**The Gehenna Truths!**

**By Gary Whipple**

When this writer first saw the truths to be considered in the remainder of this book, he felt somewhat like the first person to see and explore a new world. That is, he felt as if he had been privileged to go where no other men had ever gone before. Then, he discovered that a few great men of God, living in the nineteenth century, had caught glimpses of these same truths and briefly mentioned them in their writings: men such as Robert Govett and G.H. Pember. Not knowing what to call them, this writer settled on the title of “The Gehenna Truths.” In this chapter he will be giving the beginning principles of these truths.

**TWO RELATIONSHIPS**

As a way of introducing these beginning principles, one must have an understanding of *two relationships.* The first is the relationship between the “law of God,” and the *lost* person. The second is between the “commandments of Christ” and the *saved* person. The first relationship says *“do* and have eternal life,” whereas, the second relationship says *“do* and have millennial life.” The first relationship says if you fail to keep the law of God, you will suffer forever in the lake of fire, whereas, the second relationship says if you fail to keep the commandments of Christ, you will suffer loss for a millennium in “outer darkness” and possibly “the blackness of darkness” (see page 152).

**Contrasting These Relationships**

Whereas, the law of God is given in the Old Testament, the commandments of Christ are in the New...specifically the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. 5-7). Whereas, the law of God separates an unregenerate sinner from the presence of God eternally, the commandments of Christ will separate an unrepentant saint from the presence of Christ for a millennium. Whereas, the final judgment for lost sinners is called “the second death,” which will last forever (Rev. 20:14; 21:8), the final judgment of apostate saints is also called “the second death” (Rev. 2:11; 20:6), which will last only for a millennium. In view of this, the scriptures teach that there is such a thing as an “eternal death,” and a “millennial death.”

**THE FIRST RELATIONSHIP**

In presenting this first relationship the writer must summarize its results upon mankind. Then, after we get a clear view of its powers, we will be able to understand the victory that is ours through Christ.

**The Commandments of the Law of God**

Eternal death occurs when an unbeliever dies in his sins (John 8:21, 24). This is a result of his falling short of the perfect standard of righteousness demanded by the law. The scriptures declares**…whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one {point}, he is guilty of all** (James 2:10). Again, **“the wages of sin is death”** (Rom. 6:23). Since it is impossible for man to keep the law because of his weakness (a totally ruined and depraved state), God sent His Son, who was born in the likeness of sinful flesh for the purposes of fulfilling the righteousness of the law, and to take upon Himself the demands of the law, even death on the cross for every one that would believe on Him (Rom. 8:3). Therefore, He has redeemed us from the curse of death by willingly becoming a curse for us (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 10:4). This redemption however, can only become ours through *faith* in Him. God plainly tells us that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 4:5). Therefore, salvation is by faith only – without works!

***Crucified with Christ:***

“For I *through* the law am dead *to* the law, that I might live unto God” (Gal. 2:19).

When one trusts in Christ’s finished work on the cross, he becomes dead *through* the law and *to* the law. To illustrate this, let’s suppose a criminal who has been convicted to die in the state’s electric chair, dies of a heart attack before he is executed. Here, he would be dead *to* the law, but not *through* the law. “To the law” means that the law has no power to judge and punish one who is dead. “Through the law” means that the sentence of the law (death) was carried out. Thus, only if the criminal is executed by the state, is the law satisfied. For then, he would have died *through the law* and as such would be dead *to the law.*

Now, let us suppose that another criminal was executed and died *through* the law, but the next day he was reported as being *alive* and walking down a street in the local village. What could the sentencing judge do? Could he have him executed again to satisfy the law? The answer to this would have to be no! This is because the criminal had *already* satisfied the law by dying *through* the law. Therefore, the judge would be obligated to count him as “judicially dead” *to* the law, even though he was alive.

This is exactly what happens to the believer when he first believes. He dies *through the law.* That is, God counts him as dying with Christ on the cross. Therefore, since he has died *through the law* he becomes dead *to the law* (the law having no power over him as to sin’s penalty). For the law cannot judge a *dead* man. Yet one will say, “But I am alive. How can I be dead?” The answer is that you are “judicially dead.” That is, God counts you as literally dying on the cross in Christ even though you are “practically alive.” This is what Paul meant when he said “...I **am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”** (Gal. 2:20).

***Reckon Yourself Dead:***

“Likewise *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11).

Before a believer can serve God and bring forth fruit, he must *reckon* that he is dead. The Greek word for reckon is “logizomai.” This is an accounting term that means to take an inventory and to arrive at the exact answer. A believer must conclude exactly that he is dead *through* the law before he can serve Christ. And if one is dead, how then can he lose his salvation? Can a dead man be brought back into the courtroom in order to be sentenced to death? No, a thousand times! He is dead *to* the law already, and can only be alive in Christ Jesus. For we not only *died* in Him, but we were *buried* with him, and then we were *raised* with Him (Rom. 6:4), and at the present time, we are *sitting* with Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). Again you may say, “I am here on earth, How can I have been buried, raised and in heaven?” Because, God “judicially” counts it as so! And if God counts it as so, who are we to argue the point. So while we have judicially passed through the portals of heaven with Christ when He ascended, we are yet here on earth in a realistic sense, alive in a manner, in which we have never been before, *“reckoning* ourselves to be dead *to* the law,” so that we may serve the Lord (Rom.7: 6).

From all of this we can draw several conclusions:

(1) One must die *through* the law and *to* the law in order for him to live unto God (Gal. 2:19).

(2) When he dies in Christ “judicially,” the Holy Spirit seals him and gives to him eternal life (Eph. 1:13). This is when his *spirit* is saved.

(3) The beginning of the Spirit controlled life is when he *reckons* himself as being dead to the law and alive to Christ” (Rom. 7:4). This is how his *soul* is saved. (4) In the realistic or practical sense, every sin that a Christian commits since he has “judicially” died *through* the law, must be cleansed under the “law of Christ.” This brings into effect Jesus Christ’s present work as the High Priest, where he *cleanses* us from all sins as we confess them. (1 John 1:9).

This is a great necessity for the salvation of our *soul.*

**In summary**: Judicial death *through* the law speaks of the salvation of the spirit, whereas, recognizing that you are dead *to* the law, speaks of the beginning principles of the salvation of the *soul (Rom. 7:4).*

**THE SECOND RELATIONSHIP**

The second relationship is between the Christian and the “law of Christ” (sometimes called the commandments of Christ). Those Christians who keep this law will gain the *inheritance* at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Whereas, those Christians who do not keep this law will suffer *loss* of all rewards.

**The Commandments of Christ:**

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the *law of Christ”* (Gal.6:2).

Once a Christian has experienced the salvation of the *spirit,* he is placed under a new set of commandments called the “law of Christ.” These commandments were personally given by Jesus Himself in the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew, chapter five through seven). Those that keep them will have their *soul* saved. Those that fail to keep them will suffer ruin and destruction outside of the glory of the kingdom for a thousand years.

Someone will say, "How can these things be? How can I now keep a new set of laws?" The answer lies in the power of Christ. While on the cross, He fulfilled the demands of the law for you in taking the *penalty* upon Himself. When you trusted in this finished work of Christ, two things happened. First you were declared by the law itself as being judicially dead and outside of its power to condemn. Secondly, Christ took up His permanent residence in your life (the sealing of the Holy Spirit), where He now stands ready to personally and realistically fulfill His own laws in and *through* your life. This fulfillment becomes automatic only when you yield your life to Him through faith, and allow Him to live His life *through* you. And the faith that you must daily exercise can only come from your daily growth in the Word (Rom. 10:17).

Nevertheless, some will say, “under grace there are no laws, we have perfect freedom.” However, this is in error. There must be a law that governs every dispensation, including grace, else you would have chaos. Therefore, for this dispensation, the laws are given in the “Sermon on the Mount,” and explained in the epistles. Furthermore, our Lord tells us that all of these commandments of Christ are fulfilled in one word, and that word is *love.* Thus, according to our text, the governing law of grace is love! When one allows Christ to live *through* him, he will produce that love which will fulfill all of the commandments of Christ (Gal. 5:22, 23).

***Dead but Not Alive***

Is it possible for a believer to be dead but not alive? The answer is “yes,” if he has not *reckoned* himself *dead* to the law, and *alive* to Christ by faith. This can be illustrated as one dying, being buried, and then remaining in his grave when he has the power residing in him to rise to a new life. Another question would be, "Will that same person go to heaven?" The answer again is “yes” since he died with Christ on the cross. However, he cannot *enter* the “kingdom of heaven” until he becomes *alive* to Christ by faith. The purpose of this newness of life is so that Christ can produce spiritual fruit *through* him, which is necessary in order to *enter* the kingdom.

Coming alive in Christ begins by reckoning yourself dead in Christ, even though you are realistically alive in the flesh. This reckoning produces assurance of your salvation. Once you know you are saved (know you are dead to the law), then you may begin your growth in the Word, from the *milk* to the *meat.* It is the feeding on the Word that automatically builds your faith (Rom. 10:17) and makes you experientially alive to Christ.

Jesus illustrates these truths in John 3:3 and 3:5*:*

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (3.3).”

“…Jesus answered, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and {of} the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (3.5).”

Here, our Lord stresses two different necessities. One for the purpose of *seeing* the kingdom (verse 3), and the other, for *entering* the kingdom (verse *5).* Contrary to popular teaching, salvation of the s*pirit* is not taught in both verses, nor is one a commentary on the other. Rather, both verses speak of two different kinds of salvation. These are salvation of the *spirit* (verse 3), and salvation of the *soul* (verse 5). What is necessary for one to *see* the kingdom? He must be born again (Gr. ‘born from above’). To have this new birth he must have died *through* the law on the cross with Jesus Christ. What is necessary for one to *enter* the kingdom? He must come up out of the grave *alive* and be empowered by the Spirit. In doing this he will be fulfilling a requirement in this verse (verse 5) that is both “literal” and “symbolic,” and established by the rules of Greek grammar.

Here is the “literal” meaning. The first element of *water* in this verse must be literal water since the second element, which is the *Spirit* is literal. In the Greek rules of grammar, you cannot arbitrarily make one element a symbol while the other remains literal. They must both be either literal or symbolic. Therefore, in the literal meaning, one must be born out of literal *water* after being immersed (the coming up portion of literal baptism), and also out of the *Spirit* (being daily born from the Word into a Christ controlled life).

Here is the “symbolic” meaning. The water represents the *grave* while the Spirit is represented by the *wind* This is established by Jesus changing the literal meaning of the Spirit in verse *5* to a symbolic meaning in verse 8 (in both verses the Greek word “pneuma” is used for the words *Spirit* and *wind).* Again, we must remember the rule of grammar. If one element changes to a symbol, so must the other. Therefore, we are now at liberty to change literal water to its symbolic meaning in order to match it with wind. With this change, the scripture now teaches that in order for one to enter the kingdom he must come up out of his grave (from whence he was placed after his death *through* the law), and become born of the wind (a symbol of the *evidence* of God living through him in the Spirit). This speaks of *works.* For, as the wind gives *evidence* of its *power* in blowing where it listed, and with men hearing the sounds thereof but not knowing where it comes from or where it goes to, so is one who is born of the Spirit (producing of works).

Someone may say, “Why does the scripture speak of one ‘coming up’ or ‘born out’ of the water. How did he come to be placed there in the first place?” The answer is found in verse 3, when he was born again. Here, in the new birth experience, he died *through* the law and was buried. This is symbolized by one being placed under literal water (in his grave) by immersion. By being placed in the womb of death, he is only guaranteed to *see* the kingdom (eternal life). However, in order to *enter* the kingdom, he must be born out of the womb of death and produce spiritual works.

It is this writer’s belief, that in order for one to *enter* the kingdom of heaven, he must fulfill both the “literal” and the “symbolic” meanings of this verse of scripture.

**The Penalty for Not Keeping the Commandments of Christ**

As far as this writer can determine, the penalty, or suffering of loss (1 Cor. 3:15) for the believer who fails to fulfill the commandments of Christ, will be in two major places outside the kingdom. **First**, there is the place of **“the outer darkness”** (obscurity just outside the glory of the kingdom). This place will be occupied with those Christians who, for the lack of a mature faith, failed to have their *soul* saved at the Judgment Seat of Christ (see Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). **Secondly**, there is a place mentioned in Jude 13 as the “blackness **of darkness forever”** [‘forever’ in Greek is ‘aion’ meaning age, i.e. the millennial age]. This is a place that is reserved for all those, who not only failed to produce a saved *soul* at the judgment seat, but also fell away from the truth of the Word of God while in this life. These are called apostates, and in Jude 13, we see the worst kind of apostates. These are apostate teachers.

The “blackness of darkness” is in the region of “Gehenna” and includes the *grave* and the *pit* (Psalm 88). The major difference between “the outer darkness” and the “blackness of darkness” is the degree of punishment that each represent. Whereas, the “outer darkness” will be filled with *disinherited* believers just outside the light of the kingdom, the “blackness of darkness” will be filled with *disinherited* and *apostate* believers in a region far beyond light.

***The Disinherited Christian***

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall **not** inherit the *kingdom of God?* Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are {these}; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, (21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told {you} in time past, that they which do such things *shall not inherit the kingdom* of God” (Gal.5:18-21).

The epistles of Paul are mainly given to teach that which is necessary for a believer to have and maintain, in order that he may inherit the kingdom of God (same as the kingdom of heaven). They also warn against disobeying the commandments of Christ, with the result of being disinherited. The two above passages of scripture will serve to illustrate this.

In the first passage, Paul was pointing out to the Corinthian church that some of their members were breaking the law of Christ by willfully committing the sins that he listed here (the word “some” in verse 11 tells us that some of the members were not involved).

Somehow, this church, like the church of today, apparently believed that only the lost (unrighteous) would not inherit the kingdom, and that the saved (righteous) would automatically inherit it, no matter how they lived their lives on earth. However, Paul tells them to “not be deceived,” for neither would they (the saved) inherit the kingdom if they continued to commit such sins and not be *washed* (verse 11). Once again, we see the necessity of the office of Christ’s high priesthood during this church age, where He makes intercession before the throne of God for our sins and cleanses them with His blood. However, this work is only effective for those believers who confess their sins and are willing to forsake them.

The second passage shows Paul’s disapproval of the Galatians, who placed themselves back under the law and were trying to satisfy it through their *own* works. These works are called *law-works* and represent the activity of the old nature in *p1aying* Christian. Today we have the same thing being promoted by the church. They are called church programs or church work. They are the opposite of the works of love, which is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Thus, the works of the flesh (the old nature) are listed in the above second passage, and represent the fruit of a *carnal* believer who fails to trust in the Holy Spirit to produce His own works *through* him. The believer that does not trust in the leadership of the Holy Spirit is in danger of practicing these sins, which will cause him to *lose* his inheritance. Notice Paul’s warning in Verse 21 **“…they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God?’** The word “do” in the Greek text is the word “prassos,” which means *practice.* This speaks of Christians who willfully practice sin without any sorrow or intent on their part to confess them. (1 John 1:9).

***The Non -0vercomer***

In the seven letters to the seven churches (Rev. Chapters 2 and 3), Jesus reveals to us the “overcomer” as opposed to the “non-overcomer.” Here, he gives a clear view of those who will *inherit* the kingdom and receive special rewards, as opposed to those who will be *disinherited.* It will be helpful to understand that these seven letters have four levels of interpretation which are as follows:

(1) They were written to seven literal churches of the first century.

(2) They were written to seven church periods.

(3) They are written to seven different kinds of churches.

(4) They are all written to each individual believer. It is to this last interpretation that we must focus our attention.

Notice that at the end of each letter, our Lord says, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.”** With this admonishment, we are led to believe that the messages to all of the churches are but one continuous message to the individual who desires to rule and reign with Christ.

1. Those of Ephesus lost their first love (the Word). Jesus says whosoever repents and returns to the Word will be an *overcomer* and will be given the special privilege of eating of the tree of life (this speaks of a much higher wisdom) (Rev. 2:1-7).

2. Those of the Smyrna church were being tried with special trials and tribulations to test their faithfulness. Jesus says those who are faithful unto death will be given a “crown of life,” but those who fall away will be hurt of the *second death* (Rev. 2:8-11).

3. Those of Pergamos teach and allow to be taught the *doctrine* of Balaam which says: *“because* you are the sons of God, you can do as you choose without punishment or loss of reward” (Num. 25:1-3; 31:16). Those who turn from this doctrine will be *overcomers* and will be given “hidden manna and a white stone” (special privileges to feed on the deep things of Christ along with a high award or rank in the kingdom) (Rev. 2:12-17).

4. Those of Thyatira (dark ages of the Roman Catholic church historically) become overcomers by not partaking of this church’s sins and sinful teachings of spiritual idolatry and fornication.

They will rule over the nations with a rod of iron (possibly the third level in the kingdom structure), and be given the morning star (knowledge of the rapture) (Rev. 2:18-29).

*5.* Those of Sardis are saved but that is all. However, those that will grow in the Word, hold fast, repent of sins, and watch for His coming will be *overcomers* and will have a white garment. Those that fail will be *non-overcomers* and be *blotted out of* the “book of life” (lose their right to enter the kingdom) (Rev. 3:1-6).

6. Those of Philadelphia who overcome will be given the highest rank or privilege in the kingdom. They will become a pillar in the temple and have written on them the name of the city of God. At present, they are counted as already having crowns and are admonished to *hold fast* so that no one can take them (Rev. 3:7-13).

7. Those of Laodicea have become rich in the things of the world and are saying, “We **have need of nothing.”** Yet Jesus says that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, and as such are **“lukewarm”** (no power) and will be **“spewed out of His mouth”** (lose inheritance). However, anyone who *overcomes* will be allowed to sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3: 14-22).

The careful student of the Word will see in the first *four* letters, a composite picture of the beginning and ending state of an apostate Christian (one falling away from God). Then, in the *fifth* and *sixth* letters, he will see the growth of a newborn Christian to full maturity. Then in the *seventh,* a falling away of that Christian due to prosperity and the worship of mammon. The apostasy in the first-four letters begins by *leaving* the Word, whereas the apostasy of the seventh is the result of *prosperity* of this world.

Notice the three steps of apostasy in the first-four letters:

(1) The loss of their first love, the Word, which caused them to fall into special trials and tribulations for the purposes of bringing them back.

(2) A further fall into accepting a false doctrine, called the doctrine of Balaam (Num. 31:16).

(3) The final step in accepting the teaching of spiritual idolatry and fornication to such a degree, that the apostate does not want Christ to rule over him. Then notice that in the seventh letter, the cause for the first step in the fall (leaving the Word) is prosperity and power in this world.

**The Three Classes of Non-overcomers**

“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?...(24) Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; (27) When your fear cometh as desolation, and your ***destruction*** cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. (28) Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: (29) For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord” (Prov.1: 22, 24-29).

In this passage, there are apparently three classes of non-overcomers who will be disinherited before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The least of these are called the **“simple.”** These describe the average church members of today who are spiritually naive. They could represent the antitype of Esau when he failed to value his birthright, and sold it for a mess of pottage. The next, are the **“fools”** who hate knowledge. These could be the pastors and teachers as well as the layman who desire no further growth in the Word. The last category in this scripture contains the **“scorners,”** who are apostates (those who have willingly fallen away and are against the Word). They comprise different stratums of believers. They are those who have grown to see “the meat of the Word” and fallen away, and they are those who see no further than the *milk* of the Word and fall away. They are found in the seminary as well as in the pulpit and the pew. They all reject and make fun of the Word of God by their words and lifestyle, and by that action tell Christ that they do not want Him reigning over them (Luke 19:14).

There is not much mentioned about the “simple” in respect to judgment. Apparently, their punishment in “the outer darkness” will be light as compared to others. The “fools” however, will suffer the promotion of *shame* and *stripes* in this place (Prov. 3:35; 19:29). The greatest punishment of the three however, will be the “scorners” or apostates. They have a special place reserved for them called the **“blackness of darkness”** in the realm of Gehenna, where they will be assigned for one thousand years.

***The Place of Outer Darkness***

The first place of internment for the disinherited is called **“outer darkness,”** (obscurity just outside the kingdom). As we have stated before, this could be in the fourth level of the kingdom structure (see chapter eight), which is an antithesis to the fourth level of this present kingdom of Satan. It is here, that God will also give out different kinds of judgments for its inhabitants. For there must be a “just recompense **of reward”** (Heb. 2:2). There will be those here who will be bound hand and foot (Matt. 22:13) as opposed to those who will be unbound (Matt. 25:28-30; Luke 19:24-26). There will be those who will be beaten with *many* stripes, as opposed to those who will be beaten with *few* stripes (Luke 12: 47,48).

***The Place of the Blackness of Darkness***

“Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. (12) These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds {they are} without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; (13) Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the *blackness of darkness forever*” (Jude 11-13).

As we have mentioned before, the above scripture from Jude does not speak of lost men, but rather apostate Christians (specifically apostate *teachers* in these last days). They have **“gone in the way of Cain”** (verse 11). This means that they began their fall from Christ, by teaching that one could approach God with their *own* works instead of the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. This is what Cain did:

Offered the works of his hands and fruit of the cursed ground instead of bringing a blood sacrifice as Able did. Cain however, was lost, and God used him as an example here to show there is only one way to approach God -- by a blood sacrifice (Jesus Christ). Apostates, in the last days however, will teach “the way of Cain,” i.e., approaching God on the basis of works.

Those who commit this gross error then rush to commit the next error, **“the error of Balaam for reward”** (verse 11). Plainly and simply, this is the selling of their ministry for money. This is indicative of the spirit of many modern day ministries and great denominations. They emphasize numbers, money, large churches, and television audiences. Except for some exceptions, this is the ministry of *entertainment*, which draws great sums of money for its leaders. It is also the ministry of the *great world church* in Rome, who has become rich beyond measure by selling itself. God calls this church the Great Whore (Rev. 17:1, 2).

From the error of Balaam, they continued their fall until they **“perished in the gainsaying of Core,”** or Korah (Num.16:1-32). The Greek word for “gainsaying” is “antilogia,” which means “against the Word.” Korah was a great man of the Levites. He was brought near to the Lord to serve in the tabernacle. However, he had higher ambitions. He wanted also to be the high priest and take over Moses and Aaron’s God given position (types of Christ). Thus, his contention with Moses indicated that he was “against the Word.” He also caused 250 princes of Israel to fall with him as well as winning the sympathy of the entire congregation for a short period of time. This made him a type of all usurper teachers, who rebels from God’s Word and attempts to take over the authority of Christ. As a result, the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and all of his company, and all who pertained to him, and they went down alive into the *pit* into the heart of the earth.

In this passage of scripture God shows us three major steps that lead down into gross apostasy. The last step correlates with the fourth step, or fourth letter in Revelation 2:19-23. Historically speaking, the Thyatira church is identified with the Roman Catholic church whose priests and popes are against the Word of God, have usurped the authority of Christ, and committed the sin of Korah. While God uses this church to give to us a picture of the historical falling away of the church, He also plainly tells us that its members, without trusting in Christ’s finished work at Calvary, are lost religionists.

Apostasy then, means *failing away* from Christ. As we study the **“blackness of darkness,”** or that which this writer would class as the “Gehenna truths,” keep one thing in mind. Apostates are not lost men. They will not be separated from God forever. They are the saved who have *rebelled* against God’s Word and as a result will be separated in the “blackness of darkness” for a millennium (one thousand years). In our above scripture, God calls them **“clouds without water”** (a promise for blessing but unable to deliver), **“blown about by the wind”** (drifters), **“live autumn trees that produced no fruit in two seasons who have been up-rooted”** (turned against the Word); **“wandering stars”** (no orbit around another star, i.e. nothing to rule the course of their life) (verses 12,13).

There are different levels of apostasy. Not all apostates need fall to the depths here described in order to suffer “destruction in Gehenna” (body) and the “blackness of darkness” (soul).

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this chapter, we have attempted to point out five different paths of life. By understanding the two relationships that we have touched upon, one can see where each one of these paths leads.

The first path leads to the Lake of Fire. All those who are alive to the law of God when they physically die will go there.

The second leads to everlasting life. This is given to all who have died through the law while living in this life.

The third leads into the kingdom of heaven. This privilege will be given to all who die through the law, became alive to Christ and keep His commandments.

The fourth path leads to “the outer darkness.” This is a place of obscurity outside of the kingdom for all who die through the law, then fail to become alive to Christ and keep His commandments. Its duration will be for one thousand years.

The fifth path leads to “Gehenna” and the “blackness of darkness” forever (Gr. “aion” meaning age, i.e. millennial age). This is the gloomiest of all places. It is reserved for apostates. That is those who after they died through the law, turned against the Word and become *enemies* of God.

(From Gary Whipple's Shock and Surprise, Beyond the Rapture, Ch. 10)

<http://lampandlightchurch.org/audio-sermons/beyond-the-rapture>

<http://lampandlightchurch.org/?q=audio-sermons/rightly-divide-series>