

Healing Hereafter: Quick-read Version

(For briefly examining nearly all the questions and conclusions found in Booklet 7.

Please explore the Full Version of this booklet for a more thorough discussion and extensive biblical and scholarly evidence validating the summaries below.)

Booklet 7: Beyond the Point of No Return

Chapter 1

Here we evaluate the fifth argument for a temporary Hell: that its purpose is correction rather than punishment. Taking a closer look at what warnings the Bible gives us about future retribution, we ask if it actually refers to Hell or not in the first place. We examine in particular the assertion that "the coming wrath" Jesus allegedly warns of is not an eternal Hell, but rather the imminent Roman retaliation to Jewish uprisings that culminated in the razing of Jerusalem in 70AD. We expose the fact that Jesus never used the phrase "the coming wrath," and we see that the only two times he refers to wrath at all are clearly consistent with the judgment of Hell. Then we explore when John the Baptist and Paul use "the coming wrath" to assess how likely it referred to a Roman rebuttal. The specific people we are told of in John's audience turn out to be the least probable people—both biblically and practically—to incite Rome's wrath and therefore to need a warning from anyone to avoid it. We see that Jesus later echoes John's comments about "the coming wrath" almost verbatim, except that he replaces this phrase with Gehenna, invalidating attempts to equate it with Rome or any other temporary judgment. Then we discover that the audience of Paul's reference to "the coming wrath" is a church 1000 miles from Jerusalem who had no connection at all with Rome's Palestinian presence. Paul does not warn this church of Roman retribution,

but he does warn them about a punishment of everlasting destruction. Because biblical warnings of coming wrath do apply to Hell, we turn to the word "punishment" itself to discover whether or not it can mean something transient in the Bible. Those who teach a temporary, corrective Hell examine the punishment of Hell described by Jesus in one of his parables and correctly demonstrate that the expertly recognized definitions for the Greek word translated as punishment—*kolasis*—include both punishing and correction. Because it remains a possibility, they conclude that the *kolasis* of Hell must be unpleasant but ultimately corrective, arguing that its meaning is derived from a plant being pruned for its own eventual benefit. We too acknowledge this possibility but withhold our conclusion until we've reviewed the parable's context for objective guidance. Upon realizing that Jesus describes *kolasis* as eternal, equates it with eternal fire, and applies it to people instead of plants, we admit that Hell is not meant to be temporary, that fire is never used to prune a plant, and that eternal fire is not a biblical, logical, or practical way to correct humans either.

Chapter 2

But there are several examples in the Bible of very evil people being granted an opportunity for restoration by God. The account of the twin cities Sodom and Gomorrah is among the most prominent and is used as evidence of a temporary Hell, as their evil inhabitants were destroyed but later promised a type of restoration. We see that those who equate this with transient correction in Hell are willing to trace the biblical commentary on these cities to God's offer of reconciliation, but they do not share what the Bible reveals after that. The fact that its final comments about Sodom and Gomorrah twice confirm that the general destruction of their inhabitants is eternal proves the inaccuracy and irresponsibility of only partially or subjectively exploring contextual information about a topic. To

avoid this, we accept the full biblical context, learn of the historical context in which these two cities are set, and use this information to explain how God could provide restoration to people who are doomed to everlasting punishment. The solution it directly leads us to is none other than Jesus. God does not offer a universal, inevitable immigration into Heaven from Hell, but he does offer everyone—including those so evil that their cities are destroyed—the opportunity before they go to Hell to choose Heaven through the gospel. For the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah, and for others without meaningful access to the gospel during life, this would take place in Lugg.

Chapter 3

To be as objective and comprehensive as possible, we also address the other biblical passages used by those who argue for a temporary Hell, so that we can determine the nature of the restoration found there. By focusing carefully on the literary context, we learn that there are two types: the Jews being rescued from captivity in other nations and a non-universal remnant of humans being rescued from wrath through the solution of Jesus. Neither of these is compatible with inevitable salvation for all after a period of correction in Hell, but the latter is consistent with God's offer of restoration to Sodom and Gomorrah through Jesus.

Chapter 4

After recognizing that our response to Jesus *before* we enter Hell or Heaven defines our participation in God's restoration, the Bible's urgent warnings against delaying this response make sense in the context of the biblical, eternal Hell. We discuss why they don't make sense if Hell is temporary. Attempts to fit these warnings into the context of a transient, corrective Hell are found to be deceptive because each warning is only partially referenced and contradictory because each

refers to a Hell from which no escape is implied. All of our findings disallow Hell's purpose to be restorative, completing our survey of the arguments for a temporary Hell. Given the implications of this realization, we spend some time emotionally digesting a forever Hell before taking a break from it.