

Malachi:

“For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be *stubble*. . . .”¹⁹

What about the Fire?

Almost all of us have heard that God will burn the wicked in a great holocaust. Think what that says about God. Among humans, no more fiendish thing can be done than burning another human. Our most severe criminal penalties are reserved for individuals who burn others. But we have given God a pass to do it because He is God. He can do what He wants, and we still call it righteousness. He may have the power to do it, but does He have the heart? At the risk of shocking you, our God does not burn anyone alive.

The book of Revelation speaks about fires in the last days. It speaks about a lake of fire.²⁰ What is a lake? A lake is a body of water. What does water represent in prophecy? “The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”²¹ Therefore, the lake is just a whole lot of people. The fire? What does the fire represent?

To answer that, we must refer again to our great Example. Did Jesus experience a fire when in process of dying? We did not see it, but Yes, He did. Once again, we must refer to the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus. “From on high He sent *fire* into my bones.”²² What was that fire? Guilt—and the agony with which He died. It pictures the lost agonizing when they confront the sins of their lives without the merciful shelter of God’s hand over them. As Jesus before them, they too experience “fire in their bones,” agonizing over their sins, while loathing the thought of living in the Holy City where praise to God is heard on every hand. They have nothing now to live for, nothing to struggle for, nothing for which to hope. There is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”²³ And one by one, they give up the struggle to live. The fire represents this struggle. (See the pamphlet, “What About the Fire?” for a more thorough discussion of the fires of the end.)

¹ John 17:17, *King James Version*; emphasis supplied

² John 14:6, emphasis supplied.

³ Psalm 22:1, *New American Standard* (NAS); Matthew 27:46.

⁴ Psalm 22:6, NAS

⁵ Psalm 22:12, 13, NAS.

⁶ Psalm 22:14, NAS.

⁷ Psalm 22:15, NAS.

⁸ vss.3, 4, 11, NAS. See also Psalm 109:21-31; Lam. 2:3b, etc.

⁹ Mark 15:44, 45, *New International Version* (NIV).

¹⁰ Eg, John :16; 2 Cor. 5F:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 John 2:2; Romans 5:18; 8:23; 1 Th

¹¹ John 5:28, 29, KJV.

¹² See Revelation 20:5.

¹³ Revelaton 21:2.

¹⁴ Revelation 20:9, KJV.

¹⁵ Revelation 20:11, 12, KJV.

¹⁶ Ezekiel 7:14, NAS.

¹⁷ Psalm 48:4-6, NIV.

¹⁸ Psalm 58:7, 8, NIV, emphasis supplied.

¹⁹ 4:1, KJV, emphasis supplied.

²⁰ Revelation 19:20; 20:10.

²¹ Revelation 17:15, KJV.

²² Lamentations 13, NAS, emphasis supplied.

²³ Matthew 13:42.



For More Information:

- www.4Adventists.com
Two Books Titled: *Light Through the Darkness: A Vindication of God*, 157 pages, and an *Adventist upplement*, 72 pages
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBZfdggyXw&feature=youtu.be
(or) <http://youtu.be/hMaItpis72c>
A Video Titled: *A New Look At the Character of God*
- www.GodsCharacter.com
A Book Titled: *Servant God: The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Trustworthiness*, 418 pages
- www.TeachServices.com/as-he-is-4th-angel-publications-paperback-1si/
A Book Titled: *As He Is: Issues in the 'Character of God' Controversy*, 334 pages (Contact straub@direct.ca for alternate pricing.)

Alternate End Game

“Take heed that no one *deceives* you” Jesus said in **Matthew 24:4**, repeating His warning three times in that chapter. Especially in the last days, Satan will pull out all the stops in an effort to deceive and confuse us to our ruin. In no area will he seek to deceive more than as pertains to the question: How does it all end? Will this world of suffering, trouble and death flow on forever? Or will it end? And, if so, how will it end? Will we all stand at some point before the throne of God to receive a reward for what our lives have been, as the Bible says? Satan has obfuscated this point until Christendom today is hopelessly confused.

Jesus' Example

The only place we can find crystal-clear truth is by looking at the example Jesus left for us in the word. “Thy word is truth,”¹ He said. And “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”² When this order comes to a final stop, then what happens? Specifically, what happens to those who have not made peace with God?

Everything that will happen to the lost happened to Jesus. Emblazon it on your frontal lobe. From Gethsemane to His death on Calvary, He received the sinners’ reward. He Himself never sinned. But the Father beheld Him, treated Him, as a lost sinner and released Him to the consequences of the sin that He bore. Otherwise, the plan of redemption would not have worked. If Jesus had failed in one point to experience all that the lost will experience, He would not have died the sinners’ death, and God’s plan to redeem us would have failed. Therefore, do not believe fanciful stories about

eternally burning flames or any such thing. Look only at Jesus, if you want to know the truth about the fate of the lost. Looking at His description in Gethsemane, during His trial, during the base things He endured, looking at Him on the cross; we do not perceive His inner self. How did He think? What did He feel? We see only the vicious things that demon-possessed men did to him externally. The gospels do not tell us what went on *inside* Him as He hung on the cross. But when we look at the prophecies of the Old Testament, there we hear His inner voice during that mysterious period when He endured the agony of great darkness.

In Gethsemane He sweat blood drops; on the cross He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”³ We see only a hint of His internal struggle, until we read in the Old Testament, “I am a worm and not a man.”⁴ These words reflect how He feels, deprived of His Father’s presence. All who behold sneer at Him, make faces, wag their heads, shout insults at Him. Where now is His Creator, the One who has been with Him always? Now, when trouble is near, He cannot find Him. Bulls and beasts surround Him. They have come for the feast. He is afraid.⁵

Looking deeper into His inner life, we hear Him say, “I am poured out like water. And all My bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax; it is melted within Me.”⁶ He speaks of physical changes that He experienced—His strength has dried up, His tongue cleaves to His jaw, and, because His Father does not intervene to protect Him as had done in the past, He feels that God has laid Him in the dust [of death].⁷ Isaiah 53 refers to Him as “crushed,” grief-stricken, in anguish when He died.⁸ Is it any wonder that His life was shortened? He died much sooner than could reasonably be expected—within a day, when up to now the briefest time known to die from crucifixion was two or three days.⁹

Model of the Deaths of the Lost

Because Jesus died as the Sin Bearer, His death tells us what the deaths of the lost will be. How do

we know this? Because of the fairness of God. He could not allow the lost to experience anything that the Sin Bearer didn’t experience, because He has committed to a fair contest with the devil. Jesus died for all, but only the saved will choose to take advantage of it¹⁰; the unsaved will choose to die their own death. Can you imagine Satan’s glee, if the Father in sympathy tried to give His Son an edge in the conflict? Satan would have shouted “Foul” all over the place. No. The Father wouldn’t do it and if He did, Satan would be there to call the holy angels’ attention to it, saying it confirmed his charges against the Father. The Father couldn’t and didn’t let that happen. In His death on the cross, Jesus experienced *everything* that the lost will finally experience. Whatever cruelty Satan can devise will befall the one released by God.

The Great White Throne Judgment

Resurrection solved the problem inherent in Jesus’ death. “[T]he 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.”¹¹ Can you see *two* resurrections mentioned here? The one we are speaking of is the *second* resurrection, the resurrection of the lost.¹² They awaken to see the earth broken up and a beautiful city sitting in its midst.¹³ It’s easy to imagine Satan deceiving this great horde into thinking that he resurrected them and that he is the rightful owner of the city. Using his deceptive powers, he heals them, telling them that he has restored their life, and this healing proves it. Accepting the lie, they get to work, making plans to “recapture” the city for their leader. They build great arsenals of war and plan the battle. Eventually they are ready. “[T]hey went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.”¹⁴

Just then Christ appears, sitting on a throne high above the city. “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it. . . . And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life. . . .”¹⁵ Suddenly all interest in war is gone.

- They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but no one is going to the battle.”¹⁶
- When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together, they saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror. Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor.”¹⁷

When the judgment sits, these hordes have spurned his presence and so are not blessed with the shelter of God. They have nothing now to protect them from the full consequences of their sins. When the books are opened, they see with clarity the full weight of sin that they bear. They look at the Holy City and see the residents there praising and worshiping God, an activity from which they would flee if they could. They know now that their plans to capture the city could not succeed; they experience the sense of hopelessness that Jesus felt on the cross. And they go away.

”Let them vanish like water that flows away; when they draw the bow, let their arrows be blunted. *Like a slug melting away as it moves along*, like a still-born child, may they not see the sun.”¹⁸

Like Judas before them, they choose to “go away” to death—the least guilty first and then the most guilty—Satan, the last to die. They have nothing to live for now, and life would be intolerable to them. God is to them a consuming fire, as the vision of what heaven would be like, with the saved praising and worshiping God, becomes their worst nightmare. They become stubble, according to