objection, so I would not be forced to construct his own argument for him. Again, what is the perceived problem?

Is the focus supposed to be on “everlasting fire” (Matthew 25:31?) Why would he think that anything that is consumed and “burnt up” by everlasting fire would survive? Sodom and Gomorrah were also burned by “eternal fire” and they were reduced to ashes. This “eternal fire” (same Greek words) is fire from the Eternal LORD, the Everlasting God, and it reduces its subjects to ashes just as well as any other fire (compare Genesis 19:24-29, Jude 1:7, and 2 Peter 2:6). Likewise, its effect is *also* everlasting.

Gen 19:24-29 KJV

- (24) Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and **fire from the LORD out of heaven;**
- (25) And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.
- (26) But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.
- (27) And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:
- (28) And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, **lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.**
- (29) And it came to pass, when **God destroyed the cities of the plain**, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

Jud 1:6-7 KJV

- (6) And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.
- (7) **Even as Sodom and Gomorrha**, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, **are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**

2Pe 2:6 KJV

- (6) And **turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes** condemned *them* with an overthrow, **making *them* an ensample** unto those that after should live ungodly;

Please note that this fire is no longer burning, that it completely incinerated its fuel, and that this is set forth as an example of the judgment of the great day. If there is any question as to the effect of “eternal fire” all anyone has to do is consider Sodom and Gomorrah. What happened to them? They were “burnt up” and “reduced to ashes” and have become “no more.”

Or is his objection that everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels? Again, I fail to see the problem here, unless Robert is working under an (unscriptural) assumption that the fallen angels are also immortal and cannot be destroyed. However, this would be a bad assumption to make, considering that we are told that Jesus Christ only hath immortality.

1Ti 6:15-16 KJV

- (15) Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;
- (16) **Who only hath immortality**, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Perhaps his focus is on the phrase “everlasting punishment.” If so, what is the problem? Will those that are destroyed in the final judgment come back to life? Of course not – that is why the punishment is “ever lasting”, because it *lasts forever*. They will never

resume consciousness or be raised to life ever again. If the wages of sin is death, then this *death* must be *everlasting*. Are the wages of sin death? What saith the scripture?

Rom 6:23 KJV

(23) **For the wages of sin is death**; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I am unable to discern what his point or complaint is on this section, so I have assumed that he has utilized the common trick of altering the text from “everlasting fire” to “never ending burning” and “eternal punishment” to “eternal punishing.” If this was not his argument, he should have provided a clearer statement.

### Question Twelve: Matthew 13:41-42

Mat 13:40-42 KJV

(40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

(41) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

(42) And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Robert comments:

“Matthew 13:41-42 tells us that in this place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. If it is just a burning up of people in this fiery place then it would not seem likely there would be much weeping and gnashing off those being burned unless it is referring to eternal punishment or let me say forever and ever.”

First, this is another reinforcement of the “burn up” doctrine that Jesus taught, for we are told that this shall be as tares are gathered and burned in the fire. Tares that are burnt are quickly incinerated. Anyone who has burned gathered weeds in a dry season ought to understand this: it is hard to paint a more fitting picture of “burn up” than this.

Second, although I am not sure what translation Robert is depending on here, the King James does not say that there is weeping and gnashing of teeth of anyone while being burned, or in a place of burning. My bible has two separate statements separated by a colon, indicating that they are related, but not necessarily synonymous.

This similar phrase is found six additional times in the gospel of Matthew, and once in Luke, which reads:

Luk 13:28 KJV

(28) There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

Do people who are caught in a raging inferno weep and gnash their teeth? Not really. Besides this, shouldn't we consult our bibles to find out what this phrase means? Or is it more convenient to attempt to twist every phrase to try to bend it around a strange doctrine of infinite sadism?

Job 16:9-10 KJV

- (9) He teareth *me* in his wrath, who hateth me: **he gnasheth upon me with his teeth**; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.  
(10) They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.

Psa 35:15-16 KJV

- (15) But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: *yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:  
(16) **With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.**

Psa 37:12-13 KJV

- (12) **The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.**  
(13) The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

Are we starting to get a picture of what this phrase means yet?

Psa 112:9-10 KJV

- (9) He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.  
(10) The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved; **he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.**

“Weeping” is an obvious term that expresses sorrow and regret, but “gnashing with teeth” is a clear expression of hatred and anger. The passage in Psalm 112 is the closest match to the usages in Matthew and Luke, and yet again we see that this is that “burn up” doctrine that Robert has condemned. What does it mean when it says that the wicked shall “melt away” and “the desire of the wicked shall perish?” That sure sounds like “burn up” to me, with a healthy dose of “consumed” and “be no more” to boot.

Do we have a New Testament example of its intended meaning?

Act 7:51-54 KJV

- (51) Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.  
(52) Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:  
(53) Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.  
(54) When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, **and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.**

So in this account, who was harming whom? Was the Sanhedrin in pain? Or did they seek to harm Stephen? Likewise, why does Robert “gnash with his teeth” against those that dare to read the Bible for themselves, believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets? Have these words “cut to his heart?”

Act 24:13-15 KJV

- (13) Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.  
(14) **But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:**  
(15) And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, **that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.**

The resurrection of the dead is the clear message of scripture, that blessed hope of the apostle Paul and all true Christians (see also Titus 2:13). In contrast, the doctrine of the immortal soul is repackaged teaching of paganism, tracing its roots back to the first lie of the serpent, “thou shalt not surely die” (see Genesis 3:4). The two doctrines stand in direct opposition, for if the soul is immortal, then what need is there of a resurrection?

Plainly stated, weeping and gnashing of teeth is “regret and anger” that is expressed in reaction to the final judgment, when the children of the kingdom are “cast out” and justice is done. Think not that every one which saith “Lord, Lord” shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, for all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire, which is the *second* death (see Matthew 7:21, Revelation 21:8).

### **Question Thirteen: 2 Thessalonians 1:9**

2Th 1:7-9 KJV

- (7) And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,  
(8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:  
(9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Robert says:

“2 Thessalonians 1:9 tells us that there is a penalty for not obeying the Gospel and it says it is eternal destruction. Once again this is the same Greek word used in Matthew 25: 46 to refer to eternal life. If it is only temporary then that would also mean that our eternal life is only temporary.”

First, Robert should notice that this destruction does not occur until Jesus is revealed from heaven with his angels, thus this must refer to a future event, not one that is currently ongoing (see 2 Thessalonians 1:7). This already contradicts his “soul fry” doctrine that inflicts torture without judgment.

Second, there is no difficulty with “eternal destruction” no matter if it is destruction from the Eternal, or whether it be destruction that is eternal in nature. That which is destroyed stays destroyed eternally. This is not a difficult concept. Please note that this verse does not say “eternal destroying”, and previous verses did not read “eternal punishing” which is a required construct for the “immortal soul” and the sadistic “Burn On” doctrine.

Third, Robert's logic behind "if it is only temporary then that would also mean that our eternal life is only temporary" is severely flawed. Life is a condition, or an attribute, and eternal life is a life that never ends.

Destruction is a state, specifically a state of non-existence, and eternal destruction is a state of non-existence from which you never come back, a death that never ends. Robert's argument is a tired and hackneyed sophistry of "Burn On" theologians that should have been abandoned long ago.

#### Question Fourteen: Revelation 20:10

Rev 20:10 KJV

(10) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Robert states:

"Revelation 20:10 notice that the devil is cast into the lake of fire, where the false prophet and beast already are but then it says they will be tormented night and day forever and ever. Does not sound like a burning up to me."

If Robert would carefully note the words of the verse above, he might notice that it says nothing to establish that the beast and the false prophet survived being cast into this lake of fire at the beginning of the previous thousand years. Robert is reading another meaning into this verse to conform with his pre-existing "Burn On" Theology. Like anything else that is thrown into a fire, the beast and false prophet shall "burn up."

2Th 2:8 KJV

(8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord **shall consume** with the spirit of his mouth, and **shall destroy** with the brightness of his coming:

Robert has essentially claimed that a lake of literal fire and brimstone would *neither consume* nor *destroy* these nations. What saith our scripture? Does it give any indication that the beast and false prophet shall *live* in the lake of fire?

Rev 19:19-21 KJV

(19) And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

(20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. **These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.**

(21) **And the remnant were slain with the sword** of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

If the scripture meant to say "the beast and the false prophet where cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone where they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever..." it would have *said* so. Unless specifically stated otherwise, anyone or anything that is cast alive into a huge fire is assumed to have *perished* (compare Daniel 3:22, 26).

But did our prophecy in Revelation 19 say anything about the beast and false prophet living in this fire? The only reference to “life” is that there were “cast alive” into the fire, which indicates quite the opposite.

**Psa 68:1-3 KJV**

- (1) To the chief Musician, A Psalm *or* Song of David. Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.
- (2) As smoke is driven away, *so* drive *them* away: **as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**
- (3) But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

As I have indicated previously, many of these “Burn On” proof texts would disappear if people would be willing to read the words of the King James bible just as it is written, without adding words, phrases, or theological gloss. Let’s look at this verse again, and note the sentence structure this time around.

**Rev 20:10 KJV**

- (10) **And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

The subject of this verse is “the devil that deceived them.” “The devil” includes Satan and all of his angels, which can be clearly seen from Christ’s statements in the gospel of Matthew (see Matthew 25:41).

**Mat 25:41 KJV**

- (41) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, **prepared for the devil and his angels:**

The fire itself is *identified* by the parenthetical phrase, “where the beast and the false prophet *are*.” The action is properly applied to the subject, the devil *and his angels* for whom this fire was prepared. It is the devil *and his angels* that are the subject of this torment. Without the parenthetical phrase, this would read:

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ... and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

If additional proof of the translation is needed, simply look to the word “[and](#)” that precedes “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” The grammar of the text also proves the subject of this torment is the devil and his angels (see Matthew 8:29).

**Rev 20:10 GNT-TR**

- (10) και ο διαβολος ο πλανων αυτους εβληθη εις την λιμνην του πυρος και θειου οπου το θηριον και ο ψευδοπροφητης [και](#) βασανισθησονται ημερας και νυκτος εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων

But why would Robert assume that the beast and the false prophet are still alive after one thousand years? These are symbols of powerful nations (see Daniel 7 and Revelation 13) and they cannot be deemed to “have life” after their kingdom has been destroyed. Although the leaders of these powers can also be called the “beast” and the “false prophet” we have no cause to assume that they will survive the fire any more than the remnant of their armies will survive the sword.

If Robert would care to note the Greek text above, he might also observe why the King James translation has placed the word “are” as in “where the beast and the false prophet *are*” in *italics*. The word has been supplied for the purposes of grammar, because “where the beast and the false prophet” would otherwise be improper English.

For example, observe how William Tyndale translated this same text in 1525:

Rev 20:10 Tyndale

(10) and the devyll that desceaved them was cast into a lake of fyre and brymstone **where the beest and the falce prophet were** and shalbe tormented daye and nyght for ever more.

In both cases, “are” or “were” were required by the rules of English grammar. I cannot say that either choice was incorrect, for they both have merit. On one hand, this is where the beast and the false prophet “were” cast one thousand years ago. On the other hand, inserting a verb in the past tense would make it seem as if the beast and the false prophet survived to escape the fire, or left of their own accord. Thus I understand why the Authorized translation chose the word “are.”

Additional meaning cannot be read into the phrase “where the beast and the false prophet *are*” simply because the chosen word is in the present tense. I may have a dog that I loved very much, and if someone asks me what happened to her after she died, I might reply “She *is* under that tree.” No sane person would understand this to mean that my dog was currently suffering under the ground because I spoke in the present tense. But consider that if I had said “She *was* under that tree” my audience would have asked, “But where is she *now*?”

How are the beast and the false prophet still within this lake of fire? As ashes, or simply as their last known location before they were burnt up, destroyed, and consumed by the brightness of His coming. Any other interpretation must add to the Greek text to insert a different meaning. There is no word in the Greek to be translated as “continue” or “exist” no matter how much Robert’s “Burn On” theology might require such a proof.

The Greek text literally reads “where the beast and the false prophet.”

Rev 20:10 GNT-TR

(10) και ο διαβολος ο πλανων αυτους εβληθη εις την λιμνην του πυρος και θειου οπου το θηριον και ο ψευδοπροφητης και βασανισθησονται ημερας και νυκτος εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων

To the extent that the beast and the false prophet that were cast into the lake of fire were men, they shall be raised and stand before the great white throne of judgment just like every one else (see Hebrews 9:27). If one would merely read the next two verses, it is plainly obvious that this must be so (see Revelation 20:12).

Heb 9:27 KJV

(27) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, **but after this the judgment:**

Rev 20:12 KJV

(12) **And I saw the dead, small and great,** stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

If Robert wishes to continue to argue his theory that the beast and the false prophet survived this thousand years in the lake of fire, he must first present a Greek text that contains a word meaning “continue to exist” between the words “false prophet” and “and” in Revelation 20:10, and then he must successfully prove that this is the correct text, and that all of our others are false. I shall leave him with this burden of proof.

Pro 30:5-6 KJV

(5) Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

(6) **Add thou not unto his words,** lest he reprove thee, **and thou be found a liar.**

Rev 22:18 KJV

(18) For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues** that are written in this book:

### **Is the Devil Immortal?**

Although Robert has not explicitly stated this, the undertones of his statements from this point and the next indicate that he is under the impression that the devil will survive this fire, possessing eternal life or immortality in himself. Unfortunately, he did not actually make this statement, so if this is to be answered, I must create his own question for him.

Therefore, Robert, have you just said that the devil is immortal, and shall not die, nor be consumed by fire, neither becoming ashes, to be *no more*? Are you implying that the devil shall be tormented even after night and day have ceased to exist? If so, where did you come by this doctrine, and where is your evidence?

The only reasoning that I can imagine is that Robert must either believe that God, the “Father of spirits,” is unable to destroy what he has created (see Hebrews 12:9), or that he is able to destroy the devil and his wicked angels, but will refuse to do so. At another time I have heard him say that “spirits are immortal” so perhaps he affirms both.

Therefore, I think that this is the proper time to prove the power of God, that he can destroy what he has created, even that old serpent, the Devil. This shall be proven from the scriptures, that this is his promise, and his justice, and even if Robert shall find four hundred and fifty theologians willing to offer their “wisdom” and “commentary” let us let God decide the victor (see 1 Kings 18:21-40).

Mar 12:24 KJV

(24) And Jesus answering said unto them, **Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?**

First, the Bible plainly states that immortality is the sole possession of God, and that if any creature is to possess immortality and eternal life, it must be received as a gift. There is not one verse stating that the devils possess immortality, so we must assume that the angels live at his pleasure, as do all creatures of his creation. Men and angels and beasts do not possess life in themselves, for He only hath immortality (see 1 Timothy 6:16).

Joh 5:26 KJV

(26) For as the Father hath **life in himself**; so hath he given to the Son to have **life in himself**;

1Ti 1:17 KJV

(17) Now unto the King eternal, **immortal**, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1Ti 6:16 KJV

(16) **Who only hath immortality**, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Rom 6:23 KJV

(23) For the wages of sin *is* death; but **the gift of God is eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“But,” Robert may ask, “if the devil is not immortal, how can it be tormented for ever?”

If an action is applied “for ever” to a creature of finite existence, **this does not grant the creature eternal life**, and neither is it expected that the action be continued beyond the scope of its subject. This should be obvious, but I realize that examples must be shown to overcome subtle brainwashing that denies this simple truth.

For example, if I were promised by a mechanic that he would service my car for ever and ever, this does not guarantee that my car will last one thousand years. If I were to drop my car into the ocean, or if it were to be incinerated in a nuclear blast, one does not expect my mechanic to obtain a submarine or start servicing specks of radioactive dust from the air.

What happens when an action is applied “for ever and ever” to a finite being? Does it grant the subject immortality and eternal life? What saith the scripture?

Exo 21:6 KJV

(6) Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; **and he shall serve him for ever.**

Are any of these servants still alive? If so, how are they still serving their masters, who died thousands of years ago? If not, how did they continue to serve while they were dead

when their master was still alive? Additionally, if driving an aul through one's ear grants eternal life, is Jesus Christ really the only way to salvation? (See John 14:6.)

Deu 15:17 KJV

(17) Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust *it* through his ear unto the door, **and he shall be thy servant for ever.** And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

Clearly, the only biblical interpretation of the phrase “for ever” or “for ever and ever” is that the action or effect will continue for the duration of the target, within its intended scope. If someone promises to love someone and to be with them for ever, this is well understood to mean “until death do us part.” Such is the case with the servant serving his master, and this is the only sensible conclusion that can be applied to the devil and his angels. They shall be tormented until they no longer exist.

**If the devil is immortal**, it would be tormented for ever, for the duration of its immortal existence, and Robert would finally have a scripture to support his “Burn On” theology.

**But if the devil be consumed by fire and perish**, then it shall be tormented for the duration of its limited existence, until he is “no more.” Any argument that the devil *must* be immortal because he will be tormented for as long as he shall continue to exist is *circular*.

Speaking plainly, when the bible says the devil shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever, this has nothing to do with immortality, and everything to do with his promised destruction, that he shall “burn up” as spoken by the prophets of old. It is a sick mind that would create an imagination from its own heart that God would purposely grant eternal life to anything for the purpose of *unending torture*.

But does Revelation 20:10 promise eternal life in unending torture? Regardless of what exactly is signified by this *torment* (also used in relation to devils concerning the judgment, see Matthew 8:29, Mark 5:7, and Luke 8:28) the torment cannot last longer than the duration of its subject.

I think there should be no argument that this torment shall last **for as long as the devil continues to exist**. But what says the scripture? Will the devil “Burn On” or “burn up?”

Eze 28:11-19 KJV

(11) Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

(12) Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

(13) **Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God;** every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that **thou wast created.**

(14) **Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth;** and I have set thee *so*: **thou wast upon the holy mountain of God;** thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

(15) Thou *wast* **perfect** in thy ways **from the day that thou wast created**, till iniquity was found in thee.

Who is this king of Tyrus?

1. “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God...”
2. “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth...”
3. “Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God...”
4. “Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire...”
5. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created...”
6. “...till iniquity was found in thee.”

Surely this is enough information to identify the subject of this prophecy. Excepting God himself, the only beings that have been in Eden the garden of God include Adam, Eve, the serpent, and perhaps the cherubs that he set to prevent others from entering after man was banished from the garden (see Genesis 3:1, 21-24).

Adam and Eve were not cherubs, so with our second piece of information this could only be addressing the serpent and the loyal guardian angels of Genesis 3:24. That old serpent is also called Satan the devil, and he has been upon the holy mountain of God (see Revelation 12:9, 20:2, Job 1:6) and because we are clearly told that he sinned, and iniquity was found in him, we now can know for a certain to whom this prophecy pertains. This is Satan, the devil.

Can Robert deny this? I have in my possession a copy of his Statement of Beliefs, including the handwritten check marks beside each statement that I must assume indicates his agreement in each case. Therefore, I will quote his statement:

“8. **We believe** in The Existence of Satan: Who originally was created a holy and perfect being; but through pride and wicked ambition rebelled against God, thus becoming utterly depraved in character, the great adversary of God and His people, leader of all other evil angels and wicked spirits, the deceiver and god of this present world, that his powers are vast, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God who overrules all his wicked devices for good, that he was defeated and judged at the cross, and therefore his final doom is certain; that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God, by the blood of the Lamb and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 14:12-15; Ephesians 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8; I John 3:8; Revelation 12:9-11. 20:10.”

Repeating for emphasis,

“**Who originally was created a holy and perfect being...**”

Why does it say this? Where does the scripture describe the devil as having been created as a perfect being? One wouldn't find this if one were to rely solely on the five citations at the end of the statement. These are not the words of Isaiah, nor is this found in the words of Paul, Peter, or John. These are the words of Ezekiel 28:15, “Thou *wast* **perfect** in thy ways **from the day that thou wast created...**”

It would seem that whoever originally wrote this statement knew of this scripture. But at least, Robert should not be able to protest the authenticity or application of these verses.

Eze 28:16

(16) By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: **and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub**, from the midst of the stones of fire.

God just promised that he would “destroy” this covering cherub from the midst of the stones of fire. Does he mean that? This is starting to sound a lot like that “burn up” doctrine to me.

Eze 28:17

(17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: **I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.**

Has the devil yet been laid before kings that they may behold him? Yet this is exactly what will happen at the resurrection of the dead (see Isaiah 14:4-23, Revelation 20:10-12). Let’s keep reading, and see if Ezekiel gives any further support for this “burn up” doctrine.

Eze 28:18-19

(18) Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; **therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.**

(19) All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, **and never shalt thou be any more.**

- “Bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee...”
- “I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee...”
- “...and never shalt thou be any more.”

Is it possible to define what God means by “**destroy**” any more clearly? Could He have been any more explicit in laying out this “**burn up**” doctrine that was preached by Malachi, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ? What do words like “**devour**” and “**ashes**” mean? How can any other meaning be read into “**never shalt thou be any more?**”

**It seems pretty clear to me** that when Satan is laid before kings in the final judgment, the torment will destroy the devil, that the fire shall devour him, that it shall bring him to ashes upon the earth, and never shall he be any more. What else saith the scripture? Shall we turn to the prophet Esaias?

Isa 14:4-12 KJV

(4) That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

(5) The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers.

(6) He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, **is persecuted**, *and* none hindereth.

- (7) The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break forth into singing.
- (8) Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.
- (9) **Hell from beneath is moved** for thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: **it stirreth up the dead for thee**, *even* all the chief ones of the earth; **it hath raised up** from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

Let's ask ourselves a similar question here: who is this king of Babylon? Verse 9 clearly describes **the resurrection** to judgment at the last day, for when else is hell itself moved to meet anyone at their coming? (See Revelation 20:13).

Rev 20:13 KJV

- (13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; **and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them**: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Why does it specify that it stirs up the chief ones of the earth, raising up from their thrones all the kings of the nations? That language sounds very similar to the former promise of "I will lay thee before kings" (see Ezekiel 28:17-18). Let's read just a little further to see if Isaiah will identify this king of Babylon for us. How come he doesn't arrive until hell itself is raised? (See Revelation 20:10-13.)

Isa 14:10-12 KJV

- (10) All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?
- (11) Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.
- (12) **How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!** *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

Lucifer is the devil, and simple observation proves that he willingly accepts this name. Interestingly enough, the word is also used in English to refer to a match, which is something that is "burnt up." Here it prophesies that the kings of the earth shall behold him, and see that he has been made as weak as them, and the language of destruction and consuming is used in reference to the grave and the worm.

If we needed any other hints as to his identity, we are told that he has fallen from heaven. As such, does not Jesus himself identify this being as the devil?

Luk 10:17-18 KJV

- (17) And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.
- (18) And he said unto them, **I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.**

Who else has fallen from heaven? This king of Babylon is Satan, the devil. Continuing...

Isa 14:13-15 KJV

- (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

- (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.  
(15) **Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.**

Does this not describe the iniquity that was found in him, and does it not prophesy that he shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit? Is this not in agreement with the prophecy of Revelation 20:10?

Isa 14:16-19 KJV

- (16) They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, *Is this* the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;  
(17) *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners?  
(18) All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.  
(19) **But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.**

It doesn't sound like Satan is going to survive that judgment. Fire "burns up" and the worm "consumes" and he shall be "no more." This is not even a glorious death, but a shameful destruction of condemnation.

Isa 14:20-22 KJV

- (20) Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy people: **the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.**  
(21) Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.  
(22) For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, **and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.**

What is the final judgment but the final destruction of all that is represented by Babylon? Shall any of his seed survive? Will wicked men continue to prosper and torment the righteous? Or will only those that love God and keep his commandments enter therein to that holy city that descends from heaven in that final day?

Rev 22:14 KJV

- (14) Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

So far, both Ezekiel and Isaiah have contained some pretty detailed and explicit prophecies that promise that the devil shall be burnt up and destroyed in final judgment. But are these the only evidences? These ought to be sufficient themselves, but what else saith the scripture?

Jer 10:10-11 KJV

- (10) But the LORD *is* the true God, he *is* the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

(11) Thus shall ye say unto them, **The gods** that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.*

That sounds like the final judgment, and it doesn't sound as if any of the devils will survive. Is not Satan the "god of this world?" (See 2 Corinthians 4:4.) But did he make the heavens and the earth? What does the word "**perish**" mean? It seems to me that scripture clearly states that Satan (and other gods of this world) shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.

Isa 27:1 KJV

(1) **In that day** the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword **shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent**, even leviathan that crooked serpent; **and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.**

This day described by Isaiah is the same day that the earth is made waste, when he punishes the kings of the earth, (Isaiah 24:1, 21), when he shall swallow up death in victory (Isaiah 25:7, also see 1 Corinthians 15:54-55), when the dead shall live and Isaiah himself shall rise (Isaiah 26:19) and when the great trumpet is blown (Isaiah 27:13).

The setting is that final day of the Lord (which may be a very long day indeed, see 2 Peter 3:8) but who else is called leviathan, the serpent, and the dragon but Satan the devil? First the LORD shall punish him with the sword, (Revelation 19:15, 20:3) but there is also the prophecy that he shall be **slain** (see the aforementioned Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, compare with Revelation 20:10).

Heb 2:14 KJV

(14) Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death **he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;**

Again, the language used with regard to the devil is "destroy" and in combination with the law and the prophets that were honored by Paul, this can mean nothing less than "burn up" and "be no more." The devil will be destroyed in final judgment.

Gen 3:14-15 KJV

(14) **And the LORD God said unto the serpent**, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:  
(15) And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; **it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**

If Jesus was bruised in the heel, and laid in the grave for three days and three nights, raising *himself* from the dead because He is the Prince of Life and has life in himself (see John 2:19, John 5:26, Acts 2:24, Acts 3:15) then what do you suppose would happen to the serpent, who does *not* have immortality (see 1 Timothy 6:15-16) when his *head* is bruised? If Christ died, but raised himself from the dead, shall the devil return to life?

What does it mean when the head is bruised? Do we need to paint a picture?

Psa 74:13-14 KJV

- (13) Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: **thou brakest the heads** of the dragons in the waters.
- (14) **Thou brakest the heads** of leviathan in pieces, *and gavest him to be meat* to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

Apparently, wounding the head of a serpent is a *deadly* thing, and even if the creature does not immediately perish with the first blow, it shall surely die. It seems ridiculous that I should be required to demonstrate this point further, but Habakkuk also provides another crystal clear example of what it means to wound the head.

Hab 3:12-13 KJV

- (12) Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.
- (13) Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, *even* for salvation with thine anointed; **thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck.** Selah.

What does it mean to “wound the head” by “discovering the foundation unto the neck?” That sounds like a fatal death blow. Thus we may affirm the intended meaning of the Bible when it prophesies that the seed of the woman shall “bruise the head” of the serpent. Any other meaning must depend upon a private interpretation, and lacks the authority of scripture (see 2 Peter 1:20).

Let’s check the New Testament again, and see what else it says on this matter:

Jud 1:6-7 KJV

- (6) And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, **he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.**
- (7) Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, **are set forth for an example,** suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The angels that sinned are reserved unto the judgment of that great day. Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth as examples of this judgment, and they were *destroyed* with eternal fire. The inhabitants shall be raised to judgment (see Matthew 10:15 and 11:24) but the cities themselves have become “no more.”

Furthermore, if the devil is wicked (and we must agree that he is) then every other prophecy in the Bible that says the wicked shall be “burnt up” and “consumed” and “melt away” and “be no more” also applies to him and his angels. There is no shortage of proof in this respect.

Why would anyone think that the devil would live for ever, in any type of condition? Perhaps it is because to believe that men never die, they must also allow for the wicked angels to possess the same immortality. But in this they greatly err, knowing not the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Now that our foundation of scripture is established, let's look again at this passage, and proceed forward this time around, for we are not yet finished with our proof.

Rev 20:10 KJV

(10) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented **day and night** for ever and ever.

A final argument is sometimes made that the devil must be immortal because this torment is "day and night." However, we are told that even day and night will have an end, and this is yet another evidence that this torment of the final judgment has a *limited* scope. What are we told follows this final judgment?

Rev 21:1 KJV

(1) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: **for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away**; and there was no more sea.

There is significance in this statement, which should be recognized by anyone who reads the scriptures. What does it mean when heaven and earth have passed away?

Genesis 8:22 KJV

(22) **While the earth remaineth**, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and **day and night shall not cease**.

Job 26:10 KJV

(10) He hath compassed **the waters** with bounds, **until the day and night come to an end**.

Zechariah 14:7-8 KJV

(7) **But it shall be one day** which shall be known to the LORD, **not day, nor night**: but it shall come to pass, *that* at evening time it shall be light.

(8) And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

We are not only told that day and night shall not cease while the earth remains, but that day and night will eventually cease. The judgment concludes with the earth passing away, and we are plainly told that the "former things have passed away." That would include the heavens and the earth, night and day, and the devil and his angels.

Rev 21:4 KJV

(4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, **neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away**.

The literal reading makes perfect sense, if we would just be willing to believe the words. We cannot expect to understand a prophecy if we isolate it by itself, for no prophecy is of a private interpretation, and we are expected to understand the scriptures that have already been written for us by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21). Yet even if one were to read Revelation by itself, it also tells us that even *night and day* shall *have an end*.

Revelation 21:23 KJV

(23) **And the city had no need of the sun**, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

Revelation 21:25 KJV

(25) And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: **for there shall be no night there.**

Revelation 22:5 KJV

(5) **And there shall be no night there;** and they need no candle, **neither light of the sun;** for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

For those that would postulate that the devil must be immortal, because he shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever, they have an additional problem that day and night shall cease, and with it, the defined scope of the torment.

It makes perfect sense why the devil would be required to stand before men in the judgment, to be revealed as the adversary and deceiver of the ages, but after the judgment, what would be the point of keeping him alive any longer? Why would it be difficult for anyone to simply believe the scriptures that prophesy that he shall be “burnt up?” Why do people resist the clear words of scripture? (See 2 Timothy 4:3-4.)

#### **Question Fifteen: Revelation 20:14-15**

Rev 20:14-15 KJV

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

(15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Robert states:

“Revelation 20:14-15 tells us that at the judgment some things will happen. Death and Hades (Greek word meaning the realm of the dead) were cast into the lake of fire that Revelation 20:10 tells where the devil is. If the devil will be tormented day and night forever and ever then it would make sense that everything placed there would also. Notice verse 15 if your name is not found in the book of life (you are not saved) then you too are cast into the lake of fire to be not burned up but tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Scripture never promises that the dead will be “tormented” in the lake of fire, but if there were such a scripture, I would be the first to quote it. There might be a measure of “torment” in the final judgment, if for no other reason than that people do not want to stand before a righteous judge.

How much more would these people loathe to endure an accounting of all things they have ever done? Judgment itself is a torment for the ungodly. Some people might even consider it a “torment” to be required to read a lengthy essay on the nature of future punishment...

Mat 12:36 KJV

(36) But I say unto you, **That every idle word** that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Robert seems to have “bet the farm” that men and angels are equally immortal and cannot be destroyed. I say that if the devil shall be “burnt up” then we likewise would expect that wicked men shall perish as well. This is the clear testimony of scripture, of the whole canon, both Old and New Testaments, with citations so numerous that they cannot be exhaustively listed in this paper. The “immortal soul” bias is fueled by an overwhelming ignorance of the whole scripture.

Eze 28:16-19 KJV

(16) By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: **and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub**, from the midst of the stones of fire.

(17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, **I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.**

(18) Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth **a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth** in the sight of all them that behold thee.

(19) All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, **and never shalt thou be any more.**

It seems that Robert’s attack has backfired. The devil may be very old, having existed as a created spirit since the time of Eden, but he is not immortal, and he only exists at God’s pleasure. He shall be tormented when he is “laid before kings” and the people shall be astonished, and in the end he shall be *no more*.

### Part V: Voices from the Past

Robert’s first attack was to label his opponents as members of “cults” or “false religions,” playing a type of “guilt by association” card. Then he briefly cited some scriptures that he claimed his opponents use to state their position, but he neglected to answer these. Next he blazed ahead with a short list of supposed “proof texts” of his position, asking that these be “accurately dealt with” and this we have. Perhaps he will complain because of the sheer volume of scripture brought to bear on this subject, but he must acknowledge that we have been thorough.

Similarly, in his conclusion Robert attempts to summon the perceived force of tradition, claiming that this matter has been “dealt with” in ages past.

In his own words, Robert says:

“Is this a new wave of false beliefs? No this belief has been around for many years and Theologians have addressed it in many different decades. Here are a few quotes from voices in the past.”

This is a false argument, because the only argument that matters is the scripture. However, I am incredulous that Robert has been so quick to dishonestly represent this issue as well. None of the earliest saints have been quoted that spoke of immortality being a gift, something that must be strived for, and not part of our original condition.

Robert summons four men, two of which were obviously deluded enough to preach his doctrine of “Universal Immortality,” thus denying the necessity of the resurrection of the dead and the destruction of the wicked. Athenagoras and Hippolytus certainly qualify as false teachers, plainly adding to and contradicting the very words of scripture.

But since this was his standard of proof, let us consider Justin Martyr for a moment:

“We have been taught that only they may aim at immortality who have lived a holy and virtuous life near to God. We believe that they who live wickedly and do not repent will be punished in everlasting fire.” (*First Apology*, 21)

First, Robert failed to notice that Justin said that immortality is something that must be “aimed” at, not the default state of man.

Second, this itself shall become an excellent proof of what Justin believed would be the ultimate result of punishment in everlasting fire. What did Justin mean by this?

“... And by her [Mary] has He been born, to whom we have proven so many Scriptures refer, **and by whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who are like him**; but works deliverance from **death** to those who repent of their wickedness and believe upon him.” (Dialogue with Trypho, 100, 158 A.D.)

What was that? Did Justin just say that God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who are like him? What does he mean by destroy? He said “**death**.” This is starting to sound a lot like Justin preached the “burn up” doctrine to me.

“Wherefore God delays the confusion and destruction of the whole world, **by which the wicked angels and demons and men shall cease to exist**, because of the seed of the Christians, who know that they are the cause of preservation in nature. Since, if it were not so, it would not have been possible for you to do these things, and to be impelled by evil spirits; **but the fire of judgment would descend and utterly dissolve all things**, even as formerly the flood left no one but him only with his family who is by us called Noah, and by you Deucalion, from whom again such vast numbers have sprung, some of them evil and others good.” (Second Apology, 7, 161 A.D.)

Could Justin have stated this any more clearly? Can we have any doubt what he means by the punishment of everlasting fire? Justin says this means that the devil shall:

1. Be destroyed,
2. Shall cease to exist,
3. And shall be utterly dissolved.

Within a few sentences in this *same* chapter, Justin further emphasizes that this “dissolving” is the ultimate result of suffering in “eternal fire.”

“But since God in the beginning made the race of angels and men with free-will, **they will justly suffer in eternal fire** the punishment of whatever sins they have committed. And this is the nature of all that is made, to be capable of vice and virtue.” (Second Apology, 7, 161 A.D.)

Why would Robert attempt to summon Justin Martyr to his defense in this type of dispute? Such shows an utter **lack of discernment**, because Justin would not even consider Robert to be counted among true Christians.

“For I choose to follow not men or men’s doctrines, but God and the doctrines [delivered] by Him. For if you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say that there is no resurrection of the dead, **and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians...**” (Dialogue with Trypho, 80, 158 A.D.)

In truth, the “Soul Fly” and “Burn On” doctrines have been around for quite some time, but they did not start to appear in the writings of authors that claimed to be Christian until the time of Athenagoras (whom Robert cites) in 177 A.D. And before it became Catholic dogma, it was first taken from the teachings and beliefs of the pagan religions.

But is Robert preaching a new wave of false beliefs? Surely not, for this Old Religion dates back to antiquity, and we know its origin is none other than that old serpent, Satan, the devil, that deceiveth the whole world (see Revelation 12:9).

Gen 3:2-5 KJV

- (2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
- (3) But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
- (4) **And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:**
- (5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Man, in his arrogance, has embraced this lie, proclaiming themselves as gods, declaring “We shall not surely die, for our soul is immortal, and cannot be destroyed!”

Robert continued:

“The Bible has to be our basis for belief and if it teaches the opposite of soul sleep and the burn up doctrine then the verses that these people point to must have explanations because the Bible does not contradict itself.”

Does the Bible say that the dead sleep? It surely does. David seemed pretty sure about this. We could read from many books, but let’s focus on the Psalms for a moment.

Psa 13:3 KJV

- (3) Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, **lest I sleep the sleep of death;**

Psa 30:9 KJV

(9) What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? **Shall the dust praise thee?** shall it declare thy truth?

Psa 104:33 KJV

(33) I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: **I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.**

Psa 115:17 KJV

(17) **The dead praise not the LORD**, neither any that go down into silence.

Psa 146:2-4 KJV

(2) **While I live will I praise the LORD:** I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

(3) Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

(4) His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; **in that very day his thoughts perish.**

The living “has being” and can praise God, but those that sleep the “sleep of death:”

1. Cannot praise God
2. Are counted as dust
3. No longer have being
4. Have returned to the earth
5. His very thoughts have perished

But does the bible say that the wicked shall burn up? It is consistent in this as well. In the previous examples, I chose to quote exclusively from the Psalms, to emphasize that these words are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. These following examples, showing that the LORD shall “burn up” the wicked, shall be from the book of Isaiah.

Isa 1:28 KJV

(28) And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and **they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.**

Isa 1:31 KJV

(31) And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, **and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.**

Isa 5:24 KJV

(24) **Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff,** *so* their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Isa 10:16-18 KJV

(16) Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory **he shall kindle a burning** like the burning of a fire.

(17) And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: **and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;**

**(18) And shall consume the glory of his forest,** and of his fruitful field, **both soul and body:** and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.

I thought I would pause for a moment and point out that this verse above says “**both soul and body**” shall be consumed (see also Matthew 10:28).

Isa 33:10-12 KJV

(10) Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.

(11) Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, **as fire, shall devour you.**

(12) **And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.**

Isa 47:13-14 KJV

(13) Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from *these things* that shall come upon thee.

(14) **Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them;** they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: ***there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.***

How many ways does the Bible need to say that the wicked shall be “burnt up?” If there was any doubt about what God means when he says that the wicked shall be as stubble and burnt by fire, here he reminds us that nothing remains in its wake, not even a coal.

The John Gill commentary explains:

“**there shall not be a coal to warm, nor fire to sit before it;** stubble, when burnt, leaves no coals to warm a man with; and though it gives a blaze for a short time, while burning, it is quickly out, and gives no light nor heat for a man to sit by ...”

We shouldn’t need a theologian to prove that stubble “burns up.” This is common sense.

Isa 66:22-24 KJV

(22) For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

(23) And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

(24) And they shall go forth, **and look upon the carcasses** of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, **neither shall their fire be quenched;** and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

If the fire is not quenched, who would doubt that these carcasses shall also “burn up?”

Selectively restating Robert’s words for specific effect,

“...then the verses ... must have explanations because the Bible does not contradict itself.”

Robert *correctly* notes that the Bible does not contradict itself. Why then, does his doctrine create such a mass of biblical contradictions, with his own proofs even contradicting himself at times? How can he explain these away? The dead sleep and fire consumes.

Must normal words like “life” and “death”, “consumed” and “ashes”, “perish” and “be no more” be interpreted as the opposite of their plain and ordinary meaning? How does he manage to obscure such clear and obvious imagery? Rather, it is the “Burn On” doctrine that is a “false teaching” and not supported by scripture.

There is a saying that “the exception proves the rule.” When has fire *not* burnt things up?

**Exo 3:1-3 KJV**

- (1) Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb.
- (2) And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, **and the bush was not consumed.**
- (3) And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, **why the bush is not burnt.**

Moses was plainly astounded that anything would burn without burning up. Normally a bush that was burning would *be consumed*. But if this had not been *unusual* this would not have demanded his attention.

Besides this, there is one more obvious example:

**Dan 3:19-27 KJV**

- (19) Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.
- (20) And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace.
- (21) Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, **and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**
- (22) Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of **the fire slew those men** that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
- (23) And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.
- (24) Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.
- (25) He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, **walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt;** and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.
- (26) Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

(27) And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, **nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.**

In our second example, the fire did not consume the Hebrew children, but neither were they burnt in any fashion. Their ropes were burnt and consumed (and were no more) but their hair was not singed, their coats were not changed, and they did not even smell of fire. Clearly, fire consumes ropes, and slays mighty men, but when it does not consume what God chooses to protect, neither does it cause any harm. Robert's "Burn On" doctrine is left without a single example to form a biblical precedent.

Robert concludes:

"Let me conclude by saying after further study of the soul sleep doctrine and the burn up doctrine I find them to be false teachings and not in line with Christian beliefs that are outlined in the Bible."

Correcting Robert, I think it would be more accurate to say that he has scarcely studied these doctrines at all, and is hardly qualified to declare what constitutes "false teaching" in this regard. God has promised to destroy the wicked, and he has the power to fulfill his word. Robert's error lies in that he knows not the scriptures, neither the power of God, and thus he greatly errs (see Matthew 22:28-30).

Mat 22:29 KJV

(29) Jesus answered and said unto them, **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.**

## Part VI: The Foundation of Scripture

God built this world, and all that is in it, including its cycles of life and death, and its sciences of chemistry and physics. The very creation that we observe around us every day teaches us that death is not an ascent into a higher plane, but rather the cessation of being. Death is an invisible thing from the creation of the world, but it is clearly understood by all things that are made. Death is an end of life, a cessation of consciousness, a final exit from pain and the things of this world, not a transition into the "spirit world."

Rom 1:20 KJV

(20) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are **clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made**, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Yet Robert's doctrine denies this truth of creation, preaching a vain doctrine of men, the imagination of heathen philosophers, even the dogma of the Roman church and the Muslim faith. Yet where is his evidence from creation? Where is his doctrine clearly seen in the creation of the world?

When Jesus rebuked the unbelieving Sadducees because they denied the resurrection of the dead, he said that they knew not the scripture (Acts 23:8, also Matthew 22:29-33,

Mark 20:28) and he proved his doctrine from the very books of Moses which they themselves acknowledged.

Luk 20:34-38 KJV

- (34) And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:  
(35) But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:  
(36) Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.  
(37) **Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed** at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.  
(38) For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

Jesus did not teach the Sadducees that the dead were living in heaven, hell, purgatory, or otherwise conscious in some other place. Rather, he said that “he is not a God of the dead” to prove that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall live again, in a future resurrection. If Robert’s teaching were true, that the dead are really alive because their “soul and spirit continue on” then this would contradict Christ’s own proof.

Jesus proved the resurrection of the dead from the books of Moses, and expected that the Sadducees should have been able to do the same. Robert cannot do this, for his philosophy contradicts the resurrection, and likewise Moses contradicts Robert.

Gen 3:19 KJV

- (19) In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: **for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.**

Gen 3:22 KJV

- (22) And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, **lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:**

God told Adam that he was created out of dust, and that when he died, he would return to the dust. After Adam sinned and he was cast out of the garden, God guarded the tree of life to keep him from the fruit, lest he put forth his hand and eat, and live for ever. This obviously means that man, by himself, will not live for ever. Robert’s assumption of an “immortal spirit” denies this plain biblical teaching.

Deu 31:16 KJV

- (16) **And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers;** and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go *to be* among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

God himself has described death as a sleep. Sleep is not a word used to represent a higher consciousness or a greater awareness, yet this is the word God chose to describe the state of death. I say that this also preaches the resurrection of the dead, for sleep is a temporary state from which one can be roused at a future time. Thus Moses agrees with Christ and the gospels, and this doctrine is plainly taught.

Exo 32:33 KJV

(33) And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, **him will I blot out of my book.**

Deu 29:20 KJV

(20) The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, **and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.**

I say also that the annihilation of the wicked is a clear teaching, for “blotting out” is hardly an obscure term. If God has written someone in his book, and blots him out, he shall become no more. God is the Creator, but there is nothing that he has created that is beyond his power to destroy, to blot out from under heaven, and his book of life.

Deu 32:39 KJV

(39) See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me: **I kill, and I make alive;** I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.

What has Robert used as his foundation? His doctrine is not evidenced by nature, nor is it grounded in scripture. He has simply accepted the Roman traditions of the Catholic church with a *blind* faith, without stopping to question if these were valid assumptions.

Were the saints of old promised that they would “go to heaven when they died?” Were they warned that if they would not obey they would be tormented without end in fiery caverns beneath the earth? No, these myths and falsehoods are the stuff of the pagan religions. The saints died in faith and they have not yet received the promises, but they endured all things, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Heb 11:13 KJV

(13) **These all died in faith, not having received the promises,** but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Heb 11:35 KJV

(35) Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; **that they might obtain a better resurrection:**

Considering the importance of a proper scriptural foundation, and setting aside unfounded assumptions from vain philosophy and traditions of men, let us briefly review the attempted proofs that Robert has offered for his teaching.

## Part VII: A Brief Review of Robert’s Arguments

Robert *correctly* sensed that a correct understanding of the nature of death is the essence of these doctrines. Thus, to counter where God has said that man shall not live for ever, but shall surely die, he has tried to prove that souls do ever live. His seven arguments include:

1. In Genesis 35:18, Robert claimed that Rachel’s soul must have departed *to another plane of existence*. Scripture says that she departed, because she *died*, because she passed away, and was *not*. Souls die, so saith the scripture.

2. In Luke 23:43, Robert claimed that Jesus promised that He would be in paradise that very day, contradicting Peter, and denying His own prophecy. His error lies in an ignorance of the scriptures, and a misreading of the English grammar, confusing “shall” with “will.” It is possible that Robert is using an inferior English translation that either does not understand these differences, or that does not recognize the nuances of the underlying Greek text. However, Jesus issued his promise (the “shalt”) *that day*, remaining in the grave three days and three nights, ascending to his Father on the first day of the week. The thief remains in the grave and will be remembered *when* Christ returns, at His coming, and His kingdom.
3. In Revelation 6:9-11, Robert has interpreted an isolated image from a prophetic vision where the dead cry out for justice, and insisted that this is a proof that the dead are conscious. He seems unfamiliar with the literary device of personification, and has ignored that this same passage instructs the dead to go back and rest for a yet a little while. Besides this, his interpretation *directly* contradicted his very next argument, proving that at least one (even both) must be imagery, not a literal happening.
4. In Luke 16:19-31, Robert has attempted to force an obvious parable into a literal history, in spite of obvious contradictions this would inflict on other essential Christian doctrines. He insists that he believes it is a history, ignoring the very words of Christ and the prophets that prove that He *only* spoke to the multitude in parables. As such, he cannot be expected to grasp the meaning of this parable. Parables are constructed to illustrate a spiritual truth, not to prove the operation of nature. For example, in the parable in Judges 9 the trees themselves speak and elect a king, and threaten to devour each other with fire. The dead are no more conscious than the trees.
5. In 1 Peter 3:18-20, Robert has misread the sentence structure to where Christ “preached” by his death, instead of his quickening by the Spirit. His final comment is even blasphemous, saying “The main point is if Jesus did not fall into soul sleep why should we expect to.” First, there is nothing to indicate that Jesus did not sleep during those three days and nights, and second, if perhaps He did not, that might be because Jesus Christ was God Himself (and *we* are *not*).
6. In 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, Robert claims that we will live together with Christ whether we wake or sleep, thus, we must be with Christ *while* we are dead. He has ignored the words of Paul in the same chapter (and other epistles) that state that we will be with Christ when He *returns*, at His *coming*, at the *resurrection*.
7. In 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, Robert claims that “when a person leaves the body they are in the presence of the Lord.” He has ignored the verses immediately before and after his chosen proof-text, which say that we shall not be found naked, but clothed with a spiritual body, and he has also forgotten that Paul said that we receive this spiritual body *at the resurrection of the dead*, and that we *cannot* inherit the kingdom of heaven without this spiritual body.

Thus, Robert has interpreted a parable and a segment of a vision as if they were actual events, and the rest of his arguments primarily depend upon misreading grammar or

sentence structure, isolating a couple verses away from their context, and insisting upon an *assumed* foundation of an “immortal soul.” He seems to have trouble understanding that man can *truly* die.

Robert then presented eight more scriptures which were supposed to represent arguments to prove that the wicked dead are currently “undergoing some type of punishment right now.” Why does he believe the dead are punished before judgment? His reasons include:

8. In Matthew 23:33, Robert noted that the phrase “damnation of hell” is used. He then attempted to argue that because all men die once, that a final sentence of death is no sentence at all. His logic is unconvincing. Judgments hand down death sentences all the time.
9. In Matthew 10:28, Robert found the word “hell” again, and discovered that in this context it refers to the second death, rather than the first. I am not sure what he was trying to prove with this argument.
10. In Mark 9:43-48, Robert observed that the second death is considered more threatening than losing an eye or a limb. Again, I do not understand how this would prove his point that the second death is really a type of life, instead of annihilation. So far he seems to have been merely collecting verses that contain the word “hell” translated from the Greek “gehenna.” I pointed out that this Greek word was derived from the Hebrew name of a valley where refuse and *dead corpses* were “burnt up.”
11. In Matthew 24:31-46, Robert has found another verse that contains the word “hell.” He notes that the wicked shall be sentenced to eternal punishment, but the righteous shall be given eternal life. He seems to have missed the obvious meaning that “eternal punishment” is the opposite of “eternal life” and therefore the punishment must also be the opposite of life, that is, death. The language itself argues against him here.
12. In Matthew 13:41-42, Robert claims that hell is a *place* of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Although most recent translations have inserted this gloss, this was contained in no major translation until the latter 1800s. The King James translation agrees with the earliest English tradition since the 1300’s, and states that there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in *reaction* to the judgment. Additionally, Robert seemed unaware as to the meaning of the idiom “gnashing of teeth” (meaning anger directed against another) or the Psalm that Jesus was quoting which plainly contradicts Robert’s “Burn On” doctrine, which reads, “The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish” (see Psalm 112:10).
13. In 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Robert has taken the phrase “eternal destruction” or “everlasting destruction” and argued that if the destruction of the second death was truly eternal, then “eternal life” must be only temporary. This particular argument that Robert has *borrowed* is one of the most backward examples of illogic that I have ever seen. If those destroyed by the second death were to come back to life, *then* he might have a case, for *that* would *not* be eternal destruction.

14. In Revelation 20:10, Robert has argued that the beast and false prophet must have survived being thrown into the lake of fire, because they had not removed themselves one thousand years later. In order to make this argument, he has misread the verse, adding words that are neither present in the King James translation or the Greek text. Identifying his underlying assumption that the devil would not be consumed by the fire, I used this opportunity to provide overwhelming proof from both Testaments where God promised he would “burn up” the devil, “consuming” him with fire, that he would become “no more.”
15. In Revelation 20:14-15, Robert used an unfounded *assumption* that the devil is immortal to argue that his torment which shall be “for ever and ever” must have an infinite duration. However, when our bible applies an action “for ever” to a finite being, that action also ceases when its subject expires. Given that we had already proven that the devil is finite, and that God has promised to annihilate him at the end of the judgment, his reasoning was exposed as circular. The devil will not survive the judgment, and neither should we expect that wicked men shall last any longer.

Most of these supposed points (8, 9, 10, 11, and 13) made little sense and seemed like they were created to “pad out” an otherwise lacking argument. He seemed to have no knowledge of any of the prophecies concerning the destruction of the devil, or the meaning of “for ever and ever”, or the significance of “night and day” in relation to the “new heavens and the new earth.” In short, his assumptions were fueled by an overall ignorance of the whole bible and a neglect of immediate context.

Finally, Robert used an appeal to tradition and the Old Fathers, arguing that he must be correct if others have also believed as he believes. Sadly, he was unfamiliar even with his chosen authors, because only half of his chosen witnesses actually agreed with him, and Justin Martyr especially championed *against* Robert’s doctrine and wouldn’t even consider Robert a Christian, even specifically *because* Robert claims that he will “go to heaven” when he dies.

For these reasons, we judge that his accusations of teaching “false beliefs” are without weight or merit, for his own teachings are unsupported from scripture, even clearly contradicted within, he is unable to answer the arguments of his opponents, and he even contradicts his own self at times. The Bible must be our basis for belief, and if the scripture says that the dead sleep and the wicked shall be burnt up, then this is what we must believe, and we must teach no other doctrine.

### **Part VIII: Conclusion: The Spirit of truth and the love of God**

Did Robert present his case fairly, with chivalry and honor, seeking out the scriptures, and weighing both sides of the issue? Did it seem as if Robert attempted to set aside any preexisting prejudices that might slant his opinion in favor of “traditions of men,” returning to the first principles of his faith? That is, from the nature of his arguments, did Robert appear to be guided by the Spirit of truth?

**Joh 16:13 KJV**

(13) Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

1Jn 4:6-8 KJV

- (6) We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. **Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.**
- (7) Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
- (8) **He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.**

We are told that the Spirit of truth will guide us into all truth, and that we may recognize this spirit of truth by the love of God, and our love for one another, for he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Robert's doctrine has failed the test of scripture. But let us put his teaching to its fullest test: is it a doctrine of love?

If someone were to believe that God would grant eternal life to his enemies for the purpose of inflicting never ending pain and torment, without possibility of repentance or redemption, how can they actually believe that God is love? Can they even understand the meaning of the word? How can anyone claim that "eternal conscious torment" to "burn on" without end is love in any form?

1Jn 4:16-18 KJV

- (16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love**; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.
- (17) Herein is our love made perfect, that **we may have boldness in the day of judgment**: because as he is, so are we in this world.
- (18) **There is no fear in love**; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Additionally, anyone who is motivated to serve God simply because they want to avoid infinite torture does not know God at all, and cannot truly love God. Most people will do *anything* to avoid torture. As spoken by John, there is *no fear* in love.

Heb 11:6 KJV

- (6) But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: **for he that cometh to God must believe that he is**, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God is love, therefore he that cometh to God must believe that he is love, and without this faith it is impossible to please him. If someone is unable to believe and merely fears punishment, they know not the love of God, and they will be "burnt up" in the second death. The unprofitable servant was cast into outer darkness (see Matthew 25:30).

Rev 21:7-8 KJV

- (7) He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.
- (8) **But the fearful, and unbelieving**, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, **and all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: **which is the second death.**

God has also reserved the second death for all liars, which brings us back to the importance of truth. God does not like to have his character maligned, when prophets lie and tell others that He is a cruel, vengeful, sadistic being. How could this please him?

Jer 23:32 KJV

(32) Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, **and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness**; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

Mat 7:22-23 KJV

(22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?  
(23) **And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:** depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

What profit is there in Robert's "Burn On" doctrine? It is a lie from the beginning, it prevents people from knowing the true God of love, and many people turn away from the gospel because it has been misrepresented to them. Those that claim to be "saved" by their "fear of hell" are to be viewed skeptically, because true love casteth out fear. "Burn On" is not only false, it is of no value, even preaching against the gospel of Christ.

Jer 23:16 KJV

(16) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: **they speak a vision of their own heart,** *and* not out of the mouth of the LORD.

The revealed God of the Bible is far different than the vision spoken of by these false prophets. He is a God of love, and of mercy, and his judgments are just. Men have created an evil, vengeful, vindictive god after their own likeness, a divine devil, and preached a vision of their own heart, but this is not the true God. The true God is the God of the Bible, the revealed person of Jesus Christ (see John 14:9, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:1-3).

William Tyndale, in "An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue," wrote:

**"And again, a good man might err in many things, and not be damned;** so that his error were not directly against the promises that are in Christ's blood, **neither that he held them maliciously,** ... and though all be false, yet should I not be damned, so long as I had no obstinacy therein: for the faith that I have in Christ's blood should swallow up that error, **till I were better taught.**"

Does not William Tyndale agree with the Apostle Paul in this regard?

Act 17:30 KJV

(30) And the times of this ignorance God winked at; **but now commandeth all men every where to repent:**

Good men might err in many things, but if they have received the love of the truth, they will repent upon discovering their error (see 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Apollos was instructed in the way of the Lord, and fervent in spirit, but needed to be taught the way of God more perfectly (see Acts 18:24-26). Paul was a chosen vessel to preach to the Gentiles, but if he had later fallen away to knowingly oppose the truth, should he not also become a castaway? (Compare Acts 9:15 and 1 Corinthians 9:27, Hebrews 6:4-6.)

Truly, God has commanded all men every where to repent, which requires change, and fruits meet for repentance (see Matthew 3:8, Acts 26:20). The “Burn On” doctrine of “eternal conscious torment” is the antithesis of love, and is not compatible with the true Christian faith. For what reason is it believed? Is it for a myth that one has an “immortal soul” because one lacks true faith in the resurrection of the dead?

Ultimately, this becomes a question of love. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love (see 1 John 4:8), so how can we keep the commandments of God if we know not love? What are his commandments?

**Mar 12:29-31 KJV**

(29) And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

(30) **And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart**, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

(31) And the second *is* like, *namely* this, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**. There is none other commandment greater than these.

**Joh 13:34-35 KJV**

(34) **A new commandment** I give unto you, **That ye love one another; as I have loved you**, that ye also love one another.

(35) By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

**2Jn 1:6 KJV**

(6) **And this is love**, that we walk after his commandments. **This is the commandment**, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

The commandments of God are not grievous, and they are briefly stated:

1. **Love God,** ... **with all of your being.**
2. **Love thy neighbor,** ... **as thyself.**
3. **Love one another,** ... **as He has loved us.**

**1Jn 5:1-3 KJV**

(1) Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

(2) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

(3) **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.**

**Rev 22:14-15 KJV**

(14) **Blessed *are* they that do his commandments**, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

(15) For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Those that will not keep these commandments, who obstinately refuse the love of God, these shall have their part in the second death, that they rise not; neither shall they be any more. His sentence is absolute, but it is just, and ultimately it is also most merciful.

Rom 8:1-2 KJV

- (1) *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me **free from the law of sin and death.**

For Robert, and each and every reader, I urge you to forsake the wicked traditions of men, and turn again to the scriptures as the source of truth. You must know that God is love, and believe that He is, and you must also believe His words. God created this world to teach us the difference between life and death, and this very law teaches us about God.

Look to the scriptures, and see the character of the True God.

Eze 18:32 KJV

- (32) **For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth**, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.

Eze 33:11 KJV

- (11) Say unto them, *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked**; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Not only does God have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but why would he intentionally torture billions of people without an end, without any hope of redemption? Anyone who would wish such a fate upon others knows not the love of God. Any one who would believe such a thing knows not the scripture.

Rev 21:4 KJV

- (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: **for the former things are passed away.**

Rev 22:19 KJV

- (19) And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, **God shall take away his part out of the book of life**, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

**Believe his words:** there shall be **no more pain**; the former things **shall pass away**.

\* \* \*

## Appendix: Should We Purposely Neglect Any Scripture?

Robert asked:

“What Biblical support do they use? The verses are Job 14:10, 14; Psalm 6:5, 49:15; Daniel 12:2; John 3:13,5:28-29; Acts 2:29-34; 2 Peter 3:4 and Ecclesiastes 9:5, 12:7. Instead of doing a thorough study of each of these verses I would rather look at verses that have not been dealt with in a satisfactory matter to me that teach us that there is more to it than just sleeping through time waiting for Jesus to return.”

I thought it might behoove the reader to at least take a look at the verses that Robert admitted that he was unwilling to answer. Let not the reader think that this is a comprehensive list by any means.

### Job 14:10-14 KJV

- (10) But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he?  
(11) *As* the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:  
(12) So man lieth down, and riseth not: **till the heavens *be* no more**, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.  
(13) O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!  
(14) If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

The book of Job has a wealth of description concerning the condition of death. The reader is strongly encouraged to read the entire book and to make notes of each and every place death is alluded to, and how it is described. Job indeed was a prophet, foretelling of the second coming, resurrection, and judgment of the dead, and let no one tell you that this is not inspired scripture.

The dead shall sleep “till the heavens be no more” (Rev 20:11) and Job will be kept secret “until thy wrath be past” (Revelation 16:1) and appointed “a set time” (1 Corinthians 15:23) until his “change come” (1 Corinthians 15:51).

### Psa 6:5 KJV

- (5) **For in death *there is no remembrance of thee***: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

### Psa 49:14-15 KJV

- (14) Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.  
(15) **But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave**: for he shall receive me. Selah.

Does anyone challenge that David is a prophet? And did he not prophesy the coming of Christ, saying, the LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? (Psalm 110:1, Matthew 24:44, Mark 12:36, Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 1:13). David will be received when he is brought out of the grave (and not before).

Justin Martyr also used David's 24<sup>th</sup> Psalm to demonstrate to Trypho the Jew that only One ascends to heaven, that being the King of Glory, none other than the LORD of Hosts. Thus we understand why Justin would say of those (who were beginning to say) that they ascended to heaven when they died, that they blasphemed the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (from Dialogue with Trypho, chapter 36).

**Dan 12:1-3 KJV**

- (1) And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.
- (2) **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.
- (3) And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Daniel plainly says that the dead shall sleep until that resurrection of the last day.

**Joh 3:13-16 KJV**

- (13) **And no man hath ascended up to heaven**, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.
- (14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
- (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not **perish, but have eternal life**.
- (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

What part of “no man hath ascended up to heaven” is difficult to understand?

**Joh 5:28-29 KJV**

- (28) **Marvel not at this:** for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,
- (29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

These words of Jesus also echo those of the prophet Daniel, speaking of the resurrection to everlasting life, and a resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. Christ and his apostles preached the resurrection of the dead, and this we be warned to look for every hour. Paul said that if it were not for this resurrection of the dead, that we of all men would be “most miserable” (see 1 Corinthians 15:19).

**Act 2:29-35 KJV**

- (29) Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you **of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day**.
- (30) Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;
- (31) He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.
- (32) This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

- (33) Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
- (34) **For David is not ascended into the heavens:** but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
- (35) Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

What part of “David is not ascended into the heavens” is difficult to understand?

2Pe 3:3-7 KJV

- (3) Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,
- (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? **for since the fathers fell asleep**, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.
- (5) For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
- (6) Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
- (7) But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire **against the day of judgment** and perdition of ungodly men.

Does not Peter himself say that the dead sleep? Their day of judgment is still to come.

Ecc 9:4-6 KJV

- (4) For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.
- (5) **For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing**, neither have they any more a reward; **for the memory of them is forgotten.**
- (6) **Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished;** neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun.

Ecc 12:5-7 KJV

- (5) Also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is* high, and fears *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:
- (6) Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.
- (7) **Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was:** and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

How many clear verses must one ignore to cling to these vain traditions of men? The dead know not any thing, and their memory is forgotten. David said that their “thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4) and they are described as returning to the dust. The spirit of life belongs solely to God, and clearly this is not “the” man, but that vital spark that gives him awareness. Perish is a very clear word.

**Many more could be added to these besides.** The biblical doctrines of death and hell do not depend on a small handful of proof texts that must be twisted far beyond their intended meaning, altering the grammar or inserting circular logic, but they speak plainly for themselves, when the words are interpreted in their ordinary sense as defined by scripture. **If a doctrine is true, it will not contradict any scripture.**