

fact is applicable to other leper hospitals such as the San Lazaro Leper hospital in the Philippines. The disease is apparently not inherited, though children of leprous parents show a tendency to also develop the disease.

Modern drugs have greatly aided the cure of Hansen's disease. Research especially in India has shown that patients can be cured, and usage of bodily extremities can be helped or cured. One of the problems with Hansen's disease is that it affects nerve endings which results in loss of feeling in the member affected. Thus fingers and toes are often worn off literally, or burned off, etc., because the patient does not realize what is happening.

Modern methods and drugs have greatly helped the people afflicted with Hansen's disease. Many are suggesting that the patients can be treated in doctor's offices just as any other patients, and, in fact, some have and are being treated that way.

If the same sort of effort were made to remove the stigma from the term leprosy, and to completely disassociate the Bible term from Hansen's disease, since they are not identical, much needless mental agony and physical distress caused by false misconceptions among the general public would be removed, and a great service would be rendered many people.

## DEATH: WHAT IS IT?

Some religious groups, and others within religious groups, hold the basic position that the people who do not go to heaven, when sentenced by God to hell, are then annihilated, and cease to exist. Thus, the punishment is eternal in its consequence and duration, though not in the person's existence or punishment endured endlessly while existing. The argument is several-sided and not capable of absolute solution either way, though we do not

consider the Bible to teach annihilation at all. However, some do, and argue that a loving God would not sentence anyone to eternal punishment such as is normally considered to be taught in the Bible. Of course this position attempts to decide what a God Who loves everybody would do, which is quite impossible. God loved the world, but not enough to save it in its sin, and so sent Jesus to die for it. Yet that death did not save anyone except those who accept it—that is a Bible fact, if anything is. Love is not soft on sin, nor sinners. God may have loved the world, but that love is not expressed but through His will, such will being also just and good. God expressed His love in chastening His children, Heb. 12. God loved Israel enough to do many things for them, but not enough to forgive them other than on the conditions He laid down for them. Hence, many who left Egypt did not enter the Promised Land, Heb. 3:7—4:13. David was loved, but still Nathan came with the stern rebuke, and his son by Bathsheba died. God loved the apostle James, but Herod still beheaded him. God so loves each one that He is unwilling for any to perish, but the wages of sin is still death. And this last word “death” brings up the basic issue: what is meant by death. The terms perish, destroy, punishment, lost, and their related terms are also involved.

We do not have space to give an extended discussion of all of these terms. We suggest that ch. 8 of R. C. Foster’s book, *The Final Week* from Baker, be read on this subject, or the extensive debate by A. Campbell and D. Skinner published by College Press. Wilbur Fields has a mimeographed essay in Ozark Bible College Bookstore on this same subject, to whose essay and Bro. Foster’s book I am somewhat indebted for material in this essay.

That the word “death” in itself does not mean annihilation is obvious. Everyone dies physically, but the

body simply changes states. It becomes again dust. That nothing is actually destroyed in the material world is about as sure a principle as we know. Hence death in a physical sense means a change of state. So the argument moves to the sphere of the spiritual, and the meaning of death in that realm. Now it is interesting that the Bible does not use the terms "spiritual" and "death" together. That there is a spiritual realm and a physical realm is clear, however. One can not help but wonder if the only real realm is the spiritual, or non-material. God is real—and also spirit. All things material are temporal. From this viewpoint, defining what is "real" in terms of whether something lasts forever or not would make the spiritual world the only real world.

As far as the word "death" itself, we have shown in the discussion of Matt. 22:23-33 (# 72 (6)) and of John 11 (# 62) that Jesus taught that all live to God, whether physically "dead" or not, and the dead are not "dead" to Him. That the word death does not necessarily mean extinction is patent. Rev. 20:12 speaks of "the dead" very much in existence, and v. 14 speaks of a "second death" (how could there be a "second" death if the word death always means annihilation?) which is identified in relationship to the lake of fire that is to burn forever, v. 10. That the wicked dead are to be thrown in that lake is clear from v. 15. The text does not say annihilated. That beings can be thrown into the lake and not annihilated is clear from v. 10. So the word "death" does not within itself mean cessation of existence, though it may well depict either a change of state, loss of well-being or both. That it is not a term equal to annihilation is also seen in Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:20; Luke 9:60; Rom. 6:2-11; Eph. 2:1; Col. 3:3; I Tim. 5:6; and numerous other scriptures akin to these.

In Bible times, the Sadducees taught that death meant

extinction. The apostle Paul, some years after his conversion, did not agree with them, but rather held the view that there is life after the exodus from the body, and that all will be resurrected, Acts 23:1ff. It seems rather clear that God had not revealed anything contrary to him, (such as the doctrine of the Sadducees being true) and none of his letters so speak. In that text, he remarks about his belief in the resurrection, and in 24:14, 15 he makes it plain that the O.T. taught such a doctrine. Jesus plainly said the same in the discussion with the Sadducees. So the Old Testament is clear on that subject. Other people in the Old Testament times so taught. Note David in II Sam. 12:23 and Psalms 23:4; Job in 19:25-26; Martha in John 11:24. Abraham (very much in existence, Luke 16:19-31 some 2,000 years after he died) was gathered to his "people," Gen. 25:8, which surely does not refer to his body but his spirit; likewise with Aaron in Num. 20:24. Note Enoch, Gen. 5:24, and Elijah, II Kings 2:42.

That a person is not equal to the body in which that person lives is also plain—see II Cor. 5:1-9; Phil. 1:21-23; Heb. 12:23; James 2:26; I Pet. 3:19; II Pet. 1:13-14; Rev. 6:9-12. God is spirit, Jn. 4:23-24, and we are in His image in this regard, but certainly not in material body. Man is a spirit as God, has innate life (called soul) through that spirit, and while on earth dwells in a body. So the Bible differentiates between each of these three aspects of humans, I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12-13.

As to the words rendered "everlasting/eternal," perish, destroy, lost, etc., none of them mean cessation of existence necessarily, but all convey the idea of a change of state, loss of well-being, or both. There is hardly any point in fire, destruction, and worms, etc., being unquenchable (Matt. 25:41, 46; Mk. 9:44-50; Rev. 14:9-11) if the dead cease to exist at the moment of their sentencing. The point of such descriptions and ceaseless punishment is to

get men's minds on the "real," the "good" and the "holy" rather than being blinded by the god of this world, II Cor. 4:4. Hell can hardly be a place to be feared and avoided, and where men weep and gnash their teeth (Mt. 8:12; 25:30; Mk. 9:44-50; Luke 12:47-48; 13:28) when no one is there because of lack of existence! Note the word translated "eternal/everlasting" in Mt. 19:16; 25:46 (twice); Acts 13:46; Rom. 16:26; Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 1:11; etc.

That the words destruction, perish and lost are also terms that must be understood in relationship to their usage, and do not mean or equal annihilation necessarily is also a fact.

The word *appollumi* and its derivatives does not mean cease to exist, extinction. It means loss of state or well-being. It can be translated as destroy, perish, lost, etc. Now see Mt. 27:10; Mt. 8:29 and Mk. 1:24; 14:4; Luke 5:37; 15:8, 24, 32; John 6:27; 17:12; Acts 25:16; I Pet. 1:7; II Pet. 3:6. The basic idea is not annihilation at all, but ruin or loss.

The same is true for *olethros*, which is translated destruction. Like the other words, it signifies a great loss, or tragedy. Note II Thess. 1:6-9 and the words associated with it there, as affliction, vengeance, and eternal. Now see I Cor. 5:5; I Thess. 5:3; I Tim. 6:9; the only other places where it occurs. Foster notes that Greek writers of N.T. days did not use the word to mean annihilation, but something bringing on tragic consequences, or the result therefrom. Sophocles has his main character in the Greek drama "Oedipus Rex" cry out, "I am the great *Olethros*" or supreme example of suffering, not extinction.

The third Greek term *kolasis* is also a point of contention. It occurs in Acts 4:21; Mt. 25:46; II Pet. 2:9; and I Jn. 4:18. In none of these places does it denote annihilation, but punishment or anguish or suffering. It

was often so used in the classical writers of the same period as the N.T. writers, or with the idea of chastise.

Passages in Revelation teach both continued existence after death and judgment, plus suffering, as in Rev. 14:9-11. "They" are not annihilated but punished in torment forever, since "they" who are sentenced to be tormented with fire and brimstone have the "smoke of their torment" going up "forever and ever." See also Rev. 21:8. Some find fault with the book of Revelation, saying that it is symbolic, not literal. That may be true, but it does not teach untruth because it is of such nature. If the real is worse than the symbol . . . !

We conclude by saying that we consider that I Cor. 15:1-58 teaches that everyone will be resurrected at the last day (see also Jn. 5:28-29), therefore "death" does not mean extinction at all. Those who pass out of this earthly existence not a part of Christ will appear at God's judgment bar to be sentenced according to their life here on earth, Rom. 14:12; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-13; etc. Their punishment will be in a place prepared for the devil and his angels, Mt. 25:41, and for an endless time remain there, very much in existence. Now—the reader may not agree with the conclusion expressed. Suppose that "hell" is non-existent. No one has to worry at all. But if it is, and one goes to meet God unprepared (Acts 17:30, 31; II Cor. 5:11; Heb. 10:26-31) then for all eternity that person will wish his earthly life had been lived in the fear of God. Who wants to take chances with such high stakes?

## QUIRINIUS (CYRENIUS IN K.J.) AND THE CENSUS, LUKE 2:1-5

Luke's standing as an accurate historian has been assailed many times, but never more than about the statements in 2:1-5. It was known that Quirinius had been