

The Seminary at Lincoln Christian University

EVANGELICAL CALVINIST UNIVERSAL SALVATION:
THE UNCHOSEN SAVED BY THE CONSUMING FIRE (YHWH) AT THE ESCHATON

A Thesis
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by

Jeff R. Grupp

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Candidate's name: Jeff R. Grupp
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This form is to certify that the above candidate for the Master of Arts degree from the Seminary at Lincoln Christian University has successfully completed the written thesis requirements and oral exam/presentation, and that the thesis has been accepted by this committee.

May 1, 2023

(Date)

Steven Cone

(Primary Reader, Chair of Thesis Committee)

[Signature]

(Secondary Reader of Thesis Committee)

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(signature of student)

ABSTRACT

A novel eschatology and soteriology will be introduced, where it is found that a literalist reading of Scripture reveals that GOD (who I refer to as the Eschaton Fire) will save all condemned and unchosen human souls that were ever created at the Eschaton, by immolating them in His Consuming Fire at the Eschaton. It will be found that Scripture involves the annihilation view of consciousness and the soul for those who are unchosen, but where this annihilation occurs *before* the Eschaton, as Scripture indicates, and not after the commencement of the Eschaton, as annihilation theology standardly involves. Scriptural evidence will be used to verify that the popular, traditional view of hell (where GOD *supposedly* torturers His unchosen creations horrifically, forever) does not exist in the Bible, since instead, Scripture reveals that before the Eschaton, in the interval *from* the point of body death, and *to* the Eschaton resurrection of all, any unchosen souls are annihilated (destruction and nonexistence of consciousness and/or soul), before being brought back to life, back into existence, at the Eschaton, in order to be immolated by GOD and thus saved everlastingly. (For those who are not adherents of annihilation theology, Calvinist universal salvation *does not* depend on annihilationism, as the reader will see below, and the reader can proceed without expecting that endorsing soul-annihilation is required to understand evangelical Calvinist universal salvation. But it is contended in this thesis that Scripture points to the aforementioned pre-Eschaton annihilation, as will be shown.) The unchosen are immolated in GOD, which is the Eschaton event, and this Refining Fire, this Consuming Fire, or Lake of Fire, is a baptism of Fire, giving the free gift of salvation at the Eschaton to all unchosen/condemned, by

the GOD (YHWH) of infinite love. A key ingredient of Calvinist Universal Salvation is that hitherto the Lake of Fire has been confused into being imagined to be either *identical to* the traditional, popular view of hell, or some sort of second hell-like scenario after the heavens and earth pass away, but it will be shown that Scripture states that (1) all underworld regions (Hades, hell, etc.) are ended at the Eschaton (heavens and earth pass away), and further that (2) the Lake of Fire is described in Scripture as identical to GOD—where specifically, GOD, the Lake of Fire, is *identical to, equal to*, the Eschaton Fire, which saves all the condemned. Showing that GOD is equal to the Lake of Fire is verified by showing that Scripture involves ascribing the qualities of GOD—and that *only* GOD can have—*also to* the Lake of Fire, such as that *both* GOD *and* the Lake of Fire are described ending death (compare Rev. 20:14 and Isa. 25:8). Lake of Fire is merely another name for the Eschaton Fire, and for GOD (YHWH). So, the trajectory of the condemned human is to live in the physical body as a living soul, then at body-death the unchosen soul goes into the underworld regions, wherein the consciousness and/or soul ceases to exist, in some partial or full way (annihilation is analyzed in detail), the consciousness and/or soul is annihilated until the Eschaton, wherein the unchosen human is resurrected (awakened, brought back into existence), to be put into the Lake of Fire (GOD, YHWH), in order to be saved in Christ, forever, via GOD-immolation, at the Eschaton. The author understands that some claims of this thesis are new and could be surprising, but the Scriptural evidence presented is copious, and considered definitive, making use of a thoroughgoing literalist framework, wherein a systematic theology of Calvinist universal salvation is uncovered that was previously unnoticed.

1. ALL UNCHOSEN SAVED BY IMMOLATION IN CHRIST

In this thesis, I will introduce, explicate, and defend the following Scriptural theology:

Before the Eschaton,¹ there are *both* condemned and saved people (there are both chosen and unchosen people). At the Eschaton, the LORD returns in full revealing, where all humans and all flesh will see Him together (Isa. 40:5, Joel 2:28), as He is (1 John 3:2), revealed as Fire, a Consuming Fire (Heb. 12:29). The heavens and the earth will be immersed within, and immolated by, GOD's fire (verse support below). The immolation in the fire of GOD leads to *all* the unchosen and unsaved—including murderers, oppressors, and any and all of the most hated criminals—having their flesh destroyed, but where death is destroyed (Rev. 20:14, Isa. 25:8), so that their spirit saved, in order to be given salvation, at the Eschaton (1 Cor. 5:5, copious verse support given below), to live with GOD, seeing Him face-to-face, *forever*.²

¹ In this thesis, I define the Eschaton as the time when (1) the LORD resurrects *all* people (Parable of the Tares), and (2) puts the unchosen in His fire (Scripture analysis below), therein (3) allowing all humans to see Him as He is, and therefore become as they truly are (1 Jn. 3:2), which is as angels (Matt. 22:30), even equal to angels (Luke 20:17 KJV wording), (4) to commence the unending afterlife of ecstasy in looking directly at GOD's face for all eternity (see 1 Cor. 13:12). This Fire is after the stars fall and the sky splits like a scroll with the sixth seal being opened (see Rev. 6:12-17), after which the LORD arrives with Fire (1 Cor. 3:13, Isa. 66:15, 2 Pet. 3:7, other verses given below). The Eschaton is the transition at the very end of this physical age, "the end of all things" (1 Pet. 4:7).

² Some might claim that some elements of Calvinist universal salvation are similar to early church universalism (perhaps mostly within the Alexandrian School). In this thesis, I will not discuss if this is correct or not, and I will not be discussing early church universalism, or any comparisons it has to evangelical Calvinist universal salvation.

Secondly, the Calvinist universal salvation of this thesis is distinct from Augustinian universalism (which is discussed in Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism*, chapter 4), which sometimes is considered a "Calvinist universalism." The evangelical Calvinist universal salvation contained in this thesis has no similarities to Augustinian universalism.

I call this *Calvinist universal salvation* (or, *evangelical Calvinist universal salvation*). And according to Calvinist universal salvation, we humans, in this physical realm, live in a reality that aligns with some type of five-point Calvinism, but with one significant difference: according to Scripture, the unchosen *are all saved* at the Eschaton.³ Unlike other types of Christian universal salvation, there *is* a hell in Calvinist universal salvation, just as Scripture indicates—though it is not stated in Scripture that any people are ever put in hell, as many other scholars before me have noted. Also, as Scripture indicates, hell, and all regions and dimensions of the underworld, cease to exist at the Eschaton, as shown below. For unknown reasons, Calvinist universal salvation, where Fire of GOD *is* the Eschaton (the Lake of Fire), the Consuming Fire, *saving* all the unsaved, has apparently been missed by theologians hitherto, which is surprising (at least to me), since copious Scripture will be presented below to back-up the systematic theology of

³ Outside of academia, I often find people believing that Calvinism is only of *one* type, and that all Calvinists believe roughly the same things. But there are different varieties of Calvinism. One well-known such difference is the four-point Calvinism versus five-point Calvinism. There are other varieties beyond that (see Crisp 2014). So, when I announce that this thesis involves a *Calvinist* theology, that does not mean, for example, I agree with every sentence of what John Calvin wrote, or every nuance of his thought, or what any other specific Calvinist theologians may have endorsed at any time in the past. I only intend for this thesis to roughly involve some sort of five-point Calvinism (TULIP), though the five points are not discussed at length below. This thesis posits that some variety of a five-point Calvinist theology can be concluded as existing in Scripture, and therefore as properly describing the physics and metaphysics of reality, with, as stated above, one variation: at the Fire-Eschaton, the end of the age is, the end of all things, *all* the unchosen are saved via GOD-immolation and baptism of Fire. This thesis takes an extremely literalist approach to Scripture, where aspects of Scripture typically thought to be poetry and/or metaphor by scholars are considered not to be poetry and/or metaphor, and are taken as literal, with the exception of, for example, situations where Scripture reveals the intent is to be nonliteral, such as when Scripture reveals that a passage is a parable (examples discussed below, such as with the parable of Lazarus and the rich man). All this is *not* to claim the following: since a literal approach is taken, therefore some or all metaphorical approaches to Scripture are to be rejected. This is not the claim of this thesis, and though it is not discussed in this thesis, it certainly could be the case that some normally considered metaphorical areas of Scripture could be simultaneously about literal events in past, present, or future, but where the same passages could *also* have a poetical and/or metaphorical dimension (parts of Isaiah 25, for example [discussed below]). Likewise, some passages may be historical accounts in the past, but also discussion of the Eschaton events, wherein, historical and future-Eschaton passages contain the same patterns of events. This repeating of patterns in Scripture is quite evident and well-known, such as with GOD's Eschaton-like event at Mount Sinai with Moses.

evangelical Christian universalism presented in this thesis. Consider this verse, to give one initial example:

1 Corinthians 15:22 Authorized (King James) Version

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.^{4,5} (Italics and underlining added.⁶)

⁴ I believe many will claim that verses like this *appear to be* universalist, but nevertheless universalism *does not* exist, since humans, by their free will, can choose to reject GOD, which it is often claimed, the majority of people *do*, and thus universalism does not exist. But I will claim in this thesis, including in a footnote late in the paper, that human free will is not found in the Bible, it is heretical, impossible, and does not exist.

⁵ In this verse, it can be shown that “made alive” is a reference to salvation, and therefore, salvation *for all*. Other places in Scripture refer to salvation as “life,” such as Matthew 7:14, “because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it..” In Mt. 7:13-14 there is a dichotomy, life or not life, where in Matt. 7:13, the narrow way is that of *destruction*, which is a reference to *annihilation*, a topic Jesus revisits elsewhere in the Gospels (see discussion of pre-Eschaton annihilationism in section 3). Therefore, the opposite of the annihilation/destruction of Mt. 7:13 is life, as discussed in Mt. 7:14. The dichotomy presented in Mt. 7:13-14 is annihilation versus salvation, where salvation is life (Mt. 7:14). This would point to life in Jesus, or being “made alive” in Him (as 1 Cor. 15:22 also discusses), *as being salvation*. Also, and perhaps even more straightforwardly, Jesus is identical to salvation (Luke 2:25-30), and in John 14:6, He says Jesus is life, therefore, salvation (Jesus) is life. And consider Romans 5:18, a thoroughgoing universalist verse:

Romans 5:18 Authorized (King James) Version

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (Underlining added.)

This verse maintains that the *free gift* (which is salvation, Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” [modern translations, ESV, NRSV, NKJV {footnote}, RSV] say “free gift” rather than “gift”]) is in the direction of and pointing to (“unto”) the reason or explanation (“justification”) in *life*. The “free gift,” Jesus, who is salvation, eternal life, is referred to in Romans 5:15 as “the grace of God... which is by one man, Jesus Christ.” According to John 4:10, the gift of GOD is living water. And Eph. 2:8 refers to being saved through faith as the *gift* of GOD. For these reasons, 1 Cor. 15:22 is referring to salvation as being “made alive,” which is the reversal of the death in Adam.

⁶ All underlining of verses and Scripture passages in this thesis were added by the author.

1 Corinthians 15:22 English Standard Version

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:22 New International Version

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:22 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:22 New American Standard Bible

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Notice how this verse refers to *all* people being saved, but wherein each translation the verse involves a pointing into the future, where the universal salvation happens at some future point, as indicated by the “shall... be” (KJV, ESV) or “will be” (NIV, NRSV, NASB) in the verse. All five translations consistently agree in revealing the universal salvation, *and* that this universal salvation will happen *in the future*. Additionally, as indicated in the next two verses after 15:22, 15:23-24 reveal that all referred to in 15:22 are Christ’s, where the salvation occurs specifically at His Eschaton:

1 Corinthians 15:23-24 Authorized (King James) Version

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

As the reader can see, Calvinist universal salvation is not in line with many popular Christian theological concepts. The reader may therefore be in disbelief that Calvinist universal salvation could be Scriptural, but this is what I will show. In other words, I will show that theology, worldwide, has largely involved a false eschatology, where the specific falsehood is the view of an *inescapable and unending* hell-torture: the majority of souls GOD creates He condemns to be burned in unimaginable torture unendingly, with no chance of stopping.

2. THE POPULAR VIEW OF HELL IS NOT FOUND IN SCRIPTURE

I have found that there are few things that turn many people off to Christianity more than that popular view hell: that the all-loving creator-GOD creates most people for little more than to put them into difficult lives while they live here in the physical domain, where after that, the love-GOD (θεός) tortures most of them forever, burning them in screaming pain, with not the slightest chance of ever letting-up on this horrific situation, for a mathematical infinity of time everlastingly, all merely because a person, in their less-than-supernatural level of intelligence, could not make the right free-will choice and *choose* to worship the name of Jesus while living in the physical domain. My career is in jail ministry, and this popular, traditional view of hell is the principal objection and source of confusion about Christianity that I see amongst the many jail inmates. It is also a primary objection that I see opposers to Christianity use to doubt and/or attack Christianity. The opposers claim that Christianity is absurd: how can the maximally wonderful and all-loving GOD create beings mainly just to torment them unspeakably, without any end? I have heard jail inmates say that they would not even wish that on their worst enemy, so how could the GOD of *infinite love and kindness* desire that, or even have the capacity to conceptualize and create anything like *that*? Though I have found this objection not always popular, especially amongst those who uphold the popular (but non-Scriptural) view of hell, but this objection from the jail inmates, however, appears to be a philosophically and logically consistent objection: How could the most horrific imaginable torture come from infinite Love? This is like saying maximum dryness comes only from maximum wetness, which is a logical, analytical contradiction.

What if the popular view of hell could be shown to be a misunderstanding, or a misreading, of Scripture? Ramelli writes: “In the New Testament there are very few passages that might be taken to indicate an eternal damnation.”⁷ No verses or passages anywhere in Scripture anywhere discuss a fiery underworld burning all the unchosen without any end, and the popular and mainstream view of hell does not exist in Scripture. And in this thesis, I will show that, rather, a different model of hell and especially the Lake of Fire exists in Scripture. We will find in this thesis that Scripture involves, in many ways, the *opposite* of the popular view of hell: hell, and all underworldly regions (Hades, Gehenna, Sheol, Tartarus), are not described in Scripture as being endless, and people are raised out of the underworlds: “the dead are raised... for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him,” Luke 20:37-38, which is a passage specifically about the Eschaton, where some of the saved, or perhaps all, will even be “equal to angels” (Luke 20:36). While *all* people are not officially saved *now*, *yet*, before the Eschaton, all unchosen people however *will be* saved in the future, specifically, *at* the Eschaton. Consider these additional verses and passages which verify Calvinist universal salvation:

Romans 14:11-13 Authorized (King James) Version

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess⁸ to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself

⁷ Ilaria Ramelli, *A Larger Hope? Universal Salvation From Christian Beginnings to Julian of Norwich* (Eugene: Cascade Books. 2019), 10.

⁸ We can see in other Scripture that confessing the Name is what is done by one who is saved or being saved, which would indicate that if *all* are to confess, then all are to be forgiven (1 John 2:2, John 1:29, and KJV for Mark 3:28), and all saved:

Romans 10:9-10 Authorized (King James) Version

to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.⁹

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 John 4:2-3 Authorized (King James) Version

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

1 Kings 8:35-36 Authorized (King James) Version

When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an

We can also see similar actions with the tongue regarding salvation. For example, Joel 2:32 states that "whosoever shall *call on* the name of the Lord shall be delivered" (Italics added). Also see 1 John 4:15, 2 John 1:7.

⁹ This same message of every knee bowing also appears in Philippians 2:10-11, and Isaiah 45:23.

Philippians 2:10-11 Authorized (King James) Version

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In discussing the universalism of "every knee shall bow," MacDonald writes:

First, this acknowledgement of Christ is universal. Paul emphasizes that there are no exceptions by expanding the Old Testament text "every knee will bow" with the words "*in heaven and on earth and under the earth.*" This is going considerably further than the Isaiah text. In Isaiah only the living were in mind. All the survivors of the nations would bow, but the dead were dead. Not so here. Even those "under the earth," that is to say, the dead, will bow. So the picture is of every single individual who has ever lived acknowledging the rule of Christ. This much is not terribly controversial amongst commentators.

Second, this vision is of universal salvation. It is common to suggest that, although all creatures here will bow the knee, some will be forced to do so against their will prior to being damned. (Gregory MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist*, Second Ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 98.

MacDonald, interestingly, hints at the conflict that the Bible's message of universal salvation has with supposed *human free-will choice*—a term and concept that does not appear anywhere in Scripture, nor do any of its cognates. In another footnote below, I discuss the lack of need of any so-called free-will choice in Calvinist universal salvation. Calvinist universal salvation, therefore, is a theology that does not contain or include the widely discussed conflict between free-will choice and GOD's sovereignty.

And lastly, some may maintain that the context of Romans 14 is Paul's exhortation to both weak and strong in Romans churches to stop judging one another regarding food, and humanity's eternal destiny is not the subject-matter. I maintain that such a view is not on the right track, since at Romans 14:10b and 14:11a, we see a shift, from talking about the judging over food, to a broader scope, moving to a broader discussion,

Isaiah 49:26 Authorized (King James) Version

And all flesh shall know¹⁰ that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer.

Luke 3:6 Authorized (King James) Version

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.¹¹

Multiple sections are devoted to citing and analyzing Scripture that demonstrates the specific Eschaton-oriented Calvinist universal salvation of this thesis.

Notice the future-pointing nature of those three verses, where the word “shall” in each indicates that the universal salvation *is in the future*, which is, as will be shown in this

of standing before the judgment seat of Christ. The topic shifts to the judgment seat, an Eschaton event, wherein which every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, and thereby, everyone shall be saved.

¹⁰ Notice the future-pointing (Eschaton in the future) of this verse. And furthermore, John 17:3 says that a human *knowing* Jesus means that human is *saved*:

John 17:3 Authorized (King James) Version

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

And since Isa. 49:26 indicates that all *all* flesh shall *know*, then John 17:3 tells us that *all* will be saved.

¹¹ Notice, again, the future-pointing of this verse. Some may claim that this verse is only referring to the future ministry of Jesus, not the Eschaton. But the Lk. 3:6 must refer to both, since the context of this verse is the Eschaton, as seen in the verse before: Luke 3:5 AKJV: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth." All mountains being made low is a destruction of, or vanishing of, every mountain. This is a concept only found in Scripture to do with the Eschaton (see Revelation 6:14, 16:20, Ez. 38:20, and Ps. 46:2-3, where Psalm 46 can be interpreted, at least in part, as a passage about Eschaton, since it refers the end of wars in verse 7, and to the earth melting in verse 6). And more importantly, Lk. 3:6 refers to all men *seeing* the salvation of GOD. *All* men seeing this is only an Eschaton event, since before the Eschaton, all men do not see Jesus/salvation. Lk. 3:5-6, is repeated in Isaiah 40:4-5, but where it is stated the glory of the LORD shall be *revealed* to all flesh, which is an Eschaton scenario (also see discussion below about 2 Thess. 1:7-9 below), and where instead of all men seeing the salvation of the LORD, it is *all flesh* that see it together.

thesis, temporally located at the Eschaton. This future-pointing of verses to a future universalist Eschaton is a quite dominant theme of the copious Scripture cited in this thesis in support of Calvinist universal salvation. Even verses that are very widely discussed, such as “every knee shall bow,” appear to point directly to Calvinist universal salvation, as do these widely discussed verses:

John 12:32 Authorized (King James) Version

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Psalms 150:6 Authorized (King James) Version

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.¹²

¹² Above I just discussed the future-pointing of Scripture to a future universalism by Fire, so does that mean that only in the future is there this all-praise of the LORD established? Or are there ways in which that future event is being already felt, or lived, analogous to a Great Attractor (to borrow a term from astrophysics), pulling all things *to it* across time and space and all dimensions? Discussion below will support that both are occurring (as John 12:32, just cited, supports), and therefore, in addition to future-pointing Scripture that points to a future universalist Fire-Eschaton at the end of all things (end of the age), we can *also* expect to find Scripture indicating that this future Eschaton-by-Fire is felt and experienced in a way in the present, again, as if the Eschaton was acting like a Great Attractor from the future, invading into human souls and into all things, at the present. I say this because we know that GOD is, *now*, after the ascension, drawing all people to Him (John 12:32), where we will all see Him as He really is for the first time right at the Eschaton (Isa. 40:5, 1 John 3:2, more verse support given below). So it is only a small stretch to say that GOD is *presently drawing* people and all things, across time, *at* His future Eschaton revealing—such as if all humans could feel, be aware of, and interact with, this future event (in part) in all of their present moments—as if His presence in our lives now contains a kindling or spark or smoldering about that time at the fire-Eschaton. This is when humans first see Him face to face, and as if that understanding of who He is as unveiled in the future is impacting people and all things *presently*:

Romans 8:19 Authorized (King James) Version

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

So, it may be more accurate to suggest that all of creation has always “felt,” for lack of better words, the pull of the Consuming Fire of the Eschaton. I believe that Psalm 150:6 could be interpreted as future pointing, due to the word “Let,” which seems to be expressing that not all creatures that have breath are praising, so therefore, the LORD had to make the command, via the Psalm, to let them do so at some point after His commanding. I wanted to bring up the idea that we can expect present-oriented verses about all

And a verse like Romans 5:6, also widely discussed, seemingly fits better into the Calvinist universal salvation scenario than the popular view of hell:

Romans 5:6 Authorized (King James) Version

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.¹³

creatures praising to be found in Scripture, about all creatures presently yearning for GOD and/or praising Him. I believe that John 1:9, Titus 2:11, and Mark 1:37 (KJV only for Mark 1:37) seem to be powerful examples of such universalist verses.

¹³ As a side point, it is interesting to note that (1) Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6)—which initially would be all people, both the elect and the condemned/unchosen, since *all* have fallen short of the glory of GOD—and (2) Christ's death and resurrection led to the forgiveness of all sins (1 John 2:2, also see Mark 3:28 in KJV wording), then according to the popular view of hell, there would be multitudes of people in hell, but they would be forgiven: *those who are forgiven* would nevertheless be tortured in hell forever. This is a surprising form of "forgiveness," where the soul is forgiven, but regardless, the most horrific hell-punishment is still carried-out forever. This would be another one of the paradoxes cleared-up with Calvinist universal salvation.

3. PRE-ESCHATON ANNIHILATIONISM

Evangelical Calvinist universal salvation involves an original and very specific theology of annihilation of the consciousness and/or soul, that we will analyze in detail in this section. The annihilationism I will be concerned with involves the conclusion that one's consciousness and/or soul ceases to exist, since it is described as being destroyed, or being in eternal destruction, according to the words of Jesus in the following verse:

Matthew 10:28 Authorized (King James) Version

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.

Hell and the underworld regions are destroyed at the Eschaton (Rev. 20:14) when the earth—which the underworld regions are inside of—pass away (Mt. 24:35, Mk. 13:31, Lk. 21:33, 2 Pet. 3:10, Rev. 21:1), so the hell annihilation can only be *pre-Eschaton*. The modern translations are in accord with the KJV in using the word “destroy” (or “kill” is also used), and in using the word “hell,” in this verse. Importantly, notice how this destruction (annihilation) happens specifically at the hell phase, which is pre-Eschaton, since hell is destroyed at the Eschaton (entire sections below verify this). This is a marked difference between mainstream post-Eschaton annihilation theology, and the pre-Eschaton annihilation theology of this thesis. But the Scriptural evidence is clear: it is “*in hell*” (pre-Eschaton) that annihilation occurs, not at the Eschaton and/or final judgment, such as annihilation occurring in the Lake of Fire, all of which are after hell and the underworlds

have been destroyed—so, if annihilation happened *after* hell passed away, then that would contradict the words of Jesus in Matt. 10:28.

Also, consider the following additional examples of annihilation verses, about the pre-Eschaton annihilation of humans:

2 Thessalonians 1:9 Authorized (King James) Version

Who shall be punished with everlasting¹⁴ destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power...¹⁵

1 Thessalonians 4:15 Authorized (King James) Version

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Psalm 92:7 Authorized (King James) Version

When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.

¹⁴ I will discuss why this verse and others (Ps. 92:7, cited in this group of verses) involve the concept of everlastingness, forever, destruction, when the annihilated are brought back to life (resurrected) at the Eschaton, later in this section, and in section 10 below.

¹⁵ I will discuss the relationship between eternal destruction (annihilation) and eternal punishment in a section below.

Isaiah 1:28 Authorized (King James) Version

And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.¹⁶

Many more could have been cited, and more are cited below.

These Scriptures all point to a pre-Eschaton annihilation of consciousness and/or soul, and I do not know of any Scripture that point to an Eschaton or post-Eschaton annihilation, such as annihilation in the Lake of Fire.

It is important to note that the thesis of evangelical Calvinism universal salvation *does not depend on* the annihilationism of the soul being the correct theology; rather it merely appears that annihilationism is a nonessential aspect of it.

We will find in this thesis that the trajectory of the condemned soul is to first live in the physical body as a living soul, then at body death the soul goes into the underworld regions, and into some degree of non-existence of the person, and thirdly, after this, the soul is resurrected, to be consumed by the Consuming Fire, Lake of Fire (GOD) (this is the Eschaton), in order to be saved in Christ, saved via GOD-immolation, in His ecstasy (ekstasis, see Psalm 16:10-11, 104:15).

The annihilation of the soul is a *gap*, of some sort, in the existence of the soul. This is important because, in this thesis, I do not take a position on whether the mind merely sleeps for a bit, on the one hand, or on the other, the soul literally stops existing, is blotted

¹⁶ The concept here of the annihilated later being *consumed*, will play an extremely important role in our development of Calvinist universal salvation in this thesis.

out of existence, at the pre-Eschaton annihilation. Both sorts of annihilation may be occurring. And there appears to be a spectrum, a range, of ways the annihilation could occur, from mere sleep, to total nonexistence of the human. But in this thesis, I am primarily concerned with annihilation as a cessation of consciousness and conscious awareness, which constitute an end of the person, *from* physical body death, *to* the Eschaton resurrection—a pause, silence, gap, sleep of conscious existence, of conscious awareness—wherein the human ceases to exist for a finite duration (but which is an eternity to the annihilated, this is discussed below), during the underworld interval.

During this underworld interval, there are two options for the human upon death of the physical body: 1. annihilation (human and/or consciousness ceases to exist and/or function), or 2. non-annihilation torment (human remains conscious, and does not cease functioning, in order to be tortured). It appears Scripture is more in line with annihilation, as we have seen, where souls go into a state of sleep or dormancy—absence of soul and/or conscious functioning—during the underworld interval, such as with the story of Jonah and his pre-Eschaton fainting, or sleep, in the deep (discussed below).

Also, as stated, the annihilationism I will introduce in this thesis is a *pre-Eschaton* annihilationism, which, despite seeming to be in-line with Scripture, would be a novel position, to my knowledge (since annihilation is, to my knowledge, always considered an Eschaton and afterward phenomenon). This thesis holds that all people—that is, living souls (1 Cor. 15:45, Gen. 2:7)—if re-created in a wink for the eternity with GOD in the afterlife, have to cease existing so that a new person, the new self, the new soul, of the afterlife, can be created by the LORD. The old must vanish so the new can come into existence, wherein there will be a gap between the two lives. The existence of the

corrupted soul (living soul) ceases, and the noncorrupted living soul comes into existence (see 1 Cor. 15:42), wherein a discontinuity of, a gap in the life of, the soul exists, between these two existences, despite the body and its soul having its haecceity in both lives (the haecceity is brought back into existence after the gap, the annihilation interval). This gap is the annihilation interval of the living soul, where consciousness and/or soul cease to function, and/or cease to exist, during their time in the underworld. The loss of conscious functioning would be a cessation of mentation, wherein the self, experientially, would be described as no longer existing (annihilation).

The verses just cited about the annihilation of the person are claimed to be annihilation because the verses mention the *destruction* of the living soul. According to Merriam-Webster, to “destroy” is to kill or annihilate, and to annihilate is to cease to exist. This is annihilationism, and I do not know how to avoid the thesis of annihilationism regarding the soul after death of the physical body, given these verses. Due to what is written in these verses, annihilationism involves souls ceasing to exist, or ceasing to function (sleep, faint, etc.), or their going fully dormant, or something related to this, and this occurs during the underworldly state, which occurs *from* the point of body-death, *to* the Eschaton.

For those reasons, I contend that references in Scripture to the soul being in the underworld involve, in-part or in-full, accounts of the soul *ceasing to exist*, in some way, since consciousness—which is human existence—ceases during the gap between the physical and the afterlife (Eschaton). We will discover in this thesis that *all* souls exist salvifically, forever, from the point of the Eschaton and afterwards, so we know that the underworldly annihilation does not occur from the point of the Eschaton or after that. And we know from the Scripture passages just cited above about the goats (the full passage

is Matthew 25:31-46), that the goats (the unchosen) are resurrected at the Eschaton, *in order to be burned* in the Lake of Fire, Consuming Fire (GOD) (Matthew 25:41). When being resurrected for the salvific Eschaton immolation by GOD, GOD brings them back into existence at the Eschaton, in order to be burned and saved. I do not know of any Scripture that indicate the soul is dormant, and/or the consciousness ceases, during the immolation of the Eschaton (Lake of Fire). And there is Scripture stating that humans are alert/conscious, and even in amazed states during the Lake of Fire immolation (see analysis of Isa. 13:8 below).

Jonah 2:7 involves Jonah going into the underworld, where he sleeps (faints, becomes unconscious, pause in conscious awareness), and when he awakens (begins his emergences from and out of the underworld) he is aware of the LORD.

Consider the following verses:

John 5:28-29 Authorized (King James) Version

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear¹⁷ his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the

¹⁷ Some may wonder how the annihilated can *hear*. In this thesis, I hold the position that annihilation is primarily like some sort of dreamless sleep perhaps, or a cessation of consciousness and conscious awareness, in some way. Some Scripture implies there is still a body of some sort during underworldly sleep-annihilation, and perhaps even an altered and/or spiritual-like body, see 1 Sam. 28, while other Scripture implies that the body would be destroyed (not exist) during underworldly annihilation/loss-of-consciousness, see Matt. 10:28. For that reason, there may be an array of scenarios for underworldly body existence or nonexistence—where some have a body of some sort, and some do not. But this is all not what I am concerned with here. Rather, I am concerned with aspect of annihilation involving loss of conscious and the loss of consciousness as being the annihilation state: without consciousness and conscious awareness, the person—that is, the *self*—does not exist, and whether the body continues existing, or if the body is *also* destroyed (stops existing), would depend on the specific situation. A stoppage in consciousness and in conscious awareness can occur for a consciousness with a body, and for a consciousness that does not have a body (such as with the disembodied consciousness of the man Paul

resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Revelation 20:13 Authorized (King James) Version

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Revelation 20:13 English Standard Version

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

knew in 2 Cor. 12:1-4). In either case, what appears to be going on is that the soul is dormant (by which I mean it does not have any conscious activity, it is devoid of conscious contents), and the LORD begins its awakening when he calls to it at the Eschaton, whereby the hearing happens in consciousness, not via the ears of a body. This seems to align well with what we humans recognize as *hearing*, since all hearing happens in consciousness—ears seemingly are merely a detector of air vibrations to be processed “downstream” in brain and mind, wherein the diverse phenomenology of sound experiences is an aspect of consciousness, not of ear drums. And this seems to align with the concept that the soul (regardless if it has a body or not) appears to stay in existence in the underworld, like a soul without consciousness and conscious awareness (the aforementioned dormant soul), but where the person, the self (the conscious elements and conscious awareness) do not exist (1 Sam. 28 seems to imply this): the dormant soul is a fully empty soul (fully empty of consciousness). The hearing of the LORD would be the LORD implanting the dormant soul with consciousness again at the Eschaton awakening. But the scenario where not even the dormant/empty soul exists also seems logical and possible, where in that scenario, the LORD could stop the existence of every aspect of a person, body, soul, consciousness, only to bring them back into existence—bringing back their body, their haecceity, subjective mind, qualia, etc., as He chooses—at the Eschaton awakening/resurrection. Perhaps, as the Scripture passages cited in this footnote imply, both scenarios (keeping dormant soul in existence, and not keeping it in existence) are what GOD is doing, depending on His predestining of the person (soul and living soul) in question, and their destiny that the LORD has determined before the beginning (see Grupp “Why God Did Not Choose,” for more discussion of this topic).

Revelation 20:13 New American Bible (Revised Edition)

The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds.

Daniel 12:2 Authorized (King James) Version

And many of them that sleep¹⁸ in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

These verses, as with others above, indicate that the annihilation is pre-Eschaton, and there is no Scriptural evidence that the annihilation of the soul starts at the final judgement and with the Eschaton. These verses involved humans being awakened, resurrected, coming out of the land of the dead, for the Eschaton. They are emerging from either cessation of consciousness and/or soul annihilation of the underworld phase. The annihilation is *from* the point of body-death *to* the Eschaton, for the unchosen.

There are three key aspects to the annihilationist theology involved in the Calvinist universal salvation described in this thesis. Firstly, and as indicated above, I maintain that Scripture involves, at the very least, an annihilation a person that, consists of the annihilation *of consciousness*, at the very least. This would therefore entail that a person is held to be, to some large degree, identical to their consciousness: if I don't have

¹⁸ Sleep here is a reference to the underworld existence in annihilation. Compare the fainting (loss of consciousness, sleep) of Jonah in the deep in Jonah 2.

consciousness and conscious awareness, my self, my being, is paused and/or non-existent during that interval. If the consciousness ceases in some such way, then the person stops existing, in full or in part. A verse such as 1 Sam 16:7 would indicate that our real self, the one GOD looks at and is looking at now, is our insides (our subjective, conscious, self-aware, inner landscape). John 6:63 says that “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” The spirit is the consciousness primarily, more than the flesh.

To verify this position—that a human being is to be primarily defined in terms of its inner consciousness, rather than its physical body—in philosophical terms, consider that if my consciousness could be removed from association with, or attachment to, my body, and/or from being inside of my physical fleshly body, and put into another container (body, instrument, vessel), such as some sort of a computer, for the sake of explanation, then hypothetically speaking, I believe I will still feel like, and have self-awareness of, my same continuous conscious self—only moved to a different location and vessel—now inside of, or associated with, a new body (the computer). Phenomenologically, if I have anything like a normal consciousness after this shift has been made, I will still feel that I am “Jeff,” and the very *same* “Jeff,” regardless of which body my mind/consciousness is in—just as I feel the same continuity of selfhood (feeling I am the same “me,” the same “I”) when I am in a different body during a dream at night, where I dream I am in a different life, in a different world, with a different body. But if on an inverse scenario, where my body was preserved but not my mind, destroying my mind, my consciousness, even my soul, I will not feel I continue to exist, and my *self* will cease to exist, in some way.

This seems to support how the self is to a large degree, if not fully, identical to consciousness and/or conscious awareness. And for these reasons, I am taking the old-fashioned view of self being more aligned with being the consciousness and conscious awareness, rather than being the physical body, as logically inferred by what was just written in the previous paragraph. In different words, self is the *inner awareness*, the inner *feeling* of self, the contents of consciousness, including the qualia, and all of the phenomenological self (in Husserlian terms), more than being the mere flesh-body with its meaty organs. So, if the inner self, the consciousness, ceases its activity, and there is no consciousness, then I conclude that the self does not exist in times of soul sleep (soul dormancy, without any conscious contents in it): the self is in a state of nonexistence. Without awareness, and without contents of consciousness, there is no self, or functioning self—only, at most, a dormant (nonactive) soul.

Secondly, I hold that when the dead are raised at the Eschaton, at the coming-back-into-existence of the soul and/or the consciousness, from the underworld annihilation, the person is roughly brought back into existence from this nonexistence and/or nonfunctioning of self and/or soul. Some of the Scripture cited in this section appears to suggest that the annihilation could be more like a sleep (deep dreamless sleep), or cessation of mind activities, of self or soul activities, than a total ceasing to exist—perhaps both sorts of underworld annihilation from sleeplike annihilation on the one hand, to total ceasing to exist on the other, exist in Scripture, and there is a spectrum of ways a person is annihilated during the underworld epoch.

Regardless of the exact nature of the annihilation, and if there is some sort of spectrum, from sleep on the one hand, to pure nonexistence on the other, we know that annihilation

is reversed at the Eschaton, as shown above. The references in the Old Testament about underworld existence being associated with a deep sleep (loss of consciousness), would be an example of this time of nonexistence and annihilation:

James 2:26 Authorized (King James) Version

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Matthew 27:52 Authorized (King James) Version

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

Matthew 9:24 Authorized (King James) Version

He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

Acts 7:54-60 Authorized (King James) Version

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him:

and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Luke 8:50-55 Authorized (King James) Version

But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

John 11:11-14 Authorized (King James) Version

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

Isaiah 34:2 Authorized (King James) Version

For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies:
he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

Thirdly, annihilationists typically hold, to my knowledge, that the soul ceases to exist at the final judgment, at the Eschaton, but as can be deduced from the first two points just given, the Calvinist universal salvation theology described in this thesis would involve the idea that the Eschaton is the point where the soul, in fact, *awakens*, and is brought back into existence, into awareness, back into consciousness, into having mental activity and mental content: *from* being in a state of unconsciousness, or perhaps, of non-consciousness. This is when the soul is *brought out of* the underworldly status. Consider the following verse:

Acts 2:27 Authorized (King James) Version

because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2:27 English Standard Version

For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

Acts 2:27 New American Standard Bible

For You will not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

In Matthew 25, we see the soul annihilation of the underworld referred to as “everlasting punishment.” I consider the everlasting punishment of Matthew 25 is a synonym for everlasting destruction (soul cessation): a person is destroyed for an infinity of time, for reasons spelled out after I cite the verse:

Matthew 25:46 Authorized (King James) Version

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.¹⁹

Matthew 25:46 English Standard Version

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Matthew 25:46 New American Standard Bible

¹⁹ This verse is about the Lake of Fire, not about hell. Hell is not temporally infinite, but the Lake of Fire is. This will be discussed below. This verse is about the goats, who appear to go into *everlasting* fire (Lake of Fire):

Matthew 25:41 Authorized (King James) Version

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

The more modern translations say “eternal fire.”

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

It must be the case that the eternal destruction is *equal to* eternal punishment, lest a contradiction emerge in Scripture. If eternal punishment was not *also* annihilation, then one verse (Mt. 10:28) would contain the person ceasing to exist, and another verse (Mt. 25:46) would point to the opposite: punishment while being non-annihilated, not destroyed, which would be a contradiction. So, to avoid contradiction, eternal punishment must equal annihilation of the soul and/or person.²⁰

There is more support for this concept that eternal destruction = eternal punishment if we consider the following passage:

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 Authorized (King James) Version

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

²⁰ This is also the position endorsed by Bart Ehrman, in "Smith-Pettit Lecture - The History of Heaven and Hell," (YouTube. August 7, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_eZf33UMs8).

2 Thess. 1:9, a verse about annihilation (destruction) of an unchosen person, and a verse discussed at length below, indicates that the destruction of the person is a *separation from* GOD's presence (*ἀπό*, from or *away from*). But there cannot be any such separation from GOD's presence, since one can never be away from GOD and the love of GOD:

Romans 8:38-39 Authorized (King James) Version

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm 139:8 Authorized (King James) Version

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell,²¹ behold, thou art there.

Therefore, the *separation from* GOD's presence referred to in 2 Thess. 1:9 must be a reference to the pre-Eschaton annihilation: cessation and annihilation of, at the very least, their conscious awareness and their mind. If there was no such annihilation, then the person would be both separated from GOD's presence, and also in GOD's love (Rom. 8) (which is to be in His presence, since GOD is love, 1 John 4:7-9), which is a contradiction,

²¹ The newer translations use "Hades," rather than hell.

since the person would be simultaneously separated-and-not-separated from GOD. Annihilation of the self (regardless if that means soul sleep on the one hand, or soul non-existence on the other), where the separation occurs because one party (human self) ceases to exist, and therein is separated, resolves this, and there is no contradiction in Scripture. GOD is omnipresent, so the only way a human self can be separated from GOD is to not exist.

Before returning to analysis of Matthew 25:41, one more possible objection to pre-Eschaton annihilation should be discussed. The objection can be stated as follows: if one's consciousness, body, self, or even their soul does not exist through the underworld gap from body-death to Eschaton—why is this called eternal or everlasting *punishment*, when the consciousness and maybe even the soul, does not exist? *How can punishment be happening if there is nothing there to punish?* I will next address this objection.

We know that we cannot define annihilation of consciousness and/or soul in terms of *timelessness*: we cannot consider a human consciousness and/or soul as defined as timeless—outside of time—during the annihilation, since such timelessness would involve the consciousness and/or soul *not* having a location in time, and therefore neither a beginning nor end in time. But we know that a human consciousness and/or soul does have a start in time, and an end in time, when the consciousness and/or soul goes into the underworld (which would be the commencement of its pre-Eschaton annihilation), and where the consciousness and/or soul annihilation lasts until it is awakened, brought back into existence, at the Eschaton resurrection. So, we cannot consider the annihilation of the consciousness and/or soul to be described in terms of the consciousness and/or self as being *timeless*, as if the soul goes into a timeless state, for example.

Rather, there isn't anything at all we can say about the consciousness and/or soul in the gap ("during" annihilation), since the consciousness and/or soul does not exist, and there is nothing that can be said about, nothing to assign language to, something that *is not there*. There are merely two distinct lives, two separated existences—pre-Eschaton pre-underworld existence of the consciousness and/or soul on the one hand, and Eschaton / post-Eschaton of the consciousness and/or soul on the other. The consciousness and/or soul goes out of existence, and comes back into existence when the dead are raised.

The point is that the pre-afterlife (pre-Eschaton pre-underworld) existence of the consciousness and/or soul has to *stop existing*, and the afterlife (Eschaton / post-Eschaton) consciousness and/or soul must *come into existence*, as new but with the same haecceity (perhaps as a new consciousness, with different conscious contents and conscious awareness, but containing the same haecceity). The only way I can tell in how to explain this is if there is a *gap between these two existences*, pre- and post-Eschaton. Let's explore specifically why there only can be a marked gap between these two existences, which is the gap of annihilation.

These two existences cannot "touch" each other, so to speak. In other words, they cannot temporally coincide at their boundaries in any way, for example: the end of the pre-Eschaton consciousness and/or soul cannot temporally coincide in any way with the start of the Eschaton/post-Eschaton consciousness and/or soul. If they did, then at the overlap/coinciding interval, the consciousness and/or soul would exist both simultaneously in the pre-Eschaton state on the one hand, and also in the Eschaton and post-Eschaton state on the other, during that duration of overlap of the two existences of the consciousness and/or soul. If that happened, then a person would be both able to see

GOD as He is (1 John 3:2) and not able to see GOD as He is (contradiction), for example. Also, the person would, more simply understood, be both pre-Eschaton and not pre-Eschaton simultaneously (also a contradiction). There are many ways one will arrive contradiction when analyzing the impossible scenario of the two existences temporally overlapping.

So, if they are not coinciding/overlapping, and if there was not gap of nonexistence between them, then the two lives, the two existences, would have to be directly adjacent, touching without overlapping, and without any time (temporal gap) between them. At the time that the pre-Eschaton life ended, without any time gap, the Eschaton life would have to start. This is a scenario time would exist in *discrete* units (time would be like the integers on the number line), rather than being *continuous* time (time being like the Real number line, where there are infinite numbers [times] between any two numbers [times] on the number line [in the timestream]). But this scenario cannot exist, however, because it would require the “surfaces,” for lack of better words, of the time that the pre-Eschaton life stopped, and the time of the Eschaton / post-Eschaton life started, to “touch” without overlapping/coinciding, lest there be the annihilation gap between the pre- and post-Eschaton existences of the consciousness and/or soul. For this gapless and non-coinciding touching to happen, the pre-Eschaton life would vanish, and immediately, without any time passing, the Eschaton / post-Eschaton life would start. This would involve a situation where discrete (non-continuous) time atoms would be temporally extended (temporally extended time atoms are called *chronons*), and would suffer the same contradictory and fatal description that Democritean atoms (spatially extended

philosophical atoms that do not have parts) do.²² These temporally extended chronons would be chunks of time, durations, without parts: durations not made up of duration (contradiction). So, the pre-Eschaton and Eschaton / post- Eschaton existences of the consciousness and/or soul can only have the annihilation gap between them, in the case where time is discrete. Let's now discuss the other scenario, where time is not discrete, but is continuous, like the Real number line, where there are infinite numbers between any two numbers.

We will, however, find that if time is continuous, in that scenario also, the pre- and post-Eschaton lives of a consciousness and/or self also cannot be directly adjacent, without overlap, and with out gap. There must be a gap (annihilation). On this scenario, of continuous time, we consider the time atoms chronons, to be point-sized (having no duration), where time is composed of timeless / durationless instants, infinities of them composing any perceived duration. Consider what philosopher Roderick Chisholm discusses, in how entities cannot touch at all, in any scenario of continuous time or space:

Consider two discrete physical bodies thought to be continuous with each other; the east side of body A, say, is continuous with the west side of body B. How is this possible? Either (i) the eastmost part of A is in the same place as is the westmost part of B or (ii) no part of A occupies the same place as does any part of B. In the case of (i), we would have two discrete things in the same place. But this is impossible. In the case of (ii), since A and B occupy different places, there is a

²² See Jeff Grupp, "The Implantation Argument: Simulation Theory as a New Proof for the Existence of God," *Metaphysica*. 22. 2. 26-31 (2021). In this paper, I argue that Democritean atoms (partless basic building blocks of reality that are spatially extended) cannot exist. The very same reasoning in that article would apply to temporally extended chronons, and temporally extended chronons cannot exist either,

place between the place where A is and the place where B is. But if there is a place between A and B, then A and B are not continuous.²³

Therefore, there can only be a temporal gap (nonexistence) between the pre-Eschaton and Eschaton/post-Eschaton consciousness and/or soul, which is the pre-Eschaton annihilation of consciousness and/or soul discussed in this section. The only solution is to propose is the aforementioned annihilation gap of the consciousness and/or soul, between the two existences, pre-Eschaton and Eschaton/post-Eschaton consciousness and/or soul. A pre-Eschaton annihilation is logically inevitable. For these reasons, eternal punishment has to be identical to eternal destruction (annihilation). And in Scriptural terms, *punishment is to not exist* (while in the underworld). To say there is nothing there to punish if the consciousness and/or soul does not exist during the annihilation gap, is to assume that punishment cannot merely be *nonexistence* through the gap. But from what we have just analyzed, the gap of annihilation can only be non-existence, and therefore, eternal punishment equals eternal destruction of the annihilation phase.

We also know that the standard theory of annihilationism, which is post-Eschaton, rather than pre-Eschaton annihilation being espoused in this thesis, cannot be correct, since *all* people are *to be* saved, as Scripture so precisely verifies in this thesis. If *all* human souls are saved, then there cannot be souls that are annihilated *without end*: annihilated without being resurrected. For if they were, then all would not be saved, and the plethora of Scripture passages cited in this thesis verifying Scriptural Calvinist universal salvation would be contradicted: annihilated (nonexistent) consciousnesses and/or souls would be

²³ Chisholm, Roderick. *On Metaphysics* (University of Minnesota Press. 1989), 84.

saved (contradiction). And for that reason, the only annihilation that Scripture can be referring to is the gappy pre-Eschaton annihilation just discussed.

Returning to discussion of Matthew 25:41, this verse requires more analysis, in the broader context of Matthew 25. Consider the broader context of the verse:

Matthew 25:40-46 Authorized (King James) Version

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

In verse 41, Jesus refers to the everlasting fire, which is the Lake of Fire, since fire of hell would not exist past the Eschaton (“heavens and earth pass away”) and therefore is finite in duration. There is only one unending Fire referred to in Scripture, which is GOD, who is revealed with Fire at the Eschaton. Then immediately Jesus traces back (verses 42 to

45) to pre-Eschaton times to discuss the lack of good works (faithful works). And then in 46 it is claimed that those of unfaithful works go into everlasting punishment. There is no timeframe given for when this everlasting punishment is, but the “and” at the start of verse 46 (“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment...”) tells us that the verse 46 is a continuation of thought from verse 45, and therefore about the pre-Eschaton reality discussed in verses 42 to 45. For that reason, verse 46 is about pre-Eschaton everlasting punishment, in the underworld reality, and therefore the infinity of loss of consciousness (loss of soul, a gap in the existence of the soul, the self, in some respect, partially or fully). So, the everlasting Fire of Matthew 25:41, is not identical to the everlasting punishment of Matthew 25:46. The everlastingness of annihilation punishment will be discussed in a section below, which will reveal why it is called “everlasting” and/or “eternal,” when it is nevertheless reversed (the everlastingness and/or eternity are *interrupted*, by GOD) at the Eschaton.

4. LAZARUS AND THE BEGGAR (LUKE 16)

As for the story of Lazarus and the beggar in Luke chapter 16:19-31, this is definitely the most widely mentioned passage I hear about when people tell me there is Scriptural support for the popular view of hell. I contend that it is self-evident that the story of Lazarus and the beggar is a parable, for reasons explained next.

The story of Lazarus and the beggar is in Luke, which is glutted with parables, and the story of Lazarus and the beggar is located right in a long string of parables involving rich men and involving money and wealth (Parables of Hidden Treasure, the Pearl, the Unforgiving Servant, Lost Coin, Prodigal Son, Unjust Steward, Master and Servant, and others). The story of Lazarus and the beggar is the only story in the Bible that sounds anything roughly like the popular view of hell (and it is not a perfect match), and it is not like the Scriptural account of hell and the underworld regions. Therefore, the parable seems to be intended to be like the other parables in Luke, and it was never meant to be taken as a story that actually happened, or to be a description of the popular view of hell. Some parables are to be taken as representations of fact, descriptions of the physics and metaphysics of reality (e.g., the Tares), which are seen to contain alignment with the descriptions of reality found throughout Scripture, but others are not, and are made to be clearly renderings, role-playing, stories that did not actually happen and not about actual reality (e.g., Mt. 13:33, the Kingdom is not *actually* a lump of bread-dough), rather than empirical and/or logical analysis of reality.

And further, if the story of Lazarus and the beggar involved a *literal* description of the physics and metaphysics of reality, then multiple contradictions would emerge between this story and the rest of Scripture. For example, Scripture elsewhere indicates that in the

afterlife we will not remember former things: “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” (Isa. 65:17 AKJV). That would be contradicted with the story of Lazarus and the beggar.

But while in hell, Lazarus appears to be cogent and conscious, for a long span of time. It would appear that this would contradict the concept of the underworld being more of a state of soul loss, and soul cessation. So, taking the story of Lazarus and the beggar as a Parable, for multiple reasons just listed, seems to be our only option.

Calvinist universal salvation, described in Biblical eschatology and soteriology, dissolves multiple paradoxes and absurdities that are falsely believed to exist in Scripture, such as how an all-loving GOD supposedly creates creatures (people) only to prevent them (Mark 4:12) from turning to the LORD (Luke 8:10, Isa. 6:9-10), in order to torture them endlessly and in unfathomable horror, stemming from the corruption in their hearts *that they were created with* (1 Cor. 15:42), outside of their control. I believe it is safe to say that the popular view of hell involves that paradox, but Calvinist universal salvation involves a thorough resolution to that paradox. Another paradox that would appear to be solved is the Calvinist limited atonement paradox. I will not have space to go through it, however, and all such apparently resolved paradoxes in this thesis, but a few will be mentioned in passing.

5. INITIAL SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT FOR CALVINIST UNIVERSAL SALVATION

In more detail, Calvinist universal salvation can be described and further introduced as follows:

Calvinist universal salvation: The Creator-GOD created all humans before the world was created (Eph. 1:4),²⁴ where He *specifically* created them *corrupted*,²⁵ and then He re-makes them noncorrupted at the end of the world (1 Cor. 15:42, Jer. 18:4), by immersing all people in His Being, which is Consuming Fire (1 Cor. 3:15, Mk. 9:49, Heb. 12:29), which is the Eschaton. We will find that Scripture states that only *some* humans are chosen and saved *before* the end of the world (the Eschaton), but where GOD will save all remaining humans, that is, all unchosen and condemned, *at the Eschaton*, by immersing them in the Lake of Fire, which will be shown is an immersion in GOD, during the activities of the fire-Eschaton. So, reality contains a two-step salvation process, where first the elect (the chosen) are saved (pre-Eschaton), and secondly all non-elect are burned (by GOD's Fire) in order to be saved (at the Eschaton).

²⁴ See Jeff Grupp, "Why God Did Not Choose All Souls: New Scriptural Evidence." *Philosophy and Theology*. Vol. 32, 1 & 2 (2021), 116, note 5.

²⁵ As an aside, I want to comment on the significance of this point: that humans were created as *corrupted*. This is the only way anything can be created by a monotheistic Creator, if that Creator is the unblemished greatest conceivable being. Logically speaking, there can only be *one* such uncorrupted entity that can exist, which would be GOD only, and that being so, then if GOD creates anything *distinct* from Himself, then it is corrupt, since He is the only uncorrupt. So there is a mystery of how a corrupted thing can ultimately originate from an uncorrupt entity. This would be an argument for *creatio ex nihilo*: any corrupted created entity cannot come from the being or nature of the one uncorrupted Being. This is a *logical* principle, contained in the message of 1 Cor. 15:42, and it explains why reality is how it is, a damaged (corrupted) reality that needs to be saved by its Creator, by becoming one with its Creator. I previously discussed this in Grupp, "Why God Did Not Choose," page 17, and this would be the long-sought solution to the problem of evil, and the problem of pain. In a universe created by one GOD who is perfect, anything created by GOD would be corrupted and need to unite with GOD, the one uncorrupted, in order to exist uncorrupted.

Only the non-elect will be hurt during this transformation at the Eschaton (see Rev. 2:11²⁶). Specific Scriptural evidence and reasoning will be given for this thesis.

Many verses and passages will be presented to support the thesis of Calvinist universal salvation. Here are a few more.

Romans 11:32 Authorized (King James) Version

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.²⁷

John 1:9 Authorized (King James) Version

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Revelation 5:13 Authorized (King James) Version

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

²⁶ I interpret the second death to be the baptism of fire of the Eschaton, and the first death as becoming a being of fallenness with sin diseasing our being at the fall of Creation. The baptism of fire as being the Lake of Fire, will be discussed and Scripturally verified in a section below.

²⁷ I believe it is safe to say, and it has been suggested to me, that the Romans 11, and perhaps all of the book of Romans, is fertile ground for the Calvinist universal salvation theology of this thesis.

Luke 16:16 Authorized (King James) Version

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Matthew 13:33 Authorized (King James) Version

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

John 6:33 Authorized (King James) Version

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Psalms 117:1 Authorized (King James) Version

O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

A passage of Scripture that breaks down Calvinist universal salvation is the Parable of the Tares in Matthew 13. In the Parable, it can be seen that there are two groups, the chosen and the unchosen, where the unchosen are blocked from believing (verses 10-15, we also see this blocking in Mark 4:12), even though they apparently otherwise could have or would have believed. And specifically at the very end (the Eschaton), the

unchosen are burned, but there is no mention that the burned continue burning past this ending (beyond the Eschaton event). *Instead*, with the way the passage flows, it is immediately *after* this burning, at the end, that the “righteous shine forth as the sun,” which is a signal of how we will be when we are our real selves when we are looking at GOD in the afterlife (see 1 John 3:2), since we will be like suns, spheres of blinding light, just as GOD is a sun:

Psalm 84:11 Authorized (King James) Version

For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (Also see Matt., 17:2, Isa 9:2, and Mal. 4:2.)

In the Parable of the Tares, the end-Fire is directly adjacent to and preceding the shining as the sun. The quite poignant issue of a truly *never-ending* torment, such as with something like the popular view of hell, is not mentioned, and therefore is, strictly speaking, not involved with those who are tares (the condemned, the unchosen, who are soon to be immolated) in this Parable. The chosen and unchosen would all-together comprise all human beings that were ever created—nobody would fall outside that logical dichotomy—and for that reason, we know that in verse 30, the chosen and unchosen, are one collective, one system (“both grow together”). Then right after Jesus’ discussion of the Parable of the Tares, we find verse 33, which indicates that the kingdom of heaven is worked through “the whole,” in the next parable listed in Scripture, in a verse immediately

adjacent to the end of the Parable of the Tares, putting the Parable of the Tares right in the context of discussion of parables where the kingdom of heaven reaches into all of humanity. Here is the full passage:

Matthew 13:10-15, 24-43 Authorized (King James) Version

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them... Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto

him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 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. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The gnashing of teeth referred to at the end, which is ubiquitously believed to be a reference of hell, and therefore people being thrown into hell, but that cannot be correct, as this is about the very end of the world, the end of all things (note that a few lines up it says, “so shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels...” which is referring to Eschaton events). So, this burning is a reference to the Lake of Fire, which below we will find is GOD and His Eschaton Fire, and that is why this gnashing of teeth verse is directly followed by this: “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

Another passage that communicates Calvinist universalist salvation is in John 10. In this well-known passage,²⁸ we again see a demarcation between the chosen and unchosen, the saved and the condemned (where the chosen and unchosen comprise all human beings), where no human beings fall outside of this group. But then at a later time, *after* this demarcation was set, GOD saves all the rest of the sheep, so there is only one Shepherd and one fold. In other words, currently there are the chosen and unchosen, but in the future *all* will be brought into GOD’s *one flock* (that is, the unchosen will be saved). This is the thesis of Calvinist universal salvation. Here is the passage:

²⁸ At least up to, but not including, verse 16 to the end, is widely known and discussed. The universalist aspects of the passage that start in verse 16 often seem not widely discussed, from what I can tell.

John 10:1-4, 6-9, 11-17 Authorized (King James) Version

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice... This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture... I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

Note again how the underlined portion of the passage from John 10 involves the universal saving as being future-pointing. The parable of the Tares is also future-pointing, a very consistent theme of the omnisalvation that will occur at the Eschaton.

A thesis like Calvinist universal salvation should not be surprising, since Scripture plainly tells us that the underworld realm of the dead (Hades, hell) *will not last forever* (Mark 13:31, Rev. 20:14), and also that all things *will be* (in the future) restored (Acts 3:21). Passages like these point directly toward a Calvinist universal salvation theology.

6. WELL-KNOWN, WIDELY CITED VERSES CONTAIN CALVINIST UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Above we saw how some widely cited verses (such as “every knee shall bow”), in fact contain Calvinist universal salvation, or even the two-stages of salvation of Calvinist universal salvation, but where it has not been recognized that it is this what the passages contain. Below are samples of more verses and passages that are widely discussed, and which involve Calvinist universal salvation. And notice, again, in these widely discussed passages, the *future*-pointing nature of some of these examples, where all are *not* saved *now* (there are condemned *and* saved presently), but where universal salvation is future, not present, at the future Fire of the Eschaton.

Luke 2:8-12 Authorized (King James) Version

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

John 5:25-28 Authorized (King James) Version

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is,²⁹ when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.

John 1:29 Authorized (King James) Version

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Romans 8:22-23 Authorized (King James) Version

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

²⁹ In a footnote above, I discussed how some passages cited in this thesis seem to indicate that the universal salvation of the end (future) is, somehow, *also* “reaching back,” for lack of better words, into the present (pre-Eschaton), as this passages also indicates, where the Eschaton “is coming,” but also “now is.” This passage indicates that not only will the dead hear GOD’s voice at the Eschaton, but furthermore, the dead are *now*, presently, in some way, hearing His voice, as well.

Consider the following additional, lesser discussed, verses, that point to Calvinist universal salvation, and where again some indicate the two-step salvation dynamic: first there is pre-Eschaton Calvinist double predestination (up to the Eschaton), and secondly, at a later point, in the future, there is total and maximal universalism, which happens by Eschaton Fire. I have again underlined the future-pointing aspects of these Calvinist universal salvation passages below:

Acts 3:21 Authorized (King James) Version

whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

1 John 2:2 Authorized (King James) Version

and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Romans 5:18 Authorized (King James) Version

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

John 6:33 Authorized (King James) Version

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Isaiah 66:23 Authorized (King James) Version

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:22 Authorized (King James) Version

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Isaiah 31:7 Authorized (King James) Version

For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.

Isaiah 40:5 Authorized (King James) Version

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Lamentations 3:31 Authorized (King James) Version

For the Lord will not cast off for ever.

1 Timothy 2:4 Authorized (King James) Version

Who will have³⁰ all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

³⁰ I have been told that “will have” should be translated with the very different phrase, “wants to.” I have not seen the argument for why that is the case. I find it interesting that translating “will have,” rather than “wants to,” occurs only in the Textus-based Bibles and the pre-Textus Bibles in English: WYC, YTL, KJV, GNV, Tyndale Bible (Coverdale Bible, Matthew’s Bible), The Great Bible 1539, Bishop’s Bible 1568, Noah Webster 1833, Julia E. Smith 1876, with the exception of Green’s Literal Translation (which is arguably not properly classified as an ancient translation). All of these use the very-same concept: that GOD *will save all* (a future universalist event). And on the other hand, all post-Textus translations, to my knowledge, do not use “will have,” and instead use “wants all.” But for all of the translations, the most ancient to most modern Bibles, all are translated from identical Greek for 1 Tim. 2:4 (ος παντας ανθρωπους θελει σωθηναι και εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας ελθειν), since there are no discrepancies regardless of which manuscript they were translated from—whether the 1550 Textus Receptus, the Byzantine Majority, the Alexandrian, the Hort and Westcott, and so on: all are identical. So, all Textus and pre-Textus translations agree with each other, translating 1 Tim. 2:4 as GOD saving all in the future, and the post-Textus translations agree with each other, in translating 1 Tim. 2:4 as GOD merely *wanting to* save all—but these two groups (Textus/pre-Textus versus post-Textus) disagree, which is quite interesting. How this change happened in translating 1 Tim. 2:4 from the way the ancient group did, to the way the modern group has, is not explored in this thesis outside of this footnote, where I will consider the Textus and pre-Textus translations to be doctrinally sound, and the pre-Textus “wants to” to be doctrinally problematical to the point of leading to a contradiction in the post-Textus translations that does not exist in the Textus and pre-Textus translations. The Textus and pre-Textus “will have” fits far better into the overall plan of Scripture (which is Calvinist universal salvation), and it avoids the unsettling paradox that the omnipotent creator-GOD *cannot* save all people—He only wants to, but won’t, or can’t, do what he wants, and He can’t have what He wants.

But this leads to what I consider a far more profound issue surrounding 1 Tim. 2:4, which is that if one interprets 1 Tim. 2:4 as the newer translations do with “wants,” there is an apparent contradiction with Psalm 115:3 that emerges: “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased” (AKJV), “God... does whatever pleases him” (NIV), “God... does all that he pleases” (ESV). So, if one claims that GOD “wants to” save all people, *but does not, another*, second contradiction emerges: He does and does

1 Timothy 4:10 Authorized (King James) Version

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.³¹

Mark 9:49-50 Authorized (King James) Version

For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

These verses reveal the *two-step* salvific process of Calvinist universal salvation, where before the Eschaton there are both the saved and condemned, and then at the Eschaton *all*³² are burned by, or at least affected by, the Consuming Fire (see Mark 9:49) at the

not do what he wants. This contradiction is avoided by interpreting “wants to” in the modern Bibles in a way where GOD *did* what He wants according to 1 Tim 2:4, which is to save all people, where that would mean that “wants to” in the post-Textus translation merely reduces to the “will have” of the earlier / ancient translations, wherein the ancient translations are more accurate, since the post-Textus translations do not involve the Textus/pre-Textus reduction to “will have,” and since contradiction emerge in the doctrine of the newer translations. Perhaps this is why the KJV involves the future-pointing, Eschaton-oriented, “will have,” because Tyndale and his team were aware of the issues just discussed. Some may assert that despite all of this, all still will *not* be saved, since humans may respond to GOD with free will and reject Him, choosing to not be saved. But this would be to deny Ps. 115:3 as true, and to deny GOD’s omnipotence in saving all people if He merely wants to (which the post-Textus translations say He does), and further, there are problems with believing that GOD’s desire is not strong enough to overtake a human’s supposed resistance. In general, if GOD is sovereign, such human response matters not.

³¹ This verse seems to imply there are two groups of saved people. In other words, all people are saved, but there are two subgroups that all people comprise. And the way the verse is written, it is as if one group is more blessed in salvation than the other. This would fit consistently with Hebrews 6:9, which indicates that some salvation is better than others.

³² Both Revelation 2:11 and Revelation 20:6 appear to state that the uncondemned are not hurt in the Lake of Fire event at the end of all things.

Eschaton, wherein secondly, all remaining unsaved are saved. The absolutely dominant “never-get-out-of-hell” view of the popular view of hell is plainly contradicted by Scripture.

7. THE POPULAR VIEW OF HELL

In this thesis, I will discuss both the Scriptural accounts of the underworld region (hell, Hades, Tartarus, Sheol), but first I will discuss the aforementioned *popular* view of hell, where these two accounts—Scriptural vs. popular accounts of hell—are not at all identical, and in seemingly all ways are opposites of each other. I believe the following is an adequate description of the *popular* view of hell, and seemingly as endorsed worldwide:

The Popular View of Hell:

Those who do not “choose” Jesus via their fully autonomous free-will,³³ while living in the physical domain, will be kept conscious to be tortured in the horrific burning

³³ Calvinist universal salvation is different than perhaps any other theology, to my knowledge, in that it does not require human free-will choice for salvation, and one cannot, for example, choose to stay condemned at the Eschaton. Whether free will exists or not, there are widespread indications in Scripture of GOD overriding any choice a human has. For example, in Psalm 23:4, we see that GOD makes (maketh) a person lie down (“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...”). To give another example, Ez 36:27: “And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Philosophers widely conclude that human free will is self-contradictory (see Peter Van Inwagen, “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will,” in *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*. 8th ed., Louis Pojman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) 52-53), 430-431). And has been widely discussed how supposed free-will decisions conflict with the sovereignty of GOD: if my life, at this moment, is a product of all my decisions (free-will decisions), and your life is for you, and every other person in the world for their life, then GOD seems a bit irrelevant, like a passive GOD that does not have much control. This starkly conflicts with Scripture, which states that GOD is the creator of all things (Rev. 4:11), which would, then, include any aspect of the inner mind, which GOD also would have to create, as Scripture says He creates our inner minds (Luke 11:39-40). Despite these points, free-will is endorsed world-wide. Grudem writers:

Our words, our steps, our movements, our hearts, and our abilities are all from the Lord. But we must guard against misunderstanding. Here... God’s providential direction as an unseen, behind-the-scenes, “primary cause,” should not lead us to deny the reality of our choices and actions. Again and again Scripture affirms that we really do cause events to happen... *We do have choices* [italics Grudem’s]... Scripture repeatedly affirms these truths as well... One approach to these passages ... is to say that if our choices are real, they cannot be caused by God... But the number of passages that affirm this providential control of God is so considerable, and the difficulties involved in giving them some other interpretation are so formidable, that it does not seem to me that this can be the right approach to them. Exactly how God combines his providential control with our willing and significant choices, Scripture does not explain to us. (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic*

of the fires of the hell underworld, forever, in a literal mathematical infinity of time, with no chance of escape or release out of hell-torture *ever offered*: they will never, *ever* leave, and will always remain in the maximally intense absolute torment-state at the height of total immolation,³⁴ and where the all-loving Creator-GOD caused and created this situation and has turned His back on these condemned souls, separating Himself from them.

Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000 (1994)), 320-322.)
(Underlining mine.)

Grudem does not cite one verse or passage from Scripture as an example for how Scripture involves and/or describes the mechanics of, free-will. He does not cite one verse or passage, despite saying there is plentiful Scripture supporting free-will, and despite Grudem's Systematic Theology being glutted with verse support in seemingly every other issue discussed.

Free-will theology, from what I can tell, did not emerge with the life of Jesus, or from Scripture laying-down any sort of human free-will theology. Rather, it emerged into the second century, after Jesus, and not with the emergence of Scripture. Karamanolis writes:

The notions of free will and divine providence are as central in the thought of early Christian philosophers as they are for their Hellenic contemporaries... By the time of Justin Martyr, Christians are already exhibiting a strong interest in the issue of free will and in the role of divine providence... If we look at Scripture, however, either the Old or the New Testament, we do not find a discussion of this kind... The Scriptures not only lack a relevant discussion but also lack the concepts and the terms that Christian philosophers employ when discussing the issue of free will, such as that something is up to us..., that we are masters of our choices..., and that we have the power to choose freely... (George Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 2014 (2013)), 144-145).

On page 144, Karamanolis discusses how there "are statements that bear on the issue of free will, such as that of Jesus, who wishes he could avoid suffering but follows his Father's willing..." But Karamanolis's comment does not help with *human* free will choice, since the free-will intimated regarding Jesus supposedly wanting to avoid suffering is an aspect of Jesus's life, which would be the free-will of *GOD* (since Jesus is *GOD*), and not the supposed free will of a creature. *GOD* has free-will, I don't know of any Scripture that indicates that His creatures do. Much Scripture may appear to be about human free-will ("seek the LORD with all your heart..."), but regardless, of any such verse, Jesus says apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), and any good work in us starts with Him (Phil. 1:6), so it would appear any apparent free will act would in fact be *GOD* working in humans, and not the work starting with the human will. And lastly, I do not know of any Scripture, in any translation, ancient or modern, which discusses human free will at any length. If *GOD* is the creator of all things (Rev. 4:11), then I do not see how humans can create free-will moments inside their consciousnesses. And the idea that humans can share in the free-will of *GOD* seems difficult to argue when, as we just saw, all good works first original from *GOD* (Phil. 1:6), and not from humans.

³⁴ I use the phrase "unceasing eternity" to denote how some views of eternity may involve the eternity ending. For example, if "eternity" means that time pauses or stops, for example, then this sort of eternity would cease once time resumed again for the mind that was in a state of eternity-as-timelessness.

To my knowledge, the popular view of hell is a descendent of the Augustinian view of hell, as described here by Crisp:

It is usually understood that those who defend this sort of position are also committed to the belief that those members of humanity whose final destination is heaven ... are distinct from those members of humanity whose final destination is hell (the reprobate)... Furthermore, those who will be in heaven comprise all and only the elect and are exclusive of those who will be in hell, who comprise all and only the reprobate. Moreover, theists in this tradition assume that there is no hope for those who are reprobate: there is no possibility that a member of the reprobate might become a member of the elect, because God has foreordained the number of those who will occupy heaven and hell.³⁵

Virtually any Scripture about the underworld does not in any way match the popular view of hell. Only Gehenna might be the precursor of the popular view of hell. Hart writes:

“[T]he Gehenna” [is] the Greek form of Ge-Hinnom, “Valley of Hinnom.” This is a term that appears eleven times in the synoptic gospels and then only once more in the New Testament, in the Letter of James. If there is any word in the text that comes near to having something like the meaning we tend to attach to the word “hell” today, this would be it.³⁶

³⁵ Oliver D. Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press: 2014), 101.

³⁶ Hart, David Bentley, *That All Shall Be Saved* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 112-113.

But even the Valley of Hinnom, Gehenna, is not under the surface of the earth, and therefore has that significant difference between the popular view of hell. So, even the Valley of Hinnom is perhaps not such a Scriptural close-fit to the popular view.

Consider the following verses, which reveal the Scriptural account of hell and/or hades,³⁷ which is the inverse of the popular view of hell, in that these verses do not involve hell (or hades) as being a permanent residence, but rather, one that specifically has an end:

Revelation 20:14 King James Version

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.³⁸

Psalms 86:13 Authorized (King James) Version

For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.³⁹

Acts 2:27-29 Authorized (King James) Version

because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell...⁴⁰

³⁷ These three verses are translated as hades rather than hell in the newer translations. Hades is the land of the dead, which is underground.

³⁸ This verse is not future-pointing, like other Scripture is, pointing to salvation completing at the Eschaton in the future, and that is because it involves John's vision and revelation, in the book of Revelation, which would have been experienced present tense, which is how John recorded it when the LORD had Him write it down when the book of Revelation was written.

³⁹ More recent translations use "Sheol," or "depths of Sheol."

⁴⁰ More recent translations use "Hades," as do some Textus-based Bibles (YLT).

Launonen refers to the popular view as “the traditional view.”⁴¹ “Tertullian, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley were all traditionalists, as were most of their contemporaries... Eternal conscious torment is also affirmed in the Athanasian Creed as well as many other confessions of various historical and contemporary churches.”⁴² I will not conjecture on how or why the popular view of hell and the underworld regions, being the inverse of *Scriptural* account, came to be the dominant view, while the Scriptural account is basically undiscussed—at least not in all its points (which would be a discussion of Calvinist universal salvation).

⁴¹ Lari Launonen, “Hell and the Cultural Evolution of Christianity” (*Theology and Science*, 20:2, 2022), 194.

⁴² *Ibid.*

8. GOD = LAKE OF FIRE, PART 1

In this section, I will show that Scripture informs us that the Lake of Fire *is identical to* the Eschaton Fire at the end of the age, the end of all things. In other words, I will show that the Lake of Fire *is equal to* GOD, and to the salvific Eschaton-immolation in GOD (Christ), where the body is burned away, and spirit is saved unto salvation by Fire.

To my knowledge, this point has been missed by theologians for the past nearly 2000 years, for some unknown reason. In discussing this finding with others, I have found many quite alarmed specifically about how this has not been pointed out until this thesis. Other in-plain-sight discoveries were missed and took a long time to be uncovered (such as the red-shift of galaxies, gravity, and electricity⁴³), and the same is merely the case for the Lake of Fire being identical to GOD, and it being missed does not mean it is not a correct finding, because Scripture is very specific on this: only GOD can end death, the Lake of Fire also ends death, therefore GOD = the Lake of Fire (discussed below).

The apparent mathematical precision of this point is a key issue for the Calvinist universal salvation theology being discussed in this thesis. Since Scripture does not tell us that any humans are in hell or ever put in hell, often scholars and pastors will claim that, *instead*, it is *the Lake of Fire* (which is eternal and/or everlasting, unlike hell) that does the hell-like job of burning and torturing the unchosen forever. We will find in this section that is not correct, and it is the Lake of Fire that is actually the all-salvific Eschaton Fire, and thus, nowhere in Scripture are we told there is anything like the popular view of hell for

⁴³ And there are, currently, other large discoveries lurking, such as how the slime mold can navigate through a maze, demonstrating acute mathematical aptitude, when it does not have a brain, or any neurons. Discoveries are often in plain sight, and the plain sight nature of the discover that GOD = Lake of Fire should not be ignored because it is hard to believe it could have been missed, since that is standard in the world of discovery.

humans: no burning torture of humans forever—whether in hell and/or the Lake of Fire—but rather, only the infinite Love of GOD saving humans by the Consuming Fire of His Being. It is my experience when I tell people this finding, and even point out the clear scripture connection between the book of Isaiah and the book of revelation that we're about to discuss, which shows that GOD is identical to the Lake of Fire, that their initial reaction is that they are so surprised that nobody has pointed this before, that it therefore must not be correct. While I empathize with this, and it is indeed surprising that nobody has pointed it out, this is however not reason to reject the simple and obvious discovery we discuss in this section. The logic must speak for itself, and form our findings, our paradigm; and our being surprised, or our biases, and so forth, should not be what forms our paradigm.

In the Old Testament, there are allusions to afterlife and the New Testament's announcement coming of humanity's universal salvation, which appears to lurk in this verse:

Habakkuk 1:12 Authorized (King James) Version

Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

Despite these and other allusions in the Old Testament, scholars today often tend to focus more on how in the time of the Old Testament, afterlife did not exist yet, at least not in any way that we would recognize afterlife to be thought of today. And in the Old Testament time, afterlife was no more than humans existing in a state of sleep and/or of loss of

consciousness: all go to Sheol,⁴⁴ the land of the dead. The underworld was a place of cessation of the conscious self, it being in sleep and/or loss of consciousness. But discussion of afterlife in the Old Testament is nebulous and often indirect, typically pointing to the Eschaton of fire. And this would be because afterlife *did not exist before the Cross*, since the Cross was needed to save all humans. The Cross, and for GOD to be revealed as Jesus in the flesh on earth, in order to be like humans (Heb. 2:15-17), to the point where He can indwell them all, was needed in order to atone, to make in-agreement again, GOD and all humans (human souls), and that atonement did not happen until the Cross, wherein afterlife could not straightforwardly exist prior to that. Before that, humans were too dissimilar to GOD (despite being in His image) to be atoned with Him, and thereby to be regularly indwelt and saved by Him. The power of the Cross washed humans of their *lacking* the needed Christlikeness (that is, the Cross washed them of their sin). And consequently, it is in the New Testament that afterlife starts being discussed heavily. This new conversation, about afterlife, started when GOD (Christ) wore a flesh body and walked on earth; this is when GOD started telling us about our future in eternity, for all souls. The Textus-based and earlier Bibles tend to use the word “hell,” and the newer Bibles tend to use “Hades,” to refer to the land of the dead. The land of the dead in the Old Testament is neither endless fire nor torment,⁴⁵ and it is not properly an *afterlife*—a living-on after body-death, since it is an annihilation phase. But notably, the fire-Eschaton leading-into afterlife *is* discussed heavily in the Old Testament. More specifically, human reality was discussed as leading right into the Eschaton, but as for

⁴⁴ Evans 1938, 304.

⁴⁵ Hades does, however, involve significant discomfort, in the Parable of Lazarus and the beggar, see Luke 16:23, which was discussed above as being a parable not-at-all to be taken as literal.

the eternity in the brightness of Christ to follow, that seems to have been only alluded to in the Old Testament.

From what I can tell, in contemporary Christianity, especially outside of academic settings, hell and the Lake of Fire are typically considered *identical*. But in more academic settings, hell and the Lake of Fire are discovered Scripturally as *not* being identical. But nevertheless, in the academic settings, the Lake of Fire is still considered by scholars to be a hell-like reality, that enters the picture at the end of the age—sort of like a second hell, the real and permanent one, replacing the first one, which does not end, and functions very much like the popular view of hell discussed above: torturing and burning people without end. But I will argue that such views are *not* what Scripture involves. Instead, I will argue that *the Lake of Fire is the Fire-Eschaton: the Lake of Fire is identical to GOD*. And further, I will claim that this point is blatant in Scripture, as discussed next.

There are only a few criteria given in the New Testament about what hell and/or the underworld(s) are like, and only a few references to a *fiery* pit or underworld (Gehenna, hell). To sum up what we discussed above, it is also unclear in the New Testament if any people are in hell yet. And if any are ever placed in it, which Scripture does not claim, it is also unclear how long they will be there (no persons are in it for an eternal amount of time, if any who find themselves in a fiery underworld scenario). If any ever are in hell, residence there *precedes* the Eschaton, just as all varieties of underworld existence in Scripture occur *before*, and leading *up to*, the Eschaton, as discussed in a section above.

The Lake of Fire is called a “lake,” but I do not know of any Scripture that claims that the pre-Eschaton underworld regions have a lake (fiery lake), or any “liquid” or liquid-like bodies of fire, which would seemingly be needed, if one is to match-up to the description

of the Lake of Fire of the book of Revelation to being identical to the popular view of hell. And notably, the exact term, “lake of fire,” is used late in the book of Revelation at the time of the Eschaton. And as already pointed out, death and hell (or Hades, Sheol or the grave, in the newer translations) are *thrown into* the Lake of Fire, in Revelation 20:14, and this is called *a death* (specifically, “the second death”). So, if the Lake of Fire is identical to hell and/or Hades, then Revelation 20:14 would amount to maintaining that the Lake of Fire is thrown into the Lake of Fire, which is nonsensical. These are a few of the reasons that hell and the underworlds are being considered here as thoroughly distinct from the Lake of Fire.

And importantly, Scripture distinctly tells us *what, then*, the Lake of Fire *is* (GOD), and how it has very different properties as hell, Gehenna, or Hades. I draw this equivalence from multiple passages, but the most definitive passage in making this connection is in Isaiah 25. Consider the following passage, where in Isaiah 25:8, we can see how death is *swallowed up by the LORD*, just like how *the Lake of Fire also consumes death* in Revelation 20:14 (death is *inside of* the Lake of Fire in the verse). As we will find, this would indicate that GOD=Lake of Fire, since there is only one thing that can consume and destroy death, and that is the crucified-resurrected GOD (Scripture support given below). Here is the passage:

Isaiah 25:6-9 Authorized (King James) Version

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast

over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Notice, again, the future-pointing of the Scripture, “He *will* swallow up death;” “*will* wipe away tears;” “*shall* he take away,” and so on. And notice what the *result* of swallowing up death is: every tear is wiped away and salvation in afterlife (Eschaton and post-Eschaton) commences. Likewise, following Revelation 20:14, in Revelation 20:15 there is a continuation of the concept that the dead are thrown into the Lake of Fire, but then the next verses after that, starting at Revelation 21:1, follows seemingly the very same pattern as Isaiah 25:6-9: death consumed → no more tears. A therefore B. The same pattern is in both Revelation and Isaiah. A is GOD consuming or swallowing death, which is a victory (Rev. 20:14-15), an avenue to salvific afterlife; and B is no more tears (Rev. 21:1-6). Here is the passage in Revelation immediately following the claim that death and hell are cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the second death:

Revelation 21:1-6 Authorized (King James) Version

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away,⁴⁶ and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride

⁴⁶ Note that right after the Lake of Fire (Eschaton), heaven and earth are passed away, the Fire has melted and destroyed them, as discussed elsewhere in his thesis.

adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

To repeat: Isaiah 25:6-9 and Revelation 20:14-21:6 each contain the same pattern (A→B). In Revelation 21:4, just cited: “and there shall be no more death [A], neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain [B].” The passages both claim GOD consumes and destroys death at His Eschaton-event (A), which brings salvation in the afterlife (the end of tears) (B).

There is only one thing that can conquer death, which is GOD:

Psalm 49:15 Authorized (King James) Version

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me.
Selah.

2 Timothy 1:10 Authorized (King James) Version

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Hosea 13:13-14 Authorized (King James) Version

The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

And further, since there is only one thing that can bring the end of all tears (salvation at the Eschaton), these passages are considered to be discussing aspects of the same events: salvation at the Eschaton by immersion in Christ (the perpetually, omnitemporally crucified GOD, Rev. 13:8, Rev. 19:12-13). Isaiah 25:6-9 does not mention the immolation via GOD-fire as being the Eschaton event, bringing in salvation, *but* in chapter 26, which is a continuation of the account in 25, there is mention of devouring of enemies by fire in Isaiah 26:11. Isaiah 26 appears to contain the very specific account of Calvinist universal salvation, where the earth casts out the dead (Isaiah 26:19, this would have to be at the Eschaton), and where that is right *after* the birth pangs (Isaiah 26:18) leading into the Eschaton, and where there appears to be a reference to a hiding-place, perhaps a pre-Tribulation rapture scenario (Isaiah 26:20-21), that will be completed shortly before, and leading into, the Eschaton events (when the deliverance of the chosen was completely,

see Daniel 12:1-2). So, taking Isaiah 25 and 26 together reveals the precise replica of what is given at the end of Revelation 20 and the start of Revelation 21: *death is swallowed up by, consumed by, assimilated into GOD.*

Also, in Isaiah 26, note that the dead are destroyed (annihilated), where, importantly, GOD “made all their memory to perish” (verse 14), indicating that the destruction mentioned in Isaiah 26:14 is specified as some sort of elimination of conscious activity, which would be in-line with the discussion above about the pre-Eschaton underworld annihilationism involving a cessation of consciousness. Also, in-line with Jonah 2 (discussed below in this thesis, Section 10), Isaiah 26:16-17 involves those entering into the annihilation (underworld consciousness cessation and/or sleep) crying out (praying) for rescue to the LORD, possibly *as they are going into consciousness cessation and/or soul non-existence (annihilation).* This is the same pattern as in Jonah 2. In Isaiah 26:19, we find this verse, which is a reference to the Eschaton event:

Isaiah 26:19 Authorized (King James) Version

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Returning to our comparison of the two passages (Isaiah 25:6-9 and Rev. 20:14-21:6) we are discussing about GOD swallowing up and destroying death (A), which leads to the end of all tears and pain via salvation in the afterlife (B), the context of Isaiah 25:6-9 surrounds the Eschaton, as just discussed, but also since Isaiah 25:8 mentions what is happening in Isaiah 25 as being the death-ending event, the end of all tears, which happens at the Eschaton via the Lake of Fire. At the Eschaton, GOD swallows and

consumes death—*something only GOD can do*, and which He does at the end of all things, at the end of the age, as much Scripture indicates. The two passages, Isaiah 25:6-9 and Rev. 20:14-21:6, involve the same activities, which can only happen once, since:

1 Corinthians 15:26 Authorized (King James) Version

The last enemy that *shall be* destroyed is death.

Therefore, Isaiah 25:6-9 and Rev. 20:14-21:6 are descriptions of the same event: *salvation via the Lake of Fire (GOD)*.

A major reason for concluding this is because, as stated, Scripture *involves only one thing that can destroy death*, which is *Christ, after His Cross*, and *at His Eschaton*:

1 Corinthians 15:50-55 Authorized (King James) Version

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Again, note the future-pointing in those two passages.⁴⁷

Isaiah 25 refers to the *swallowing* of death, which would indicate a *consuming* of death, since when we swallow, or eat, we *consume*, and we assimilate what we consume. Since we destroy what we eat, it would then furthermore indicate that the consuming of death is a *destroying* of it: death is destroyed by the act of swallowing and eating, bringing it into our being for digestion-assimilation. And notice that in the following verse, from 1 Cor. 15, which is a passage explicitly about the Eschaton, that this destruction of death is the “last enemy” to “be destroyed,” confirming that the end of death occurs at the Eschaton, wherein the *end of death* is what Isaiah 25:8, and also Revelation 20:14, are likewise referring to.

1 Corinthians 15:24-27 Authorized (King James) Version

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith

⁴⁷ Consider the following:

1 Kings 19:12 Authorized (King James) Version

And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

This verse is not about the Eschaton Fire, as 1 Kings 19 appears to be a purely historical passage, with no recognizable references to the Eschaton events and the Eschaton Fire. The fire referenced in verse 19 appears to be a natural event, such as a forest fire or the like, as the fire is mentioned at the end of a string of natural events (wind, earthquake, then fire), all of which GOD was not inside of. So, 1 Kings 19 would not be a passage that is both an historical account, but also a foretelling of the Eschaton, as many passages of Scripture involve that sort of two-fold approach. Presumably, this is why the LORD is mentioned in 1 Kings 19:12 as *not* being in the fire, and if He is not in it, it cannot be a reference to GOD, the Consuming Fire, the Lake of Fire.

all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

And Revelation 20:14 says, in the context of the Lake of Fire *consuming* death (death is immersed within, immolated by, and thus surrounded by, that is, consumed by, death, in Rev. 20:14, when death is cast *into* the Lake of Fire), that the Lake of Fire does something that only GOD/Christ can do: *destroy death*. For reasons stated so far in this section, the Lake of Fire can only be *identical to* GOD.

I imagine that some may object to this finding, that GOD = Lake of Fire, and claim it is not that GOD is identical to the Lake of Fire, but rather, that GOD *casts* death into it, so, therefore, the Lake of Fire is not GOD, but that which GOD *throws into* the Lake of Fire, just as Rev. 20:14 seems to say: death and hell were *cast into* the Lake of Fire. But this analysis does not seem to be right, if we look at the verses before Revelation 20:14.

Revelation 20:7-9 Authorized (King James) Version

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

We see here in this verse, which is in the context of the Lake of Fire, that there is Fire that comes to earth, when all the nations, and all the earth, will be *devoured* in Fire from, and of, GOD. So, in this passage, the casting is a devouring/consuming, not a situation where GOD stands at a distance and throw into a fire distinct from Him. Everything in Revelation 20 (and Isaiah 25-26) points towards the casting into the Lake of Fire as being GOD's immolation of the heavens and the earth.

Then next, we have the following passage:

Revelation 20:10-13 Authorized (King James) Version

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 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: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

We see in verse 10, which is immediately after verse 9 discussing how the fire being discussed is Fire from GOD, that He sends, to devour the whole earth, where this

conversation moves directly into discussing the Lake of Fire. Is the fire of verses 7-9 the same as that of verse 10? One might guess that this is a chronological account, where the fire of verse 9 is *before* the Lake of Fire of verse 10, but we see in verse 11 that the earth is still intact, since people could still run away from GOD. So, this is not a chronological account in Revelation 20:7-14, and instead, the passage is jumping around, talking about what is about to happen: the end of the age is going to be destroyed by the Fire of GOD. But this indicates that verses 8 and 9 are accounts of this casting into the Lake of Fire, where it would seem conclusive that verses 8 and 9 are discussing immolation in GOD—that is identical to this casting into the Lake of Fire of verses 14 and 15, and therefore, it is not the case that the objection holds (the objection being, that it is not that GOD is identical to the Lake of Fire, but that He casts death into it). *Rather*, the Lake of Fire *is* GOD, and people are cast into Him become *He arrives*, and immerses them, immolates them, in His Fire.

A fire is not usually thought of as being a liquid, but rather, a plasma state of matter. So, the Lake of Fire, the Fire of GOD's Being, must be not quite like ordinary fire we are familiar with from this physical reality. Also, and importantly, when something goes into a lake, it is immersed by the lake, surrounded by the lake—in other words, it is as if the lake swallows and consumes that which is *in (inside of)* it. And Revelation 20:14 does involve the going into the Lake: ...death and hell were cast *into* the lake of fire... The Greek for “into” is εἰς: the point reached, entered, into, in, upon, among, penetrates, penetrates into (especially into a result), and, interesting, εἰς can be penetration *of a union*. I find this quite revealing, in that it indicates the oneness with, and union with, GOD we are given at the Eschaton. εἰς would mean that the casting into the Lake of Fire of Revelation 20:14

surrounds, consumes, the people that go into it, and this is a swallowing, like Isaiah 25:8, where in being swallowed, that which is swallowed enters, penetrates, into the being of that which swallows it, and is assimilated into that which swallows it, as in a process of digestion.

Consider the following two simple logical arguments, which reveal the seeming inescapability of the conclusion that GOD (Christ) = Lake of Fire = Eschaton. I will show how these concepts connect in Scripture, both Old Testament and New, after the arguments.

1. GOD swallows-up (consumes) death at the Eschaton (Isa. 25:8).
2. Death is inside of (consumed by) the Lake of Fire at the Eschaton (Rev. 20:14).
3. Isa. 25:8 and Rev. 20:14 are *both* accounts of the destruction of death, wherein Eschaton-level salvation immediately follows each.
4. *Only* GOD can do what Isa 25:8 and Rev. 20:14 state, which is end death, in order to bring in the afterlife (salvation in glory).
5. Therefore, GOD = Lake of Fire.

This argument is of mathematical certainty. It follows a simple logically deductive form:

A is B,

C is B,

Therefore, A is C.

(A is GOD, B is consumes/destroys death, C is Lake of Fire).

Now consider this argument:

1. GOD = Lake of Fire (conclusion of previous argument).
2. The Lake of Fire occurs at the Eschaton.
3. Lake of Fire at the Eschaton consumes all things (“the end of all things,” 1 Pet. 4:7) (discussed and Scripturally verified in the next section).
4. The Fire of the LORD consumes all things at the Eschaton (from 3).
5. The Lake of Fire is the Fire of GOD destroying the earth at the end of the age (at the end of all things).
6. Therefore, GOD = Lake of Fire = Eschaton

And later in 1 Cor. 15—a chapter found above, near the start of this thesis, when discussing 1 Cor. 15:22 to involve universal salvation as its context—we see the condemned being raised and made uncorrupt at the Eschaton, when death is again referred to as being “swallowed up,” here at the twinkling of an eye, when we are changed, in the core of the Eschaton salvation transformation, even further reinforcing the connection and identity between Revelation 20:14 and Isaiah 25:8.

1 Corinthians 15:49-52 Authorized (King James) Version

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed... So when this corruptible shall have

put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Note how v. 52 contains *the dead*, the sleeping, which are the condemned, the unchosen, are *raised uncorrupted*. As we've seen in a few passages above, and more in a section below, through the fire comes a transformation, salvation, from corruption into noncorruption, indicating how this Eschaton Fire is a restoring (Acts 3:21). This is Calvinist universal salvation, where residents of the Lake of Fire are burned and saved in the Eschaton, as hell (or Hades) and death are ended, by being consumed by, or cast into, GOD. Also consider these verses:

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

If the dead are raised in incorruption, then they are saved/salvific, and there are no dead (universal salvation). This passage is not about a particular group of the dead, but rather to *the dead in general*—that is, *all* the dead.

Psalm 21:9 Authorized (King James) Version

Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.

In Psalm 21:9, the reference to the fiery oven is the swallowing/consuming event of the Eschaton Fire (GOD). We will see other references in this thesis about the fiery oven or furnace, which we have reason to believe are references to the Lake of Fire of the Eschaton of GOD that saves all, raises all dead.

Proverbs 16:4 Authorized (King James) Version

The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Psalm 79:11 Authorized (King James) Version

Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die...

9. GOD = LAKE OF FIRE, PART 2, THE ESCHATON FIRE THAT CONSUMES ALL THINGS

I will next discuss premise 3 of this second argument just given: that the Eschaton Fire (Lake of Fire) consumes all things. Doing so will let us arrive at the conclusion in point 5 of that argument: GOD = Lake of Fire = Eschaton. The gist of what I will do in this section is show that the Lake of Fire consumes all the earth and heavens, revealing that the location of the Lake of Fire is where heaven and earth are: that is the location in reality of the Lake of Fire, even now (see 2 Pet. 3:7), though not yet revealed.

There are a significant number of verses in both Old and New Testament that discuss this Fire (Fire-Eschaton), where the Lake of Fire is a synonym for the Fire of the LORD destroying the earth at the end of the age (at the end of all things [1 Peter. 4:7]).

To start this analysis, consider the following:

2 Peter 3:7-10 Authorized (King James) Version

but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens

shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

This passage is about the day of the LORD, and therefore, the end of all things, the end of age, the Eschaton. The passage involves the destruction of (“shall pass away”) of the heavens and earth, where all of the heavens and the earth are burned up. Verse 7 says this is a Fire to the ungodly. But the Lake of Fire, also an Eschaton Fire, likewise consumes the ungodly—more description of the identity of the Lake of Fire with the Eschaton Fire:

Revelation 21:8 Authorized (King James) Version

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

So, *both* GOD and the Lake of Fire are Eschaton fires that *consume the ungodly*, another quality the Lake of Fire has that only GOD can have. So, references widely cited in Scripture, especially in the prophecy sections of Scripture, about the Eschaton Fire (GOD), are also references to the Lake of Fire. (Hereafter I will refer to GOD, the Consuming Fire, destroying the world at the end of all things, as the Eschaton Fire, or Fire-Eschaton, as I already have a few times above.) We find that where the Eschaton Fire and the Lake of Fire are discussed, they have the same qualities listed, as we have

clearly seen already with the passages of this section and the preceding section. We have seen this in the previous section with death, and just now with consuming the ungodly. Qualities that only GOD/Fire-Eschaton can have the Lake of Fire does also, due to the fact that GOD = Lake of Fire.

Another example of this is seen in the following passage, which discusses how the Eschaton is a *revealing* of GOD from heaven, at which time the disobedient (ungodly) are put into everlasting punishment and destruction, which is the everlasting fire,⁴⁸ which is the Lake of Fire:

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 Authorized (King James) Version

and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction⁴⁹ from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power...

⁴⁸ I am claiming here that the references to eternal punishment and eternal fire are references to the same thing, since Matthew 25:31-46 link the two together, in discussing how the goats go into the eternal fire (v41), which is also described as eternal punishment (v46).

⁴⁹ I will discuss this “everlasting destruction” below. Modern scholars typically view it as a statement about annihilationism: everlastingly non-existent, or, *forever destroyed*, which I will interpret as being like a hole in the stream of time, or an eternity (time-stoppage) between two lives: pre-Eschaton physical existence, and post-Eschaton existence where we are as angels (Mt. 22:30), or equal to angels (Lk. 20:36). This annihilation is a sort of non-existence, or sleep of death, ended at the Eschaton when the dead rise for judgment. More on that shortly.

This is a reference to the Fire that is forever, which is the Lake of Fire, not hell. The Eschaton Fire is the *everlasting Fire*. People go into the eternal Fire. We are all in Him now (John 15:5), but also, we are *not yet fully in His Fire*, since it is not fully revealed to us yet, and until the Fire-Eschaton. But we are in Him now, and we will exist in Him in a new way at the Eschaton, where and when it is revealed how we are in Him, and when we directly see that we are burning in Him, where His immolation is revealed everywhere.

According to this 2 Thess 1:7-8, in *revealing* Himself, the LORD comes *from Heaven*. The NIV, NKJV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, RSV, and ESV also use “revealed,” the NLT uses “appears” (the Lord appears from heaven), the ASV, CSB, and HCSB use “revelation” (“at the revelation of the Lord”), and the YLT uses “in the revelation of the LORD Jesus...”

None of these say that the LORD comes *from* another dimension, *to* arrive here on earth, as if He is *traveling* from one dimension or reality or place to another. He is already everywhere (Eph. 1:23, Isa. 6:3), but He is *not yet revealed*, and revealed *from heaven*, as 2 Thess. 1:7 indicates. But we know that heaven, the Kingdom of GOD, is all around us, even within us (Luke 17:21). So, the revealing of the LORD at the Fire-Eschaton is not where GOD travels through dimensions, or across space, but rather, the revealing is just that: *revealed everywhere*. When more of GOD is revealed to us, then we enter into also being in His Fire, it is *shown* all around us and within us: omnipresent. The location of the Lake of Fire is never mentioned in Scripture, which would seem like a possibly significant issue—but perhaps it is not mentioned because it is *everywhere* (throughout the heavens and the earth), where there is no need for mentioning its location since its location is meaningless. When people are *cast* into the Lake of Fire in Revelation 20:15,

the casting does not involve a change of location, but rather, it involves some sort of a change of *state*, of *being*: *from* not seeing the Consuming Fire *to* seeing it.⁵⁰

Now that we have established that the Eschaton Fire = the Lake of Fire = GOD, we can further note that the Fire (Eschaton Fire) at the time of the end of all things, is Fire *everywhere*, since GOD is everywhere, as discussed, and furthermore, since we are told the Fire destroys heaven and earth at the Eschaton (1 Peter 3:10). This will be fully revealed in the future, but Luke 12:49 (“earth be already kindled”) implies the world is smoldering in its closeness to His Eschaton revealing/revelation. With this, premise 3 of the argument at the end of the last section appears to be established: the Eschaton Fire consumes all things. This would indicate the end of all things (1 Pet. 4:7), indicating an *annihilation* of all things, wherein when we are made new, with our new angelic bodies for the afterlife, we have been brought back into existence after an annihilation.

For reasons stated in this section, I will hereafter refer to the Eschaton Fire as being the Lake of Fire, considering them identical in Scripture, such as shown in this passage:

From Isaiah 66 King James Version:

For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one

⁵⁰ The post-Textus translations sometimes use the terminology of being *thrown into* the Lake of Fire, which seems to be in conflict with the concept of this being a *revealing* of the Fire, where one is standing (that is how we *go into* fire), not a traveling *from* where one is in order to arrive at, and therein *go into* the fire.

tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord... For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.⁵¹

⁵¹ Verse 24 indicates that all flesh can look upon flesh other than itself. At first glance, this appears starkly nonsensical, like this: every lion that exists can see more lions in the field. But note that what are being viewed in verse 24 are carcasses (dead flesh). The context of this passage is man existing post-Eschaton after the end commences. It appears that what is going on is that "all flesh" here means that which is living, not carcasses, and where in this moment, captured in Isa 66:24, people have their new bodies for living in the afterlife, it has just occurred and they can still see their old bodies, now carcasses, lying in the landscape for burning, but devoid of any soul and thus any personhood.

I believe passages like this are often ignored, and for that reason, people don't see the detailed mechanics of Calvinist universal salvation going on in Scripture, and which carefully reveal the soon-coming Eschaton, where all shall be baptized (Luke 3:16, the Fire-Eschaton as baptism of Fire will be discussed below) by the Consuming Fire:

Luke 12:49-50 Authorized (King James) Version

I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

10. ETERNAL OR EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT AND DESTRUCTION ARE SOUL ANNIHILATION

As eluded to above, in the King James Version, all underworld references (Hades, Tartarus, Gehenna, Sheol, the Grave) are generally lumped into being referred to as “hell,” and “the pit,”⁵² in both Testaments, but in the newer translations, the differing concepts are preserved. Reflecting the modern thinking, Lenchak writes that, “only Gehenna truly designates a place of everlasting punishment for the wicked after death.”⁵³ My concerns over the next few sections will be that the underworlds are *all* destroyed by the Fire-Eschaton (GOD), and also how before that, there is a period of annihilation (non-existence of consciousness and self-experience) for the unchosen who are not yet saved, but who will be saved in the Eschaton of love and Fire.

The pre-Eschaton annihilation discussed above, where the soul is everlastingly nonexistent, involves what I will call *a vertical infinity*. Above we found that the soul does not exist in everlasting torture during the pre-Eschaton annihilation, and the underworld references in the Old Testament (Hades, hell, Gehenna, the pit, Sheol, etc.) represent sleeping souls, souls without mental content and conscient processing inside of them, and perhaps cases where even the soul is destroyed, to be re-created at the Eschaton. What we found above is that minds and selves therefore do not exist during the pre-Eschaton annihilation.

But what I want to discuss next is: Why are the periods that souls are in the underworldly regions, in states of sleep annihilation, described in Scripture as being in *everlasting* or

⁵² In the newer translations, “pit” is kept as “Sheol” (Balfour 1825, 15).

⁵³ Timothy Lenchack, “What’s Biblical about... Hell?” (*Bible Today*, 2013), 116.

eternal destruction, sleep, punishment, and so on, in Scripture, if they really *are not unending*, where they only cease to exist during the pre-Eschaton annihilation? More simply, why is the gap of non-existence of the soul, from the point of body-death, and up to being raised at the Eschaton, described as *an infinite amount of time* (everlasting, eternal), when it is really *are not* an unending span on the timeline?

The answer to this question appears to be given in Jonah 2. The hole in time, or what I will call below the vertical infinity, involves another sort of infinity of experience, in the underworldly loss of awareness. Exploration of this involves *the core message of Scripture*, where self is destroyed and recreated, in various ways and timeframes, depending on the person/soul involved. This core Scriptural message is found plentifully in Scripture, such as in the following:

Galatians 2:20 Authorized (King James) Version

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Authorized (King James) Version

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Romans 6:5 Authorized (King James) Version

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Also see 1 Cor. 15:42, already cited above.

What I will be concerned with next is the concept of *forever* in Jonah 2. This passage sets a clear and specific definition of the concept “forever” for all of Scripture, specifically as the concept of “forever” is found in the context of hell, or for any underworld realities or condemnation states in Scripture, which claimed to be everlasting, forever, eternal, but which are, in fact, only gaps between the two existences, of pre- and post-Eschaton consciousness. In simpler words, Jonah 2:6 tells us *which type* of “forever” is denoted when Scripture refers to condemnation, death, and the underworlds. Some readers may be surprised to see the implication in the previous sentence that there are *different types* of forever. But it is easy to understand how this is the case. Even mere dictionary definitions disclose how there are different types of forever, as we will see in a moment. The word “forever” appears at verse 6 of Jonah 2—again, this usage of “forever” is uniform among virtually all translations, from old to new:

Jonah 2:6-7 Authorized (King James) Version

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

The word used to describe Jonah's time in the belly of the sea beast (verse 2: "belly of hell" AKJV, "the depth of Sheol" NASB, "belly of Sheol" for NKJV, to give a few examples) is "forever," and as stated, from what I can tell, this is the word ("forever") used in virtually every Bible translation, ancient to modern: all of them discuss Jonah existing in some sort of state of *forever*.

But what is quite notable is that Jonah's time ("forever") of being in the underworld, where he is in a fainting-annihilation state, is that this time of "forever" *was only for three days*. This is precisely the situation we saw above: the annihilation of the consciousness and/or soul is discussed as being forever (everlasting, eternal, etc.), but *it is not*, since on the timeline, it is only a gap between two lives: a corrupted life, and a life coming out of corruption. It does not appear that Jonah's time in the underworld, the deep, was leading into the Eschaton, and this reveals that people can go in-and-out of annihilation phases, before the annihilation phase that leads into the Eschaton (which is the annihilation phase that immediately follows body-death). But our concern here is not that, but rather is why Jonah was described as being in the underworld forever, when he was only there for three days.

Ehrman's account⁵⁴ of horizontal and vertical movements of the person through time also refers to a finite horizontal timeline, where the person moves along from creation of the soul toward the Eschaton, but where there is a change of direction in time when the soul / person is described as involving this gap in existence, or hole in time. Ehrman's account is slightly different than what I want to propose, regarding the horizontal and vertical

⁵⁴ Bart Ehrman, "Smith-Pettit Lecture - The History of Heaven and Hell," YouTube, August 7, 2020, educational video, 55:00-58:30, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_eZf33UMs8.

movements of the person along the timeline(s). What I am proposing is that the Bible contains is a horizontal timeline of the soul, infinitely into the future, from the point of the creation of the soul, up to and through the Eschaton, on into the infinity (unendingness, like a mathematical number-line into positive infinity) of afterlife—but where at some point leading into the Eschaton, there is a cut, a gap, forming a chasm, a pit, a break, in the timeline, which I am calling *the vertical infinity*, where this slice in the timeline's pre-Eschaton eras is only vertical in one way only (not in two ways, as Ehrman suggests), which is *downward*, down *into* the timeline. This delving deeply into the timeline, rather than continuing to flow across it, functions like a pause, a stoppage, of the flow of time, when considering timeline, the flow of time, to be roughly analogous to the Real number line, for example, where one probes into the infinities of moments between any two other moments, rather than moving across the timeline through the moments. Again, to use the Real number line as a rough analogy of time, it is like the soul has stopped flowing through the number line, from 1, 2, 3, 4... to instead delving deeply into all the infinity of moments between two times, such as between 1 and 2: 1.5, 1.25, 1.125, and so on, to infinity. It is as if the soul has started endlessly dividing into the timeline, rather than flowing across it and through it. This *dividing into* would function as a time-stoppage, or like a gap, a cut or bottomless pit, in the flow of time (horizontal time).

So, in Jonah chapter 2, we see that a three-day span is referred to as being *forever*, where critics of Scripture may claim this is a contradiction: unending time happening within finite amount of time. But the paradox appears only if one is *only* considering infinity of experience to be to have a temporal duration, flowing *across and through* the horizontal timeline, rather than being a *break*, a *gap*, in the timeline, functioning as some sort of an

underworld *interruption* to Jonah's traversing the timeline: a temporal deepening, of time moving vertically downward, and *into* the timestream/timeline, or like a ceasing (like a hole or pit) in the timeline, in the stream of consciousness. This vertical infinity we are defining as being the underworld state, or annihilation state, *between* the two time-points of (1) the fainting, or the loss of consciousness and ceasing to exist of the consciousness and/or soul before salvation, and (2) the resurrection of the self, the soul, for the infinity of the afterlife on the other side. Regardless of its nature, it is described as "forever" in Jonah 2.

Using Merriam-Webster to get a simple-usage definition of "forever," the noun definition of "forever" appears to be how the word "forever" is being used in Jonah 2:6. Here are the definitions of "forever" from Merriam-Webster:

Forever (adverb)

1: for a limitless time

2: at all times, continually

Forever (noun)

: a seemingly interminable time: excessively long

Notice how the noun definition specifically *does not* involve a concept of *unendingness*—that is, on the timeline (the horizontal time-stream), the noun definition of "forever" does not involve a horizontal unendingness, which I will refer to as a "mathematical infinity," or "mathematical infinity of time," in this thesis. The adverb definitions *do* contain the concept

of being without end (horizontally unending: mathematically extending into future infinity on the timeline, from the start of the soul's existence, to the Eschaton, and into the mathematical infinity of time of the afterlife⁵⁵), but the noun definition plainly does not involve the concept of being without end. The noun definition is more like a pause, or a gap, in of time, a hole in the flow of time, that can be unpaused, and which one can be pulled out of, but which is an eternity and/or everlastingness during the pausing, or the non-existence of the soul. As we have seen in this thesis in several verses and passages of Scripture, especially in the older translations (AKJV), hell is referred to as a "pit," which is a synonym for "hole." This hole in time is a pit, a cavity or gap, inside of which is the infinity of hell and hell experience:

Isaiah 14:15 Authorized (King James) Version

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.⁵⁶

The adverb and noun definitions therefore appear to contradict each other, wherein only one of these sorts of definitions from Merriam-Webster (adverb or noun) can be applied to Jonah 2:6. It appears self-evident that the noun definition applies to Jonah 2:6, and if it does, that would seem to set the definition for the concept of "forever," in the context of

⁵⁵ Ehrman, "Smith-Pettit Lecture," 56:00-56:30, calls this infinite timeline of the soul into eternity a "horizontal dualism," where the timeline split between this evil age and the age to come, which is what I am calling pre-Eschaton and Eschaton/post-Eschaton realities.

⁵⁶ Ehrman, "Smith-Pettit Lecture," 32:25-30, indicates that "pit" is also synonymous with Sheol, death, or grave.

condemnation and underworldly existence of souls throughout Scripture, as being described by the noun definition of “forever,” a vertical infinity, or a gap, in the timeline.

The noun definition of the concept of forever hell in Scripture would appear to bind all uses of the concept of forever hell, underworldly existence, and damnation in Scripture to being the noun definition: inhumanly and/or uncomfortably long, but not a mathematical infinite of *unendingness*. And this noun-usage of “forever” would apply to any and all instances of “hell,” “damnation,” “the pit,” and so on, in Scripture. Why this is so is because if all instances of foreverness in Scripture surrounding hell and condemnation *did not* conform to the noun definition, then *some* instances of hell damnation in Scripture would be mathematical infinities of a temporal forever, and *others would not be*, which would lead to hell damnation as being both simultaneously horizontally infinite and not horizontally infinite, which would be a contradiction.

All instances of foreverness in the context of underworld existence will be considered to be noun definitions: hell does *not* involve a horizontal infinity of time, but rather an infinity of time and/or experience that is more like a hole or pit in the stream of time. The concept of foreverness in Scripture here discussed as noun-like (foreverness that can be interrupted, stopped), *only* is found in Scripture in the context of hell, the underworld (Shell, Hades, Gehenna, hell, the grave, Land of the Dead, etc.), condemnation, and damnation, and not in the context of the upcoming heavenly existence throughout afterlife. And contrastingly, Scripture uses the *adverb* definition of “forever” (eternal, everlasting, unending, etc.) in the context of, and when discussing, the upcoming forever afterlife for souls (all souls) with GOD, and also *within, inside of* (Eccl. 12:7) GOD. Specifically, this is because there are no Scripture passages that involve a soul, a person,

being *removed from* the state of afterlife once one is in that state, in the direct presence of GOD, seeing Him face to face, after our old bodies are destroyed and we are given new bodies (angelic bodies). The concept of foreverness is used in opposite ways in Scripture when discussing hell on the one hand and afterlife with Christ, in Christ, on the other. We are never told that afterlife in glory has an end, but in Scripture we are told that the foreverness of hell, Sheol, damnation, condemnation, the grave, the land of the dead, etc., *does* have an end (Jonah 2:6-7, Rev. 20:14), wherein GOD removes souls from those states—or more aptly put, brings them back in to existence after a time of non-existence. Again, there has to be a cessation of existence of *any and every* soul, in the soul's timestream of existence, when it goes from the old self to the new, from unsaved to saved, and whenever that may happen, the old will cease to exist and the new will be brought into existence.

This distinction, of how foreverness in glory/afterlife (adverb), versus foreverness in hell damnation (noun), shows the contrast of the two types of infinities of foreverness, and how they are opposing realities, seen as contrasting in Scripture. This reveals that hell-underworld existence, on the one hand, before and leading-into the Eschaton, and Eschaton/post-Eschaton foreverness on the other, is noun-like (a gap/pit on the timeline, a break in the stream of time-reality), but where the overall stream of experience and/or time, from now on through afterlife, is a foreverness that is adverbial. “Forever” in Scripture is a mathematical horizontal infinity of unendingness in the context of afterlife in glory, but “forever” in Scripture is *not* such a mathematical horizontal unendingness in the context of hell and underworldliness. From what has been found to this point, even if there *are* any condemnation-states described as *forever, unending*, in the Bible, any such state

would nevertheless have to reduce to the vertical infinity underworld experience, as just described, and could only function as a gap in time, which one would be lifted out of (see next section), and not anything like the popular view of hell.

So, before unchosen humans are saved, they are destroyed (annihilated, nonexistent). Above we discussed this with Matthew 10:28, but the same concept appears to be found in the following passages :

Hosea 6:1-3 Authorized (King James) Version

Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Psalm 90:3 Authorized (King James) Version

Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

The underworld annihilation is an issue of the deep inner mind, our immaterial spirit,⁵⁷ the soul, or whatever one wants to call the human subjective and introspective experiential

⁵⁷ I imagine many readers of this these are, philosophically speaking, physicalists (reject the existence of nonphysical entities), and therefore feel squeamish when I refer to the self as an “immaterial spirit,” “soul,” and so forth. If that is the case, that reader can take the “immaterial spirit” of the self to be our consciousness

self and mind. "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about" (Jonah 2:5).

In Amos 9:3, the deep, the covering, is a place that covers a person from being *seen* by GOD. We see the same happening in Jonah 2:4: "I am cast out of thy sight." It is very likely that this has something to do with the non-existence, the annihilation, of the soul, when in the vertical infinity. At the soul level, being in the underworld *first* causes Jonah to erroneously believe GOD is not with him (one can never be without GOD, even if in the underworlds or in hell, see Ps. 139:7-8, Rom. 8:38-39, Eph. 1:23), not reaching into his soul. And since when GOD looks at us, He looks at the *innermost* self, our soul (1 Sam16:7), then in underworld scenarios, GOD is apparently *not* looking at the person's soul. Perhaps Jonah could feel how GOD was not looking at him, causing him to feel as if GOD was not with him.

We see that in the deep of underworldly existence, there Jonah finally *remembers* GOD (Jonah 2:7). Without consciousness, presumably Jonah could not pray (he prayed before the loss of consciousness, the fainting, see Jonah 2:1-2). So, the prayer that came to the LORD in Jonah 2:7 must have been prayed *before* Jonah went unconscious and presumably nonexistent, which is the prayer we are told about it in Jonah 2:2: "I cried by reason of my affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me." So, it was the *hardship* that

merely appearing as a spirit, or as spiritual. Consider what Searle writes, in the appropriately titled *The Mystery of Consciousness*, in the third paragraph of the book:

Compared to mountains and molecules, consciousness seems "mysterious," "ethereal," even "mystical." Consciousness does not seem to be "physical" in the way that other features of the brain, such as neuron firings, are physical. Nor does it seem to be reducible to physical processes by the usual sorts of scientific analyses that have worked for such physical properties such as heat and solidity. (From Searle, John, 1977, *The Mystery of Consciousness*, New York: New York Review of Books, p. xii.)

Jonah was in that caused him to pray, wherein the LORD simultaneously heard the prayer. But in Jonah 2:7, *which is a later time*, presumably while Jonah was unconscious (ceased to fully exist), we are told that it was *then* that the prayer went *inside* of GOD, it “came in unto thee.” So there appears to be, at least in the case of Jonah, some sort of delay across different times and events, seemingly representing the gap of the soul, the nonexistence of the soul. Here is the sequence of events:

(1) Jonah prays *and is heard by* the LORD.

(2) Then later, Jonah has fainted, and ceased to fully exist, where at the very least, some significant core-aspect of his soul ceases to exist (it has died, while in the belly of hell, the realm of death).

(3) During Jonah’s fainting and/or nonexistence, where Jonah underwent a death, his old self gone, the prayer goes *into, inside of* the being of GOD.

From this analysis, the belly of hell, of which a person is resurrected from by the LORD, involves ceasing to exist, a true death, where in the LORD *looking at* the soul, not just hearing it, the person is resurrected. The person is brought back from the annihilation mentioned in Matthew 10:28. From the fainting and loss of functioning of Jonah’s soul, come to the conclusion that his momentarily ceases to exist. This cessation of the existence of the soul appears to be a core element to a person being in the core (belly) of hell. This is what is involved in the infinity of hell before the Eschaton and before salvation.

11. GOD PULLS PEOPLE OUT OF HELL, OUT OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, AND OUT OF ANNIHILATION

The picture we have before us seems to be one where at the interface between (1) pre-Eschaton reality, and (2) post-Eschaton reality, there exists an infinity of depth. While a person was traversing through horizontal time in their life, there is a point where there is an onset of a time-flow change, where the time-flow is interrupted, and the person falls out of horizontal time, and into the vertical infinity of time, essentially not *flowing* through time. Mathematically speaking, there are always infinite numbers between any two numbers, two points, on the number line.⁵⁸ The famous paradox that the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno discussed was how a person cannot get from one point to the next

⁵⁸ We have analyzed Jonah 2 below above. Here is another such Scripture:

Psalm 139:7-17 Authorized (King James) Version

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there as none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

We see in v7, v11, and v12 that we cannot be apart from GOD (see also Rom. 8:38-39), even if in hell (v8), and then in this context we see a reference in v9 to this hell experience being the “uttermost parts of the sea,” a reference to going to the depths. Then v15 appears to indicate that in that innermost depth we are formed, in the deepest ocean we are worked, transformed, amid our (pre-Eschaton) time of imperfection, corruption (v16). Hell, we know, to some dimension and reality, is fiery, but it also involves a going to the lonely depths of the world. We see multiple references to at the deepest points of night the day is sensed, witnessed. This is the overall theme of hell and damnation discussed in this thesis as residing in Scripture: at the deepest verticality of hell/damnation infinity (forever), GOD is revealed as the soul is moved out of that vertical infinity. (And we've already seen this when analyzing Rev. 20:14, also see Acts 2:27 KJV and Psalm 16:10 KJV.) Psalm 23:4: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.”

through time, since a person has to traverse through infinite other points⁵⁹ to get from one time to the next, which can't be done in time (one never can complete the task of traversing infinite moments), so the person never gets from one point to the next, unless they are pulled out, plucked out, of that "state," or brought back from annihilation. And we do see this sort of plucking out mentioned in Scripture in Zech 13:8-9, Zech. 9:11, Ps. 79:11, Ps. 16:10, and others. Also consider these:

Amos 4:11-12 Authorized (King James) Version

I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

Zechariah 3:2 Authorized (King James) Version

And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

Acts 2:27 Authorized (King James) Version

⁵⁹ This involves a non-discrete model of time, where time-moments resemble points the Real number line (**R**), where there are infinite numbers and infinite points between any two non-identical numbers.

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2:27 New American Standard Bible

For You will not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

GOD appears to remove, pull out, or bring-back the person from the vertical underworld—which would mean GOD puts their consciousness and/or soul back into having contents, having activity, into having existence. This is being pulled out of the *underworld*, including hell—and it is *not* referring to the being pulled out of the Lake of Fire. Plucking-out only happens in the contexts of the underworlds in Scripture, not in the context of the Lake of Fire (GOD), which one is, strictly speaking, never apart from or *not* immersed in—partially-revealed pre-Eschaton, and fully-revealed from the point of the Eschaton and after. This is a picture of GOD as *Savior*: the One who removes a person from the inevitable hell-state, or underworld, they are in.⁶⁰ Therefore, a picture in Calvinist universal salvation

⁶⁰ I often have atheists in the jail ministry I word in ask my why hell has to be horrific, if any people/souls ever are there. I feel that is a fair and reasonable question, and I wonder the same at times. But I think the matter is strictly logical, where some of this was answered in Grupp, “Why God Did Not Choose,” 93-117. One might wonder why the Scriptural account of hell has to be, at times, quite so devastating as it is, in some ways being downright *horror*. Why do some aspects of it contain such torment? The simplest answer to that is that is as follows. All good things come from above (Psalm 16:2, James 1:17), joy is a good thing, so joy comes from GOD. Likewise, things like inner peace, wisdom, soft-heartedness, compassion, humbles, fruits of the Spirit, and so forth, all would come from above only. But in the state of hell, one is not, receiving these or anything good, because one is not receiving the LORD from above. But if one’s life does not involve these, or anything good and of GOD, one will have the thorns of hell instead. because one is not receiving the fruits, and when is not living the fruits, of the Father from above, but if that’s the case, then one can only live a life of the opposite of those, of the fruits of the Spirit, which would be a life of hell, of not love, not peace, not joy, not peace, not patience, not kindness, not goodness, not gentleness, not faith, not make this, not patience. This will be a life of torment, and without GOD would have to be the worst

emerges of a Calvinistic creator-GOD that is that is quite an inverse of the cruel tyrant-GOD of traditional Calvinism.

The above Zenoic mathematical description may or may not align well to actual reality, and to what is happening in the infinite deepening of the vertical infinity, but something like this sort of a delving into the infinity of moments (vertical moments) inside of and between two moments of time (horizontal moments), rather than moving horizontally across, and through, those times, appears to be what is involved in the *stilling* or, and in ways *ceasing*, of existence. This is the vertical infinity, which horizontally is a stilling of time, the fainting in the deep of Jonah's loss of consciousness (loss of self, loss of existence). The horizontal self, the stream of consciousness, ceases to exist, and only an empty soul, without consciousness, remains. Then the LORD brings back a new soul, one that is watched by GOD.

case imaginable, which is, some of the aspects of the Scriptural model of hell. So anybody who is not chosen we can expect, at some level, to live a life of torment in the hell state.

12. UNENDING HELL THAT ONE NEVER ESCAPES IS NOT A BIBLICAL CONCEPT

The practice of the older translations of lumping all underworld regions and states into one term, “hell,” has not been popular, in general, amongst academics for the past few hundred years.⁶¹ And there has been a discovery amongst scholars that the popular view of hell does not actually exist in Scripture, despite that fact that, from what I can tell, the majority of the Christian world has little idea of this. While I wholeheartedly agree with this discovery, understanding that *the popular view of hell* is not found in Scripture, and therefore not found in any sort of Biblical Christianity, in this thesis, however, I will not give any sort of deep or heavy analysis of this discovery that has unfolded for centuries. The Greek underworld of fire (Gehenna) is not necessarily referred to in the Old Testament. Only the Fire-Eschaton is, as discussed above. The fiery regions of the underworld are first mentioned in the New Testament, or it could be the case that these fiery areas did not come into existence until the New Testament, due to the changes that occurred with GOD (Jesus) atoning humans via the Cross. Hart writes,

There is no single Greek term in the New Testament that quite corresponds ... at all really... to the Anglo-Saxon word “hell,” despite the prodigality with which that terms has always been employed in traditional English translation of the text; nor anywhere in scripture do we find a discrete concept that quite corresponds to the

⁶¹ For example, see Balfour, Walter. “Into the Scriptural Import of the Words Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, and Gehenna: All Translated Hell, in the Common English Version.” 2nd ed. Charleston (Harvard Divinity School Andover-Harvard Theological Library): George Davidson. 1825.

image of hell—a realm of ingenious tortures presided over by Satan—that took ever more opulent and terrifying mythical shape in later Christian centuries.⁶²

The popular view of hell, which is not found in Scripture, is clearly found in the non-Biblical intertestamental writings.⁶³

Talk of the Gehenna was part of the common religious parlance of the Jewish world before, during, and soon after the time of Jesus... Clearly it was understood sometimes as a place of final destruction, sometimes simply as a place of punishment, and sometimes as a place of purgatorial regeneration.⁶⁴

As is well-known amongst scholars, the Old Testament does not contain the concept an underworld of torture, nor one that a person is never released from. And neither is that contained in the writings of Jesus at any place in the New Testament (it is the Lake of Fire verses, or the belly of the sea beast in Jonah 2, discussed elsewhere in this thesis, that contain the concept of an eternal and/or everlasting duration). *Unquenchable fire* is discussed at multiple places in the New Testament, but not a residence of hell, Gehenna, Hades, and so forth, that one is never removed from, and which has no end for the person residing in it. Even if there were, they would have to be described in the context of the noun definition of “forever” as discussed above.

The ideas of everlasting (unending mathematical infinity of time) never are all wed in the sayings of Jesus, so it is best to claim Jesus does not claim there is an unending hell, which would fit, since the hell in the popular view of hell does not exist. Bart Ehrman,

⁶² 2019, 112. Also see Hart, *That All Shall Be*, 115-16, 118.

⁶³ Hart, *That All Shall Be*, 112, 114.

⁶⁴ Hart, *That All Shall Be*, 114.

following others before him, therefore claims that Jesus did not teach that there is an unending hell existence for humans:^{65,66}

The ideas of a glorious hereafter for some souls and torment for others, to come at the point of death, cannot be found either in the Old Testament or in the teachings of the historical Jesus. To put it succinctly: the founder of Christianity did not believe that the soul of a person who died would go to heaven or hell.⁶⁷

Others⁶⁸ have missed this, believing that Jesus ties together the ideas of eternity, hell, destruction and fiery punishment, to arrive at the popular view of hell that is wrongfully imposed on Scripture.

⁶⁵ Ehrman, "Smith-Pettit Lecture," 20:00-21:00. A verse like Matt. 25:46 does not mention hell. And verses from Jude and Paul, such as Jude 1:7 and 2 Thess. 1:9 respectively, for example, also do not mention hell or underworld torment. Ehrman, who argues that Jesus advocated annihilationism, as discussed in the previous section, of those who are not sheep in Matt. 25:46, where Jesus is talking about an annihilationist destruction, an infinity of non-existence. Ehrman claims that Jesus is talking about heaven and hell in Matt. 25:34-46, but he is not, he is talking about an annihilationist punishment (end of body and soul) by fire (see Ehrman, "Smith-Pettit Lecture," 52:00-55:00). Ehrman claims that Jesus does not teach that the soul goes to heaven or hell (Ehrman, "Smith-Pettit Lecture," 54:50-55:00).

⁶⁶ Hart, *That All Shall Be*, 115, holds the same view: "Certainly no one now can say with confidence precisely what Jesus's understanding of the Gehenna's fire was.... Or what duration he might have assigned to those subjected to it, or even how metaphorically he intended such imagery to be taken." Hart further writes, regarding this new wave I have even seen translations...., mine among them, accused of attempting to expel the traditional picture of hell from the text" (118).

⁶⁷ Bart Ehrman, *Heaven and Hell: A History of the Afterlife* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020), 16.

⁶⁸ This seems to be most theologians. To point to a few specific examples (see Jonathan Lusthaus, "A History of Hell: The Jewish Origins of the Idea of Gehenna in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark," *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*, 21:2 (2008), also see James Sterba, "Eliminating the Problem of Hell," *Religious Studies*. 56 (2020)).

13. ALL UNDERWORLD REGIONS ARE ENDED BY THE LAKE OF FIRE

In this section, we will find that all areas of the underworld are destroyed, by the Lake of Fire—the underworld regions are swallowed up by the Lake of Fire, assimilated into the Lake of Fire—which happens when the heavens and the earth shall pass away (Matt. 24:35). The underworld regions are in the earth, and if the earth passes away, so do the underworld regions, such as hell and Hades.

Consider the latter parts of Mark 9:

Mark 9:43-50 Authorized (King James) Version

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

The question is which fire is being discussed here: underworld fire, or the Consuming Fire (GOD) of the Eschaton. The answer is both are being discussed, where we will next see how one fire (hell fire) is absorbed into the other (Lake of Fire), just as Revelation 20:14-

15 discusses underworld regions being absorbed by GOD, as discussed in sections above, when all is consumed by the Eschaton Fire at the Eschaton.

Mark 9:43-50 blurs the lines between these two fires. The references to hell in this passage are the Greek, γέενναν, or Gehenna, in both the ancient Bibles (such as KJV), and the modern translation, which is a valley near Jerusalem, and a place of burning dead bodies. And the Greek word for fire throughout the passage is πῦρ, which does not necessarily mean *only* Gehenna and/or a hell-like fire, but has associations with being the *eternal* fire (which would indicate the Lake of Fire, since hell is not eternal, but is *ended* in the Lake of Fire, absorbed into the Lake of Fire), and also heat from the sun, or having to do with *lightning* (note Luke 17:24, Matt. 24:27 and 28:3, Rev. 8:5, 11:19, 16:18), and fire from GOD. In Mark 9:48, the fire of hell is described as *not* (οὐ) *quenched* (σβέννυμι, suppressed, put out), which is the second time the hell fire is mentioned as being unquenchable in the passage. But then, interestingly, at verse 49, we see a significant change of subject. Verses 43-48 are about hell fire, so it might seem that verse 49 is also about hell fire, but it can't be: verse 49 says *everyone* will be *salted with fire*, but we know that not everyone goes into hell (and it is likely that *nobody* actually ever goes into a fiery hell). Verse 49 appears to have shifted into discussing the fire of GOD, since GOD is the Fire that affects everyone, and Mark 9:49 is referring to a fire that affects everyone. Also, verses 49 and 50 refers to the fire being a salting, where this would shift the focus from being about hell destruction to implications about preserving and GOD's covenant with humans. But the Greek word for *fire* in 9:49 remains the same as used in verses 43-48. The same wording for fire in Greek is used to describe both hell fire and GOD-Fire (Lake of Fire).

I believe the only way to interpret all of this is with the idea discussed elsewhere in this thesis that the Eschaton Fire is both revealed at the Eschaton, but also is to a lesser degree influencing us from the future today in the present: as if it is reaching-back into the past, for lack of better words, from the future, to impact us, and to put the earth in a state of smoldering:

Luke 12:49-50 Authorized (King James) Version

I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

The earth is currently smoldering in the Eschaton Fire that will soon fully erupt (be revealed) everywhere, where this is referred to in the context of being a baptism in Luke 12:49-50 (I discuss the baptism of Fire in the next section). Also, Luke 12:49-50 appears to say that the earth is both being baptized with Fire now, and at all pre-Eschaton times, but also will be *fully* immolated when Jesus is revealed at the Eschaton. Revelation 20 refers to hell (which is fire) going *into* the Lake of Fire and being swallowed by the Lake of Fire, as discussed at length above. One Fire eats, consumes, swallows another. The fire of hell is being assimilated into the Lake of Fire. So there is an interesting smearing of the boundaries between underworld hell fire and the Lake of Fire, but where we see one absorbs the other, one morphs into the other. The place of burning bodies, regardless if there are any bodies there or not, is swallowed by GOD and made one with Him, as all things are going to be restored. This is precisely the overall conclusion of this thesis, and it is encapsulated in Mark 9:43-50. I think the only way to interpret this passage is where the fire of hellish existence is constantly being under threat of being swallowed by GOD all throughout history (it is already kindled), especially from the cross onward, and is

constantly being under threat of being absorbed into GOD. Hell is not referred to as being a fiery underworld until the time of Jesus in the Bible. It is likely that hell, which is taken to be a real place in this thesis—but just not a place where there are not known to be any people being burned currently or ever—started this kindling at the time of Jesus, since His incarnation was preparation for His Eschaton.⁶⁹

The King James Bible consists of Revelation 20:14 telling us that death and *hell* were cast into the lake of fire, but the newer translations tell us that death and *Hades* were cast into the Lake of Fire. Regardless of whether Hades and hell are two separate areas of the underworld, or if there is overlap in their existences, we know that *all* underworld regions will be consumed with His Fire, and we know that *all death ceases* with GOD, as discussed in sections above. This means both hell, Hades, and any conceivable underworld regions cease to exist in the Lake of Fire, as they are assimilated into, swallowed up by, GOD. This is because both hell and Hades are both destroyed in the Lake of Fire, when the heavens and the earth—where hell and Hades exist: *in* the earth—are destroyed at the end of the age, at the end of all things. Death, Hades, and hell, all cease to exist at the Fire-Eschaton (GOD), and *by* the Fire-Eschaton. The Textus- and pre-Textus based translations use the word “hell” in 20:14, and the post-Textus translations use “Hades,” but regardless of whether these refer to the same zones of the underworld, totally different zones, or coinciding but non-identical zones, and so forth,

⁶⁹ Many scholars, such as Ehrman, take the mentioning of the fiery underworld starting at the time of Jesus to be the about the Greek cultural influences impacting the writing of Scripture, since Greek culture involved fiery aspects, but the Hebrew culture (and the writing of the Old Testament) did not. But what has just been discussed in Mark 9:43-50 would be a counter argument to that, and would reveal that the heavens and the earth (including the regions in the earth, such as some underworld regions, such as hell) have been kindled and could have been set aflame by the existence of the crucified GOD coming to save the world, where He will save it by Fire, which will be fully revealed, and which is smoldering now, according to the findings of this section.

any and all underworld regions pass away at the Eschaton, and that death, that cessation, in the future, is starting in the pre-Eschaton era, by the presence of GOD everywhere throughout the heavens and the earth, which are fading away (see 1 John 2:17). Consider the following:

Deuteronomy 32:22 Authorized (King James) Version

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Jesus refers to those denoted in the Beatitudes as the salt of the earth, they are salted (Matt. 5:16). The first fire, hell, is present tense, “the fire is not quenched” (verses 46 and 48), and then in verses 49 and 50, the second fire is referred to as future: “shall be salted with fire”—despite the Eschaton Fire being a causative agent from the future, presently impacting the world, as just discussed. (See Isaiah 65:24 for another interesting referenced to backward causation—cause happening before effect in time—used by GOD, in answering prayers before they are prayed.) The Fire of the Eschaton does not bring pain to the chosen (see Rev. 2:11, and 20:6).

Apparently what we are finding in this section about Mark 9 at the swallowing of hell into GOD have been missed by theologians. Consider what Lusthaus writes, in discussing the Synoptic Gospels, and specifically about Mark 9:43-48, writes that

Its importance is even greater because it establishes the nature of the punishment in Gehenna, with its particular emphasis on fire and eternal torment. Mark refers twice to the ‘unquenchable fire’ and also to the ‘worm which does not die’ (a

reference to Isa. 66:24), which clearly constructs the eternity of the punishment, as well as its divine nature.⁷⁰

As shown above, Mark 9 is not about the popular view of hell, as Lusthaus seems to suggest it is, but rather, Mark 9:43-50 is about GOD's universal salvation for all people, and His restoring all things (Acts 3:21).

⁷⁰ Lusthaus, "A History of Hell," 178.

14. GOD, LAKE OF FIRE, IS CONSUMING FIRE, AND A REFINER'S FIRE

Recall that Isaiah 25:8 referred to death being *swallowed up* in victory. When we are swallowed by something, our earthly understanding is that we are inside of it. Just as we consume the LORD in the LORD's Supper, the LORD *consumes* us (He is the Consuming Fire). We consume Him, and He us—which is the coinherence humans have with GOD (see John 15:5). The concept of being *inside of* GOD would appear to fit within the description of a consuming Lake of Fire, swallowing, devouring, in His thorough immolating of all things, which has already started, as found in the previous section. The conclusion being discovered is, just like GOD is love, and therefore made of, composed of, love, GOD is also Fire, and therefore is made of, composed of, Fire, whatever the ineffable supernatural characteristics of that spiritual GOD-fire is.

Deuteronomy 4:24 Authorized (King James) Version

For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Hebrews 12:29 Authorized (King James) Version

for our God is a consuming fire.

I believe it is self-evident that the “is” being used in each of those verses, regarding how He *is* a consuming fire, would be the “is” of identity: $a = b$. Therefore, I will work from the conclusion that the LORD *is* the Lake of Fire. And GOD, being the Lake of Fire is, it seems, why GOD is called the “consuming fire” in Scripture: He consumes: swallows up

(death and hell), brings all things into His refiner's fire, and therefore restores all things (Acts 3:21).

Deuteronomy 4:36 Authorized (King James) Version

Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. (Underlining added)

Some may object that this verse, and others like it in Deuteronomy (cited shortly below) are not about GOD as Consuming Fire, as identical to Fire, but only that GOD speaks from inside of some ordinary earthly-physical fire. This certainly could be correct, but I argue that the better interpretation is that this fire referred to in Deuteronomy is the Consuming Fire (GOD), since we see His voice coming out from within it, from the midst of it, where "midst" means middle, central part—as if referring to the deepest innermost of the fire. This fits well with description of GOD and His being, where GOD speaks fromth heart, or from the midst (innermost central part), since

Matthew 12:34 Authorized (King James) Version

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Speaking happens from the heart, from the deep inner regions. Therefore, we should expect to find verses in Scripture referring to GOD speaking from deep within fire or from deep within His fiery Being. I believe this interpretation is a better way to look at Deut 4:36 and the other Deuteronomy fire verses I cite shortly, since these verses appear to describe GOD as He is: a fire that speaks from deep within. It could be that GOD merely is speaking inside of a physical fire, but it seems to line up better with Scripture to refer to these passages about GOD, the Consuming Fire, who speaks from His innermost.

So, moving forward on this interpretation, there are several references in the Old Testament to GOD being Fire (Consuming Fire), and to the Eschaton Fire/Lake of Fire. Consider these:

Deuteronomy 5:4-6 Authorized (King James) Version

The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire,⁷¹ and went not up into the mount;) saying, I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 5:22-28 Authorized (King James) Version

⁷¹ Notice here that we are told they were *afraid of* the fire, which could be analogous to how GOD struck fear into those who saw Him or heard Him directly, such as with the disciples at the transfiguration of Matthew 17. This could be further reason to conclude that these verses in Deuteronomy are about the direct revealing of the Consuming Fire, the Eschaton Fire (GOD), rather than a mere ordinary physical fire that GOD speaks to humans from within.

These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; and ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

Lake of Fire / Fire-Eschaton / GOD, I conclude, is also the Refiner's Fire mentioned in several places in the Old Testament, due to the fact that the Refiner's Fire is described with the same properties as the Lake of Fire / Eschaton Fire. The Refiner's Fire is a fire that cleans a person, like soap. The Lake of Fire at the Eschaton is therefore a baptism,

which would be expected since by the Fire-Eschaton all are saved. Consider these verses:

Malachi 3:1-3 Authorized (King James) Version

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Note again the anticipation of the fire in the future (the aforementioned *future-pointing*). Malachi 3:1-3 is talking about GOD cleansing the sinners with Fire at the end of all things ("the day of his coming"), when He is revealed, when He appears, as just discussed. These are the same properties as with Lake of Fire / Fire-Eschaton, so, the Refiner's Fire is also a reference to this Fire at the Eschaton that saves all the unchosen. And considering the Refiner's Fire as a baptism in GOD-Christ, the Eschaton being a Fire baptism would appear to link the following two future-pointing Fire-baptism verses:

Luke 3:16 Authorized (King James) Version

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire...

Matthew 3:11 Authorized (King James) Version

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire...

The Holy Ghost baptism did not happen until after Jesus ascended. So, we know that what is being spoken of in Luke 3:16 and Matt. 3:11 are events for some time after His ascension. From what is being discussed in this section and the preceding section about Mark 9:43-50, it is unlikely that this Fire baptism is *only* referring to the Pentecost Prayer of Acts; and it is also unlikely since John the Baptist would not have been saying this to people that were likely at the Pentecost Prayer, when he uttered it right at the start of Jesus' ministry while incarnated. Luke 3:16 and Matt. 3:11 seem better interpreted as being said to all people (since the Gospel is to be preached to every creature [Mark 16:15]). So, this baptism of Fire would be at the time that all are salted with Fire, which is completed at the Eschaton. This Fire baptism appears to offer explanation for how those who are unchosen, and who are of Satan, can be inexplicably saved at the Day of the LORD (the time, roughly, of the Great Tribulation into and through the Eschaton). Consider the following:

1 Corinthians 5:5 Authorized (King James) Version

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

This “destruction” of the flesh would have to be via the Fire-Eschaton (Day of the LORD Jesus)—at GOD’s saving of all souls at the Eschaton—since this destruction of the flesh, and transformation of the Spirit, occurs at the end of all things (Eschaton) for this unchosen and unsaved man, wherein it leads to salvation. 1 Cor. 5:5 also reveals the two-stages of salvation discussed above, and discussed again in more detail in the next section.

So, GOD, the Father, who is Consuming Fire, and who is Christ, will be shown, revealed, in such a way that He will be directly *seen*, by *all*, at the Eschaton (Luke 3:6, Isaiah 40:5, Job 19:26), so that the inside of Him, in the midst of Him, the center of Him (Deut 4:36, 5:4, 5:22,24, Ex. 3:2), via His *inner* fire, He can be seen, by all things (Isa. 40:5) when they are directly swallowed by Fire: people will look at each other aflame and yet *amazed* (Isaiah 13:8), with the revealing of, and the immersion within, the Lake of Fire, which is Christ (GOD), at the end of the world.

15. TWO-STAGES OF SALVATION IN CALVINIST UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Next, we will further discuss more details about the aforementioned two-stages of salvation by the LORD introduced above.

At first glance, the reader will likely believe that the concept of Calvinist universal salvation would involve an impossible (contradictory) combination of ideas: few are chosen (Matt. 22:14), but all are saved—like claiming that all are saved and all are not saved, a blatant contradiction. But this contradiction only arises if GOD's choosing few⁷² was *simultaneous with* Him saving all. That would amount to saying that GOD simultaneously saves *few and saves all* (contradiction). It is the *two-step* salvific process introduced above, where the two stages—pre-Eschaton versus Eschaton / post-Eschaton—are *not* simultaneous, that avoids any such contradiction.

Some verses in the Bible refer to there being *both* the saved and condemned. Those verses are about a *present* timeframe, and about the pre-Eschaton epoch, which is, in its entirety, being pulled into, and which is fading into, the Eschaton. And the vast majority of the universal salvation verses in the Bible are about events at the second state: at the Eschaton and/or post-Eschaton, where are both the chosen and the condemned have been saved. As noted, the verses about the Eschaton and/or post-Eschaton are typically future-pointing, as noted above. Consider the following additional examples, where I have again underlined the future pointing aspects, going *from* the present (pre-Eschaton) state, *to* being consumed by Fire in the Eschaton. I have also underlined the universalist parts of these passages.

⁷² Again, see Grupp, "Why God Did Not Choose," for a new discussion for specifically *why* GOD only can choose *some*, not all, before the Eschaton.

Jeremiah 18:4 King James Version

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.⁷³

1 Corinthians 4:5 Authorized (King James) Version

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

John 5:25, 28 Authorized (King James) Version

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is,⁷⁴ when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live... Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

⁷³ This verse is another good example—as many given in the thesis are—of verses that are about both historical events in the past, and about the universal salvation of the Eschaton. The same could be said of some of the verses I cite right after this one in this section and the next, as well. As has been pointed out above, Scripture involves such fractal-like iterations and repetitions, such as with the days of Noah resembling the times leading into Eschaton, to give one of many examples that could have been given.

⁷⁴ This phrase, “The hour is coming, and now is...”, a highly philosophical wording, indicates that the Eschaton has not come into being yet, but is both, for lack of better words, interacting with humans now, from the future, pulling humans to the Eschaton. But beyond that, and in another way, the Eschaton Fire is also *here*, now, where only part of it is unveiled to humans pre-Eschaton, where this partial awareness of GOD’s presence (see 1 Cor. 13:12) reveals GOD-Christ as the saving Fire, where at the Eschaton, when consumed while the world is burning (Lake of Fire), may be the very first time humans see GOD as He is, and therefore humans will be their real selves at that time (1 John 3:2). In that Presence (YHWH) now, in part, and in that Presence is our calling, which is to be salted with Fire (Mark 9:49).

1 Corinthians 3:13 Authorized (King James) Version

every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

One can see the aforementioned two-step salvific process in verses such as these. And from these Scriptures, which point to a future salvation of all unchosen souls by Eschaton Fire, the following two-stages of salvation can be formulated, as follows:

Two-Stages of Salvation. (1) Scripture refers to there being both saved and unsaved souls *before* the Eschaton. The chosen *only* are saved pre-Eschaton (through the span of world history), from the first of the chosen beings being made living souls deep in the past, all the way right up to a specific point at or just before the Eschaton, when the last of the chosen souls are saved. The unchosen are condemned during this pre-Eschaton stage. Pre-Eschaton, the chosen are saved by GOD's choosing, and by their being indwelt by Him; but the unchosen have not been made salvific pre-Eschaton. Stage (1) involves a deepening, and often passages through hell (discussed below), just as Jesus (whom the saved—which is all people—are to imitate when moving into salvation) went into the underworld, before overcoming death. After this, (2) the unchosen are saved by the Lake of Fire (GOD), at the Eschaton event. (1) some are saved, happens before (2), all remaining are saved: two-steps or stages of salvation.

The two-stages of salvation were discussed in a section above when analyzing the Parable of the Tares. Several verses and passages were cited above, indicating these two stages of salvation in Scripture; also consider this one:

Isaiah 66:15-17 Authorized (King James) Version

For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

The two-step salvation, (1) leading up to the Eschaton, and (2) at the Eschaton and after, was introduced, where at the interface of (1) and (2) death and hell cease to exist, which is the Eschaton event. Calvinist universal salvation explains how there *is* a hell, but where nevertheless at the Eschaton all are saved.

16. SAVED BY FIRE

Scripture also contains many passages about how humans are saved in the Eschaton Fire. Consider Isaiah 13:6-9:

Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth:⁷⁵ they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as⁷⁶ flames. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

This is about the Day of the LORD (right before the Eschaton and into the Eschaton), where in verses 6 and 10, we find there that the Day of the LORD an event of Fire, which involves *amazement* in people over their faces being on-fire (verse 8), which would have to be a mental state that only GOD can invoke, describing the specific transitioning He produces in bringing the unchosen to being fully-salvific (see 1 John 3:2) amid the Fire-Eschaton.

This passage begins by describing itself as *destruction from GOD* and described as the Day of the LORD (verse 6), indicating that this is an Eschaton-level situation, and thus

⁷⁵ This travailing in pain (birth pangs) is one of the main reasons this passage is about the Eschaton, in addition to also possibly being about historical events from the Old Testament times.

⁷⁶ Note that it says "as" flames. Above we have noted that GOD's fire is a spiritual fire, and therefore will not be identical to ordinary physical fire, which is a plasma state of matter, to my knowledge. I believe this is why Isaiah 13:8 says their faces will be "as" fire, since apparently GOD's Fire is like enough to physical fire that it is labeled as "fire" in Scripture, but then again, not an identical match, being uncorrupted, and unlike the ordinary physical fire of the fallen (corrupted) physical world.

again an Old Testament reference to the Lake of Fire (GOD). accompanied by the fieriness of the Eschaton (the Lake of Fire: the immolation within, inside of, the ocean of the Consuming Fire). At verse 7, all hearts melt in this Day. In verse 8, we see Verse 8 is where the transition point occurs, into the amazement, after the pre-Eschaton birth contractions (Mt. 24:7-8, Isa. 13:8-9⁷⁷) leading into the Eschaton.

After the deep of the underworld, or of fire hell and/or ocean hell if any ever are in hell, the person is put into the Lake of Fire—into GOD—for salvation. Though it has been missed by theologians and pastors for centuries, and since the early church, Scripture is direct in saying that all are saved *by* Fire. In addition to verses already cited above that support the idea of salvation by Eschaton Fire. Consider these Eschaton passages:

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 Authorized (King James) Version

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a

⁷⁷ I believe Isaiah 13:8 involves the concept that the Lake of Fire almost “forces,” for lack of better words, the unchosen into repentance at the fire-Eschaton for the unchosen. Look at how the verse transitions midway through it. The verse starts off with a reference to the birth pangs, and therefore the Eschaton, in some way. It is mentioned that they have screaming pain, like a woman in birth labor, and we find out they are being immolated. So, they are in the midst of the Fire-Eschaton; but notice that after their mention of travailing in painful horror, *then are amazed*. And they are amazed at one another, possibly because they are all in Fire. I believe amazement is not a state of mind one can be in if one is in screaming pain. Therefore, there seems to be a shift mid-verse, where the immolated people went *from* screaming terror *to* amazement, which would indicate the salvation “process” carrying forth, during the Eschaton GOD-fire.

reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (Underlining added.)

Numbers 31:23 Authorized (King James) Version

every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water.

Zechariah 13:8-9 Authorized (King James) Version

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

Isaiah 48:10 Authorized (King James) Version

Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Also consider these verses, which might also be about the Eschaton salvation of all unchosen souls:

Psalm 37:20 Authorized (King James) Version

But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

Deuteronomy 32:22 Authorized (King James) Version

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains... They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.

17. DEEPER DYNAMICS OF THE TWO-STAGES OF SALVATION, AND THE GAP OF ANNIHILATION, IN CALVINIST UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Eschaton-like events in Scripture often replicate and build (feeling of the 4000, and of the 5000, etc.). For example, in Exodus we see an earlier, much smaller-scale Eschaton-like event, when Moses meets with GOD on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:17-20), with many of the same signs and revelations as found for the entire world later in Revelation. Such Eschaton-like repetitions and foreshadowings, of the events leading up to the Eschaton, events mimicking the Eschaton, are quite widespread phenomena in Scripture. It is as if the Eschaton is being felt and lived, in some ways, pervasively, in the present and *before* the Eschaton. Perhaps this repeating-and-building Eschaton offers some hint of an explanation of verses such as these:

1 John 2:18 Authorized (King James) Version

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

1 John 2:8 Authorized (King James) Version

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

Amos 4:11-12 Authorized (King James) Version

I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

2 Peter 3:7-8, discussed above, may also have a relation to these verses, in discussing how our world we live in and see every day, has its purpose as being reserved for fire, which I interpret to mean has its purpose to be immolated by the Lake of Fire and therein restored. It is as if the Fire of the Eschaton, being an Eschaton event, is also reaching to us from the future, in some way. John 12:32 could hint more information on this concept that the Lake of Fire, is fully revealed at the Eschaton, but is however also present in the world now, its presence being active but not fully visible, not yet fully unveiled, in the world leading into the Eschaton. This Fire, pulling us into the future, the fire of GOD, would appear to be the shaper of all of reality, all of history, being in all things (Eph. 1:23), and pulling all things to the Eschaton restoration (Acts. 3:21).

The two-step salvific mechanics would likely have many dimensions of depth. For example, an event such as *the salvation of a soul* would have aspects to it not understandable by humans pre-Eschaton. I interpret the salvation of a soul to be where in some way the soul is coinhered, or made one with, its Creator, but which is a “process” of such depth and inexplicableness that our human language cannot grasp at this time (pre-Eschaton).⁷⁸ Similarly, we should expect that there are multiple dimensions, maybe even infinite dimensions, to any one verse or passage of Scripture, to *every* aspect of

⁷⁸ Rom. 6:19-20 indicates how our human language and ways of understanding do not capture reality as it really is.

Scripture, and therefore including the many verses and passages of Scripture that are specifically about Calvinist universal salvation. So, while the formula of a two-step Calvinist universal salvation appears in Scripture, the reader should *not* further conclude that there are *not* more deeper dimensions about salvation to be contemplated and discovered. Consider the following passage.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 Authorized (King James) Version

and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

At first glance, it may appear that the underlined part, “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,” is about the Eschaton Fire, since this text is sandwiched in between to parts of Scripture clearly about the Eschaton event. But the “obey not” of verse 8, written in present tense, not past tense (“who did not obey”), indicates that in verse 8 the discussion is about humans who *are* disobedient, and therefore about a pre-Eschaton time, such as the present moment. So, in 2 Thessalonians, the Writer⁷⁹ is talking about the present, while mentioning the future.

⁷⁹ I am capitalizing the W, as a reference to GOD, to indicate the dictation view, rather than the inspired view, of Scripture. To my knowledge, the dictation view was the view that Calvin also ascribed to (see Hesslink, John, “The Revelation of God in Creation and Scripture: Calvin’s Theology and Its Early Reception.” In *Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities* (Westminster John Knox Press. 2012), 7-8).

Therefore, the eternal punishment with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, is pre-Eschaton, and thus referring to the underworldly existence of those who have died in their bodies and still rest in the earth (some are raised before the Eschaton). And for these reasons, the annihilation discussed in the passage (“everlasting destruction”), is another Scriptural reference to annihilation of the soul, between body-death and the Eschaton for the unchosen. Interestingly, the punishment and destruction (annihilation) is from the presence of the LORD. The word from is ἀπὸ, which is like *out of* (as used in Matt. 12:43, 15:22, 24:27), and *because of* (as used in Matt. 10:28, 18:7). So it is *by the presence of GOD* that the soul, the mind, in the vertical infinity of time cessation, pauses its functioning, sleeps in a content-less (no mental content) non-existence. So, GOD’s presence—His presence, *specifically*—is an agent of annihilation. The corrupted soul, the sin-filled soul, which cannot be saved *until* the Eschaton, but which *will be* at the Eschaton (see 1 Cor. 5:5), appears to reside in the underworlds, sleeping dreamlessly, and/or in a state of soul-pause, or nonexistence of mental functioning, due to merely waiting for the Eschaton salvation.

18. CONCLUSION

The evangelical theology of Calvinist universal salvation unveils some hitherto unnoticed components in Scripture that reveal the elegant, Love-centric logic of the Creator: about the depth of the all-loving GOD (YHWH), who is saving all souls and restoring all things. Outside of scholar circles, I believe many have turned away from Calvinism and from Christianity because it is believed that it involves GOD being an evil tyrant, who creates beings merely to torture them in screaming pain forever, and even prevents from turning to him—people that might have otherwise believed—so that He can torture them horrifically forever. But that sort of a cruel-GOD scenario of five-point Calvinism *vanishes* with evangelical Calvinist universal salvation. The Lake of Fire is a baptism forced (Luke 16:16) upon people in order to refine and save their souls, by being immolated with His Being. GOD (YHWH) is instead discovered to be the GOD of infinite love (i.e., most deeply sacrificing self for other, for enemy), in saving, via baptism of fire, humanity, in order to restore them from the corruption they were created with (1 Cor. 15:42, Jer. 18:4). He is a Creator who is invading all souls to coinhere with them and to *maketh* them lie down by green pastures.

One of my thesis advisors said that the view presented in this thesis has never been discussed before. Therefore, this being the first attempt at a Calvinist universal salvation via Eschaton Fire / Lake of Fire, I envision there are improvements that can be made to the theology of Calvinist universal salvation, which could be contributed by others, and I imagine there may be corrections that need to be made, for any mistakes that might exist in the many details discussed in this thesis. I view this thesis as only the first step in much more in-depth analysis of Calvinist universal salvation that could take place, which I hope

others will contribute to heavily. I believe that Calvinist universal salvation is the answer to so much confusion that has existed in interpreting Scripture for thousands of years. Also, I view Calvinist universal salvation as a theology that most fully takes Scripture for what it merely says, the most literal interpretation, without having to depend on the seemingly hopeless task of trying to interpret GOD's words with our human minds—minds that are full of lies (Ps. 116:11, Rom. 3:4, 1 Kings 8:38), and which are so small compared to GOD's infinite mind (Ps. 147:5 KJV).

I deeply hope that others find great excitement, as I have, over the logic of evangelical Calvinist universal salvation presented in this thesis. And I also deeply hope that others do not ignore or reject it, merely because it is new, or because I am not a famous theologian, and instead only an unknown theology student. I view this thesis as important, for the world to understand a new theology—a literalist reading of Scripture—and I pray that readers view the message, not the writer of the message. Calvinist universal salvation has brought me the deepest hope, joy, and rescue, in this world of trouble (John 16:33), and it is my prayer that as many as possible can also enjoy this literalist analysis of GOD's Word. The Scripture passages above which unveil the ecstatic theology of Calvinist universal salvation are not secret. They were there through the centuries, and they exist in all translations of Scripture, from most very ancient to very modern. It is my hope that this systematic theology will show many how amazing, loving, and beautiful the GOD (YHWH) of infinite love, the Creator of all things, truly is. And it is my hope that many will rest in the deep peace of Christ, knowing their present and future salvation, in the upcoming salvation of all humans in an unending afterlife of ecstasy (ekstasis) in Christ (YHWH).

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