

## Jesus Often Preached About Eternal Damnation

John the Baptist said to the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, "You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance! Do not think to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I tell you God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe lies at the root of the trees. Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptise you in water for repentance but He who comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit. His winnowing fork is in His hand and he will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor. He will gather His wheat into the barn but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:7 to 12).

Jesus said, "I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees (religious leaders), there is no way you will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:20). Returning to the opening verses, 'You offspring of vipers.' The religious leaders were regarded as children of the serpent, the devil. Although they were strongly religious, they did not have a personal relationship with God and there are many people all over the world today who claim to follow a religion but they do not know God as their personal Saviour. 'Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' The wrath to come is eternal damnation – the lake of fire. 'Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance!' John told them to repent and behave like God's children, not like the devil's children. 'Do not think to yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.' Many Christians think, just because they use the name of Jesus or refer to God as Jehovah, they are saved. They are wrong. The Bible teaches otherwise. The false religion of Islam claim to be Abraham's descendants but they bow down and worship the devil, not God and unless they repent and turn to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – the God of the Jewish people, they will end up in the lake of fire. God wants to restore the Jewish people to His Land of Israel, but the Moslems want to kill the Jews so it is obvious they do not worship the same God of Abraham. 'I tell you God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.' Stones do not have life just as Gentiles had no spiritual life or knowledge before Jesus came so this verse refers to God raising up spiritually dead people to eternal life, which happened during the time of the Apostles. All Gentiles who are genuinely born-again can rightly claim Abraham as our spiritual forefather. 'Even now the axe lies at the root of the trees. Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.' Judgement lies at the root of every tree (person) and every person (tree) who does not bring forth spiritual fruit is cut down as cast into the lake of fire. 'I (John) indeed baptise you in water for repentance but He (Jesus) who comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry. He (Jesus) will baptise you in the Holy Spirit.' Only people who have genuinely repented and walk with God in repentance will be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Religious people with no heart-felt relationship with God or people who have not fully committed themselves to the Lord and have a pretended piety cannot receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. 'His winnowing fork is in His hand and he will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor.' The 'threshing floor' is earth. Jesus will judge righteously and will separate His true followers from the 'pretenders'. 'He will gather His wheat (true followers) into the barn (heaven) but the chaff (pretenders) He will burn up with unquenchable fire.' The unquenchable fire is the eternal lake of fire. This is only one of many passages of scripture that warns religious people to repent or they will go to a terrible lost eternity. There are many other verses to study regarding the final judgement – the terrible lake of fire. In fact there are hundreds more references in the Bible talking about God's judgement of sinners than there are words of God's love for humanity.

The above verses are very harsh and frightening words. They were directed at religious leaders of John's day just before Jesus started His ministry. Religious people are not necessarily going to heaven but may be bound for the lake of fire. So what is the lake of fire? The lake of fire is the second death and the final judgement for all people and fallen angels who have sinned against God and never repented of their sin, who have lived a life of disobedience and who have become wicked (Revelation 21:8). It is the permanent place of judgement prepared for sinners after Judgement Day. Both the Old and the New Testaments mention the final judgement for wicked people dozens of times. Only the New Testament names the lake of fire but there are many references to the lake of fire mentioned in the Old Testament expressed in various ways. Here are just a few. 'On the wicked God will rain blazing coals, fire and sulphur. Scorching wind will be the portion of their cup (of suffering)' (Psalm 11:6). 'You (God) will make them (the wicked) as a fiery furnace in the time of Your anger. The Lord will swallow them up in His wrath. The fire will devour them' (Psalm 21:9). 'Let burning coals fall on them. Let them be thrown into the fire, into miry pits from where they never rise' (Psalm 140:10). 'His burning place has long been ready. Yes, the King has made it ready. He has made its pyre deep and large with fire and much wood. God's breath like a stream of sulphur, kindles it' (Isaiah 30:33). The 'wood' mentioned here are the millions of sinners earlier referred to as 'trees'.

Everybody everywhere needs to know there is a severe Judgement Day coming. Every person who has ever lived on earth will be judged at some point in the future by our Righteous Judge, Jesus. There is absolutely no possible way any adult can avoid Judgement Day. We write this Bible study in the hope people will

examine their own hearts, turn, repent and be saved, as we attempt to explain what the Scriptures say ... 'Have compassion ... save some, snatching them out of the fire with fear (for them), hating even the clothing stained by the flesh' (Jude 1:22 & 23). 'We will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Jesus, for it is written, "As I live," says the Lord, "To Me every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess to God." Each one of us will give account of himself to God' (Romans 14:10 to 12). 'We make it our aim, whether at home or away, to be well pleasing to God for we must all be revealed before the Judgment Seat of Jesus so each one of us may receive the rewards for things we did while in the body, whether good or bad' (2 Corinthians 5:9 & 10).

Jesus frequently preached about eternal damnation and the lake of fire during the course of His sermons and teaching, referring to the lake of fire by several different names. "You have heard it was said to the ancient ones, 'You will not murder' and 'Whoever murders will be in danger of The Judgment.' I tell you, everyone who is angry with his (spiritual) brother (or sister in Jesus) without a cause will be in danger of The Judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' (you are worthless) will be in danger of the (Divine) Council (of God). Whoever says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of Gehenna' (Matthew 5:21 to 22). 'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna' (Matthew 10:28). 'The darnel weeds (ungodly people) are gathered up and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His holy angels and they will gather out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and all those who do iniquity and will cast them into the furnace of fire. ... So it will be at the end of the world. The holy angels will come forth and separate the wicked from among the righteous and will cast the wicked into the furnace of fire' (Matthew 13:40 to 42, 49 & 50). 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel around by sea and land to make one proselyte and when he becomes one with you, you make him twice as much of a son of Gehenna as yourselves ... You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the Judgment of Gehenna?' (Matthew 23:15 & 33).

Other Scriptural phrases for the lake of fire are: The eternal fire; Gehenna of fire; eternal punishment; unquenchable fire where their worm (their intense, terrible suffering) does not die and the fire is not able to ever be quenched' (Mark 9:43 to 48); the Judgement; Gehenna; the fire; condemned or condemnation; damned; unquenchable fire; outer darkness; burned with fire; into the fire and they are burned; burn utterly with fire; burns with sulphur; blazing coals, sulphur and scorching wind; tormented with fire and sulphur; eternal fire; everlasting fire; fierceness of fire; consuming fire; set on fire by Gehenna; eat your flesh like fire; burning furnace; pit of the abyss, perdition, destruction or being destroyed. Jesus made it clear, the lake of fire was not originally created for people but for the devil, fallen angels, evil spirits and other evil entities that roam heaven and earth at the moment. 'He (God) will say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me you cursed, into the Eternal Fire prepared for the devil and his (fallen) angels"' (Matthew 25:41). The tragic reality is, many millions of people from Adam to the last day of earth will end up being sent to the lake of fire on Judgement Day.

We need to keep this fact firmly embedded in our hearts and minds and that fact is, God is a God of love, mercy, faithfulness, grace and every other positive attribute but take this on board ... God is also a God of holy, righteous and just judgement. We cannot do whatever we want and have the opinion, "God loves me unconditionally so I can sin all I want and He will forgive me." Life does not work like that. God punishes sin! 'God is slow to anger and great in power but will by no means leave the guilty unpunished' (Nahum 1:3). God said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Exodus 33:19). The truth is, there is no verse in the Bible that states God loves all people unconditionally. What is written in the scriptures, God stops loving and actually hates some people who are extremely wicked and who refuse to repent. "For all their wickedness ... for there I hated them. Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house! I will love them no more." 'My God will cast them away because they did not listen to Him' (Hosea 9:15 & 17). God loved Jacob but hated Esau (Malachi 1:3; Romans 9:13). There are verses stating God loves those who love Jesus and who are obedient to Him (John 14:21 & 23). Once we do commit our lives to God and accept the sacrifice of Jesus our Lord then if we remain committed to Him, we know nothing can remove us from that deep supernatural love of God. 'We know death, nor life, nor angels, nor evil principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor evil powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:38 & 39).

The sins or evil behaviour that can cause a person to receive God's severest judgements and end up in the lake of fire are written in the scriptures. All we need to do is study the Bible and obey what is written there for us. Here are some examples of sins that bring God's wrath ... 'The cowardly, unbelieving (atheists), sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars, their future is in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death' (Revelation 21:8). 'Do you not realise the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (by those who say differently). The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, slanderers or extortioners will

never inherit the Kingdom of God' (1 Corinthians 6:9 & 10). 'The lawless, insubordinate, ungodly, sinners, unholy, profane, murderers of parents, manslayers, the sexually immoral, homosexuals, slave-traders, liars, perjurers, blasphemers and for any other thing contrary to sound doctrine' (1 Timothy 1:9, 10 & 20). 'They are filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil habits, secret slanderers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful, who knowing the ordinance of God which is, those who practice such things are worthy of (eternal) death, they not only do the same but approve of those who practice them' (Romans 1:29 to 32). 'Know this, in the last days (our time, right now) grievous times will come. Mankind will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness (empty religion) but denying the power thereof. Turn away from these. These people are those who creep into houses and take captive (the minds of) gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning evil and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth' (2 Timothy 3:1 to 7). Jesus said, "I tell you, every idle word people speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. By your own words you will be justified and by your own words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36 & 37). 'The tongue is a fire. The world of iniquity among our members is the tongue which defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature and is set on fire by Gehenna' (James 3:6).

'There are certain (corrupt) men who crept in secretly ... ungodly men who turned the Grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying our only Master, God and Lord Jesus ... Fallen angels who did not keep their first domain but deserted their own dwelling place, God has kept in everlasting bonds under darkness for the Judgment of the Great Day. Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, having, in the same way as these, given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh (homosexuality) are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. In like manner these people in their (day) dreaming defile the flesh, despise authority and slander holy angels ... These people speak evil of whatever things they do not know about, only what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, they will be destroyed in these things. Woe to them! For they went the way of Cain, ran riotously in error and perished in rebellion. These people are hidden rocky reefs in your feasts when they feast with you, shepherds who without fear feed themselves. They are like clouds without water, carried along by winds, autumn leaves without fruit, twice dead (going to the second death), plucked up by the roots, wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness has been reserved forever ... These people are murmurers and complainers, walking after their lusts, and their mouth speaks proud things, showing respect of persons only to gain advantage ... The Apostles said, "In the last days there will be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts." These people are they who cause divisions, strife and are sensual not having the Holy Spirit' (Jude 1:4 to 19). Only genuine repentance, genuine obedience and a genuine heart-felt relationship with God by fully accepting Jesus as the Son of God Who gave Himself up and shed His blood on the cross so we can be excused, will save us from the wrath of God and a terrible eternal future. There is no other way to enter the Kingdom of God and avoid damnation. Jesus is the one and only Way of salvation. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Before we continue this Bible study we must stress one important point. The Lord is our Righteous Judge so although Jesus taught judgement, it is solely His responsibility not ours. We are not to judge one another and the judgement we mete out to others will be the same judgement we will receive from God. This Bible study is not about our judging anyone – it is solely about what the Bible teaches regarding the Lord's Judgement on Judgement Day when we will all have to stand before Him to receive our individual judgement. We will be completely alone up there on Judgement Day. We cannot have our spouse, child, parent or friend there beside us. It will be between the Lord and us as an individual. If we know the Lord deeply and sincerely, Judgement Day will be wonderful. If people do not know God it will be utterly terrifying. Jesus said, "Do not judge (other people) so you will not be judged. With whatever judgement you judge (other people), you will be judged and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the beam in your own eye? How will you tell your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye' and behold the beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam out of your own eye and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1 to 5). We all must examine our own hearts (1 Corinthians 11:28). We are all sinners but some of us have repented and have been saved by the Grace of God. See what the Lord thinks of people who judge others. 'Jesus told this parable to certain people who were convinced of their own righteousness and who despised all others. "Two men went up into the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood upright and prayed to himself like this ... 'God, I thank You I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector standing far away would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but

beat his chest saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled but he who humbles himself will be exalted'" (Luke 18:9 to 14). Note, the Pharisee prayed to himself, he did not pray to the Lord.

Before Jesus came God ignored the sins of Gentiles. They were all lost and without hope but now that Jesus has come God expects every person on earth to repent. 'Jesus began to preach, "Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"' (Matthew 4:17). 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). 'The times of (spiritual) ignorance God overlooked but now He commands all people everywhere to repent because He has appointed a Day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man (Jesus) Whom He has ordained of which He has given assurance to all men, God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead' (Acts 17:30 & 31). We who love God, who have repented and live a life of repentance have to work out our salvation every day with reverence, knowing the fact, if we walk away from God we too will be lost for eternity. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' (Philippians 2:12). Losing our salvation is easier than gaining it for this reason ... for a person to gain salvation the Holy Spirit may invest many hundreds of hours and sometimes years gaining the trust of the sinner and drawing them slowly closer to God before they can be saved. We can only be saved with the Lord's help (Matthew 19:25 & 26). For a person to lose their salvation, they only have to make one tragic decision and that is to choose to walk away from God. That is the reality of salvation. When we regard the works of the Holy Spirit, spending years leading us to salvation only for that person to then throw it all away could result in years of wasted effort. Jesus taught, "Enter in (to heaven) by the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to (eternal) destruction (the lake of fire) and many are those who enter in by it. How narrow is the gate and restricted is the way that leads to (eternal) life! Few are those who find it" (Matthew 7:13 & 14).

The teaching, 'once saved, always saved' is an incorrect teaching. People who backslide or turn away from God after knowing Him will be rejected. The lake of fire is also the final judgement for people who initially accept God then turn against Him. Some Christians will lose their salvation on Judgement Day because they have either never truly repented and are therefore uncommitted, or they have fallen back into sin. This is a very significant and terrifying fact. People who accept God then turn away from Him will have their names blotted out of the Book of Life. Hear the words of Jesus. 'If a man does not remain in Me he is thrown out as a branch and is withered. They (the holy angels) will gather them, throw them into the fire and they are burned' (John 15:6). 'If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which will devour the adversaries. A man who disregards Moses' law dies without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think, will he be judged worthy of, who has trodden under foot the Son of God and has counted the blood of the covenant with which He was sanctified an unholy thing, and has insulted the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him Who said, "Vengeance belongs to Me," says the Lord, "I will repay." Again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Hebrews 10:26 to 31). 'People will receive the wages (judgement) of unrighteousness ... if after they have escaped the defilement of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus, if they are again entangled in sin and overcome, the last state for them will become worse than the first. It would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. But they are like dogs returning to their own vomit and like pigs that have been washed returning to wallowing in the mire' (2 Peter 2:13, 20 to 22). 'Concerning those who were once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the Good Word of God and the powers of the age to come then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance because they crucify the Son of God for themselves again and put Him to open shame' (Hebrews 6:4 to 6). 'He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, without blemish and blameless before God if you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard, which is being preached to all people under heaven' (Colossians 1:22 & 23). 'The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some have been led astray from the faith in their greed and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows' (1 Timothy 6:10). This verse means they brought much suffering down on themselves through their greed and backsiding.

Christians who indulge in alcohol could find themselves going to a lost eternity, especially if alcohol fuels violence in them. Christians are called servants in this statement made by Jesus. "If that evil servant should say in his heart, 'My Lord is delaying His coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with the drunkards, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he does not expect it and in an hour when he does not know it. The Lord will cut him in pieces and appoint his portion (judgement) with the hypocrites where there will be weeping and grinding (gnashing) of teeth" (Matthew 24:48 to 51). If you are a Christian who thinks it is okay to drink alcohol, now would be the time to give it up. It is not worth taking the risk of losing your salvation over what is the 'lust of the flesh'. The weeping and gnashing of teeth would be because the person is lost for eternity after knowing God and making the foolish mistake of getting drunk,

which is debauchery to God. 'Watch carefully how you walk, not unwise but wisely, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine (or any alcohol) because this is debauchery but be filled with the Holy Spirit' (Ephesians 5:15 to 18).

Although the majority of people sent to the lake of fire will be unsaved people who behaved wickedly, rejected God and His only way of salvation, Jesus spoke of three completely different types of Christians who were rejected by the Lord – and yes they were all believers and they were all shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven and sent to the lake of fire. We will see in this study, it is possible to believe we are saved, to walk with God, to follow Jesus, to be considered a friend, a pure hearted 'virgin', a servant of God and still be cast into Outer Darkness because the commitment to God was mere religion and not genuine. Every person who gives their life to Jesus is considered to be 'called' but Jesus said although many are called, very few of those will be chosen to enter the Kingdom of God (Matthew 20:16; 22:14). He said 'few will be chosen'. That is very frightening indeed. We will study the reasons Jesus gives for some believers being rejected on Judgement Day.

Read the words of Jesus. Notice in this verse, the children of the Kingdom. 'The children of the Kingdom will be thrown out into Outer Darkness. There will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 8:12). Notice in this verse, the man was a friend of Jesus. 'Friend, how did you come in here not wearing wedding clothing?' He was speechless. The King said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away and throw him into Outer Darkness where there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:12 & 13). Notice in this verse, the man was a servant of Jesus. 'Throw out the unprofitable servant into Outer Darkness, where there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 25:30). Notice in these following verses, these many people believed they were saved, they served God yet were rejected. 'Every tree that does not grow good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. By their fruits (behaviour) you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but those who do the will of My Father Who is in heaven. Many will tell Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, we prophesied in Your name, in Your name cast out demons and in Your name did many mighty works.' Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work iniquity' (Matthew 7:19 to 23). How terrible would they feel being rejected right at the final hour after spending years serving God. They were rejected because they were religious but had no heart-to-heart relationship with God. He said, "I never knew you." We can spend years preaching to others but if our heart is not right with God we could still be rejected. 'I discipline myself lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected' (1 Corinthians 9:27). One 'child of the Kingdom' who was rejected was Judas. Jesus called him the 'Son of Perdition' (John 17:12) and said it would have been better for Judas if he had never been born (Mark 14:21). Judas had walked with Jesus for His entire ministry yet still acted wickedly at the end by betraying Jesus then suiciding. People can walk with Jesus for years like Judas did but if they either act wickedly or never truly repent, they will go to a lost eternity like Judas did.

Violence and vulgarity assails us from every direction today through the movies, television, the internet and ever changing social norms. We are surrounded by people who despise the Lord and His precepts and they constantly mock and ridicule His precepts, His holiness, His standards and His Word. For many Christians, especially the young people the pull of the world is just too strong. The line between righteousness and unrighteousness has become increasingly blurred. Spiritual senses are becoming increasingly dull. Many Christians find walking wholly with God just too hard and they live 'on the fence' going to church but have deep sin in their lives. We all need the courage to stand against the tidal wave of unrighteousness, the strength to make right choices, the resolve to faithfully follow the Lord and cling to His precepts and that strength is found in our complete commitment to revere and obey God's Word. What will happen to people who live 'on the fence' who are neither hot nor cold in their walk with God? God will vomit those lukewarm people out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16). That is a chilling and fearful reality.

There is a Book of Life written in heaven that holds the names of every person who has ever lived on earth (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 20:12). When people reject God, He blots their names out of His Book of Life (Psalm 69:28). 'Whoever has sinned against Me (God), I will blot their names out of My book (the Book of Life)' (Exodus 32:33). When the Books are opened on Judgement Day, their names will not be found written there and they will be sent off to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). The devil, the beast, the false prophet, even death itself will all end up in the lake of fire along with people who have rejected God causing their names to be blotted out of the Book of Life. 'The beast was taken (off the earth by avenging holy angels) and with him the false prophet who worked the (deceptive) signs (and miracles) in his sight ... These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur' (Revelation 19:20). 'The devil who deceived them (the unsaved people on earth) was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet are also. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever ... Death and Sheol were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, they were cast into the lake of fire' (Revelation 20:10, 14 & 15). (Note: The beast and the false

prophet are powerful evil spirits capable of enticing men to do extremely evil things and cause millions of people to believe in cults, false prophecies, false religions, heresies and often their own insane delusions.)

The lake of fire is definitely a place to avoid. The only escape from this terrible end is to repent of all sin and from then onwards, walk obediently with God. That is what the word, 'salvation' means. It is the act of being saved from eternal judgement, the lake of fire, which is the second death. For there to be a second death, logically a first death has occurred. The first death is when people die and their spirit is sent to Sheol also known as Hades or Hell, to await the final judgement and it is not the final end. Sheol is the waiting place for the wicked before Judgement Day and on Judgement Day, Sheol and death will give up all their victims. 'Death and Sheol gave up the dead who were in them. They (the spirits of the dead) were judged, each one according to his works (general behaviour while on earth). Death and Sheol were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death' (Revelation 20:13 & 14). Who will be cast into the terrible lake of eternal burning and fire? 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (Romans 10:7). Sadly, many people will be sent there. The Bible is clear – people who have rejected God will have their names blotted out of the Book of Life. The eternally burning lake of fire is a real place of pain, torment and suffering. It is the final place of God's judgement for the devil, the beast, the false prophet, all fallen angels, all demons, all evil spirits, all wicked beings that currently rule over various parts of the earth and heaven, everything in heaven that causes offence and eventually Sheol and death itself. Of course the evil entities in the spirit world do not die physically as humans do but they will still end up there as the Bible reveals. Jesus taught us about the lake of fire and as our Creator, He knows it is a real place, not a symbolic example as some people believe. Notice some fallen angels are in Sheol, in chains waiting their final judgement. 'God did not spare fallen angels when they sinned but cast them down to Sheol and committed them to pits of darkness to be reserved for judgment' (2 Peter 2:4). The Eternal Fire never ceases giving torment, torture and pain. 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of His anger. He (the sinner) will be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. Those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name will have no rest day and night' (Revelation 14:9 to 11).

Born-again, Holy Spirit filled, obedient believers and disciples who have overcome the hundreds of difficult obstacles we face daily, will never know the terror of the lake of fire, the second death. 'Those who have a (spiritual) ear, let them hear what the Holy Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). Those who overcome will not be harmed by the second death' (Revelation 2:11). 'Blessed and holy are those who take part in the first resurrection. Over these (believers, disciples, true genuine Christians), the second death has no power but they will be priests of God and of our Messiah and will reign with Him for one thousand years' (Revelation 20:6). Jesus said, "I tell you My friends, do not be afraid of those who can kill the body and after that have no more they can do. I will warn you Whom you should fear. Fear Him, Who after He has killed, has power to cast you into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear Him" (Luke 12:4 & 5). The judgement and utter destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and huge chunks of pure sulphur, which can still be found in that area, were scriptural examples and warning of what will happen to the ungodly. 'God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes. He condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who would live ungodly lives' (2 Peter 2:6). 'Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh (homosexuality) are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire' (Jude 1:7).

Jesus taught us, people in heaven can currently see, speak to and hear those who are in Sheol. People in Sheol can see, speak to and hear people in heaven but a chasm between them prevents anyone leaving Sheol and prevents anyone who is in heaven from going to their assistance. "There was a certain rich man who clothed himself in purple and fine linen, living in luxury every day. A beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores and hungry, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The dogs came and licked the sores on Lazarus. Lazarus died and was carried away by the holy angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Sheol, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. The rich man cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue! For I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember in your lifetime you received good things and Lazarus received bad things. But now here he is comforted and you are in anguish. Besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed so those who want to pass from here to you are not able and none may cross over from there to us.' The rich man said, 'I ask you therefore father (Abraham) send Lazarus to my father's house for I have five brothers, so he may testify to them so they will not also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'No father Abraham, if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' Abraham said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead'" (Luke 16:19 to 31). That last statement was very true. Jesus rose from the dead and very few people around the world listen to Him. If

the rich man was in Sheol and in torment, how much worse can the lake of fire be? Imagine being in the lake of fire with the devil. That is a terrifying thought. The lake of fire is permanent and people in heaven will no longer be able to see people being tormented down there.

There is an appointed time for the final judgement of Judgement Day (Acts 17:31). The spiritual realm, evil angels, demons and evil spirits know there is a set time and they are utterly terrified of their upcoming judgement. 'The people brought to Jesus many who were possessed with demons. He cast out the evil spirits with a word and healed all who were sick ... Two people possessed by demons met Jesus there. They were coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce so nobody could pass that way. They cried out saying, "What do we have to do with you Jesus, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"' (Matthew 8:16, 28 & 29). 'In the synagogue there was a man who had an evil spirit of an unclean demon and he screamed out with a loud voice, "Ah! What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know you who you are, the Holy One of God!"' (Luke 4:33 & 34). 'The demons begged Jesus not to command them to go into the abyss' (Luke 8:31). There are still some evil beings in the heavenly realm. 'Our wrestling (struggles in life) is not against flesh and blood but against evil principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Ephesians 6:12). Those beings in heavenly places cause offence, are iniquitous and they will be cast out. 'The Son of Man will send out His holy angels and they will gather out of His Kingdom all things (all evil beings) that cause offence and those who do iniquity and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 13:41 & 42).

To enter the Kingdom of God also called the Kingdom of Heaven, our relationship with God the Father must be intimately entwined with Jesus the Son and we must be filled with the Holy Spirit because the unity of the triune Godhead has been bestowed on us. We can see the Kingdom of God because it came to earth when Jesus came, but to enter the Kingdom of God after we die, we must do His will while we are on earth. 'Unless one is born-again they cannot see the Kingdom of God ... Unless one is born of water (baptised) and of the Holy Spirit they cannot enter into the Kingdom of God' (John 3:3 & 5). What is the difference between seeing the Kingdom of God and entering into the Kingdom of God? To answer that question, is to liken the difference between standing outside Buckingham Palace in cold, rainy, wintry, British weather, being able to see the vast building, see the people who work there in all their finery, and watching tourists come and go. Compare that to being invited to enter inside to enjoy the magnificent, warm décor, taste the beautiful food, appreciate the spectacular artworks, stroll down the long hallways, being waited on and actually meeting the Monarch face to face. Understanding the difference in those terms sheds a whole new light to seeing and entering into the Kingdom of God. The two are opposite ends of the eternal spectrum. Many will see the Kingdom of God, but few will actually enter. Remember Jesus' words, "Many are called but few are chosen (to enter)".

The lake of fire will devour people who are religious in name only but do not know God intimately and continue to act wickedly. These are the words of Jesus as He speaks in judgement. 'Do all things they (religious leaders) tell you to observe but do not do their works, for they say (the right things) but they do not do what is right. They bind heavy (emotional) burdens, grievous to be borne and lay them on the shoulders of people and they will not lift a finger to help them. All the works they do is solely to be seen by others. They love the place of honour at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues (churches), the salutations in the marketplaces (shopping centres) ... Woe to you hypocrites! You devour widows' houses and as a pretence you make long prayers. You will receive greater condemnation. Woe to you hypocrites! You shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against people, for you do not enter in yourselves, neither do you allow those who want to and are entering in, to enter. Woe to you hypocrites! You travel around to make one follower and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much of a son of Gehenna as yourselves. Woe to you, you (spiritually) blind guides ... You blind fools! Woe to you hypocrites! You tithe and have left undone the more important of justice, mercy and faith ... Woe to you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the vessel but are within full of extortion and unrighteousness ... Woe to you hypocrites! You are like whitened tombs that outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. You outwardly appear righteous to men but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe to you hypocrites! ... You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the judgment of Gehenna?' (Matthew 23:3 to 33). Notice Jesus said those religious people would not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Religious leaders in our day are called priests, ministers, pastors, vicars, reverend, bishops, archbishops, imams, emirs, sheiks, deacons, captains, televangelists and any other person in church leadership who are pious but unsaved and hypocritical, who are leading millions to the lake of fire. Many are in it for the money. Jesus said they will receive the greatest condemnation.

The lake of fire will consume all people who persecute the family of Jesus, the Jewish people. Anyone who has persecuted the Jewish people over the centuries will face the lake of fire and that includes people who refuse to help the Jewish people. Jesus was Jewish and He regards all Jewish people His family, calling

them brothers. Ignoring the plight of any Jewish person will bring down an eternal curse as the Lord promised Abraham. 'I (God) will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curses you' (Genesis 12:3). 'The 'goat' nations who refuse to support Jesus' brothers, or His people – the Jews and Israel – when they are in need will be cursed. We may think ignoring Israel is a small thing, but it could cost you your soul. 'The King (Jesus) will answer them, "Most certainly I tell you, as you did good things to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it for Me ... Most certainly I tell you, as you did not do good things to one of the least of these, you did not do it for Me ... Depart from Me you cursed, into the eternal fire ... These will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:31 to 46).

Disobedience, not doing God's will, can keep people out of heaven. Firstly, what is God's will for us all? What does He want from us? 'What good thing can I do so I may have eternal life? ... If you want to enter into eternal life, keep the commandments' (Matthew 19:16 & 17). What are those commandments? To enter the Kingdom of Heaven and receive the rewards God has laid out for us, we all must believe, repent, be born-again, be baptised in water by full immersion, be filled with the Holy Spirit, learn to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, spend time with the Lord in prayer, praise, thanksgiving, Bible study, share the Gospel, do good things for other people, deny ourselves, live holy and Godly lives, fellowship with other believers, produce Spiritual fruit, exercise Spiritual gifts and forgive all others no matter what wrong they have done. We do all this without a speck of religion, but with our heart and soul because we have been saved from the pit of fire by God's grace. We should do these things out of love for God and for our fellow man, not out of duty or because a religion tells us to. Entering the Kingdom of God is all about our relationship with God the Father by accepting Jesus the Son and being guided by the Holy Spirit. We cannot meet God's requirement for His will on our own. We need His help. To avoid the lake of fire, the following suggestions are a start.

**Believe, repent, be born-again, be water baptised and be filled with the Holy Spirit:** 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' (Mark 1:15). 'Those who believe and are baptised will be saved but they who disbelieve will be condemned' (Mark 16:16). 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). People cannot be saved if they do not repent. True repentance is a complete change of heart, thoughts, actions and behaviour.

**Love God:** 'You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. This is the first commandment' (Mark 12:30). We must put God first before anything else. If we do not put God first, we will be found unworthy (Matthew 10:37).

**Pray:** 'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We should live in an attitude of prayerfulness. If we see a situation where we can do nothing but pray, then we should pray.

**Give thanks, praise and worship:** 'In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Jesus for you' (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We should be thankful for what we have and not whinge about the things we do not have. Having our salvation and a close relationship with God should mean more to us than anything at all in this world.

**Bible study:** 'Man cannot not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God' (Matthew 4:4). We cannot survive solely on food. To grow in God we need to study the Bible in a way that can be described as 'devouring' it. So many Christians never read the Bible and as a result they do not grow in God and behave in a carnal manner.

**Share the Gospel:** 'Go out into the world and preach the Gospel to every person' (Mark 16:15). 'Preach the Word ... do the work of an evangelist and fulfil your ministry' (2 Timothy 4:2 & 5). It is the duty of every born-again believer to share the knowledge of salvation with others because they also have a right to hear the Gospel and faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

**Do good for others:** 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 19:19). 'Treat others as you want to be treated' (Matthew 7:12). Be kind, be polite, be respectful, be helpful and most of all, be genuine.

**Deny yourself:** 'If anyone desires to come after Me let them deny themselves and take up their cross' (Mark 8:34). We should put our own desires aside if that is what God wants.

**Live a holy life:** 'It is written, "You will be holy for I (the Lord) am holy"'(1 Peter 1:16). We should all behave in a righteous manner to glorify God.

**Fellowship with other believers:** 'Do not forsake assembling together as some do, but exhort one another and so much more as you see the Day (of Jesus second coming) approaching' (Hebrews 10:25). Attending church regularly is good, so is fellowshipping with other Christians outside of church services.

**Produce Spiritual fruit and show Spiritual growth:** 'Show Spiritual fruit worthy of repentance' (Matthew 3:8). Behave in such a way, we reveal our differences to the world so people may see God is in us.

**Forgive all others:** 'If you forgive people their sins against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you but if you do not forgive their sins, neither will your Father forgive your sins' (Matthew 6:14 & 15). We cannot hold a grudge against anyone if we want to enter the Kingdom of God. Unforgiveness is something God will not tolerate.

**Do not worship idols:** Idolatry is something God truly hates (Deuteronomy 16:22). Modern Western people may not worship ancient idols but there are some false religions that still do. Any person from any religion

that worships idols will be lost for eternity unless they repent, stop worshipping their idols and worship God alone. Modern Western idolatry would include worshipping their own bodies. People who have repeated unnecessary cosmetic surgeries to improve their looks, worship themselves. Receiving tattoos is directly disobeying God (Leviticus 19:28). Another modern form of idolatry is the worship of famous people like actors, pop stars, pop groups, sports teams or individuals who play sport. These people are not worthy to be idolised, many of them live terribly depraved lives and are leading millions away from God to the pits of Sheol. The 'Mexican wave' is showing idolatry because the fools are bowing down to their idols, the sports team (Deuteronomy 5:9). Making statues of people alive or dead whom they idolise is directly breaking one of the initial Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:4; Leviticus 26:1). They, the idolaters ... 'Exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator' (Romans 1:25). Sadly, many weak Christians are caught up in these various forms of modern idolatry.

Some modern preachers are leading millions to Sheol by distorting the scriptures, giving false prophecies, preaching a false Jesus, preaching a false Christianity, preaching a false Gospel and teaching people to accept false 'signs and wonders'. Jesus warned us to beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15). Some people are being taught about a 'false Jesus'. The Truth was given to us by the Lord Jesus and we must not be deceived by false teachers, false messiahs, misleading preachers and false prophets nor listen to them. Remember, false prophets will go to the lake of fire. Jesus warned us, 'If anyone tells you, "Behold, here is the Messiah," or "He is there," do not believe it. There will arise false messiahs and false prophets and they will show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the chosen ones (Christians). Behold, I have told you beforehand. If they tell you, "Behold, He is in the wilderness," do not go out, or "Behold, He is in the inner rooms," do not believe it, for as the lightning flashes from the east and is seen even to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man' (Matthew 24:23 to 27). Many millions of people who believed they are saved will be screaming out for Jesus on Judgement Day but He will say, "I never knew you." 'If anyone preaches another Jesus Whom we did not preach, or if you receive a different spirit which you did not receive from God, or a different Gospel which you did not accept ... Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as Jesus' apostles' (2 Corinthians 11:4 & 13).

One reason people are deceived is the lack of faith in God Himself. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God, for those who come to God must believe He exists and is a rewarder of those who seek Him' (Hebrews 11:6). 'When Jesus went to Capernaum, a centurion came to Jesus asking Him, "Lord, my servant lies in the house paralysed, grievously tormented." Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof but just say the word and my servant will be healed." When Jesus heard that He marvelled and said to those who followed Him, "Most certainly I tell you, I have not found so great a faith anywhere in Israel. I tell you, many will come from the east and the west and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, but the children of the Kingdom will be thrown out into Outer Darkness. There will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:5 to 12). The children of the Kingdom are God's people. In this story, Jesus said the children of the Kingdom will be thrown into Outer Darkness. Jesus spoke directly to the people who were following Him, literally walking with Him. Jesus was very pleased with the level of faith the centurion had, inferring those without faith will be rejected. It is possible to believe in Jesus but have no faith in Him and that is not pleasing to God. To please God, we must believe He exists and He will reward the people who spend time with Him.

A reason people will be rejected and sent to the lake of fire is their refusal to accept the Holy Spirit, or not honouring Him by consistent prayer. The gift of tongues is a gift we should use daily. By not using the gift we are resisting Him. We are commanded to receive the Holy Spirit. We are not to resist, quench, grieve, lie to or blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to do that is an unforgivable sin. 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). 'Those who reject sanctification do not reject man but God, Who has given to you His Holy Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 4:8). 'You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit!' (Acts 7:51). 'Do not quench the Holy Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 5:19). 'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption' (Ephesians 4:30). 'Why has the devil filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ... How is it you have conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God' (Acts 5:3 to 5). 'Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin' (Mark 3:29).

Olive oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit and the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is the gift of speaking in tongues (Acts 19:6; 1 Corinthians 14:2). In the following parable, half the population of pure-hearted believers were rejected and shut out of heaven because they had not kept the 'oil' of the Holy Spirit 'topped up'. They had allowed themselves to become 'burned out' and as a result their God-given divine 'light' had gone out. They were the five foolish virgins who did not take enough oil. That means they did not spend time with God in prayer, speaking in tongues. 'You beloved, keep building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit' (Jude 1:20). Scripturally, if a person did not have the gift of tongues, they

were not filled with the Holy Spirit. This parable is inferring, those who refuse to be filled with the Holy Spirit will be rejected, or those who had the oil of the Holy Spirit then burned out, meaning they backslid. To refuse the Holy Spirit is foolishness. The Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift and we are expressly told several times to be filled with, baptised in or to receive Him (Acts 1:8; 2:38; 8:15; 9:17; 19:6). If we refuse, that is an act of deliberate defiance and the penalty could be a lost soul – lost for eternity in the lake of fire. In this parable, Jesus stated He had never known the servants who were not filled with the Holy Spirit, even though they were so close to being involved in the marriage feast. All they needed was the ‘Oil’ of the Holy Spirit to be allowed in through the door and without the oil, they were shut out. Without the Holy Spirit, Jesus does not know us! If you are not filled with the Holy Spirit, then when Judgement Day comes, you are risking having Jesus say He never knew you. Lamps give light so without the oil, the lamps did not give light. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot emit the Light of the Lord. ‘The Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom delayed they all slumbered and slept but at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold! The bridegroom is coming! Come out to meet him!’ All those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, ‘What if there is not enough for us and you? You go and buy oil for yourselves.’ While they went away to buy oil the Bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But He answered, ‘Most certainly I tell you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming’ (Matthew 25:1 to 13). So it seems, to reject the Holy Spirit is to be guilty of an eternal sin.

We are saved by grace through the blood and cross of Jesus then after we are saved, God expects us to do His work and show plenty of good spiritual ‘fruit’. We must use the talents God has given to us. Many people believe in God and may even believe in Jesus but have not submitted to God, cannot accept Jesus as their one and only source of salvation and are thus unsaved, even though they may believe. Just believing in God is not enough. Evil spirits believe in God and are terrified but they are not saved! ‘You believe God is One? You do well. The demons also believe in God and shudder in terror. Do you want to know, vain man, faith without works is dead?’ (James 2:19 & 20). Works, in this context are the righteous tasks we have done in obedience as God instructs us. As this verse asks, do people really want to know their own righteousness is dead? Faith without works is dead faith. In reverse, works without Godly faith are just as dead. ‘We all (all of mankind) have become as one who is unclean and all our righteousness is equal to a filthy garment. We all fade and wither like a leaf and our iniquities like the wind will blow us away’ (Isaiah 64:6). People who think they are doing ‘good things’ to serve God are going to be shocked when they discover their works were never what God intended for them and they will be blown away like chaff. ‘You will dream up chaff. You will bring forth stubble. Your own breath is a fire that will devour you. The people will be like the burning of lime, like thorns that are cut down and burned in the fire’ (Isaiah 33:11 & 12). ‘Every tree that does not grow good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven but those who do the will of My Father Who is in heaven. Many will tell Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, in Your name cast out demons and in Your name do many mighty works?’ Then I will tell them, “I never knew you. Depart from Me you who work iniquity” (Matthew 7:19 to 23).

Some people want a lukewarm Gospel with their apathetic teaching, the ‘give me everything I want’ prosperity teaching, who want to be spoon-fed on a spiritual diet of a milky, watered down, sermons. They do not want to hear the truth of self-discipline. They do not want to pick up their cross of suffering and adversity, or to follow Jesus in the path of righteousness, self-denial and grace. They do not want to walk in His narrow, straitened path of holiness and obedience. They resent being told they are in danger of being forever cursed. Some religions teach there is no lake of fire. Some religions teach everyone will eventually be saved. Some religions teach people who are still alive will have to pray for the dead before they can go to heaven. Some religions teach people have to be baptised on behalf of the dead before the dead can be resurrected to heaven. Some religions teach no person will go to the lake of fire, only the devil and his fallen angels. Some religions teach only women who have borne children can go to heaven, or their husbands have to usher them into heaven so without a husband, they are doomed. All these things are false doctrines and are not written in the Bible. When Jesus comes to judge, to those who have believed a false Gospel, followed a false messiah, believed in a false doctrine or religion, to those who have rejected Israel and the Jewish people, Jesus will say to them, “I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work iniquity.” Those people never knew Jesus personally and intimately. They knew religion but did not know God. Some would have been involved in a false religion.

It is not hard to recognise a false doctrine, false messiahs or a false Jesus. Two examples of a ‘different Jesus’ come from two false religions, the Mormons and Islam. The Mormons have a ‘Mormon Jesus’ who is not in any way connected to our Saviour, neither is the Islamic ‘Jesus’ they call Isa connected to our Lord

and Saviour. They both preach a different gospel from the true Gospel of the Kingdom. Joseph Smith Jr, who was a dedicated freemason, founded the Mormons in the United States in 1830. Smith and three others started what they claimed to be a 'priesthood' with satanic, freemasonry rituals. Sadly, this cult has spread to many other countries via their misguided missionaries. Smith claimed to have been visited by an angel named Moroni from where they get their disturbing book of Mormon. Mohammad also had strange visions and dreams and he himself knew he was possessed by evil spirits. The so-called angels who gave these false prophets their erroneous teachings would definitely have been satanic beings because it preached a false gospel. That is the task of the false prophet who will be thrown into the lake of fire. It was masquerading as an angel of Light and brought only deception and as we have seen in our lifetime, untold misery for the followers of these two evil cults. The followers of these two cults are deceived and corrupted by the serpent's craftiness, and they have rejected the true Gospel, the true Messiah, the true Holy Spirit and the true, authentic Word of God. They both have their own so-called 'holy book' but their books are not the Word of God. We need to show them the truth of the Gospel and the simplicity of salvation so they can be saved from the lake of fire, where they are headed.

Those religious leaders reading this article, who are acting in a way that does not glorify God, you need to examine your own hearts, turn away from sin, repent, believe the true Gospel of the Kingdom and teach the true Gospel of the Kingdom. Open your hearts to the Spirit of Truth. Study and obey the Word of God or your end will be a terrible end. 'The Great Day (Judgement Day) of the Lord is near. It is near and hurries greatly, the voice of the Day of the Lord. The mighty man cries there bitterly. That Day is a Day of Wrath, a Day of distress and anguish, a Day of trouble and ruin, a Day of darkness and gloom, a Day of clouds and blackness, a Day of the trumpet and alarm ... I (God) will bring distress on mankind so they will walk like blind men because they have sinned against God and their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the Day of God's Wrath but the whole earth will be devoured by the fire of His jealousy. He will make an end, yes a terrible end of all those who dwell on the earth' (Zephaniah 1:14 to 18).

When people find themselves face to face with our Judge and they realise they have been deceived, lied to, ripped off or led astray by church leaders or followed the teachings of the false prophet, there will be much weeping, wailing, grinding or gnashing of teeth, pleading and begging for forgiveness but it will be too late. Once the sentence of holy judgement has been passed, it is for eternity and there is no way out – forever. This is what the Bible says Christians are to do. 'I command you before God and the Lord Jesus, Who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom, preach the Word. Be urgent in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke and exhort with all patience and teaching, for the time will come when they will not listen to sound doctrine but having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside to fables (false doctrines, false religions), but you be sober (sensible) in all things. Suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist and fulfil your ministry' (2 Timothy 4:1 to 5). To all congregations everywhere, there is only one way to avoid being deceived by false teachers and that one way is to read and study the Bible, the holy Word of God. We cannot rely solely on our church leaders. We need to seek the Word of God for ourselves. If you are lazy about reading the Bible you are putting yourself at great risk. It is through reading the Bible and being led by the Holy Spirit Who will lead us into all truth (John 16:13) we will avoid being deceived. We need to study the Word of God, the Bible constantly to avoid being led astray. 'Every Scripture is God-breathed, inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, discipline so the man (or woman) of God may be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16 & 17).

Amen and God bless you.

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