**One needs to 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 Gehenna Truths
By Gary Whipple of** [**Beyond the Rapture**](http://www.bibleone.net/BeyondtheRapture.pdf)

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”

**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” ([Matthew 5-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5-7&t=NKJV)). 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 ([Revelation 20:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.14&t=NKJV); [21:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.8&t=NKJV)), the final judgment of apostate saints is also called “the second death” ([Revelation 2:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV); [20:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.6&t=NKJV)), 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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.21&t=NKJV), [24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.24&t=NKJV)). 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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.10&t=NKJV)). Again, “the wages of sin is death” ([Romans 6:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+6.23&t=NKJV)). 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 ([Romans 8:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.3&t=NKJV)). Therefore, He has redeemed us from the curse of death by willingly becoming a curse for us ([Galatians 3:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.13&t=NKJV); [Romans 10:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+10.4&t=NKJV)). 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 ([Galatians 2:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+2.16&t=NKJV); [Romans 4:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+4.5&t=NKJV)). Therefore, spiritual 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”* ([Galatians 2:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+2.19&t=NKJV)).

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”* ([Galatians 2:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+2.20&t=NKJV)).

Reckon Yourself Dead:

*“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”*  ([Romans 6:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+6.11&t=NKJV)).

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* ([Romans 6:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+6.4&t=NKJV)), and at the *present* time, we are *sitting with Him* in heavenly places ([Ephesians 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.6&t=NKJV)). 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 ([Romans 7:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+7.6&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Galatians 2:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+2.19&t=NKJV)).

(2) When he dies in Christ “judicially,” the Holy Spirit seals him and gives to him eternal life ([Ephesians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.13&t=NKJV)). 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” ([Romans 7:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+7.4&t=NKJV)). 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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.9&t=NKJV)). 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* ([Romans 7:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+7.4&t=NKJV)).

**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”* ([Galatians 6:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+6.2&t=NKJV)).

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 [[Matthew 5-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5-7&t=NKJV)]). 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

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 ([Romans 10:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+10.17&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Galatians 5:22-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.22-23&t=NKJV)).

**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 ([Romans 10:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+10.17&t=NKJV)) and makes you *experientially alive to Christ*.

Jesus illustrates these truths in [John 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.3&t=NKJV) and [John 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.5&t=NKJV):

*“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"*  ([John 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.3&t=NKJV))

 *“…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."* ([John 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.5&t=NKJV))

Here, our Lord stresses *two* different necessities. One for the purpose of *seeing* the kingdom ([John 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.3&t=NKJV)), and the other, for *entering* the kingdom ([John 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.5&t=NKJV)). Contrary to popular teaching, salvation of the spirit 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* ([John 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.3&t=NKJV)), and salvation of the *soul* ([John 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.5&t=NKJV)). 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 ([John 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.5&t=NKJV)) 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 [John 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.5&t=NKJV) to a symbolic meaning in [John 3:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.8&t=NKJV) (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 wishes, 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 works of the Holy Spirit, not of self).

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 [John 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.3&t=NKJV), 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* (allowing the Holy Spirit *to produce works* through self).

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 Corinthians 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV)) 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 [Matthew 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV); [22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV)).

Secondly, there is a place mentioned in [Jude 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.13&t=NKJV) 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 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.13&t=NKJV), 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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+88&t=NKJV)). 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 Corinthians 6:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.9-11&t=NKJV)).

*“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”* ([Galatians 5:18-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.18-21&t=NKJV)).

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 [1 Corinthians 6:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.11&t=NKJV) 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 ([1 Corinthians 6:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.11&t=NKJV)). 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 *playing* 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 ([Galatians 5:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.22&t=NKJV)). 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 [Galatians 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.21&t=NKJV) “…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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.9&t=NKJV)).

**The Non-0vercomer**

In the seven letters to the seven churches ([Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV)), 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) ([Revelation 2:1-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.1-7&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Revelation 2:8-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.8-11&t=NKJV)).

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” ([Numbers 25:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+25.1-3&t=NKJV); [31:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+31.16&t=NKJV)). 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) ([Revelation 2:12-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.12-17&t=NKJV)).

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) ([Revelation 2:18-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.18-29&t=NKJV)).

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) ([Revelation 3:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.1-6&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Revelation 3:7-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.7-13&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Revelation 3:14-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14-22&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Numbers 31:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+31.16&t=NKJV)).

(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”* ([Proverbs 1:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+1.22&t=NKJV), [24-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+1.24-29&t=NKJV)).

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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.14&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Proverbs 3:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+3.35&t=NKJV); [19:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+19.29&t=NKJV)). 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” ([Hebrews 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.2&t=NKJV)). There will be those here who will be bound hand and foot ([Matthew 22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV)) as opposed to those who will be unbound ([Matthew 25:28-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.28-30&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:24-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.24-26&t=NKJV)). 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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.47-48&t=NKJV)).

**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 1:11-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.11-13&t=NKJV))

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” ([Jude 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.11&t=NKJV)). 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”* ([Jude 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.11&t=NKJV)).

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 ([Revelation 17:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+17.1-2&t=NKJV)).

From the error of Balaam, they continued their fall until they “perished in the gainsaying of Core,” or Korah ([Numbers 16:1-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+16.1-32&t=NKJV)). 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 in the heart of the earth.

In this passage of scripture ([Jude 1:11-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.11-13&t=NKJV)) 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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.19-23&t=NKJV). 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 [[Jude 1:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.12-13&t=NKJV)]).

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.

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The following Word Document is SAFE to open and easy to print: [Gehenna Truths from Gary Whipple's Shock and Surprise, Beyond the Rapture, Ch. 10.docx](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/resources/Gehenna%20Truths%20from%20Gary%20Whipple%27s%20Shock%20and%20Surprise%2C%20Beyond%20the%20Rapture%2C%20Ch.%2010.docx)

(From [Bible One - Gary Whipple's Beyond the Rapture](http://www.bibleone.net/BeyondtheRapture.pdf), Ch. 10, available for purchase at [Gary Whipple's Books - Schoettle Publishing](http://www.schoettlepublishing.com/catalog/whipple.htm).)

Also see [The Second Death](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#The%20Second%20Death), [Hurt By the Second Death and Sheep and Goats](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#Hurt%20By%20the%20Second%20Death%20and%20Sheep%20and%20Goats) and [Dragnet / Separation / Furnace of Fire / Kingdom](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#Dragnet%20/%20Separation%20/%20Furnace%20of%20Fire%20/%20Kingdom) for a different interpretation.