

Chapter 19

Lake of Fire & Brimstone (Agent of Love)

In Scripture, the phrases *the second death* (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8) and *the lake of fire* (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15) occur exclusively in *The Revelation*. It is safe to state that many interpret *the lake of fire* as one and the same as *the pagan hell*. The word *pagan* is used in order to stress that the *hell* many believe in comes from pagan thought and not God's Word. But, if *the lake of fire* is not a living hell based on paganism, what is it?

As he was on the isle of Patmos, John was given *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, and, in that revelation, he saw the Lord sitting upon a Great White Throne set to judge all the great and the small that had been made alive (raised from the state of death) through the **second resurrection** or **a resurrection of life** (the righteous) and **a resurrection of judgment** (the wicked) (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15). John beheld the judgment of the deeds or works of the righteous and the unrighteous, and the unrighteous being thrown into the lake of fire, for their names were not found written in the Book of Life.

In order to understand the lake of fire, it is essential to understand what fire symbolizes or signifies according to Scripture. It is true that the destructive force of physical fire has been employed as divine judgment, as when Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for their gross immorality and going after strange flesh (Genesis 19:24; Jude 1:7), which is the first mention of fire in Scripture.

Following the law of first mention, we need to be reminded that **the spiritual is not first, but the natural is first; then the spiritual** (1 Corinthians 15:46), and that we need to be **taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words** (1 Corinthians 2:13).

When we follow this course, it is easy to understand that the physical or natural brimstone and fire that rained on these immoral cities signify the spiritual truth that God intends to judge the works or deeds of the carnal flesh of man, not for his annihilation but for his correction and restoration back to God.

It is similar to Paul's teaching that we must put off the old man (fallen Adamic-life), which was crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6), and put on the new man (risen Christ-life), **which after God is created in true righteousness and holiness** (Ephesians 4:24 KJV). Nothing good dwells in the flesh of the old man, for the law of sin dwells there, making it hostile to God (Romans 7:5, 25; 8:7).

The remedy to the law of sin is the law of God, which is signified by fire. The fire of God is the law of God. Consider the following verses.

"Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?"
(Jeremiah 23:29 NASB)

The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire. (Psalm 29:7 NASB)

"Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words [commands, law] from the midst of the fire."
(Deuteronomy 4:36 NASB)

From his right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deuteronomy 33:2 KJV)

Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, "Because you have spoken this word, Behold, I am making My words in your mouth fire and this people wood, and it will consume them. (Jeremiah 5:14 NASB)

God's Word, His Fiery Law

Take note that in all cases, the fire of God's Word was not sent forth to literally kill or destroy people; it was sent forth to consume their fleshly nature.

The fact of the matter is that law comes forth from a throne, and God's throne is described as a blazing flame of fire. Both Daniel and John were given visions of the judgment of God going forth from His throne. Daniel 7:9-10 and Revelation 20:11-15 are the same view of the throne of God. Daniel saw a river of fire flowing from the throne of God ablaze with fire, and John saw the river as a lake of fire before the Great White Throne. Putting the two visions together reveals that the source of the fire is the throne. In fact, the throne is ablaze with fire, which speaks of the law emanating from God Himself.

Should we call the throne of God the hell of God? Not if we base hell on man's view of it; a view that is based on man's image and not on God's image.

(9) "I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames. Its wheels were a burning fire. (10) A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10 NASB)

(11) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. (12) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. (13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. (14) Then death and Hades were thrown into the

lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (15) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15 NASB)

Daniel was shown the throne with thousands attending to the Ancient of Days and myriads upon myriads standing before the One on the throne. Clearly, this is a judicial scene, for the court sat.

In other words, it is a scene of the divine court room in which judgments are made. The King is seated, and from His throne come forth judgments. In our day, a judge sits upon a bench and makes judgments about lawlessness by applying what is written in the books of law that he is sworn to uphold. In Daniel's vision, books were opened, which refers to the law by which the court judges the myriads standing before the Ancient of Days. No injustice or partiality will come forth from this court; all will be judged according to the righteousness and impartial justice of God, as expressed in His law.

John's vision reveals who are summoned to appear before the court of God. They are the great and the small that were not included in the first resurrection. They are standing before the throne to be judged according to their works. It is their works or deeds that are subjected to the fiery law of God as signified by the lake of fire. The works, not the people, will be consumed by God's fire. Law judges works.

After all, **the law is good** (1 Timothy 1:8); **the law is holy** (Romans 7:12); and **the law is spiritual** (Romans 7:14).

But take note of the difference between the two visions: Daniel saw a river flowing from the throne and John saw a lake before the throne. Taken together, a more complete vision of God's judgment is presented. The fiery law of God flows from His throne as a river that grows into a lake. A lake can be defined as "a place where a river widens out greatly," and this is what John observed. The law of God will go forth like a river of fire that widens out so greatly that it becomes like a lake of fire that engulfs the myriads upon myriads standing before the throne. A river could flow on endlessly, but God's river becomes a lake, meaning that it has limits. It will not flow endlessly, for it has a limitation on its time and use. Simply, when it has accomplished its purpose, it will be no more.

We know that there is a limit to the time and use of the lake of fire, for it is called the second death, and all death must be abolished in order for God's Son to deliver up the Kingdom, so that God the Father may be all in all new (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) at the consummation of the eons.

The second death means that all the works of sinful or carnal flesh are judged and brought into death. The second death is *a type* of death that contrasts it from the first type of death. The first death pertains to the physical body, and the second death pertains to works and deeds performed while in the body of sinful flesh.

Simply, *the lake of fire* will purge and cleanse all the works or deeds of fallen man and the carnal flesh from which it proceeds; no dross will remain. This is the purpose of the lake of fire. It is not for torture or annihilation; rather, it is for correction and restoration, for, as stated above, the law is holy, spiritual, and good, and God, who is Holy and Spirit and Love, **will have all men to be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth** (1 Timothy 2:4 KJV).

The truth is that His plan is **to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him [His Son], whether things on earth or things in heaven** (Colossians 1:20).

The truth is that God loves the world!

The truth is that God, in His love, will save all mankind, without exception, and make all things new, so that He may be all in all new.

The lake of fire is essential in bringing about God's purpose of the eons. Eventually, all the unrighteous and wicked will be saved through the fiery law of God. Will one suffer loss? Yes! Will it be a temporary torment of one's soul? Probably! Will one be tortured for eternity? No!

We might think that John was the only one to see the lake of fire, but it appears that Paul, if he did not see it, at least understood it, that is, understood the lake of the fiery law of God. The last part of verse 15 has been referred to quite a bit in this book and for good purpose. As Paul stated: **To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you** (Philippians 3:1).

(11) For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, (13) each man's work will become evident; for the day [Great White Throne] will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. (14) If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. (15) If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire [lake of fire]. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15 NASB [added by writer])

Where does this fire come from if not from the throne of God that both Daniel and John saw, and Paul probably saw when he was snatched away to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2)? The fire is for the purpose of burning up man's work that is of the quality of wood, hay, and straw. What kind of fire is needed to do this, spiritually speaking? There is only one fire in Scripture that is capable of doing this; it is God's fire, the fiery law of God that will judge the quality of each man's work. But notice that the work must be based on the foundation of God's Son and not on the foundation of man. All that is built on man will be consumed by God's fire.

It is essential that we know the value of God's law. Unfortunately, for those of us who are under grace, there seems to be a lack of understanding as to the purpose of the law, especially in relation to the lake of fire as the righteous law of God that is good.

The Law is Good

(6) For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, (7) wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. (8) But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, (9) realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers (10) and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, (11) according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. (1 Timothy 1:6-11 NASB)

Paul declared that the law is good, but somehow many Christians have concluded that the law is either not good, or it is no longer necessary. But this cannot be so because under the New Covenant, God puts His laws into the minds and onto the hearts of His people, the true, spiritual house of Israel. If we believe He will do this, then we must also believe that the law is good and has purpose.

(10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (11) and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. (Hebrews 8:10-11 ASV)

This is the ultimate lot for all mankind when God is *All* in all, for it is then that all mankind shall know the Lord and all will experience His love. So the law is good, for when it is in the mind and on the heart, people will no longer have to be told or taught what is righteous, for they will know it without question because they will know the Lord their Righteousness.

Jesus said: **Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished** (Matthew 5:17-18 ASV).

In other words, the law is still operative, unless you believe that heaven and earth have passed away.

Today, it is true that all who believe are under grace, but this does not negate the need for the law. We are under grace, but this does not negate the fact that God has a righteous standard by which He judges all mankind. By what standard are we to judge our own actions if there is no law of God? We know sin by the law, and sin is judged by the law. Further, how do we know what to do to please our Lord if we do not know what displeases Him? So the law is good.

Believers must understand the law in the spiritual sense. Paul wrote that the law is not only good but that it is holy and spiritual (Romans 7:12, 14). What is walking by the Spirit, if it is not walking in accord with the law of God? As we walk in the Spirit, we bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Who can deny that these nine fruits of the Spirit, with love leading the pack, are not good? So the law is good.

Let us be clear that the law of God does not mean that mankind will revert to animal sacrifices, circumcision, and other physical rites as ordained under the Old Covenant. For those who have received the life of Christ and the Spirit of God, the law is meant to be applied spiritually, ***spiritual with spiritual.***

Writing His laws on hearts is done by His Spirit. With spiritual sight, we see that there is no need for animal sacrifices year after year because the body of Jesus Christ has been offered once for all (Hebrews 10:10). He is the sacrifice for sin. There is no need for circumcision of the flesh, for the New Covenant is about a circumcised heart (Romans 2:29). There is no longer an elite class of priests that enter the holy of holies once a year, for today there is a new priesthood, the body of believers, who have a hope that enters within the veil (Hebrews 6:19). Further, God's law consists of His moral law, which is based on love. It is no longer an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, for the command is to love your enemies and lay down your life for one another (Matthew 5:38-48; 1 John 3:16).

Do you realize that the law is being written on the hearts of all who believe, for Paul tells us that **the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us** (Romans 5:5)? Further, Paul tells us that love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). Jesus declared that the law itself rests on the whole matter of love.

(37) And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." (38) This is the great and foremost commandment. (39) The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (40) On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40 NASB)

Consider the Ten Commandments; love is the foundation of each one, or we could say, love is the way to keep each one of them. If you love the Lord, you will have no other gods before Him. If you love the Lord, you will make no idols or worship false gods. If you love the Lord, you will not take His name in vain. If you love the Lord, you will enter into His rest of the seventh day. If you love your parents, you will honor them. If you love others, including your enemies, you will not murder anyone. If you love your spouse, you will not commit adultery. If you love others, you will not steal from them. If you love your neighbor, you will not bear false witness against him. If you love your neighbor, you will not covet anything that is his. It should be obvious that the Ten Commandments are divided between love of the Lord God and love of others.

For this reason, Jesus declared that there are truly two great commandments that sum up all the rest: **Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself.**

We could say that those of us who believe have been given the very foundation of the law, which is love, and as we love, in accord with God's love, we are fulfilling the law as well. It has already been written on our hearts in some measure, to be manifested fully when we are glorified as Christ is glorified and we are complete in Him, a mature man in Christ (Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:13).

Further, as saints, we will judge the world and the angels. On what basis will we judge, which refers to setting things right, if there is no law upon which to judge? But with the law written in our minds and on our hearts, we will be fully equipped to carry out our service in the Lord under His Headship as He sums up all things in the heavens and on the earth. We won't need books to refer to because the book will be in us.

This should remind us of Paul's exhortation in his Colossians epistle: **Let the word of Christ (of the Lord) richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another** (Colossians 3:16). The Word of God is being worked into our hearts in this day to be fully wrought in us in the day of our glorification. Today, we taste it; then, we will feast upon it. Again, the law is spiritual, and when we are glorified as Christ is glorified and we occupy spiritual, celestial bodies, we will have every capability to fulfill our service as the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Now, here is something to think about: The law is good for those who will be cast into the lake of fire at the **Great White Throne Judgment** that occurs at the end of the millennial reign of Christ and His conquerors (Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15). The lake of fire may be a season of anguish or even torment for those cast into it, but this is a good thing, for it will lead to their ultimate restoration through the love of God that wins their hearts to truly and willingly love God, doing His will in all things as they continually confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In that glorious day, God the Father will be *All* in all, and all creation will be in love. This is the absolute success, victory, and glory of the cross.

Who do you think will help to restore those who are cast into the fiery law of God?

(2) Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? (3) Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? (1 Corinthians 6:2-3 NASB)

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4 NASB)

The saints are the ones who will help restore mankind. Judgment is not for punishment but for restoration. It is to teach them righteousness and for them to make restitution for their evil deeds that have been judged.

(25) "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. (26) "Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent. (Matthew 5:25-26 NASB)

The judgments of God are for the sake of righteousness, not destruction.

At night my soul longs for You, indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; for when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. (Isaiah 26:9 NASB)

However, learning His righteousness will require that the person make restitution for all that he or she has done. This is the discipline of God.

Again, most people see the lake of fire as a literal lake of intense heat called *hell* in which people are either tortured forever and ever or are completely annihilated (destroyed). Our **God is a consuming fire**, but His fire is for discipline with the ultimate goal of restoration and making right all that has been done to wrong others.

By the way, none of this negates Jesus' work of the cross. All will bow the knee to Jesus, willingly either at the Great White Throne or some time later before the consummation of the ages. Regardless of the exact timing, it will be done, and it will be done willingly.

(22) "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. (23) "I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. (24) "They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame. (Isaiah 45:22-24 NASB)

(9) For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11 NASB)

Will there be shame when they bow? Most likely! But this does not mean that they will be tortured forever and ever.

I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. (2 Corinthians 7:9 NASB)

Those cast into the fiery law of God will be made sorrowful to the point of repentance, and the blood of Christ will be available for them just as it has been for all in our present evil eon.

Consider Paul's reference to the law being a tutor to lead to Christ in reference to the rebellious and ancient nation of Israel. Is this not what the fiery law of God, the lake of fire, is to do for the multitudes as well? Is it possible that God will tutor the masses to Christ through the law as signified by the lake of fire? All are shut up in sin; all are rebellious. **Let us be clear; no man will be justified by the law or by works, only by faith is anyone saved, but perhaps the law will be used to lead all mankind into the faith.** Is this not the mercy of God?

(22) But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (23) But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. (24) Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. (25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. (26) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:22-26 NASB)

Paul tells us that the law is for the lawless and the rebellious, which is the very group of people that will stand before the Great White Throne whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life. They need the law to lead them to faith in Christ, to justification by faith. Is it not more merciful of God to tutor through the law than to roast them in an eternal hell? If He does not restore all mankind, then where are mercy and grace and love? The cross would be a miserable failure!

To prove the point, compare Paul's word to Timothy and John's word to the ecclesia.

1 Timothy 1:8-10

Lawless, Rebellious, Ungodly, Sinners,
Unholy, Profane, Murderers, Immoral,
Homosexuals, Kidnappers, Liars,
Perjurers

Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15

Cowardly, Unbelieving, Abominable,
Murderers, Immoral, Sorcerers, Idolaters,
Liars, Unclean, Dogs

Paul reveals the character of those who need the law, and John reveals the character of those who will be cast outside of New Jerusalem. They are one and the same; the law is for such as these. Those who believe in this day will enter New Jerusalem by grace, but those who do not enter must be tutored to Christ by the law so that they too, one day, might enter the holy city of God **by grace**. Thus, the law is good, for it will lead all to Christ. This is what the lake of fire signifies. It is good!

Also, take note that both the cowardly and the murderer are outside New Jerusalem. Under both God's law and man's law, there is a difference in how each is treated. Are we to believe that God, who does not change, is going to change His standard of judgment by casting both into a literal and eternal inferno? Does this sound like justice to you?

There is one more thing to note regarding the lake of fire, *brimstone*.

Brimstone as an Agent of Love

It can be stated without much, if any, contradiction that when most people hear the word *brimstone*, they conjure up images of people being tormented (actually, more like tortured) in *hell*. The modern-day concept of hell maligns the loving and merciful character of God, and, besides, it is not based on Scripture but on pagan religion.

In the physical sense, the English word *brimstone* simply refers to sulfur (sulphur). The word is traced to the Old English word *brynstan*, which is made up of *brin*, meaning "to burn," and *stan*, meaning "stone." Taken from the ground, sulfur, which has the atomic number 16, appears as a bright yellow crystalline solid that burns easily; hence, it is called a **burning stone**.

Sulfur is one of the oldest known substances used as a fungicide (kills fungus) and pesticide (kills pests). It is a component in fertilizer, black gun powder, and matches, and is used in the process of manufacturing cellophane, rayon, rubber, bleaching paper, and a host of other products.

Also, it is an essential element of life, being found in two amino acids, cysteine and methionine, and it is used to save lives and fight infections by being formulated into a form of drugs called **sulfa drugs**.

As such, in a physical or natural sense, sulfur is not a bad thing, for it has many good uses, especially when it comes to life and its preservation. On the other hand, it can also be used to kill.

However, when it comes to its spiritual meaning or application, the traditions of men have built up quite a bias against the word *brimstone*. Bible dictionaries generally identify *brimstone* as sulfur (sulphur), an inflammable mineral substance found in quantities on the shores of the Dead Sea, which is a most appropriate understanding of the word. However, most go on to define it as denoting destruction or punishment and expressing **the idea of excruciating torment**. This is based on the literal destruction of the ancient cities on the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, and on a literal and torturous lake of fire.

The question is this: Is there a spiritual meaning to *brimstone* that goes beyond physical destruction of the flesh?

The first mention of *brimstone* is found in the account of the Lord judging Sodom and Gomorrah by totally destroying the cities of the plain by fire and brimstone. There was no torture in this judgment; it was simply a total destruction of the city and its inhabitants. All who died on the plain will be raised up in the second resurrection to face the Great White Throne Judgment.

(24) Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone [*gophriyth*] and fire from the LORD out of heaven, (25) and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. (Genesis 19:24-25 NASB)

The Hebrew word for *brimstone* is *gophriyth*, which is related to cypress resin and, by analogy, inflammable (burning) sulphur, and is derived from the Hebrew word *gopher*, which is identified with a type of wood, in particular, cypress wood. If you recall, Noah was commanded to make the ark out of gopher wood (Genesis 6:14).

In the New Testament, the first mention of *brimstone* comes from Jesus as He referred to the ancient judgment in Lot's day, and the last mention in Scripture is associated with the Great White Throne Judgment and the lake of fire.

But on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone [*theion*] from heaven and destroyed them all. (Luke 17:29 NASB)

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone [*theion*], which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8 NASB)

The Greek word for *brimstone* is *theion*, which conveys the sense of flashing, as in inflammable sulphur, and is derived from *theios*, which means "**divine, godhead.**"

Putting all these notes together, it is proposed that, spiritually speaking, brimstone denotes something good, not bad, for it speaks of God's means of cleansing the flesh of man. In the physical sense, it was used to literally destroy sinful flesh (i.e., death of the body, not torture), but, in the spiritual sense, it signifies (figuratively speaking) the cleansing of man from his sinful nature and works of the flesh. Its ultimate purpose is salvation, not destruction or annihilation.

Consider these few points.

First, as stated previously, the first mention of a Hebrew word in the Old Testament sets the meaning for the Greek word in the New Testament when the same Hebrew verse is repeated or referenced in the New Testament. As such, in its primal meaning, *brimstone* refers to *gopher wood*, which was used to save Noah and his family who were brought safely through the water; in type, baptized into Christ through His resurrection (1 Peter 3:20-21). Salvation!

Second, in the Greek, *brimstone* is also connected to that which is *divine*. Many probably think of it as connected to the devil and hell, but there is a much better possibility by the fact that the words *divine* and *godhead* are attached to the meaning of *brimstone*.

Third, brimstone is like **a sulfa drug** used to fight off infection and disease in the mortal body. In the spiritual sense, it signifies the agent by which God cleanses or, if you will, purges unbelievers from the works or deeds of the flesh (Revelation 20:13). All the wicked or unjust

will be judged before the Great White Throne and will have a part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Again, the **lake of fire signifies the righteous and holy law of God** that will purge (cleanse) the wicked of their works of the flesh, teach them righteousness, make restitution for their evil deeds against others, and, ultimately, reconcile and restore them to God.

The second death is the death of their works of sinful flesh, not annihilation of their existence or torture of their body. We could say that brimstone is the treatment of disease (sinful deeds) and the preserver of life. Will this bring torment to one's soul, as in weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28)? Undoubtedly, it will. After all, even some treatments of illnesses and diseases cause pain in the physical flesh.

Fourth, the atomic number for sulfur is **16**, which is the number of **love**. **God is love**, and in His love He mercifully judges, even the unjust, for the purpose of leading all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth through the man Christ Jesus (Anointed, Messiah) who gave Himself a ransom for all, not just some or a few but ALL (1 Timothy 2:4-6). Thus, at the heart of brimstone is *God is love!*

Fifth, the gematria for the Hebrew word for *brimstone* is 693, which is a factor of 9 times 77. The number **9** signifies **judgment**, and the number **7** signifies **divine perfection** or **perfection of what is in view**. The number **77** could signify either a **double witness** or a factor of 7 times 10 with the number **10** signifying **ordinal completion** or **perfection of divine order**, as well as **the fullness of law and responsibility**. As a whole, these numbers all point to God's perfect judgment. Thus, brimstone signifies God bringing about His divine, perfect order that will ultimately include the unjust. At the consummation of the ages, the unrighteous will join the ranks of the righteous company of God.

Sixth, the gematria for *brimstone* in Greek is **144**, which signifies **the first resurrection saints**. 144 is also the multiplication of 12 by 12, and the number **12** signifies **divine government**; and it is the primary number of **New Jerusalem** (Revelation 21-22).

It appears that brimstone is one of the agents by which God will cleanse the present earth from all the deeds of sinful flesh (2 Peter 3:10) in order to establish His divine government on a new earth. Further, to bring all mankind into His Kingdom and immortality, He must purge the unjust, those outside New Jerusalem. Thus, fire and brimstone are God's way of establishing His divine government in the hearts of **all** mankind.

In conclusion, **brimstone** could be called **the sulfa drug of God** that will cleanse and purge all mankind of sinful deeds, so that by the consummation of the ages, all will be restored to God, so that the Father will be **All in All New** (1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Revelation 21:5), proving **love never fails!**

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33)