**METAPHORS, Some**

Excerpts from [Those on His Left Hand](http://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#THOSE ON HIS LEFT HAND) and [The Seven Parables of Matthew 13](http://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#The Seven Parables of Matthew 13).

[Those on His Left Hand](http://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#THOSE ON HIS LEFT HAND)

**Being Hurt of The Second Death**

That which is in view concerning a non-overcoming Christian one day being hurt of the second death following decisions and determinations at the judgment seat, as previously seen, is explained later in this same book.  The second death for the non-overcomer is having a “part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone” ([Revelation 21:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.8&t=NKJV)); and having a part in the lake of fire is explained by and through God’s dealings with the unsaved in the previous chapter as being “cast into the lake of fire” ([Revelation 20:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.15&t=NKJV)).

And seeing individuals cast into “the furnace of fire” in [Matthew 13:42](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV) is simply another way of expressing the same thing.

(The parables in [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV) deal with the Kingdom of the Heavens and fruit bearing, not with eternal salvation.  Thus, the subject matter has to do with the saved, not with the unsaved.

Further, in [Matthew 13:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1&t=NKJV), Christ going out of “the house” [a reference to Israel] and down by “the seaside” [a reference to the Gentiles], the one new man “in Christ” [about to be brought into existence at the time these parables were given] is seen throughout the first four parables.  In this respect, those gathered out of Christ’s kingdom, which “offend” and “practice lawlessness,” who are cast into a furnace of fire, can only be identified as saved individuals.

Also, this casting into a furnace of fire in [Matthew 13:42](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV) occurs before the Millennium.  The unsaved cast into the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.15&t=NKJV) occurs following the Millennium.  They are not the same.)

But is the second death, being cast into the lake of fire, something that will be carried out in a literal sense?  Or, is Scripture dealing with metaphors at this point?  And, if the latter, what about the unsaved being cast into the lake of fire at the end of the Millennium, in [Revelation 20:11-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.11-15&t=NKJV)?

If one is literal, would not the other have to be literal as well?  Or, if one is metaphorical, would not the other have to be metaphorical as well?

**Allowing Scripture to Interpret Scripture**

In [John 15:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+15.6&t=NKJV) and [Hebrews 6:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.8&t=NKJV), saved individuals are spoken of in a metaphorical sense, where a burning with fire is referenced.  And the context both places has to do with either bearing fruit or not bearing fruit, which is exactly the same thing that is seen in the [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV) parables.  Or, as the matter is expressed in [Revelation 2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV), it has to do with either overcoming or being overcome.

And the negative side of the matter is expressed at least two other ways in Scripture — being cast into Gehenna (a reference to the place of refuse outside the city walls of Jerusalem at this time; [Matthew 5:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.22&t=NKJV), [29-30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.29-30&t=NKJV); [23:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.15&t=NKJV), [33](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.33&t=NKJV)) or being cast into outer darkness ([Matthew 8:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV); [22:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [25:30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV)).

Overcoming or not overcoming and being unhurt or being hurt by the second death in [Revelation 2:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV) is expressed a slightly different way in [Romans 8:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.13&t=NKJV):

For if you [a reference to ‘brethren’ in [Romans 8:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.12&t=NKJV)] live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Whether Gehenna or outer darkness in Matthew, a burning with fire in John and Hebrews, being cast into a furnace or lake of fire in Matthew and Revelation, or suffering death or being hurt by the second death in Romans and Revelation, different facets of exactly the same thing are in view.

All of these are used in contexts showing that they have to do with saved people in relation to fruit bearing and the kingdom.

By comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is plain that these are simply different ways of expressing the same thing.  And since a literal casting into outer darkness, Gehenna, or a furnace or lake of fire could not possibly be in view (for these different places could not possibly be looked upon as referring to the same place in a literal sense), it is evident that metaphors are being used throughout.

But relative to the unsaved and the lake of fire, this is simply not expressed other ways in Scripture as it is with the saved, leaving no room for any thought other than understanding the matter as literal, not metaphorical.

Aside from the preceding, it is clear that all Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike, will be in the kingdom.  This is seen in the type in [Genesis 18](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+18&t=NKJV); [19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19&t=NKJV).  Both Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, are seen on the mount (a “mountain” in Scripture signifies a kingdom).  But note the stark difference in the place that each occupied.

Abraham stood before the Lord, where he had always stood ([Genesis 18:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+18.22&t=NKJV); [19:27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.27&t=NKJV)).  Lot though found himself in a place separate from the Lord, in a place where he also had always stood ([Genesis 19:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.1&t=NKJV), [30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.30&t=NKJV)).

**“Everlasting [‘Age-Lasting’] Fire”**

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting [age-lasting] fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. ([Matthew 25:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV))

As has been shown, similar verses to the preceding are used different places in the New Testament relative to non-overcoming Christians.  And, with this in mind, understanding how these verses are used, the matter concerning how that which is stated in [Matthew 25:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV) relative to those on Christ’s left hand is to be understood should be evident without further comment.

(Why does Scripture associate non-overcoming Christians with the lake of fire in relation to Christ’s millennial reign, in the manner previously seen [which would be the same for those on Christ’s left hand in [Matthew 25:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV)]?  The answer would be the same as the reason why Scripture associates the unsaved with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages of eternity, following the Millennium.

The lake of fire was not prepared for man.  Rather, it was prepared “for the devil and his angels” [[Matthew 25:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV)].  It was prepared for those who had rejected God’s supreme power and authority, as Satan sought to acquire power and authority above that which had been delegated [[Isaiah 14:13-14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.13-14&t=NKJV)].  Thus, in this respect, the lake of fire is connected with regality.

And man, created to replace Satan and his angels, finds his connection with the lake of fire on exactly the same basis.  Saved man, ignoring the very reason for his salvation [which is regal], will find himself associated with the lake of fire during the Millennium [an association connected with all that the existence of the lake of fire implies].  And unsaved man, ignoring salvation and the reason for man’s creation [which, again, is regal], will find himself associated with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages following the Millennium [an association connected with all that the existence of the lake of fire implies].)

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[The Seven Parables of Matthew 13](http://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#The Seven Parables of Matthew 13)

**THE FURNACE OF FIRE**

Only *one* group of individuals — though separated into *two* classes — could possibly be in view through the *use* of the expressions, “good” and “bad,” or “just” and “wicked” ([Matthew 13:48-49](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.48-49&t=NKJV)). *All* had been removed from the sea; *all* had been removed from the Gentiles. Thus, *no* room could possibly exist for an *inclusion* of *unsaved individuals* in this parable. By the very nature of the subject matter (the kingdom of the heavens) and those being dealt with in this parable (those removed from the sea), *only* the *saved* could possibly be in view.

And, viewing that to which this parable refers, these saved individuals are seen being dealt with on the basis of *prior* decisions and determinations — decisions and determinations having *previously been made at the judgment seat*. And these decisions and determinations, emanating from the judgment seat, will have been based on *prior faithfulness* to one’s *calling* (judgment will be on the basis of “works,” but the *works* being *judged* will have *resulted* from *faithfulness*, or *unfaithfulness* [[1 Corinthians 3:12-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.12-15&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Hebrews 11:17-19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.17-19&t=NKJV), [31](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.31&t=NKJV); [James 2:21-25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.21-25&t=NKJV)]).

But seeing the saved *alone* being dealt with in this parable presents major problems for *numerous* Christians, for *some* of those in the parable are cast into “the furnace of fire.” And these *same* Christians, who would *never* consider thinking along the lines of Christians being cast into such a place, are invariably forced into an *erroneous* position, resulting in an *erroneous* interpretation. They are forced into the position of *seeing saved and unsaved individuals* (“good” and “bad”) *being dealt with in the parable, along with seeing these individuals being dealt with in relation to eternal life or eternal damnation*.

The preceding though is simply *not* what Scripture has to say about the matter. Scripture is clear that the parable deals with the *saved alone*, and these *saved* individuals are dealt with in relation to *the coming kingdom*. And the fact that those described as “bad” and “wicked” are cast into “the furnace of fire” must be understood *within* this framework. It must be understood within the framework of *both* those *who* are being dealt with and that *which* is being dealt with — *Christians, and the kingdom*.

Thus, to deal with this parable on the basis of eternal verities, with the unsaved being cast into the lake of fire, is *completely outside* the scope of the subject matter seen in any of these seven parables. Such a teaching, derived from these parables, is both textually and contextually *wrong*. Any thought of dealing with any of these parables after this fashion, from a Scriptural standpoint, *could not even be open for discussion*.

If the text is dealt with in a *literal* sense, apart from metaphors, only *one* possible conclusion can be reached. At the end of the age a *segment* of the saved, a segment of Christians, are going to be *cast into* what is called in this parable, “the furnace of fire.” And that is *exactly* what Christ had previously *stated* within His explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares:

*The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,*

 *And will cast them* [*i.e.,* the offensive and lawless ones, the tares in this parable, those doing the works of Satan] *into the furnace of fire: there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth”.* ([Matthew 13:41-42](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.41-42&t=NKJV))

Or, note the same thing in the parable of the dragnet:

*So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.* ([Matthew 13:49-50](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.49-50&t=NKJV)).

So, exactly what is being dealt with through these two references to “the furnace of fire”?

Should the expression be looked upon in a *literal* sense, referring to an *actual* furnace of fire? Or, is this a continuation of the metaphorical language seen earlier in the parables, describing something *related to but apart* from a *literal* understanding of the reference?

When a person begins studying *related* Scripture having to do with “Gehenna,” “outer darkness [*lit.*, ‘the outer darkness’]” and “the lake of fire” he will find *exactly* the *same* teaching as seen in these two parables. That which is seen in [Matthew 13:42](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV) is *not* something peculiar to the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the dragnet. Rather, it is merely *part* of the *same* teaching seen *so many places elsewhere* in the New Testament (*cf.* [John 15:1-6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+15.1-6&t=NKJV); [2 Thessalonians 1:5-10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+1.5-10&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 6:7-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.7-9&t=NKJV); [10:26-31](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.26-31&t=NKJV); [Jude 1:20-23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.20-23&t=NKJV)).

In this respect, note how teachings concerning *Gehenna*, *the outer darkness*, and *the lake of fire* appear in Scripture.

1) Gehenna is an Anglicized Greek word (*Geenna* in the Greek text) used twelve times in the New Testament. The word appears eleven times in the three synoptic gospels ([Matthew 5:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.22&t=NKJV), [29-30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.29-30&t=NKJV); [10:28](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.28&t=NKJV); [18:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+18.9&t=NKJV); [23:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.15&t=NKJV), [33](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.33&t=NKJV); [Mark 9:43](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.43&t=NKJV), [45](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.45&t=NKJV), [47](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.47&t=NKJV); [Luke 12:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.5&t=NKJV)) and once in the epistle of James ([James 3:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+3.6&t=NKJV)).

Christ *alone* used the word in the gospel accounts. And He *always* used the word in contexts having to do with *entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens*.

Then, in James, the word appears in a text having to do with the tongue — “. . .it [the tongue] is set on fire of hell [‘*Gehenna’*].” And, though the word is used in a *somewhat* different sense in James, it appears *within* a context having to do with the *saving of the soul and the coming kingdom* ([James 1:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV), [21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV); [2:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.5&t=NKJV), [14-26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV); [5:7-8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+5.7-8&t=NKJV), [19-20](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+5.19-20&t=NKJV)).

*Gehenna* (*Geenna*) is the Greek word for *Hinnom* from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. *Hinnom* was the name given to a valley south of Jerusalem during Joshua’s day, named for the son of a person whose name was “Hinnom” ([Joshua 15:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+15.8&t=NKJV); [18:16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+18.16&t=NKJV)).

And, though this valley was used at times as a place where human sacrifices were offered during Old Testament days ([2 Kings 23:10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Kings+23.10&t=NKJV); [Jeremiah 7:31](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+7.31&t=NKJV)), the valley was no more than the place where the *refuse* from Jerusalem was discarded at the time Christ was on earth.

(The word, *Hinnom*, has simply been transliterated in the English text of the Old Testament; but the same thing has not been done with *Gehenna* [*Geenna*, for *Hinnom*] in most English texts of the New Testament. Rather, in most versions, *Gehenna* [*Geenna*] has been translated “hell” each of the twelve times that it appears in the New Testament, *resulting in confusion*.)

Thus, *Gehenna*, at the time Christ and James used the word, was simply the name of the place where those in Jerusalem discarded their refuse. Even dead bodies (criminals, etc.) were, at times, cast into this place; and the fires burned continuously.

In this respect, Christ was doing no more than referencing a place where the refuse from the city of Jerusalem was discarded. And James was associating the misuse of the tongue with this same place.

Remaining within the gospel accounts, being cast into *Gehenna* always carries an identical association and meaning. Textually, in the gospels, being cast into *Gehenna* is always associated with *separation* from regality within Christ’s kingdom. It matters not which of the eleven references a person checks, he will find exactly the same thing each time. *Gehenna* is *never* used in the gospel accounts in a context dealing with the *unsaved* and *eternal verities*. Rather, the word *always* appears in texts set within contexts having to do *solely with the saved in relation to the coming kingdom*.

And “outer darkness” is used *exactly the same way* in the three instances in which the expression appears, *all* in the gospel of Matthew ([Matthew 8:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV); [22:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [25:30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV)). The use of outer darkness is simply another way in which the Lord dealt with the *same* issue among the *same* group of people (the *Jewish people, in relation to the proffered kingdom*).

Viewing the matter from one perspective, those *denied* positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves in the place where the *refuse* from the city was *discarded*, *outside* the city. Viewing the matter from the *other* perspective, those *denied* positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves in a place *separated* from the One who said, “I am the light of the world” ([John 8:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.12&t=NKJV)). With respect to occupying a position with Christ in His kingdom, they will find themselves in a place *outside*, a place associated with *darkness instead of light — the darkness outside*.

The use of *Gehenna* and *outer darkness* (the outer darkness) are *simply two metaphorical ways* that Christ used to call attention to the *same thing*.

(These expressions — *Gehenna, the outer darkness* — were used in the gospel accounts during and immediately following that time when the kingdom of the heavens was *offered* to Israel at Christ’s *first* coming. With Israel’s *rejection* of the proffered kingdom, the kingdom was *taken* from Israel and an entirely new entity [*the one new man “in Christ”*] was called into existence to be the *recipient* of that which Israel had *rejected* [[Matthew 21:33-46](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-46&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-11&t=NKJV)]. And with these events brought to pass, *Gehenna* and *the outer darkness*, as previously used relative to the Jewish people, would *now be used* relative to Christians.

These expressions are used in Scripture relative to the *recipients of the proffered kingdom* [*the kingdom of the heavens*], whether Israel in past time or Christians during the present time.)

2) The Lake of Fire

The description of “*the lake which burns with fire and brimstone*” in [Revelation 21:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.8&t=NKJV) is *another* way in which Scripture deals with the *same thing again*. The “*lake of fire*” in this passage is described as *not only* the place where *unsaved* man from the previous chapter ([Revelation 20:11-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.11-15&t=NKJV)) *will spend eternity* but *also the place where Christians who do not overcome* (the world, the flesh, and the devil) during the present dispensation *will find themselves* during the coming dispensation. And this, of course, would be the *same* as Christians *being cast into* “*the furnace of fire*” in [Matthew 13:42](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV).

The *same* thing *is seen* in the *second* of the seven overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters *two* and *three*. These two chapters record seven short epistles to seven churches, and there is an overcomer’s promise at the end of each epistle. “To him that overcomes . . . .” “He that overcomes . . . .” ([Revelation  2:7](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.7&t=NKJV), [11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV), [17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.17&t=NKJV), [26-28](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-28&t=NKJV); [3:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV), [12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV), [21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

These epistles are *addressed* to *saved* individuals (those in a *position* to overcome); and the Lord has set rewards, compensations, prizes before these individuals as an incentive, encouragement for them to *run the present race of the faith in a manner that will allow them to overcome rather than being overcome*.

And *each* of the overcomer’s *promises* is *millennial* in its scope of fulfillment. That in view through overcoming, *or* not overcoming — as the case may be — will be *realized* during the 1,000-year Messianic Era *alone*.

The fact that these are millennial in their scope of fulfillment can be illustrated quite easily. Note the *promises* to two of the seven churches in [Revelation 2:26-27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV); [3:21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV). *No such scene as presented in these verses will exist beyond the Millennium*.

Christ and His co-heirs, *beyond* the Millennium, will *no longer* rule over the *nations*, as this rule is pictured in [Revelation 2:26-27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV). Rather, the Gentiles *comprising* these *nations* will be brought into *positions* of rulership *themselves* with Christ and His co-heirs, as this rule extends *beyond* the earth, *out* into the universe ([Revelation 22:2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.2&t=NKJV), [5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.5&t=NKJV)). And the Son, beyond the Millennium, will *no longer* sit on His own throne, as seen in [Revelation 3:21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV). Rather, He *will sit* on “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” from whence universal rule will emanate ([Revelation 22:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.1&t=NKJV), [3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.3&t=NKJV), [5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.5&t=NKJV)).

It is the overcomer’s promise to the church in Smyrna that has to do with the lake of fire, something that can *only* be millennial within its scope of fulfillment. That is, the conditions alluded to for the non-overcomer in this promise will exist for the *duration* of the Messianic Era, *not* throughout the eternal ages beyond.

Scripture deals with millennial rewards and/or loss, *never* with eternal rewards and/or loss. This should be easy enough for anyone to understand, for if *rewards are eternal, so is loss of rewards*. And loss of rewards involves an *association* with death ([Romans 8:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.13&t=NKJV)), something that Scripture clearly reveals *will be done away with at the beginning of the eternal ages beyond the Millennium* ([1 Corinthians 15:26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.26&t=NKJV); [Revelation 21:4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.4&t=NKJV)).

The overcomer’s promise to those Christians comprising the church in Smyrna reads,

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.* ([Revelation 2:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV);  *cf.* [Revelation 20:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.6&t=NKJV))

There is a clear implication in this promise that those who *do not* overcome *will be* hurt by the second death. And any attempt to take this promise and make it mean something other than what it *clearly states* serves only to *destroy the promise*, something that the Lord sounded a solemn warning against ([Revelation 22:18-19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.18-19&t=NKJV)). The promise that those who *do* overcome *will not* “be hurt by the second death” would be meaningless *unless* this promise is taken at face value and allowed to mean *exactly* what it says, *clearly implying* that those who do not overcome will “be hurt by the second death.”

The “second death” in the book of Revelation is *associated* with the lake of fire ([Revelation 21:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.8&t=NKJV)). And those who *do not* overcome are going to have their part in this lake of fire ([Revelation 2:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV)). That is, *they will be hurt by the second death by having a part in the lake of fire*.

[Revelation 21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21&t=NKJV) moves *beyond* the Millennium into the eternal ages, and the first six verses provide the complete story *concerning* conditions as these ages begin. Note the words, “It is done,” in the first part of verse six ([Revelation 21:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.6&t=NKJV)). This is the translation of a verb in the perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating that *the matter has been brought to completion and presently exists in that finished state*.

Then, beginning with the latter part of verse six and continuing through verse eight ([Revelation 21:6-8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.6-8&t=NKJV)), overcoming and/or being overcome are again, *for the last time*, dealt with in this book. And this takes a person *back to the same place* seen in chapters two and three ([Revelation 2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV)).

Then, the remainder of the book is simply a commentary for the eight verses that open and begin this section. First, a commentary is provided for the first part of this opening section. [Revelation 21:9-22:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.9-22.5&t=NKJV) forms a commentary for this part of the section ([Revelation 21:1-6a](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.1-6a&t=NKJV)), which has to do with *conditions beyond the Millennium*. Note how this commentary in chapter twenty-two closes: “. . . and they shall reign forever and ever [throughout the *endless* ages]” ([Revelation 22:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.5&t=NKJV)).

Then, the remainder of chapter twenty-two ([Revelation 22:6ff](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.6ff&t=NKJV)) forms a commentary for the second part of this opening section, which has to do with *conditions before and during the Millennium* ([Revelation 21:6-8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.6-8&t=NKJV) [6b]).

And this will explain *why*, outside the gates of Jerusalem during the Messianic Era, one will be able to *find* “dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie” ([Revelation 22:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.15&t=NKJV)). This information is given to shed light on and provide *additional* detail for verses in the preceding chapter ([Revelation 21:7-8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.7-8&t=NKJV)), and the information in these verses in the preceding chapter was given to shed light on the *previous* overcomer’s promises, particularly the one to the church in Smyrna dealing with “the second death” ([Revelation 2:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV)).

To distinguish between millennial and eternal conditions in this respect, note that those *outside* the gates during the *eternal ages* will be the Gentile nations, as the New Jerusalem rests on the new earth ([Revelation 21:24-27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.24-27&t=NKJV)); *but* those outside the gates during the *preceding Messianic Era*, with the New Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth, will be the *non-overcomers* ([Revelation 22:14-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.14-15&t=NKJV)). And the place that they will occupy is described at least four other ways in Scripture — through the use of *Gehenna*, *the outer darkness*, *the furnace of fire*, and *the lake of fire*.

The picture surrounding an *association between* Gehenna and the lake of fire appears unmistakable. As *Gehenna* was the place of *refuse* for the *earthly city of Jerusalem*, the *lake of fire* is seen as the place of *refuse* for the *heavenly city of Jerusalem*. And as *Gehenna* was on the *opposite* side of the city from that side where God dwelled (south, as opposed to north [*cf.* [Leviticus 1:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+1.11&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 14:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.13&t=NKJV)]), *thus will it be* with the counterpart to Gehenna in the heavenly Jerusalem. The lake of fire is used with respect to a place *completely apart from Christ and His rule*. And those “hurt by the second death” are seen *occupying this place during the 1,000-year Messianic Era*.

(Why does Scripture associate non-overcoming Christians with the lake of fire in relation to Christ’s *millennial reign*, in this manner? The answer would be the same as the reason why Scripture associates the unsaved with the lake of fire throughout the *endless ages of eternity*, following the Millennium.

The lake of fire was *not* prepared for man. Rather, it was prepared “for the *devil* and his *angels*” [[Matthew 25:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV)]. It was prepared for those who had *rejected* God’s supreme power and authority, as Satan sought to *exalt* his throne [[Isaiah 14:13-14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.13-14&t=NKJV)]. Thus, in this respect, *the lake of fire is connected with regality*.

And man, created to *replace* Satan and his angels, finds his connection with the lake of fire on *exactly* the same basis. Saved man, *ignoring* the very reason for his salvation [which is regal], will find himself associated with the lake of fire *during* the Millennium [an association connected with all that the lake of fire implies]. And unsaved man, *ignoring* salvation and the reason for man’s creation [which, again, is *regal*], will find himself associated with the lake of fire *throughout the endless ages* following the Millennium [an association connected with all that the lake of fire implies].)

But, relative to Christians and the coming kingdom of Christ, is Scripture dealing with something literal? Or is Scripture dealing with metaphors?

Note how Scripture uses metaphors to deal with this same thing elsewhere. In [John 15:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+15.6&t=NKJV) and [Hebrews 6:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.8&t=NKJV), saved individuals are spoken of in a metaphorical sense, where a burning with fire is referenced. And the context both places has to do with *either* bearing fruit or not bearing fruit, which is exactly the *same* thing seen in the Matthew thirteen parables. Or, as the matter is *expressed* in Revelation chapters two and three, *either overcoming or being overcome*.

And the *negative* side of the matter is expressed at least two other ways in Scripture — being *cast* into Gehenna (a reference to the place of refuse outside the city walls of Jerusalem at this time; [Matthew 5:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.22&t=NKJV), [29-30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.29-30&t=NKJV); [23:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.15&t=NKJV), [33](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.33&t=NKJV)) or being cast into outer darkness ([Matthew 8:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV); [22:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [25:30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV)).

Overcoming or not overcoming and being unhurt or being hurt by the second death in [Revelation 2:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV) is expressed a slightly different way in [Romans 8:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.13&t=NKJV)

*For if you* [a reference to ‘brethren’ in [Romans 8:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.12&t=NKJV)] *live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

Whether *Gehenna* or *outer darkness* in Matthew, a *burning with fire* in John and Hebrews, being *cast into a furnace* or *lake of fire* in Matthew and Revelation, or *suffering death* or *being hurt by the second death* in Romans and Revelation, different facets of *exactly the same thing are in view*. All of these are used in contexts showing that they have to do with *saved people in relation to fruit bearing and the kingdom*.

By comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is plain that these are *simply different ways of expressing the same thing*. And since a *literal* casting into outer darkness, Gehenna, or a furnace or lake of fire *could not possibly* be in view(for these different places *could not possibly* be looked upon as referring to the same place in a literal sense), it is *evident* that *metaphors are being used throughout*.

But *relative* to the *unsaved* and *the lake of fire*, this *is simply not expressed in other ways* in Scripture as it is with the *saved*, *leaving no room for any thought other than understanding the matter as literal, not metaphorical*.

Aside from the preceding, *it is clear that all Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike, will be in the kingdom*. This is seen in *type* in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen ([Genesis 18](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+18&t=NKJV); [19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19&t=NKJV)). *Both* Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, are seen on the mount (a “mountain” in Scripture *signifies* a kingdom). But note the stark *difference* in the place that *each occupied*. Abraham stood *before* the Lord, where he had *always* stood ([Genesis 18:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+18.22&t=NKJV); [19:27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.27&t=NKJV)). Lot though found himself in a place separated from the Lord, in a place where he also had always stood ([Genesis 19:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.1&t=NKJV), [30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.30&t=NKJV)).

(See [Souls Under the Altar](http://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-in-revelation.php#Souls Under the Altar), [Mystery of The Woman](http://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Mystery of The Woman) and [A Woman, a Dragon, a Male Child](http://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-in-revelation.php#A Woman, a Dragon, a Male Child) in website for additional commentary.)

Note how “a mountain” is used in a metaphorical respect in [Isa. 2:1-4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa.+2.1-4&t=NKJV) to depict not only Christ’s kingdom but lesser kingdoms on earth in that coming day — “the mountain of the Lord’s house [Christ’s kingdom] shall be established in the top of the mountains [all the subordinate world kingdoms, referred to in this respect later in the verse through the use of ‘hills’].”

Or, [Dan. 2:35](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Dan.+2.35&t=NKJV), [44-45](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Dan+2.44-45&t=NKJV), as [Rev. 11:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev.+11.15&t=NKJV), shows the matter after a slightly different fashion. In these sections of Scripture, the kingdom of Christ alone is seen, with all of the lesser world kingdoms seen as forming part of the worldwide kingdom of Christ.

In [Daniel 2:35](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+2.35&t=NKJV), [44-45](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+2.44-45&t=NKJV), Christ is seen smiting the final form of Gentile world power at the time of His return (which will be a worldwide power under the Beast, Antichrist). And “a great mountain” is used to depict the kingdom of Christ as it will exist following the destruction of that depicted by the image. Then [Rev. 11:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev.+11.15&t=NKJV) simply states the same thing at the same time, apart from the use of metaphors:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever,” ([Rev. 11:15 NASB](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev.+11.15&t=NASB)).