

“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord...It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Heb. 10:30,31.

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Heb. 10:26,27. Gill says the following to that fearsome and horrific passage; to wit: *“Which is not to be understood of a single act of sin, but rather of a course of sinning; nor of sins of infirmity through temptation, or even of grosser acts of sin, but of voluntary ones; and not of all voluntary ones, or in which the will is engaged and concerned, but of such which are done on set purpose, resolutely and obstinately; and not of immoral practices, but of corrupt principles, and acting according to them; it intends a total apostasy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.”* To which I would humbly add, Beloved, what the Lord Jesus Christ said to that other “SEVENTY” whom He sent forth as His own appointed forerunners, i.e., *“before his face;”* saying with respect to those cities that would not receive them: *“But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city;”* (Lk. 10:12) and saying further, *“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”* Lk. 10:16. Add to those words in Luke, these additional bits of evidence from 1st John 4:6; to wit:

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” (1 Jn. 4:6)

Beloved. Think of it. What is the meaning of the word “TRUTH” as used by the Holy Spirit in Heb. 10, that we read a while ago? to wit: *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the TRUTH?”* For THAT time and place in Luke 10, was it not the message of the “seventy” which they received of the Lord Jesus Christ? Concerning which the Savior said *“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me;”* and, further, *“But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city?”* And further, for THAT time and place in 1 John 4:6, was that not the truth, whereof John said, *“We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error?”*

Now, back to Gill’s exposition of Heb. 10:26 – *“If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the TRUTH,”* Gill says, *“It intends a total apostasy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.”* Beloved. Think. For THIS time and place – where on this earth is pure Calvinism insisted upon and contended for? Joined with vigorous evangelism or street preaching? And met with Hellish persecution? And, also, in Gill’s words, *“it intends a total apostasy”* – (i.e., by these beastly earth-dwellers all around us) – *“a total apostasy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.”*

Beloved. We are preaching to this doomed generation of ours as a John the Baptist Voice crying in the wilderness, or a Noah who, *“being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which also he condemned the whole world,*

and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Heb. 11:7. And, as the Great Day of Judgment draws near, it remains for us to consider the greatness of the punishment which is to follow that condemnation – or damnation – which we have consigned the whole world unto, in the Name of God. All their sinfulness deserves a great punishment – a punishment so great that it cannot be fully comprehended by our thoughts, nor ever be sufficiently expressed, in time or in eternity.

The old Puritan, Thomas Goodwin (1600 - 1679) – in his great work, An Unregenerate Man’s Guiltiness Before God – has a chapter entitled, “*Of the punishment of sin in hell. – That the wrath of God is the immediate cause of that punishment.*” In which chapter he writes:

“For what hell and destruction are, is a mystery, as well as what heaven is; and the true and proper notion or conception of either, are a riddle to the most of men. As ‘eye hath not seen, ear not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man (i.e., the natural man), what God hath prepared for those that love him;’ so, nor what God hath prepared for them that hate him. For it is the same, and no other punishment but that which is ‘prepared for the devil and his angels,’ as Christ says – (“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS.” Mat. 25:41). And what it can be that should torment them, or be the IMMEDIATE EXECUTIONER of vengeance on them, the imagination of man, confined to worldly agents and instruments and experiences, cannot divine or take in. The institutions of Hell (as well as Heaven) remain largely mysterious to us – in our present limited state and scope of understanding – ‘all things being naked and open’ only unto ‘the eyes of him with whom we have to do,’ viz., the Lord our God.’ Heb. 4:13. But, as to Hell itself, suffering Job cried out, ‘Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.’ Job 26:6. And, ‘Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?’ Job 26:14. The Grand Administrator of the Curse – is God the Father, whose law has been blatantly – and repeatedly – violated. The Grand Executioner – or Immediate Inflictor – of the threatened punishment, is the Lord Jesus Christ (and His elect people and elect angels). Much is said plainly about the punishment of the damned in Hell – and much more is said obliquely, but from which we may INFER the HORRORS and the FEARFULNESS and PAINFULNESS of the place and its vile inhabitants; all pursuant to the general principle laid down in Deut. 29:29; to wit:”

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Dt. 29:29)

Now let us digress briefly, to consider the context of **Deut. 29:29**. Generally, the context consists of the Lord warning repeatedly and in various ways – and very, very plainly – that a horrific, everlasting curse would be enforced and fulfilled to the letter against any person who left the Lord to serve idols. And so, ***“those things which are revealed and which belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law,”*** – those things include the curse of

God upon reprobates, and the painful punishments that await those who depart from the living God; to wit:

“Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood” – (a poison herb, this passage being cited at Heb. 12:15, *‘Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.’*) – ***“And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.”*** – (i.e., when he hears the words of this curse, that he **MAKES LIGHT OF GOD’S WARNINGS!**) – ***“The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall SMOKE AGAINST THAT MAN, and ALL THE CURSES that are WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK shall LIE UPON HIM, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil”*** – (i.e., he is headed, irreversibly to the punishments of Hell) – ***“out of all the tribes of Israel, according to ALL THE CURSES of the covenant that are written in this book of the law...like the overthrow of Sodom & Gomorrah which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath...For they went and served other gods, and worshiped them, gods whom they knew not...And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book. And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, AND, The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, THAT WE MAY DO ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW.”*** (Deut. 29:18-29)

Thus the context ran BEFORE Deut. 29:29; and similarly the context runs AFTER 29:29, to Deut. 30:18,19; to wit: ***“I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish...I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”*** Deut. 30:18,19. ***“Whom the Lord shall separate unto evil,” “ye shall surely perish,”*** – and multitudes of such expressions in Scripture – meaning that the Lord God will administer punishments to those people commensurate with their sins to all eternity. That is the true God, the living God. That is the God whom we know – that is our God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – ***“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord...It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*** That is, the God who lives to administer punitive measures to the wicked; to wit:

“Vengeance is MINE (ALONE), I WILL repay, saith the Lord.” Rom. 12:19.

All mankind, living and dead, more or less expects that punishment, and entertains ***“a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery (Hell-fire) indignation, which shall devour the adversaries*** – (i.e., which shall consume in Hell’s eternal flames all those who while on earth were adversarial to God’s elect.)” Heb. 10:26,27,30,31. Goodwin says that the painful punishments inflicted by Christ, the Immediate Inflictor, are set forth plainly in some Scriptures, and inferential in others; and that it takes a consideration of all, in order for the saints on earth to form adequate and accurate notions or concepts of Hell and the painful punishments of the damned. Goodwin says:

“For instance, other scriptures set it out to us as a ‘prison,’ 1 Pet. 3:19, ‘By which he also went and preached unto the spirits in prison,’ large enough, to be sure, to hold men and devils: ‘The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,’ Psa. 9:17. As also by their being retained in chains of darkness, 2 Pet. 2:4, ‘For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment,’ where men must lie till they have paid the utmost farthing, Mat. 5:26; where is nothing but ‘darkness, utter darkness,’ ‘blackness of darkness,’ Jude 4, that is, an emptiness of all good, not a beam of light to all eternity; also a ‘place of torment,’ Lk. 16:28, where there is not admitted ‘one drop to cool one’s tongue,’ in the midst of the most raging scorchings. Also, I find it everywhere expressed by the most horrid punishments and tortures that were found amongst the nations, cutting men in pieces, dividing them in the midst (Mat. 24:51, ‘And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth’), tearing them in pieces, Psa. 50:22, ‘Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver;’ ‘cutting them up to the backbone,’ Heb. 4:12,13, ‘drowning men in perdition,’ 1 Tim. 6:9, and that with ‘millstones about their necks,’ as Christ adds, Mat. 18:6, ‘But whoso offends one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea,’ to make sure they never rise again; also unto a being cast, ‘bound hand and foot,’ Mat. 22:13, ‘into fire,’ ‘Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,’ to be burnt alive; ‘a furnace of fire,’ twice in one chapter, Mat. 13:42,49,50, ‘The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,’ ‘So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth;’ ‘a lake of fire,’ and so drowned over head and ears for ever; a lake ‘fed with a stream of brimstone,’ which (of all matter that feedeth fire) is the most fierce, (‘For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it,’) Isa. 30:33; then again, ‘eternal fire,’ and that never to be slacked or extinguished.”

This is but a small sampling of the multitudes of passages pertaining to the infliction of painful punishment, from which, in the aggregate, we may infer some small concept of the painful punishments inflicted upon the damned – immediately – by the Great Inflictor – throughout eternity. Take two more, from Amos 9:1,3; to wit:

“I saw the Lord standing upon the altar; and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake; and CUT THEM IN THE HEAD, all of them; ...and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the SERPENT, and HE SHALL BITE THEM.” (Amos 9:1,3)

Nothing is more deadly, or more painful, than the bite of a SEA-SNAKE – far deadlier and more painful than the most venomous land snake. And that includes the Black Mamba of Africa, the King Cobra of India, and the Diamond Back Rattler of America. Goodwin says that this is “A GREAT TRUTH,” and he says, “I SHALL BE LARGE in handling and proving it.” In further expounding Heb. 10:31, – (“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”) – he says:

“You see he here brings in the great God, as an enraged enemy, challenging the execution hereof to himself (the Great Inflictor). This ‘Vengeance belongeth to me,’ or, as Rom 12:19, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will recompense;’ as if he had said, LET ME ALONE WITH IT. When he would set out the severeness of this punishment – (Which is his professed aim, ver. 29 – ‘Of how much SORER PUNISHMENT, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.’ Heb. 10:29.) – I say, when he would set out the severeness of this infliction of punishment, as infinitely exceeding all those kinds of horrid corporal tortures and torments, he infers the soreness (extreme painfulness) of this from the fact that now God Himself is the Avenger and the Immediate Inflictor. ‘We know him that hath said thus, Vengeance is mine,’ that is, what a great and powerful God he is. The saints, and they alone, know Him in such a way. Natural man will not accept such a God.”

The masses want only a kissy-poooh god. The elect, and they alone, know that God of whom Jesus spoke in Luke 12:5 & Mat. 10:28; to wit:

“But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” (Luke 12:5)

***“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
(Mat. 10:28)***

And, what does it mean to DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL? In all these earthly tortures, the body is very shortly overwhelmed with pain and agony. Not so in hell. The sinner never loses consciousness; he desires to die, but cannot die. THEREIN LIES THE MYSTERY OF HELL. Rev. 9:6; to wit: “And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.” The saints, and they alone, INFER the severity of the sufferings from the punishments of the damned – and are comforted by them – and enjoy the benefits of the LAW OF CONTRARIES.

Goodwin: “They, and they alone, know him in his love, and have tasted and found that his immediate ‘loving-kindness is better than life;’ and from the LAW OF CONTRARIES, they know that his wrath must be more bitter than death. They are able to measure what he is in his wrath, by what he is in his love. ‘Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.’ 2 Cor. 5:11. It is termed His Terror, as noting out that which is proper to him and HIS GREATNESS IN HIS BEING ABLE TO PUNISH AND DESTROY SINNERS IN HELL.” Amen.