



MBS101

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



# IMMORTALITY



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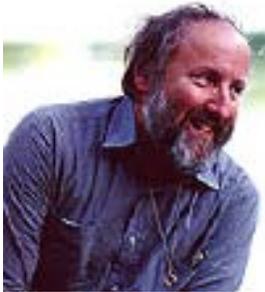
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*to the praise of the  
glory of his grace,  
which he freely  
bestowed on us  
in the Beloved.  
Ephesians 1:6*



NOTES

**T**his messianic Bible study on immortality will be discussed in four major categories.

## **I. DEFINITION**

The first major category is the definition of immortality. The meaning of immortality is: the eternal, continuous, and conscious existence of the soul after the death of the body. Physical death is the separation of the material part of man from the immaterial part of man. Immortality means “an eternal, continuous, and conscious existence of the immaterial part of man after the death of the body.” Immortality means “continuous consciousness.”

This study will use the term “immortality” in reference to its theological usage. Theologically, the term “immortality” refers to both the body or the material part of man, as well as the soul-spirit or the immaterial part of man. But to be technical, the biblical usage of the term is limited to the body only.

In I Corinthians 15:53-54, the Bible speaks of “putting on” immortality, and the body puts on immortality at the Rapture of the Church. For the dead believer, immortality is *put on* by means of resurrection, and for the living believer immortality is *put on* by translation. This will occur at the Rapture. So biblically speaking, the term “immortality” is used of the body only, but the theological use of the term is applied to both the body and the soul.

This discussion concerning immortality is concerned with the continuous consciousness of the soul-spirit or the immaterial part of man after physical death.

## II. THE EVIDENCES OF THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

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The second major category of this study on immortality is to give the evidences of immortality. “What is the biblical evidence that the teaching of immortality is true?” There are seventeen specific evidences for the Doctrine of Immortality, evidences that the Bible does teach continuous consciousness of the soul.

### A. Gathered to His People

The first evidence of the Doctrine of Immortality is a figure of speech used in the Old Testament, which relates to death: *gathered to his people*. The dead person is seen as joining a company that preceded him. For example, Genesis 25:8 states: *And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people.*

The same statement is made in Genesis 25:17 of Ishmael: *And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people.*

Notice that first, physical death takes place, Ishmael dies; then after death, he is seen as *gathered unto his people*, as joining a company that preceded him or that had gone on in advance.

Another example is in Genesis 35:29a: *And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people.*

The next example is from the life of Jacob, Genesis 49:29: *And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite.*

And the last example is in Genesis 49:33: *And when Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.*

So in the first book of the Bible, after people die physically, they are said to be “gathered unto their people.” They are seen as joining a company they are conscious of and that had preceded them. Some interpreted this phrase to mean nothing more than being buried in the family cemetery. However, that would not be true of a person like Abraham whose family or clan was back in Haran.

### B. Joined the Fathers

The second evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is similar to the first: sometimes there is the expression of having “joined the fathers.” Upon death, the dead one has joined the fathers. One example of this is in Genesis 15:15: *But you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.*

A similar statement is made in Genesis 47:30a: *but when I sleep with my*

*fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place.*

So the fact that one goes to join his fathers is also an implication that consciousness continues even after physical death.

### **C. The Continuous Existence of Enoch**

A third evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is Enoch's continuous existence; he did not die, but has gone on to continually exist somewhere. In the Old Testament, this took place in Genesis 5:24 and this is reaffirmed in the New Testament by Hebrews 11:5.

### **D. The Assurance of Job**

A fourth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is found in the Book of Job, which records Job's assurance based upon a question he himself raised and then answered. For example, in Job 14:14a the question is: *If a man die, shall he live again?*

And the question that Job raised in 14:14 is answered in Job 19:25-26: *But as for me I know that my Redeemer lives, And at last he will stand up upon the earth: And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, Then without my flesh shall I see God.*

Job had the assurance that even though his physical body will eventually go into physical death, nevertheless, he is going to see God apart from his body and that, too, is an evidence of immortality.

### **E. The Doctrine of Resurrection**

The fifth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is based upon the Doctrine of Resurrection, because the very act of resurrection implies immortality. Otherwise, why even bother with resurrecting the dead, be they righteous or unrighteous? So contained within the very concept of resurrection, is the implication of immortality. Why are they raised, but to live forever.

In the Old Testament, the Doctrine of Resurrection is taught in Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; and Hosea 13:14. In the New Testament, it is clearly taught in John 5:25-29, and Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15.

### **F. The Consciousness of the Soul**

The sixth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is that, according to Scripture, the immaterial part of man is viewed as being with God upon death and is conscious. There are examples of this truth in both testaments. For example, in the Old Testament, this truth is found in Psalm 17:15: *As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding your form.*

Here David expressed a real faith that the soul will still be conscious in the fellowship with God even after death.

This is also taught in Psalm 73:23-25: *Nevertheless I am continually with*

*you: You have holden my right hand. You will guide me with your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides you.*

In this Psalm, the author Asaph expressed a real faith in immortality. Even upon death he saw himself as being with God and conscious.

This is also found in Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; John 14:3; II Corinthians 5:1-8; and Philippians 1:22-24.

### **G. Joining the Dead**

The seventh evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is that David expected to be able to join his dead son after David's own death. This is a statement that he made in the Book of II Samuel 12:23: *But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.*

Notice the way that David put it, he expected to go to the place where his deceased son was, and expected to see him at that time after death. So David expected to be able to join his dead son in a conscious way after his own death, and he expressed it in this passage. This, too, clearly shows that the Bible teaches immortality, and that immortality was a blessed hope of the Old Testament saints.

### **H. The Consciousness of the Souls of Sheol**

The eighth evidence of the teaching for the Doctrine of Immortality is that the souls of *Sheol* are seen in continuous consciousness. A good example of this in the Old Testament is Isaiah 14:9-11: *Sheol from beneath is moved for you to meet you at your coming; it stirs up the dead for you, even all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall answer and say unto you, Are you also become weak as we? are you become like unto us? Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the noise of your viols: the worm is spread under you, and worms cover you.*

In this passage, the soul of the king of Babylon enters into the Hell section of *Sheol* itself, and all the souls that preceded him in Hell suddenly rise in astonishment as they see this one also entering the domains of Hell. They are able to ask him questions and carry on a conversation. So it should not be missed that these dead ones are portrayed as being conscious.

In the New Testament, this is taught by Luke 16:19-31 in the story of the *rich man* and *Lazarus*. Though it is frequently called "The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus," this is incorrect. Luke does not say that it is a parable nor does Yeshua (Jesus) begin that story as He often did by saying, "Learn a parable." Parables do not have names like *Lazarus* and *Abraham*. This is a true story that Yeshua gave. Notice that, after the rich man died and after Lazarus died, both of these men were conscious. Furthermore, someone else is mentioned who had also died centuries earlier, Abraham. Abraham and the rich man can carry on a conversation; they are clearly conscious although, physically, they have died. The story of the rich man and Lazarus,

then, is another evidence for the teaching of the Doctrine of Immortality.

NOTES

### I. Eternity in the Heart

The ninth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is the statement made by Ecclesiastes 3:11: *he has set eternity in their heart*. The word *heart* is used frequently in Scripture as one of the facets of the immaterial part of man. Contained within the immaterial part of man, according to Ecclesiastes 3:11, is the fact that *eternity* has been placed in it. So contained within the immaterial part of man is the element of immortality.

### J. Samuel's Appearance to Saul

The tenth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is the fact that Samuel was seen as being conscious after his own death. I Samuel 28:8-19 is the account of Saul's going to a witch to see if she could bring up the soul of Samuel from *Sheol*. Now, witches do not have that kind of power, and neither did this one. What happens in these situations is that a demon is impersonating the dead. But in this account, the real Samuel actually comes up to the surprise of the witch, which shows that she had nothing to do with it. God intervened in this instance and allowed the soul of Samuel to be brought up. Samuel was not resurrected from the dead at that point, it was simply the spirit of Samuel, his immaterial part that was brought up from Sheol. He was able to carry on this conversation with Saul, letting Saul know that his doom had come and he will die in the battle with the Philistines. But the point is that Samuel was fully conscious even after his own physical death, and that, too, shows immortality.

### K. God Is a God of the Living

The eleventh evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is what Jesus said about God in Matthew 22:29-32: *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living* (v. 32). Although those particular living ones he mentioned, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were physically dead, yet God is a God for the living. The point being made is that God has a continuous conscious, living, relationship with the patriarchs, which is one reason why He cannot leave their bodies dead. But while the resurrection of the body was still future, God already had a relationship with them because their immaterial part was very conscious.

### L. Through Death Is Life

The twelfth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is the statement made in John 11:25-26 concerning the dead Lazarus: *though he die, yet shall he live* (v. 25). Notice it does not say, "though he died, he will live." If it did, it would merely mean that eventually the dead one would be resurrected. However, John used the present tense: though he is now dead, he is also now living; though one dies, he still lives. He is certainly dead physically, but the immaterial part of man has a continuous, living consciousness and, therefore, Yeshua can say of a dead saint, though he is dead, he is living.

### M. The Promise of Future Glory

The thirteenth evidence for the teaching of the Doctrine of Immortality is the fact of the promise of future glory. The guarantee of future glory for the believer is found in Romans 8:18 and the fact that the believer is destined to be glorified also implies immortality, because the very act of glorification implies continuous eternal existence. Romans 8:18 states: *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.*

### N. The Promise of a Future Life

The fourteenth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is found in I Corinthians 15:19, which states that a lack of future life would make the believer *most pitiable*. The lack of a future life for the believer makes him *most pitiable*, because believers have committed their lives to God based upon His promise of immortality. Believers conduct a very narrow lifestyle and discipline their lives to live in accordance with His rules and His regulations, so if there is no life after death, if there is no immortality, then all this was for nothing, their faith was in vain. This, indeed, would make the believer *most pitiable*. So immortality must be true because of the kind of lifestyle we are expected to have in this life.

### O. The Soul Is Renewed

The fifteenth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is the statement made in II Corinthians 4:16-18 that, while the body decays, the soul is *renewed day by day*. Though the body eventually decays in death, yet the soul is *renewed day by day*. The only reason for the soul to be renewed is because of its immortality.

### P. Immortality Through the Gospel

The sixteenth evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is in II Timothy 1:10, where Paul states that both *life and immortality* [are brought] *to light through the gospel*. The very fact that he connects immortality with the gospel shows that one of the reasons for the gospel is the salvation of the soul for its continued existence.

### Q. Future Rewards and Punishments

The last evidence for the Doctrine of Immortality is the fact that future reward and future punishment imply immortality; these things would have no meaning after death unless immortality were true. This fact is found in Matthew 11:20-24; 13:49-50; 25:34, 41, 46; Romans 2:5-11; and II Timothy 4:7-8.

## III. THE BENEFITS OF THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

The third major category is to discuss briefly the benefits of the Doctrine of Immortality. "What are the benefits of this doctrine? Is there any practical value in teaching the Doctrine of Immortality?"

There are three benefits of the Doctrine of Immortality.

NOTES

### A. Our Hope of Future Joy

Immortality provides us the hope of future joy according to Philippians 1:23-24: *But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.*

In this passage, Paul faced the possibility of physical death, but that gave him the hope of future joy, knowing that upon separation from the body, he is going to be in a conscious, continuous fellowship with the Lord.

### B. Our Temporary Residency in This Life

The second benefit of the Doctrine of Immortality is the awareness that believers are only temporary residents in this life according to Philippians 3:20: *For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The believer's *citizenship is in heaven*. The fact that immortality is true produces the awareness that believers are temporary residents in this life, because now their *citizenship is in heaven*. What that means practically is that all trials and tribulations in this life do not need to be taken to the point of defeat or to the point of despair or to the point of depression. But believers can look upon it and say, "This, too, will pass, I am only a temporary resident on this earth, in this land. This, too, will pass. My *citizenship is in heaven*. I will some day know the full joy of the Lord." This is the second benefit of the Doctrine of Immortality, the awareness of temporary residency in this life and, after death, the destiny of eternal, continuous consciousness in Heaven itself.

### C. Our Motivation for Righteous Living

The third benefit of the Doctrine of Immortality is that immortality provides us our motivation for living righteous, Spirit-filled, sanctified lives. A person who does not have the real, living hope of immortality struggles to make the best he can out of life right here. The unsaved struggle and strive, constantly reaching out for those higher standards of living because they do not have the hope of eternal immortality in their hearts. They do not believe in immortality, and because they do not believe in immortality, they try to get the best they can in this life. They constantly struggle with materialism.

## IV. FALSE VIEWS

The fourth major category of this study of immortality is to discuss some common false views or common misconceptions concerning immortality. There are four major wrong views.

### A. Cessation of Existence

The first false view is that of cessation of existence. This is the doctrine of pure mortalism. This life is all there is and, once this body

dies, there is total cessation of existence; not only a cessation of consciousness, but of a cessation of existence as well. This is the view of atheism. Of course, those who hold to this false view, totally reject biblical revelation, for this view requires the rejection of the clear biblical teachings concerning immortality. Obviously, this is not a view that believers in the Bible should hold.

### **B. Transmigration of the Soul or Reincarnation**

There is a second false view, also held among unbelievers, and that is the teaching of the transmigration of the soul. This is also known as reincarnation: when the body dies, the soul continues to exist, but does not go either to Heaven or Hell, it simply transmigrates and enters into a new, living body, be it another person or even an animal. This teaching concerning the transmigration of the soul or reincarnation has no biblical evidence.

Some try to use a statement made in Luke 1:17, where it states that John the Baptist came *in the spirit and power of Elijah* the Prophet. The argument says that since Elijah was in John the Baptist, it teaches reincarnation, for the soul or *spirit of Elijah* the Prophet actually entered the body of John the Baptist when he was either conceived or born. However, that is not what Luke 1:17 is teaching. When Luke 1:17 states that John came *in the spirit and power of Elijah*, it means that, both these men had the power and the presence of the same Holy Spirit. The *spirit* in this verse is the Holy Spirit, not the human spirit. The power is the power of the Holy Spirit. So both men had the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit. This does not, in any way, teach reincarnation.

Furthermore, the principle of Hebrews 9:27: *inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this comes judgment*, militates against reincarnation. This verse goes against the concept of transmigration of the soul. While it is true that some men have died twice in that they have been resurrected and therefore died again, that is not reincarnation; it is the same human spirit that indwelt the person before and which indwells him again. The same immaterial part of man is joined with the same material part of man in resurrection. So there is no transmigration of the soul, there is no reincarnation; it is the same spirit-soul that is brought back into that same body.

### **C. Conditional Immortality**

The first two false views are views held by unbelievers, but the third and fourth false views are held by many believers and also held by many among the cults. The third wrong view is called “conditional immortality.” Conditional Immortality means the soul is not inherently immortal; immortality is not part of the make-up of the soul. Rather, immortality is a gift for the saved only. So at death, the unbeliever simply becomes non-existent, and only the believer continues to exist. This view is primarily taught by certain cults but, unfortunately, this view is also held by many who are believers.

The various arguments used in favor of conditional immortality, as well as the arguments against it, are the same arguments for and against the fourth position, so these will be dealt with in conjunction with the fourth wrong view.

#### **D. Annihilationism**

The most common false view, especially because of the cults, is the fourth view: the Doctrine of Annihilationism. What annihilationism says is this: the unsaved soul is annihilated after a temporary period of punishment. These people do believe that the unsaved soul goes to Hell, but not for eternity, only temporarily. Eventually the unsaved soul is annihilated after suffering a duration of punishment.

This is the doctrine of certain cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-Day Adventists. This topic will be discussed in four areas.

##### **1. The Arguments in Support of Annihilationism**

“What are the supporting arguments that they like to use?” It is possible to subdivide the support of annihilationism in two categories: theological arguments and scriptural arguments.

##### **a. The Theological Arguments**

Basically, they use eight theological arguments.

The first one is based upon the love of God; they claim that it is against the love of God for eternal punishment to be true.

The second theological argument is based upon the justice of God; there is no justice in eternal punishment.

The third theological argument is that the soul does not inherit immortality, it must be gained. This is based upon the reading of Genesis 2:7, where it states: *man became a living soul*, and also Genesis 3:19, where it states: *dust you are, and unto dust you shall return*. By combining these two passages, they say that the soul does not possess inherent immortality, but it must be gained.

The fourth theological argument is that God has failed if evil is not liquidated in its existence. Since the continued existence of the unsaved means the continued existence of evil, God would have failed if evil is not liquidated in its existence and, therefore, it will be liquidated by annihilation.

The fifth theological argument they like to use is to ask the question: “Where is the justice for dead infants and the ignorant heathen in eternal punishment?” It is unjust for those who died in infancy and those who died in ignorance to be in eternal punishment.

The sixth theological argument is that punishment is only beneficial or useful when it is used for reformation. In eternal punishment there

is no reformation; therefore, there is no need for it.

The seventh theological argument is: “Why should God and the universe be burdened with the continuous existence of those who have scorned a useful life?” They see the continuous, eternal existence of the unbeliever as being a burden to God and the universe; therefore, it should be done away with.

The eighth theological argument is that the righteous ones could not enjoy bliss knowing that others are continually in Hell. Those in Heaven will simply not be able to enjoy it if they know that there are others suffering continuously in Hell.

### **b. The Scriptural Arguments**

They also use scriptural arguments, and all together, there are sixteen scriptural arguments they like to use. They depend heavily on the word “destruction.” They depend heavily upon the use of the word *destruction*.

They point to Matthew 10:28, which refers to God's ability *to destroy both soul and body in hell*.

Secondly, they go to Matthew 7:13, where it speaks about how *broad is the way...to destruction*, and this *destruction* is interpreted as “ceasing to exist.”

Thirdly, they turn to Romans 9:22, where it speaks about the unbeliever being *fitted* for *destruction*.

Fourthly, they go to II Peter 2:1, where *false prophets* and *false teachers* bring to *themselves swift destruction*.

The fifth scriptural argument is Philippians 3:19, which speaks about the unbeliever *whose end is perdition*. The Greek word there, they point out, is the same as the other ones that were translated “to destroy.

Sixth, there is II Peter 2:12, where it speaks about those unbelievers *to be taken and destroyed*.

The seventh argument is I Thessalonians 5:3, where it speaks about the unbeliever finally facing *sudden destruction*.

Eighth, there is II Thessalonians 2:3, which speaks about the *lawless one* destined to be destroyed.

Ninth, there is Ezekiel 18:4, 20, which does speak of the death of the soul.

The tenth scriptural argument is based upon Psalm 146:4, which

states that a man's *thoughts perish* when he dies. If his *thoughts perish*, this means the immaterial part of man ceases to exist.

The eleventh argument is Ecclesiastes 9:5, where it mentions that *the dead know not any thing*

Twelfth, by combining Genesis 2:7 with 3:19 they claim that man is a soul that turns to dust upon physical death.

Thirteenth, they mention that the terms *Hades* and *Sheol* actually mean “oblivion and death”; therefore, it means “a cessation of existence.”

Their fourteenth argument is based upon Colossians 1:20, where it states that “all things are reconciled.” If there is a continuous existence of the unsaved in eternal punishment, it would mean that “all things” were not reconciled; but if “all things” are reconciled, it means there is an elimination and annihilation of the unbelieving element.

The fifteenth scriptural argument they like to use is that found in II Timothy 1:10, which speaks about death eventually being *abolished*.

The sixteenth scriptural argument is based upon I Corinthians 15:25-26, which speaks about death being destroyed.

## **2. The Arguments Against Annihilationism**

The third area of this segment concerning annihilationism is the answers to these arguments. “How does one respond when confronted with these arguments?” These arguments will be dealt with one by one in the same order as presented above.

### **a. The Theological Arguments**

First, there was the argument concerning the love of God: that the love of God would not allow for eternal punishment. However, if it is inconsistent with God's love to have man eternally punished, it would also be against God's love to have man suffer Hell temporarily or man's misery at the present time. One cannot use God's love as an argument against eternal punishment and not against temporary punishment. If the love of God were inconsistent with one, it would also be inconsistent with the other. Yet they do believe in temporary punishment.

Secondly, concerning God's justice, it is a matter of human opinion that the justice of God would not allow for eternal punishment. The Bible actually teaches otherwise: that the very justice of God requires eternal punishment for those who have rejected the eternal life He has provided for them.

Thirdly, concerning their claim that the soul does not possess inherent

immortality according to Luke 16:19-31, notice who was in torment. The *rich man* is in torment and, while his body did turn to dust, his soul did not.

The fourth theological argument was that God has failed if evil is not liquidated. But that is an assumption that they make which they do not prove. The Bible actually teaches otherwise. If the plan of God had included the annihilation of the unsaved, then God's plan fails if it does not follow through. But if God's plan includes eternal punishment, then God has not failed.

The fifth argument concerns justice for the dead infants and the ignorant heathen. Here, they make an assumption that infants go to Hell. The Bible does not specify one way or the other. Furthermore, this is a human concept of divine justice that goes contrary to the biblical concept.

The sixth argument was that punishment is only beneficial when it is used for reformation. Since the unsaved dead are not going to be reformed during eternity, therefore, they will be annihilated. But again, this is an assumption that they make concerning the legitimate use of punishment. It is not true that punishment is only beneficial for reformation. Sometimes punishment is a punishment in and of itself. So the assumption regarding the legitimate use of punishment is not necessarily true. Eternal punishment is not for the purpose of reformation, but for the purpose of punishment itself.

The seventh theological argument was: why should God and the universe be burdened with the continued existence of those who have scorned a useful life? The answer is simply because God so willed it. Furthermore, it will not be a burden. Believers are going to be in a perfect, holy state and will not sustain the same relationship to the unsaved as they do now. At that time, they will not feel this burden. They will have the mind of God and will see it from His perspective, not their own.

The eighth theological argument was that the righteous could enjoy bliss only if they know that others are not suffering eternally; the righteous could not enjoy bliss knowing that others are continually suffering in Hell. But the answer here is that the righteous will enjoy the bliss of God's presence and will not be encumbered with the present perspective regarding what is inappropriate to Heaven's bliss.

So the eight theological arguments they like to use all have answers. There is no need to teach annihilationism because of these theological arguments.

#### **b. The Scriptural Arguments**

One of their major arguments was based upon the use of a Greek

word *apollumi*, which is translated by the King James Version as “destroy.” And they refer to passages like Matthew 10:6, 28; 15:24; 16:25; and other passages.

Their first scriptural argument was based on Matthew 10:28. The word *apollumi* does not mean “utter destruction to the point of ceasing to exist.” This is obvious from its usage elsewhere. It simply means, “to be in a lost state.” It is not used of the utter annihilation of both body and soul, because the same Greek word that is translated as “destroyed” is used even of those who are still living. For example, this word is used of the living ones in Matthew 10:6, where it is translated as *lost*; in Matthew 15:24, the *lost*; in Matthew 16:25, whoever *loses*; and in Luke 19:10, *that which was lost*. So the word *apollumi* does not mean “destruction in the sense of cessation of existence,” it simply means “to be in a lost condition.” Those eternally in Hell will not be destroyed to the point of ceasing to exist, more correctly rather, those eternally in the Lake of Fire are simply those who are in an eternal lost state.

The second, third, fourth, and fifth scriptural arguments were based on Matthew 7:13; Romans 9:22; II Peter 2:1; and Philippians 3:19, all of which use the term “to be destroyed.” But the answer here is that the statements made in these passages use the Greek word *apuleia*, which does not mean “a cessation of existence.” It is used elsewhere where it simply means, “to be in a wasted condition.” It does not teach annihilationism; it is not the annihilation of the material, but the lostness or uselessness of that which is being described. The same word is used in Matthew 26:8 and Mark 14:4, where it is translated as “merely being in a state of wastedness.” Again, these verses do not mean “annihilation of the material,” but simply emphasize its lostness or its uselessness. So, these verses do not teach annihilationism.

Sixth, they use II Peter 2:12, that, in the King James Version, reads: *to be taken and destroyed*. But the Greek word here is *phthora*, which means “corruption.” The victims are merely seen as being in a state of corruption, they are to be totally corrupted as they will be in the Lake of Fire; corrupted, but they do not cease to exist.

Seventh, another biblical passage they use is I Thessalonians 5:3, which speaks of the unbeliever as facing *sudden destruction*. But the Greek word used here is *holephros*, which means “destruction,” not in the sense of annihilation; rather, it is dealing with the physical destruction of the Great Tribulation. This verse is in the context of the Great Tribulation and speaks of the destruction of the physical world, not the destruction of the soul of the unbeliever.

Eighth, another scriptural argument they use is II Thessalonians 2:8, where it speaks of the *lawless one* as being destroyed. But the Greek word here is *katargeo*, which means only “to render inoperative.” It

does not mean, “to annihilate,” but “to render inoperative.” In this passage, it is used of the Antichrist, and it simply states that the Antichrist's power and authority will eventually be rendered inoperative. In fact, the meaning of this is spelled out in other passages. For example, Revelation 19:20 declares that the Antichrist will be *cast alive into the lake of fire*, and with that action, he will then be rendered inoperative as prophesied in II Thessalonians 2:8.

Furthermore, Revelation 20:10 points out that even after 1,000 years in the Lake of Fire, the Antichrist is still alive in there. So, II Thessalonians 2:8 does not mean, “to be destroyed in the sense of ceasing to exist,” but “to be destroyed in the sense of being rendered inoperative.”

Ninth, another scriptural passage they like to use is Ezekiel 18:4 and 20, where it speaks about the soul as dying. However, the word “death” never means annihilation as is obvious from Ephesians 2:1-3 and 9. Death is simply “a separation.” In this case, the dead soul is separated from God. A soul that is dead is a soul that has no spiritual life, the unbeliever has a spiritually dead soul, but it is not non-existent. The soul that separates from the body in an unbelieving state eventually goes into a second death, but second death is not annihilationism; it simply means eternal separation from God.

Tenth, another Old Testament passage that they use is Psalm 146:4, where it states that a man's *thoughts perish* when he dies. But actually, verses 3 and 4 taken together and in context simply teach that a man's devices, man's plans, and man's thoughts cannot be carried out on the earth after physical death. He has lost any opportunity to see his plans carried out, and that is all that means; it does not teach a cessation of existence.

Eleventh, another passage they use is Ecclesiastes 9:5, where it speaks about *the dead* [not knowing] *any thing*. But the context of Ecclesiastes 9:5 is simply drawing the conclusion of human philosophy. Indeed, from the standpoint of human philosophy, *under the sun*, that is the way it looks (v. 6). But again, Ecclesiastes 9:5 simply spells out what human philosophy feels *under the sun*. It is not a divine decree; it is not the positive teachings of the Word of God.

Twelfth, another scriptural argument they use is to combine Genesis 2:7 with 3:19, pointing out that man is a soul that turns to dust. However, according to these passages, it is the body, not the soul, that turns to dust. It was Adam's body that was created from the dust, not Adam's soul. The soul came from the breath of God, not from the dust, therefore, it is the body, not the soul that returns to dust. Luke 16:19-31 spells out what actually happens to the soul at death.

Thirteenth, another scriptural argument they like to use is to say that

*Sheol* and *Hades* mean “oblivion and death,” but that is not the meaning of those words as anyone who knows Hebrew and Greek can testify. Again, Luke 16:19-31 shows that the *rich man* is very conscious where he is in *Sheol*, so the term cannot possibly mean “oblivion.”

Fourteenth, they also use Colossians 1:20, which speak about “all things being reconciled.” But in that context, the “all things” does not mean “all things without exception,” rather, it means “all things without distinction.” All kinds of things will be reconciled, but not all things as such.

Fifteenth and sixteenth, they use II Timothy 1:10 and I Corinthians 15:25-26, which speak of death as being *abolished*. However, these two verses deal only with the effects of natural death upon the body. It is the first death, physical death, that is abolished; the second death, eternal, spiritual death, is not. It is the *abolishment* of the first death that makes resurrection possible, but the second death is going to be eternal.

### 3. Additional Arguments Against Annihilationism

In conclusion, there are eleven additional arguments to show that the Bible does not teach annihilationism. It does teach the immortality of the soul of both the believer and the unbeliever.

#### a. Daniel's Prophecies

The first evidence is found in Daniel 12:2, which speaks of a coming resurrection. Daniel prophesied that *some* are going to be resurrected *to everlasting life*, and others resurrected *to everlasting contempt*. It is inconsistent exegesis or inconsistent interpretation to claim that when it speaks of *everlasting life* for the believer, it means immortality; but when it speaks about *everlasting contempt* for the unbeliever, then it is not immortality nor eternal. But the same word is used in relationship to the believer and the unbeliever in the same verse. One must never interpret the Bible in such a way that the same word in the same verse means two totally different things unless it can be proved by some indication, and there is no such indication in this verse,

#### b. Eternal Life and Eternal Contempt

Secondly, Matthew 25:46 points out that some go into *eternal life* while others go into *eternal punishment*. Again, if the believer receives *eternal life* and that means immortality for them, since Yeshua used the same expression for the unbeliever when he speaks of *eternal punishment*, it must also mean immortality for them as well. Like Daniel 12:2, Matthew 25:46 uses the same terminology for the unbeliever as for the believer, and therefore it must mean the same thing. Again, it is simply inconsistent exegesis to take the same word and make it mean two opposite things in the same verse.

**c. Fire of Torment**

The third additional argument is based on Mark 9:47-48, which speaks of *the fire* of torment in which the unbeliever suffers: *the fire is not quenched*. That, too, teaches against annihilationism.

**d. Fallen Angels**

The fourth additional argument is found in Hebrews 2:16, which points out that God did not provide salvation for fallen angels. Now, how is that relevant? Part of the teaching of the annihilationists is based upon the theological argument and the scriptural argument that the Bible promises that “all things are to be reconciled to God” (Col. 1:20). But the fact is that the “all things” here does not mean “all things without exception,” rather, all kinds of things will be reconciled, but not every one of every kind. According to Hebrews 2:16, salvation was not provided for fallen angels, and so fallen angels will never be reconciled to God, and yet they themselves continue to be eternal beings. So the fact that there is no reconciliation for fallen angels shows that the Colossians passage cannot be used to teach that all things without exception are going to be reconciled by means of the annihilation of the evil ones. It simply cannot mean that.

**e. Eternal Judgment**

The fifth argument is found in Hebrews 6:2, which speaks of *eternal judgment*. And again, the word *eternal* here is the same one used in reference to eternal life. If, for the believer, the word *eternal* means “immortality,” that same word used in reference to an unbeliever must also mean “immortality.”

**f. Eternal Punishment**

The sixth argument is found in Jude 7, which speaks of *the punishment of eternal fire*. The fire itself is said to be *eternal*, and the punishment itself is said to be *eternal*. It is not just the fire that is eternal, but the punishment in the fire that is eternal. If it were only temporary, as annihilationism teaches, then it is obviously not eternal.

**g. The Eternal Lake of Fire**

The seventh argument is based upon Revelation 14:11, where it speaks of some being tormented in the Lake of Fire *for ever and ever*. “What does it mean to be tormented for ever and ever?” Well, annihilationism claims that the term *for ever and ever* does not mean “eternity,” it just means “a very long time,” then after a very long time, they will be annihilated. The problem with that explanation of Revelation 14:11 is that the very same expression is used of God in Revelation 15:7, where God is said to live *for ever and ever*. Now, is God eternal or is He only temporary? Even the annihilationists believe God is eternal. Since the same expression is used of God as is used for the tormenting of the unbeliever, obviously, it cannot be temporary, but must also be eternal.

### h. The Beast and the False Prophet

The eighth argument is to compare Revelation 19:20 with Revelation 20:10, which show that *the beast* and *the false prophet* are still in *the lake of fire* after 1,000 years. So even 1,000 years in the lake of fire is not enough for them to have been annihilated. One would assume that they would no longer have been alive if annihilationism were true.

### i. The Greek Word Aionos

The ninth argument is based upon the Greek word *aionos*, which is the usual term that is translated “eternal.” Those who teach annihilationism try to prove that the word *aionos* does not mean “eternal,” but simply means “for an age.” However, again it should be pointed out that the Greek word *aionos* is used of both believers and unbelievers as in Matthew 25:46. Therefore, one cannot make *aionos* mean “eternity” or “immortality” for the believer, and yet make it mean only “temporariness” for the unbeliever. If it is eternal for the believer, and annihilationists do make it mean “eternal” for the believer, they cannot then turn around and say that for the unbeliever it is only a temporary duration. One cannot take the same word and make it mean two different things. This is interpreting Scripture by one's theology rather than deducing theology from the Scriptures, which is the proper way of developing theology.

### j. God Is Eternal

The tenth argument against annihilationism is that the very same word, *aionos*, which the annihilationists said does not mean “eternal” in some cases, is also a word used of God. It emphasizes God's eternalness and is used in Revelation 4:9; 10:6; 15:7; and Hebrews 9:14. Again, is God temporary or is He eternal? Even they believe that God is an eternal being. Therefore, they cannot make the same word have the opposite meaning when it refers to the unbeliever.

### k. For Ever and Ever

The eleventh and final argument against annihilationism is also based on the expression “for ever and ever.” This expression is used a total of thirteen times in the Book of Revelation. Nine of those thirteen times, it is used of God, and they all agree that when it is used of God, it emphasizes eternity and immortality. Once it is used of the saints in Heaven, and they certainly believe that in the case of the saints in Heaven, these are the eternal, immortal beings. Then it is used once of Satan in the Lake of Fire and twice of the unbeliever in the Lake of Fire. But in these last three cases, they want to make it only temporary. If ten times they agree that it means “eternal,” they cannot then turn around and make these last three times mean something temporary. So, if it is true that it teaches the immortality of God and the saints in Heaven, it must also teach the immortality of Satan and the unbelievers in the Lake of Fire. Again, we must deduce our theology from the Scriptures, not interpret Scriptures by our preconceived theology or our emotional preferences.✠

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