



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Joy!

Showcasing all humanity finished in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 45
Issue III7

There is still much light to break forth from the Scriptures. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)



Reader's Question Box #83

Are We Abandoning "Grace"?

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

Q: Clyde, I've got to ask, isn't the Greek word you are referring to in the Scriptures, *charis*, which is translated "grace" in English? The Greek word for "joy" is *chara*, which is not the word used. Grace produces joy, but grace and joy are not the same Greek word. – A.C.

A: Of the hundreds of books that we publish, among the most important of them, in my personal estimation, are *"The Absolute Despotism of GRACE,"* and its excerpted pocketbook, *"31 Days of GRACE."* Also, in our translation, the *"Bible Student's Version,"* we render "*charis*," as it is traditionally done, with "grace."

The point is not simply to do away with "grace," but to abandon its religious connotation of "unmerited favor," and to embrace its exaltation as a true member of the "joy-family" of Greek words. Such superior recognition is thus reflected by our rendering of the word in the *Expanded Literal Translation*, as well as in the current updated edition of the *Concordant Literal Version*.

This whole idea is why our lead article for *Bible Student's Notebook* 1080 is entitled, Grace: "Undeserved Favor"? Or, Something Far Better?

<https://studysshelf.com/BSN/Issues/bsn1080.pdf>

In this BSN we cite Dean Hough, of the *Concordant Publishing Concern*, in the *Unsearchable Riches* (Volume 115, Number 4), who refers to the Evangel of Grace as "*the Evangel of Joy*," declaring it as "the joyous gratuity of God's evangel." He states that *grace* "is essentially joy," "It is a teaching of God's joy which reveals God's righteousness and commends His love."

He continues:

The Greek word, *charis*, which is translated "grace" in most of its occurrences, is essentially a matter of joy. Hence it is first defined in the *Keyword Concordance* (p. 132) as "an act producing happiness," and in *The Englishman's Greek Concordance* as "that which gives joy, pleasure, delight ..."

I would say, judging by its usage, that *charis* always conveys much the same sense as *chara*, and in one way or another all Greek words in the *char*- family (e.g. *chairō* = "rejoice"). It is to be noted that *charis* is sometimes rendered "thanks" as in Romans 6:17 and II Corinthians 9:15, but in those cases the word "joy" would serve as well (i.e., to give God *charis* is to give Him joy).

Then, in *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 116, Number 3, Dean Hough further writes:

The word "grace" has the essential meaning of joy as indicated in the CVNT. ... Thus, Paul says to us first of all, "*Joy to you ... from God our Father*" [Ephesians 1:2] ...

I would greatly encourage the detailed reading of the latest 4 issues of the *Unsearchable Riches* (Volume 115, Number 4 – Volume 116, Number 3). These are outstanding and will prove very enlightening. **BSN**

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Major: Grace; Joy

Minor: Translation

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding joy (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3-4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);

- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
 - adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of saints intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

We're just presenters, not persuaders. – Steve Martin

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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Traditional Belief About Hell: A Brief Critique

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

by — Johann Grobler

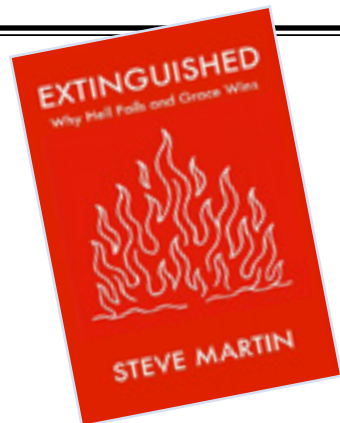
Here is the traditional belief about Hell:

When an unbeliever dies, he/she is consigned to hell, to be tormented, while weeping and gnashing teeth in an unquenchable lake of fire, forever and ever.

Every phrase or element in this sentence, applied in this context, is false and unscriptural – and its import is to portray God as a cruel-hearted, merciless, sadistic tormentor. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Here is a concise critique of every element in this sentence:

<p>Unbeliever See also II Peter 1:3</p>	<p>Faith is a gift from God. Anyone not predestined and elected to have faith <i>in this lifetime</i>, won't have it (Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29). God even blinds people so that they don't see spiritual truth. God will not punish for that (Romans 11:7-10, 25). There will come a time when all unbelievers will become believers (Philippians 2:9-11; I Corinthians 15:28).</p>
<p>After death See also Psalm 104:29 Daniel 12:2 Psalm 146:-4 Isaiah 38:18 <i>Facts from the Scriptures Concerning Death</i>, by Joseph E Kirk, BSN 623</p>	<p>Dead people are unconscious, they don't know anything, as if being asleep, until resurrected (Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 11:11-14; Acts 13:36). Unbelievers will not be judged or condemned shortly after death. Their "judgment" (Greek <i>krisis</i>, setting things right) will be at the Great White Throne of God, after the 1000 years of Christ's rule on Earth (Revelation 20:11-13).</p>
<p>Consigned to hell See also Revelation 20:14</p>	<p>"Hell" as traditionally understood does not, has never and will never exist. Four different words in Hebrew and Greek are used to translate "hell" in</p>



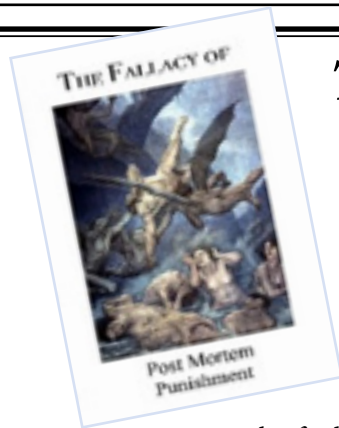
Extinguished: Why Hell Fails and Grace Wins

by — Steve Martin

You probably know the story. There's a God Who loves you. But If you don't love Him back in time, He'll burn you forever. End of story. That's what many of us were taught. Somewhere between Sunday School and adult Bible study, it became the unshakable doctrine: *Eternal hell. Endless torment. No second chances.*

But something deep in your gut always whispered: This doesn't sound like good news. If that sounds like you, this is the book for you!

	<p>the <i>KJV</i> and other translations. None of these words mean “<i>hell</i>” as traditionally understood, 1) The Hebrew word <i>sheol</i> means the unseen hidden place of the dead (Genesis 37:34-35; Psalm 16:10). 2) The Greek <i>hades</i> means the same as <i>sheol</i> (Matthew 11:23; Acts 2:27) 3) The Greek <i>Gehenna</i> means the valley of Hinnom, outside of Jerusalem, which in Jesus’ time was used as the garbage dump where fires were kept alive. Carcasses of dead animals and unburied corpses of executed criminals were cast there. It symbolized God’s destruction of a city or the “untimely” and humiliating death of an individual (Matthew 5:29). 4) The Greek <i>tartarus</i> which was used metaphorically by Peter for the place where rebellious angels are held (II Peter 2:4). Note regarding point 2: <i>sheol</i>. No Old Testament writer or prophet described <i>sheol</i> as a place of torment after death. The consequences of disobedience under the Law of Moses were related to one’s life on Earth – not afterlife – and <i>not</i> eternal. When Jesus spoke, using figurative language and parables, He never meant “<i>hell</i>” as it is understood today – and His Jewish audience knew what He meant. He did not introduce a new doctrine on “<i>hell</i>.”</p>
<p>To be tormented See also Father’s Judgments Are Remedial – Kolasis: A Word Study – Matthew 25:46 – A Compilation, BSN 308</p>	<p>Matthew 25:46 does not apply to an after death “experience” of an unbeliever. It applies to the time of the return of Christ (:31) and it applies to the judgment of nations (:32-33). God does not torment. The Greek word “<i>kolasis</i>” means correction, also used for pruning. There is not a single verse in the Bible that says unbelievers will be tormented after death. Some will say Luke 16:23 (the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man) say so, but it doesn’t. (See <i>BSNs</i> 244, 245, 246, 628).</p>
<p>While weeping and gnashing teeth See also Psalm 35:16 Psalm 112:10 Lamentations 2:16</p>	<p>This is graphic <i>figure of speech</i>, not applicable to after death. It is <i>not</i> used in the Bible in the context of physical suffering or torment, but rather related to intense emotions such as frustration, regret, envy and jealousy (Job 16:9; Psalm 37:12; Acts 7:54). Jesus’ references to the expression relate to those who are disallowed to enter the kingdom at the end of the age. See Luke 13:28, “... <i>when you see Abraham ... and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.</i>” Matthew 8:12; 22:13, “... <i>thrown into outer</i></p>




The Fallacy of Post Mortem Punishment in Light of a Successful Savior

by — Mike Owens

This is a summary of the biblical, logical and philosophical reasons by which the author has abandoned the notion of hell or punishment after death. God is an all-powerful God of love Who knows how to win hearts and minds. To assume that He needs to use physical or psychological pain in order to gain the admiration, love or loyalty of His creatures is an insult to His sovereignty and wisdom. Like Thomas and Paul – who came to believe by something they saw and experienced,

not by faith – everyone, even the Hitlers and Stalins of this world, will experience PRA – Post Resurrection Amazement.

	<p><i>darkness</i> [not hellfire].” Matthew 13:42, “... <i>at the end of the age</i> [not upon death]. Matthew 13:49-50, “<i>So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will ... cast [the wicked] into the furnace of fire.</i>” Note: concerning fire, see the item below.</p>
<p>In a lake of fire See also Isaiah 1:25 Jeremiah 9:7 Zechariah 13:9 Revelation 19:20 Revelation 20:10-15 Revelation 21:8 <i>The Lake of Fire – the second Death</i> is Symbolic, by De L. Trefethen, BSN 1012</p>	<p>Fire in the Scriptures is often figurative for fiery trials that are designed to “<i>purify</i>” character (Isaiah 48:10, Malachi 3:2-3). It is nowhere in Scripture used to describe the after-death fate of unbelievers.</p> <p>In the Hebrew Scriptures fire is never described as a place or means of torture after death. It represents purification. The same image is used by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:10-12.</p> <p>The words “<i>lake of fire</i>” appear only in Revelation 19-21 and even then it has nothing to do with post-mortem punishment, but rather events at Christ’s return and thereafter.</p>
<p>That is unquenchable See also Matthew 3:12 Mark 9:43-45 Luke 3:17</p>	<p><i>Figurative</i> for: No one can stop God’s intended work of chastisement or escape from it. It does not mean that, even if taken as a literal fire, that it will not die down at some point in time.</p>
<p>Forever See also Galatians 1:4</p>	<p>The concept of eternal / eternity/ forever is not in Scripture. Many experts agree. That is why most literal translations don’t use these words. The Hebrew word <i>olam</i> and its Greek counterpart, <i>aion</i>, have been wrongly translated “eternal” instead of “age” (or, “eon”).</p> <p>The absurdity of this mistranslation becomes clear when considering the following “Old Testament” passages:</p> <p>Jonah prayed saying he was in the belly of the fish forever, but it was only three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17; 2:6).</p> <p>According to the law of Moses a slave who after seven years decides not to go out free, must have his ear pierced and then serve his master forever, but this could only be until his death (Exodus 21:6).</p> <p>God confirmed in answer to Solomon’s request that He will dwell in Solomon’s temple forever. In less than 400 years it was destroyed by the Babylonians (I Kings 8:13; 9:3). There are many more “Old Testament” examples.</p> <p>In the “New Testament” the error becomes apparent when <i>aion</i> is trans-</p>



Sheōl and Hadēs: Their Meaning and Usage in the Word of God

by — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

This is a detailed study of two key words (one Hebrew, one Greek) that have a significant bearing on our understanding about death.

lated consistently as “eternity,” which will then result in the following nonsensical passages:

[The disciples asked Jesus], “And what will be the end of the eternity?” (Matthew 24:3).

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “... I am with you always, even to the end of the eternity.” (Matthew 28:20).

“... Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil eternity.” (Galatians 1:4).

Compare the sentence that describes the traditional belief about Hell at the beginning of this article, with this sentence:

The last and highest revelation through the Apostle Paul stands as it is written, that *ALL* mankind shall be saved (I Timothy 2:4; 4:10), justified (Romans 5:18), vivified (I Corinthians 15:22), and the Universe (Colossians 1:20) both in Heaven as well as on Earth, will be reconciled with God through the blood of His cross. – A.E. Knoch, “*What are the Facts, Eternal Torment or Universal Reconciliation?*”

This is the truth that so few understand. This is what aligns with God's character of love, joy, and peace and His passion to lavish grace superabundantly. **BSN**

Note: For further study, see:

The Fallacy of Post-Mortem “Punishment” in Light of a Successful Savior by Mike Owens, [BSN 758](#), or order the book at [Studysshelf.com](#)

Future Punishment: What God says About It, by William B Screws, [BSN 628](#)

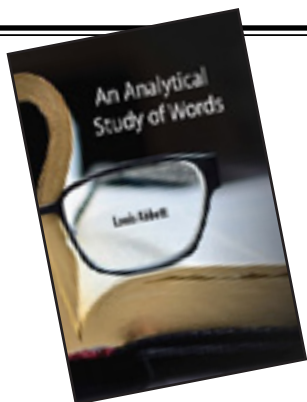
Judgment: Its Nature and Purpose by A.P. Adams, [BSN 388](#)

Johann Grobler, of South Africa, a practicing lawyer since 1978, has dedicated much of his life to learning the truth about God and His plan. He holds a master's degree in theology from North-West University. For a time, he served as a part-time pastor. He now enjoys independent study and local fellowship with a few of God's called-out ones. His writings are available on his website [GodisGod.co.za](#), where every article is in English as well as in Afrikaans, an official language of South Africa. He is also the Coordinator of Curriculum Resources for *Bible Student's Courses*. See Grobler's previous articles in the *Bible Student's Notebook*:

- Did God Predestinate Everything that Happens? [BSN 1009](#);
- The Realization of God's Presence, [BSN 1015](#);
- Does the Bible Teach that All Will Be Saved? [BSN 1018](#);
- The “Wrath” of God, [BSN 1027](#);
- The “Happy” God, [BSN 1033](#);
- To Know God, [BSN 1045](#);
- Reflections on Resurrection and Vivification, [BSN 1078](#).

TOPICS:

Major: Hell, Lake of Fire, Everlasting, Eternal
Minor: Death



An Analytical Study of Words

by — Louis Abbott (1915-1996)

This in-depth study on various words that have been translated as “eternal,” “everlasting,” “judgment,” “hell,” etc., has proved to be an invaluable study tool for many. After leaving his pastorate, Abbott gave much of his life to studying Greek and Hebrew, ranging from ancient manuscripts to modern scholarship. Louis, who studied the Greek “New Testament” for 50 years, spent his lifetime gathering this treasure-trove of information, which is now made available to the world.



Tidbits of Truth #87

“Tidbits” is a column dedicated to short comments, thoughts, studies and excerpts.

I suppose that all who do biblical research wish at times that they could set forth fragmentary and unfinished ideas in printed form without people thinking that a final and definitive conclusion has now been chiseled into imperishable granite which shall stand forever as the final word on the subject dealt with. Any such conclusion will be far from correct. — Otis Sellers (1901-1992)

WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED

Preachers use this verse to justify going to a church:

For where two or three are, gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20, CV).

You must read Matthew Chapter 18 in context.

If you do, you can see that it is about disciplining those within the ecclesia that Christ has there during His ministry on Earth, indeed *His Kingdom government*. Verses 15-20 are about dealing with “*Now, if ever your brother should be sinning.*”

It is not about getting together in a church service to “worship” in the sense that modern day Christians understand. He is teaching his chosen disciples how to do the day-to-day business of the Kingdom ages to come.

Matthew 18:15-20,

Now, if ever your brother should be sinning, go and expose him between you and him alone. If ever he should be hearing you, you gain your brother. Yet if ever he should not be hearing, take still one or two others along with you, that at the mouth of TWO witnesses, or of THREE, every declaration may be made to stand. Now, if ever he should be disobeying them, tell it to the ecclesia. Now, if ever he should be disobeying the ecclesia also, let him be to you even as the man of the Nations, and the tribute collector. Verily, I am saying to you, Whatsoever you should be binding on the Earth shall be those things having been bound in the Heavens, and whatsoever you should be loosing on the Earth shall be those loose in Heaven. Again, verily, I am saying to you that, if ever TWO of you should be agreeing on the Earth concerning any matter, whatsoever it is they should be requesting shall be coming to them from My Father Who is in the Heavens. For where TWO or THREE are, gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them.



31 Days of Grace: Daily Reflections on Living with Kindness and Peace

compiled by — Steve Martin

31 of the most powerful and thought-provoking excerpts from *The Absolute Despotism of Grace*, one for each day of the month.

Don't let verse cherry picking preachers rope you into going to a church.

— James D. Fine

THREE SPHERES OF GLORY

The first (base) sphere is the Earth, and is for Abraham's "sand" seed, as well as the "righteous" and "meek." A progression of the Kingdom revelation expanded this glory to a second (advanced) sphere. This sphere is for Abraham's "star" seed – for the called from among Israel (an individual calling within a national calling).

The second sphere of glory is heavenly in nature and is reserved for the out-called of Israel in the New Jerusalem, and will come down to them from Heaven as the capital city of Israel on the New Earth.

The third sphere is Celestial, a glory which is far up above all Heavens in the "Super-Heavens." The 3rd sphere of glory exclusively belongs to Christ and "the Church which is His Body." This hope of glory will be our reality at Christ's Celestial appearing, prior to the beginning of the Pre-Millennial Kingdom.

The first sphere will encompass the earthly hope of the "Day of Christ" (the Pre-Millennial Kingdom) and the "Day of the Lord" (the Millennial Kingdom). The second sphere will be an expanded, heavenly glory of the out-called of Israel in the New Jerusalem during "the Day of God" (the Post-Millennial Kingdom).

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

SAILS TO THE WIND

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness (II Corinthians 12:9).

I am seeing more and more that we begin to learn what it is to walk by faith when we learn to spread out all that is against us: all our physical weakness, loss of mental power, spiritual inability – all that is against us inwardly and outwardly – as sails to the wind and expect them to be vehicles for the power of Christ to rest upon us. It is so simple and self-evident – but so long in the learning!

— Lilius Trotter (1853-1928)
Diary – 22 August 1902

BSN

TOPICS:

MAJOR: [Where Two or Three are Gathered:] Church Attendance; Matthew 18:15-20 [Three Spheres of Glory] Spheres of Glory [Sails to the Wind:] Weakness

IT'S IRRATIONAL
AND IMPOSSIBLE TO
BELIEVE THAT GOD IS
LOVE AND THAT GOD IS
SOVEREIGN OVER HIS CREATION,
WHILE HOLDING ON TO
THE NOTION OF HELL.

— MIKE OWENS



Mars' Hill: A Study on Acts 17

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Even among those who place a great emphasis on Paul, with his unique apostleship and message, there is an amazing neglect of one of his most outstanding messages found in the Book of Acts: his message given on Mars' Hill. The content of his message to this group of unbelieving pagans has been overlooked for far too long. These words of Paul contain a very rich message. Preserved in the Scriptures, we know that, not only was it a challenge to the pagans of Athens, but it will prove to be a challenge to the members of Christ's Body as well.