

KINGDOM SPIRIT

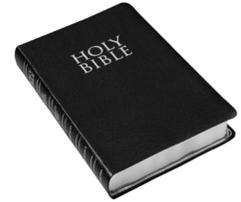
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1207

ISAIAH 30-33

The children of Israel, much like we are today, put their faith for protection in physical weaponry, allies and false gods instead of their true God. They had already been made aware of the coming conflict with Assyria, not only by the prophets, but Assyria itself had already had to be bought off once to keep them from attacking Israel and were making it known that they still planned on doing it.

Isa. 30 begins, **“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!”**

II Kings 17 tells us what this was all about. I am assuming that Isaiah saw this coming and thus prophesied against it, yet this did not stop the king of Israel from doing it. Hoshea had become king of Israel. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Israel and had forced them to pay tribute. After paying this tribute for a few years, Hoshea decided not to continue to pay it. II Kings 17:4 tells us, **“And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hosea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present (tribute) to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.”**

God is talking specifically about the people of the land of Canaan in Ex. 23:32, but He is expressing a principle of law as well when He told the Israelites, **“Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.”** To ally with another nation is, at the very least, an acceptance of their god as well. People with different gods have different moral standards. This is very evident today among the so-called allies that our nation has. It seems to be a law among people that the greater gravitates to the lesser rather than the other way around. To what degree the Israelites accepted the gods of Egypt in this covenant that they made with Egypt, I don’t know. But when God says that they add sin (accepting the gods of Egypt in whatever degree) to sin (turning from their own true God), I think we can understand this, by what we see today that our own nation has done.

(Read Isa. 30:3-7) Though Israel had taken great treasure to Egypt to get them to help them and protect them from Assyria, the actual history verified this prophecy against Israel for going to Egypt for help. It would be in vain that they loaded their possessions on their donkeys to go to the land from which the lion and the viper came, i.e. Egypt in Africa. This same scenario played out with Judah when Babylon was threatening Judah. We’ll study more about this later.

(Read Isa. 30:8-18) The similarity between the actions of the people of Isaiah’s day and our people today is amazing. In verse 10 they told the seers to see not and the prophets to prophecy not the truth, but rather to prophecy smooth things, deceits. If a preacher or teacher today attempts to

preach or teach the real truth of the Bible he will soon lose his congregation. People do not want to hear the truth, but would rather be deceived. This was the attitude of the Israelites. Isaiah was instructed by God to write this prophecy in a book which would be used as a witness against Israel. He told them that the coming destruction was like a wall that was bulging because of the pressure behind it. As the wall would break without warning, so the destruction coming from Assyria would likewise burst upon them without warning. II Kings 17:5-6 gives us the fulfillment of this prophecy. **“Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.”** This was the second part of the three part captivity of Israel and a good part of Judah, a captivity that they were not allowed to escape from for several centuries and they were not allowed by God to return to their own land.

In Isa. 30:18 we find a promise that God always leaves with His people as they go into captivity. **“And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment (justice): blessed are all they that wait for him.”** If we follow the history of this people as they eventually come out of captivity, I believe we can see this verse at least partially fulfilled.

In verse 19 of Isa. 30, Isaiah turns his attention to the people dwelling at Jerusalem. While this prophecy is directed first at the soon coming of King Sennacherib of Assyria against Judah and Jerusalem, its final and greater fulfillment will be when God establishes His kingdom here on the earth. The Septuagint Bible makes verses 19 through 21 a little more clear to me, **“The holy people shall dwell in Sion: and whereas Jerusalem has wept bitterly, saying, Pity me; he shall pity thee: when he perceived the voice of thy cry, he hearkened to thee. And though the Lord shall give you the bread of affliction and**

scant water, yet they that cause thee to err shall no more at all draw nigh to thee; for thine eyes shall see those that cause thee to err, and thine ears shall hear the words of them that went after thee to lead thee astray, who say, This is the way, let us walk in it, whether to the right or to the left.” In the near term, Jerusalem is to be besieged by Sennacherib’s army, but God is going to deliver them through a very great miracle. We’ll see this further in our study. But in the long term, the time will come when we will recognize those who are leading us astray for what they are and God will pity us. Keep in mind that in the near term, Zion is referring to the literal city of Jerusalem, but in the long term, Zion and Jerusalem refers to the structure of God’s government here on the earth rather than to a literal city.

The people are going to destroy their idols, both then and in the long term. When this happens, God is going to bless them richly. Unfortunately, the people of Jerusalem didn’t maintain their repentance for very long, but in the long term fulfillment of this prophecy, this will change.

(Read Isa. 30:27-33) We need to continue to look at this prophecy from both a short term application and a long term application. God is going to bring the Assyrians against Judah and Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the head, so when God says His breath, **“as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck,”** as we will see refers to the Assyrian taking virtually all of Judah captive, but when they get to Jerusalem, God stops them cold, or as he says here in this prophecy, **“there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.”** We will read more of this story a little later in Isaiah’s writings. In the long term, the time will come when God will stop all of the enemies of His kingdom cold and they will be powerless to cause any more problem. The thing we really need to understand is that God is sovereign and is in control, even in bringing the enemies of His people, His kingdom, against them for furtherance of His purpose.

In chapter 31, Isaiah repeats the woe against those that go to Egypt for protection from the Assyrians. He says that the men of Egypt are only men and not God and their horses are only

flesh, whereas verse 2 tells us that God is wise and will bring evil or disaster and will not call back His words. Israel needs to understand that God will bring judgment on those who are evildoers. Because they are going to Egypt for help instead of Him, God says that those helping and those being helped will both fail.

Again Isaiah turns to Jerusalem and tells them that God will protect them from Assyria, but he urges the people of Jerusalem to turn to the God whom the Israelites are rejecting and to cast away their idols of gold and silver. He doesn't say how he is going to stop the Assyrians from taking Jerusalem, but He says it won't be with the sword of the mighty man.

Isa. 32 begins with a prophecy that apparently refers to the soon coming reign of Hezekiah in Judah. (Read Isa. 32:1-8) When righteousness is practiced, major changes take place. (Read II Kings 18:1-6) In Isa. 32:5-8, "vile" means foolish; "liberal" means generous, and "churl" means miser.

(Read Isa. 32:9-14) Isaiah gives another warning of the upcoming attack of Babylon upon Judah, this time warning the women of the apparent well to do of the consequences of their complacency. We read the same warning in the book of Amos. This people's arrogance causes them to think that their wealth and societal status would protect them from any harm. Isaiah warns them otherwise. I think the same warning could apply to our nation today as well.

(Read Isa. 32:15-20) Isaiah sees the ultimate change that will happen when the Spirit be poured upon us from on high. Only then will things really begin to change for the better. Peace is a product of righteousness and cannot be obtained otherwise.

To understand Isa. 33 we need to catch up on the history of what was happening and did happen to Israel and Judah. (Read II Kings 18:7-37) Israel has gone into captivity to the Assyrians and has been placed primarily in the area between and south of the Black and Caspian Seas. Eight years later Sennacherib, king of Assyria again brings the Assyrian army back to the land of Canaan to attempt to take Judah captive. He took all

of the fenced cities of Judah (the third phase of the captivity) except Jerusalem. Hezekiah thought he made a deal with Sennacherib to back off and leave Jerusalem alone by paying him tribute of gold and silver. Sennacherib broke the deal however, after he had received the tribute and came against Jerusalem anyway. When Sennacherib's generals got to the gates of the city, they boasted that nothing could stop them from taking the city. Hezekiah's emissary that had gone out to negotiate with the Assyrian generals has returned to King Hezekiah with the news of what the generals were saying. We'll leave it there at the moment and see what Isaiah is prophesying in Isa. 33.

(Read Isa. 33:1-9) He that spoileth and was not spoiled is a reference to Sennacherib and his army. He is accused of dealing treacherously though he wasn't dealt with treacherously. Isaiah tells him prophetically that when he stops plundering, he will be plundered. Isaiah pauses in his prophecy to seek God's mercy for Jerusalem. He sees this plundering by Assyria as God's doing, that Assyria is doing what they are doing because God is causing them to do it. However, he also sees that God will punish Assyria for what they are doing. God will be exalted. Because God has filled Jerusalem with judgment and righteousness, i.e. has made Hezekiah, His faithful servant, king of Judah, Isaiah says that their (Assyrian's) valiant ones will cry outside the city. Sennacherib has broken his covenant and has been a great destroyer of the land in and around Judah.

(Read Isa. 33:10-12) God, through Isaiah, then addresses the people of Jerusalem. He says He will be exalted, He will lift Himself up. He first says the desires of the enemy will come to naught. They will actually destroy themselves He says.

(Read Isa. 33:13-24) God then makes a proclamation in verse 13. This is in reference to what He does to the Assyrian army which we will read of as study further. But this will get the attention of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and He says the sinners are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. They then raise the question, "**Who among us shall dwell with the de-**

vouring fire?” Isaiah’s answer is **“He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly;... This answer, though it has a short term fulfillment takes on the tone of long term prophecy looking toward the New Jerusalem as well when he says in verse 22, “For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us. Isaiah is speaking of time of complete peace. While Jerusalem would have peace in the short term, complete peace is long term. JRL**

What Is the Lake of Fire?

I recently received a letter from a lady asking the question, What is the “Lake of Fire?” A number of years ago, in our local Bible study, we had been studying the book of Revelation and though we had not got to Rev. 20 in our study, I knew this question was coming and I did not know the answer. In my study, I had come to realize that the word “hell” as used in Scripture, though it was translated such from four different Hebrew and Greek words, usually meant the grave. Nowhere did it refer to an abode of Satan or the devil nor did it refer to a place where only the ungodly would go when they died. However, I did not understand what the “Lake of Fire” was. We attended a Bible Camp sponsored by America’s Promise Ministries that summer and as I listened to one of the speakers, I realized that in the direction he was headed in his series of classes, he was going to have to answer that question. The problem was that it appeared to me that he was going to run out of time before he got to the subject. So when I questioned him on the last day of the camp, he agreed to jump ahead and answer the question in his presentation that day. The answer made me realize that there were a lot more questions that had to be answered to fully understand what he told us.

The lady asking the question of me, posed several of these questions plus added some of her comments in trying to understand this bigger question. In answering the lady, I tried to pose more questions and then hopefully answer all of the questions before I got to the big question. I

would like to try to rewrite my answer to her in this article as I believe this is probably one of the most misunderstood questions in the Bible, primarily because of assumptions that are made that should not be assumed.

Perhaps the best place to begin is to establish that the Bible teaches that there will be at least 2 resurrections and then distinguish the difference in the two. In Rev. 20:5,6, after describing the people that John saw being resurrected, says, **“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”** I believe that this clearly establishes that there will be at least two resurrections, apparently a thousand years apart. Paul and Jesus both have something to say about these resurrections. Paul discusses it in Philippians 3. Unfortunately the King James translations isn’t quite accurate in verse 11. **(If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.)** Some other translations like the NASB have made the correction of the word “of” to “from.” The word “resurrection” in the New Testament, all but two times, comes from the Greek word “*anastasis*” which means, according to Young’s Concordance, “A standing or rising up.” In Phil. 3:11 the Greek word is “*exanastasis*” which means “A standing up out of.” The significance is that Paul is saying that he is striving to attain to a resurrection out from among the dead, i.e. not all the dead will be raised at this time but there will be those who will be raised from among the dead. This is in accordance with Rev. 20:4-6. Paul was assured of his justification and resurrection, but he wanted to be a part of this particular resurrection, and believed that it was something that he had to strive for, i.e. he had to go beyond justification which is free and assured when one accepts Christ as their savior.

Jesus on the other hand, in John 5:28-29, speaks of a general resurrection such as Rev. 20:11-15 speaks of. He says, **Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are**

in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (“*krisis*”—Judgment).” Note that ALL that are in the grave are resurrected at this time.

Because the book of Revelation uses the term “He that overcometh” in Rev. 2 & 3 in reference to the rewards that will be given to those who strive to overcome the various temptations listed in these two chapters, the term “overcomers” has come to be applied to those listed in Rev. 20:4 that would have part in the first resurrection. I think that if one studies this verse, it will become obvious that not all people who purport to be Christians fit in this category, thus I don’t believe that all Christians will be a part of the first resurrection. However, we’re told in Rev. 20:12 that another book would be opened at the great white throne of judgment which would be the “book of life” and then in verse 15 we’re told, **“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”** This tells me that there will be Christians in the second resurrection and at the great white throne of judgment that did not attain to the qualifications for the first resurrection, or being an overcomer. To me it is a tragedy that this is not taught in our churches.

One question that has to be answered in conjunction with “What is the Lake of Fire?” is what is the ultimate fate of those whose name is not written in the “book of life?” This is very controversial, but I believe the Bible is quite clear on it.

It has been suggested that because God is the potter and we are the clay, that if the potter mars a vessel, the clay of the marred vessel is destroyed. The only example in Scripture that speaks of the potter marring a vessel is in Jer. 18. In this prophecy, Jeremiah is speaking of the house of Israel (as opposed to the house of Judah) and in verse 4 he says, **“And the vessel (Israel) that he (God) made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”** In this case, the same clay was used to make

a different vessel. The clay was not destroyed. Isaiah says in Isa. 64:8, **“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”** Romans 9:21, in teaching the sovereignty of God says, **“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”** The destruction of the completed vessels of clay always refers to the destruction of nations, not the people. (See Jer. 19)

Because the word “many” is used in Rom.5:15, this is thought by some to indicate that not all would be saved. If you will notice, verse 15 says, **“For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”** The offence of Adam made man mortal, i.e. all men die because of Adam’s sin (Rom. 5:12), so the first “many” would actually be all. It would appear to me that the second “many” would refer to the same number. If you go on to verse 18 it says, **“Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment* came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, *the free gift* came upon all men unto justification of life.”**

The lady asking me the question, knowing that I believe that ultimately all people will be saved, made the following points concerning the parables in Matt. 13. “Just because one buys a field, does not mean one keeps everything in it! Farmers and ranchers routinely burn their fields to get rid of weeds. Developers bulldoze their property. The Bible says the field is the world (cosmos, i.e. physical universe). Christian Israel is the treasure/pearl of great price hidden in it. Pearls come from water and not fields of earth. Coincidentally, ‘many waters’ represents peoples in the Bible. The field that Christ bought was the physical earth and not people per se. Although God wants people, it doesn’t say He keeps them all (as far as I can see anyway).

Following is my answer to her points: The parable of the tares is basically the same story as Rev. 20:11-15. Strong’s Concordance defines *kosmos* as “orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration;

by impl. the world (*in a wide or narrow sense, include. Its inhab., lit. or fig. [mor.]*). I don't think you can justify separating the people from the rest of the world—they are part of it. Granted pearls come from the water, but in the parable it was a merchantman seeking the pearls, not a fisherman. This would indicate to me that he found the pearl in the world. The parable of the treasure that is hid in the field or world is as you say about Israel. However, He bought the whole world, not just a portion of it whether we are talking about just the people or the whole world.

To understand God's plan and purpose, we have to understand the sovereignty of God. Most of us, at least at some point in our lives, believe whether we are "saved" or not, is dependent on a decision on our part. I really don't believe we have that choice. I suggest the reading of Romans 9. Pay particular attention to verse 16. **"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."** Verses 18-19 say, **"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"** The question that will naturally come up is if God chooses some for destruction such as He did with the Pharaoh, then why did He find fault with the Pharaoh, or if on the other hand He chooses some for overcomers, would it not be the right of the one chosen for destruction to say "not fair?" Paul words the question, **"Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"** It is important to understand that there are two basic Greek words in the New Testament that are translated "will" as a noun. The most common is *thelema* which means "wish." We have all resisted God's will or wish at some point in our lives. It is His wish or *thelema* that we obey His law for example. The word translated "will" here in verse 19 is from the Greek word *boulema* which means "purpose." We can resist His *thelema* but we cannot resist His *boulema*. This I believe gives us an idea of God's sovereignty. We all think we have free will and make our daily decisions ourselves, but in reality, we are acting according to God's plan or purpose. Paul goes on in verse 20 to say,

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

I believe we have to understand the sovereignty of God to understand the big picture, or God's complete plan. This was a difficult concept for me to accept. It took a while. However, when I was finally able to grasp it, the Bible really came together for me. To try to put the big picture into perspective, let's deal with the Pharaoh for a moment. Clearly God says that He hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not do what God was asking him to do. Then because he did not do as God asked until after the last plague, and then he changed his mind again after the Israelites left and pursued after them, God destroyed him in the Red Sea. By our way of thinking, God was not fair to the Pharaoh. But if we look at the big picture, God had chosen a certain people when He made the promises to Abraham for a certain purpose, that of eventually evangelizing the world and witnessing God to the world, Pharaoh played a major role in bringing this about according to God's plan. If God destroyed Pharaoh totally or as some would have it, punished him with eternal punishment, is God being just? When we get to the answer to what the lake of fire is, I think we will see that the end result for Pharaoh will be so great that his destruction in the Red Sea will be a light thing that will probably be forgotten. There is no question that God brings about temporary injustices to ultimately bring about total justice. We don't have the right to question what appears to us as injustices because we can't see the whole picture of what God is doing.

I certainly don't regard God as some wimp waiting for men to repent. I look at it more from the standpoint that because God is God, men will repent. The Bible nowhere says that repentance can only take place in this lifetime. Isaiah 45:22-24 says, **"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall**

one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.” This certainly has not happened in history to this point and I cannot see it happening until after the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom here on the earth. I realize that there are those that think that there are some people who simply cannot be saved. I John 2:2, speaking of Christ, says, **“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”** There are no sins that Christ did not die for. John the Baptist, upon seeing Jesus coming to be baptized, said of Him, **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”** (John 1:29) Note he did not say forgive, but rather “taketh away.” I don’t know how this is to be done, but if He takes it away, there can be no one that has sinned to whatever degree, that can be left, dead or alive.

Something else that I believe has to be understood to understand what the lake of fire is are some mistranslations concerning ages and time. It is truly unfortunate that the English translators have translated some of the words the way that they have as it has completely misled a majority of people to wrong conclusion. If we were reading the original Greek or Hebrew we would not misunderstand what the writers were saying. The words usually translated “everlasting,” “for ever,” “eternal” etc. all come from Hebrew or Greek words that actually mean age lasting, for the age, age of the ages, etc. What is missed is that these are referring to a particular age. They are not referring to perpetuity. It is a promise of God that those who are overcomers will be rewarded with life during that particular age. I Cor. 15:26 tells us, **“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”** This tells me that ultimately all people will be alive and remain so in perpetuity. But those that qualify as overcomers will enjoy an extra age of life, the thousand years that Revelation 20 speaks of in which those overcomers will reign with Christ. I once asked a young man, who had been recently converted and was really excited about going to heaven, what he was going to do

when he got there. His answer was that he was going to sit down. I believe that God expects a great deal more than that from us. I believe that the Bible teaches that the rewards that will be given to the overcomers are degrees of responsibility. Their responsibility is to rule the world under Christ during that thousand years and probably beyond. It is what we as Christians should be striving for, having part of the first resurrection.

You might ask, when did ‘everlasting’ and ‘forever’ change their meanings? They didn’t, but they are a mistranslation of the basic Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek word *aionios*. These words were not meant to convey a meaning of perpetuity. It has been said that the first step in changing people’s perception/beliefs is to redefine words. I agree, but I hope you realize that this is what has happened. Probably because the English translators did not understand the difference in the two resurrections, they have redefined the Hebrew and Greek words with the wrong English words and this has led to corruption.

Heb. 9:27 says, **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”** However, there are two deaths discussed in Scripture. At this point, we really don’t understand either one fully. The first death is the result of Adam’s sin (Rom. 5:12), all men became mortal, thus it is appointed to men once to die. The second (following the great white throne of judgment) is the result of our own sin if our names are not written in the book of life. Not all men will go through this death, at least as Revelations says, being thrown into the lake of fire.

To limit God to having to depend on what man’s decisions are is to, in effect, put Him in a box. He does not depend on our decisions. He is not waiting on us. His plan goes forward as planned before the foundation of the earth and we are a part of that plan, not creators of it.

Often the story of Lazarus and the rich man is brought up to prove that there is a burning hell and that this is what the lake of fire is. This would take quite a while to explain, but let me say that it is a parable, not a reference to an actual fact. We know this because Christ said he would not talk to the scribes and Pharisees except in par-

ables and this is who he is talking to. Every part of that story has significance, but it is not a story of what happens when we die. Hopefully, I can take the time in a later article to explain the parable, but it really isn't about what happens when we die.

Though this may not be ample explanation of some pertinent points that we need to understand what the lake of fire is, I pray that I have given enough to entice one to study this subject out thoroughly. Should anyone have further questions or comments, please feel free to call, e-mail, or write to me for further discussion. Now to get to our question, "What is the Lake of Fire?"

Let me ask one question first. What or who is most associated with fire in Scripture? Is it not God Himself? He appeared to Moses as a burning bush. He led the Israelites as a pillar of fire. He accepted Elijah's sacrifice by fire. His judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah was by fire. Ex. 24:17 tells us that, "**The sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.**" In Daniel 7 we're told that God's throne was like the fiery flame and that a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. When Ezekiel saw the likeness of the throne and He that say on it, fire was a major part of his description. Heb. 12:29 says, "**For our God is a consuming fire.**" Deut. 33:2 says, "**...from his right hand went a fiery law for them.**"

The point is that God uses fire to refer to Himself, His law, His judgments, etc. The "lake of fire" is all of these. Keep in mind that God's judgments are always restorative in nature. The people thrown into the lake of fire have been judged by the law (the books that were opened) and the judgments of that law still have to be carried out that restoration will be complete. So

those who have not accepted Christ and had their names written in the book of life still have to face the judgment. Many believe that to think that all people will ultimately be saved is to believe that all will have an equal resurrection. This is far from God's intent. Those who have never heard of Christ will not be held to the same standards of those who have and have rejected Him. It will not be a pleasant experience, but the end result will be that all will live in God's peace. If you study the law, you will see that once a person has carried out his judgment, the slate is wiped clean and he is as if he had not broken the law to start with. However, we need to remember that when we damage someone through our disobedience, we not only injure the other person, but we have done damage to God as well. Christ says that no one enters the kingdom but by Him. So at some point everyone will accept Christ's sacrifice for their sins that provides the atonement, or covering for sins so far as God is concerned, there will be no exceptions. As to how long this will take, I have no idea. Rev. 21-22 indicates it could take a while. I just know the end result. So I think we can look at the lake of fire as a cleansing agent that will restore all people to our God. God's love will overpower man's stubbornness.

To me, once I understood these principles, my attitude became much more positive and even though I know that there will be much suffering before all of this works out, I look forward to seeing the end result, both of the first resurrection and the great white throne of judgment, as I can see that whatever injustice that we might think we see or feel now will be so overcompensated for in God's kingdom, that ultimately we will forget the problems we face today. JRL