

The Three Eternal Destinies #205
Tantamount to One's Eternal Destiny

Dear Soreph,

I could begin with the familiar saying, “That’s a good question... How can a just God cast people into the lake of fire for even (or just) a lifetime of bad deeds? Is not the eternal punishment disproportionate to the crime, and therefore unjust?”

When I got your letter I was just in the middle of a teaching which addresses that very question, which many on earth ask today. I was using the word *tantamount* in my teaching about how a person’s submission to authority is tantamount to his eternal destiny. Whether or not I was using the word right or perfectly, I learned a lot by the word itself, as a lot of my teachings are centered around words and their definitions, meanings, and related words.

So the thought came to me as in Gen 3:16 that a woman’s submission to her husband is tantamount to her eternal destiny. It is a principle by which all mankind will be judged, as how a son relates to his father, how children honor their parents. The choices and judgments men make are tantamount to choosing their eternal destiny, as sealing their integrity and character and disposition eternally. It only takes one lifetime to set their personality, character, disposition, and integrity. This is what *sealed* means, as Rev 22:11 uses the word *still* — for all eternity — just as the word *remain* in Jn 9:41.

To be of the sort of person to reject Yahshua is to be “set in character” as a cowardly unbeliever, such as the rich young ruler, having had the opportunity over and over again in some cases (Rev 21:6-8; 22:17; Jn 4:14; 7:37-39). It is the negative analogy to being sealed with the Holy Spirit for eternity, in Eph 1:13. The word *still* means the way one will be for all eternity, because Gen 3:22 is meant to either free him from the second death, which is eternal, or seal him for this eternal death, which is like or worse than our Master described in Lk 16:28. Eternity for him will not be any

different from what is set in his character in this age, in his lifetime. Only one lifetime is required to set one's character for all eternity. One's disposition is molded in this one lifetime — a casting for all eternity.

What if one just suffered for his short lifespan on earth and then was annihilated? Or what good is it if a man lived one million years in all the comfort of the world, then when he died he spent one million years in the second death and then was annihilated? What good is it if a man who has been sentenced to death for murder has a stay of execution for a few years? When he died it would not make one bit of difference, since he is tormented in death forever and ever anyway. What difference does it make for a murderer on death row to eat a big meal of everything he desires a minute before his execution? Or what of a man who is dying and doctors keep him alive by machines for a few more puffs of breath, maybe a million or two? What good is he doing with his life? Or what good is breathing for a while now without following what God put into man, which is inherent in every man's heart (Rom 2:14-16)?

The knowledge of good and evil is the love our Creator put into the heart and soul of mankind, which exists in them as a natural law of inseparable quality and characteristics. It is innate, basic, and inborn, and if one doesn't believe this he is a fool (Ps 14:1; 53:1) — not just *foolish*, but a *fool* who says in his heart that there is no God, which is to say, no judgment. Such a person has to go against what is basic in every human being. If man becomes less than human, then who will constitute the nations in every galaxy of the universe? They become unworthy of a second life, but instead a second death.

This is the age of probation, testing by trial (Gen 3:22; 9:1-7), which sets one's character eternally. A man does not have to live thousands or trillions of years to be equal to the same amount of time in the lake of fire, because as we said, God only made one lifetime (Heb 9:27) for man to live in order to set his character eternally, to be worthy or unworthy of Mt 25:34 or 41, as in verse 46. Those worthy of a second life,

whose names were found in the Book of Life, were doing the good that was in their heart to do (verse 35), which is tantamount to the eternal destiny they are worthy of, according to the deeds they did. Also, those who did not do what they knew was “the good” to do for “these brothers” of our Master chose what is tantamount to the destiny of verse 41. So Mt 25:46 is the eternal reward for the two kinds of people who live by their natural senses on the earth today.

Only the fools of the earth who do not do what is innately known to them as “the good” to do set their course for the lake of fire in the span of a lifetime (Heb 9:27). This is what God thinks is just and fair, since it sets their character. These fools say in their heart, “There is no God,” having then no accountability for the way they think and act, as 1 Tim 6:9 justly condemns. For these fools will not amount to any more or less integrity in all eternity than what they amounted to during their lifetime in this age, which was their probationary period. The damage they did in the souls of other human beings by their evil deeds would have its cumulative devastating effect for uncountable generations, if mankind lived that long in this age.

This is what we mean by *tantamount* — whatever man amounts to in his day of testing (in this age) corresponds exactly to his reward in eternity. Rev 21:3 — The “men” are those of verse 24 (NKJ) whose deeds were equal or tantamount to the destiny they attained to. The word *amount* means to ascend or rise upward (as “a mountain”); to add up. A man’s glory or worth will equal what he attained to in this present life, his only probationary period.

In Rev 20:12, all deeds, either good or bad, are recorded in these “books” along with the motives behind every deed a person did in his lifetime. Every deed is motivated according to how a person values the image of his Creator in his fellow man, as expressed in his choices to do the good or the evil that he knows in his conscience (Gen 3:22). Gen 3:16-19 and 9:1-7 is what keeps the world in the shape it is in, according to each participant in its social order. Everything is based on how people get along with

each other and how each person maintains his likeness and image of his Creator, and this of course is maintained or lost by how each one lives according to Gen 3:22, as made more specific in Gen 3:16-19 and 9:1-7.

These are the foundations by which man exists in peace or war (Ps 11:3). If these foundations are destroyed, what will happen to the few righteous who are left (Isa 24:5-6)? According to Rev 20:12-15, our Father's mercy extends to the nations who are not "the Holy" but are "the Righteous" of Rev 22:11, whom the Creator takes note of and is mindful of, keeping a record of their deeds. In the "Book of Life" He records the names of all who are not unjust or filthy, but in His sight are righteous according to their own conscience and moral values in doing the good they know in their relationships with others in the world around them.

As Rev 20:15 says, whoever was *not found* (which presumes that some *are found*) written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. But those who *were found* in this Book will have a second life, which is eternal, in the nations over which the Holy will rule (Rev 21:3). The "men" are those whose lives were lived according to God's plan in the nations of the earth, and will "still" be righteous in the universe, but only after they have gone into the first death to pay for their own sins. Then they are rewarded with a second life, as Mt 25:31-46 describes the Three Eternal Destinies of Man, according to how man lives during his probationary time on earth.

Probation comes from *to prove*; it is a testing or trial period. A person's character is tested or put on trial in one lifetime, which is sufficient for God to judge by. What one amounts to in this probationary age is tantamount to what he will amount to in the eternal age. Or one's eternal worth is equivalent to what he attained to in this life, so it is no mystery where the "kings" of Rev 21:24 come from (Act 10:34-35). There is no favoritism with God. He judges by our character, according to how man maintains his Creator's likeness, in whose image he was created (Gen 3:22; Rom 2:14-16; Heb 9:27).

So I hope this answers the question about whether one lifetime is enough to settle the matter of whether one is worthy of a second life or a second death. It's not a matter of a disproportionate punishment, but of what one does to maintain his likeness to his Creator. The way one uses this innate knowledge in Gen 3:22 is all that God judges by, since He is not partial. Rev 20:12-15 is clear and precise. It's not a matter of degrees of punishment in the lake of fire. It all depends on what you do with your life *NOW*. What you do is tantamount to what you will be forever and ever. The filthy and unjust will never be what God wants them to be, so there is no place for them except where Satan and his angels will be, since they lived by those spirits. They deserve his reward since they followed in his footsteps (the proud one). The way down for him was up, but the way up for man is down — that is, humble, not proud.

As our children grow up, they can either go down or go up, but the only way up is down, and the only way down is up. It all has to do with Pr 22:6 and 15.