

## Eternal Conscious Torment vs Annihilation 005

Revelation 20:14-15

February 1, 2026

Dr. Andy Woods

Well, if you could find the Book of Revelation—which is pretty easy to find when you think about it, Revelation 20:14.

We have been in this series dealing with Annihilationism versus eternal torment, and we have introduced those terms.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum identifies conditional immortality:

"Conditional immortality means the soul is not inherently immortal..."<sup>1</sup>

So, people do not become immortal—live forever—until they get saved. If you are unsaved, you will not live forever. So, what happens to unsaved people? Well, at some point after they go into hell, they cease to exist. That is called Annihilationism.

These are views that have been floating around for a long time. They have recently come into the mainstream of Christian thought through Kirk Cameron, who apparently is sympathetic to these views.

Here is an article from December 6th, 2025:

"Kirk Cameron Denies 'Eternal Conscious Torment,' Is Now An Annihilationist?"<sup>2</sup>

He is framing the issue as, "Oh, we just need to have a conversation about this."

He came out with about a two- or three-hour YouTube video where he is in a round-table discussion with other theologians, talking about how this view is acceptable and it is okay.

In other words, even if you disagree with it, it is still within the purview of Christian thought. And, "Let's not call each other heretics."

I saw a post from Eric Metaxas—if you ever watch him or follow him—and he said that whoever calls Kirk Cameron a heretic is a heretic. So, I guess that makes me a heretic.

This is the kind of thing that is happening. As a whole it is known as the Overton window: the realm of acceptable thoughts. What is happening is that the Overton window is shifting.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fruchtenbaum, A. *Footsteps of the Messiah*, 707-8

<sup>2</sup> <https://protestia.com/2025/12/06/kirk-cameron-denies-eternal-conscious-torment-is-now-an-annihilationist>

Now Christians are thinking that certain things are within the realm of discussion that Christians in the past had not embraced. This is being framed as just an in-house conversation.

"You know, it is no different than, 'Should you have your communion service before the sermon or after the sermon kind of discussion?'"

To me, what is happening is huge because it is redefining Scripture. That is the reason that we are getting into this.

What I laid out to you with Point Number Two after introducing the series and the controversy is the Biblical arguments against Annihilation. I gave you all these verses, and we walked our way through them saying that yes, hell is forever and people will be there forever. These are the strongest verses on the subject.

From there we moved into Point Number Three, which is theological arguments—not so much individual texts, but broader theological arguments—on why hell is forever and people will be there forever.

With all of that being said, we now move into Point Number Four, where I am going to try to let their side talk.

I am going to give you the verses that they use to say that people will not be in hell forever.

Here are five Bible verses that they use. (Once we get finished with those five, then there are five more: ten total—ten big-idea type of verses where people are trying to say, "People will not be in hell forever.")

Part of being a good theologian is not just giving your own side, but being able to interact with the other camp. Neglecting that is why so many conversations are not real conversations—they are more like snowball fights where people are just throwing their verses that they think support their side at the other side, and the other side has their snowballs and they are throwing them at the first side.

The reason the conversation's going like this is that everybody is camping on their favorite verse, but they are not interacting with what the other side is saying.

These people—the Kirk Cameron types, Annihilationist, conditional immortality types—have verses that they use. If they did not have verses, their movement would have no traction.

What are some of their verses? The first one that I have here is the references to the second death—notice Revelation 20:14.

I had an Annihilationist send me an email. I guess he was trying to annihilate me with his email. In the email, he kept talking about "the second death," "the second death," "the second death."

Finally, I started to see that what he means by "the second death" is something very different from what I mean when I see the expression 'second death.' He is talking about the soul of the unsaved going into nonexistence. That is how he is defining the second death.

Notice Revelation 20:14. This, of course, is the great white throne judgment for unsaved people.

It says:

*"Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14).*

If you look back at Revelation 20:6, it says:

*"Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).*

There are a couple of references to the second death. The first time the expression 'second death' is used is in Jesus' words to the church at Smyrna—the suffering church—earlier in the Book of Revelation.

If you go back to Revelation 2:11, you will see a reference to it.

*"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes—" (Revelation 2:11).*

You might be saying, "Who are those overcomers?" Well, stick around for the next sermon and you will get an answer.

*"...He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death" (Revelation 2:11).*

So, the Annihilationist with the conditional immortality mindset has a definition of 'second death,' which means lack of consciousness. Basically, you go into hell as an unsaved person for—I am not sure how many years it is, but you reach a certain point where your soul just goes out of existence, and that is how they are defining the second death.

Frankly, that is how they define death. Notice the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel 18:4.

It says:

*"Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die" (Ezekiel 18:4).*

Look at Ezekiel 18:20—same chapter.

*"The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's*

*iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself" (Ezekiel 18:20).*

So, there is a penalty for sin. Sin is death, and the Annihilation says that death means that you reach a point where you do not exist anymore.

Are they using this phrase, "the second death," correctly? The answer is no, because the first death does not involve Annihilation. If the first death involved Annihilation, then it would make sense that the second death would involve Annihilation, but the truth of the matter is, the first death does not involve Annihilation, so the second death does not involve Annihilation.

Now, what do we mean by these expressions? 'First death' and 'second death.' Well, you physically die. Then, if you know Christ personally, your soul will not go into hell. You will escape the second death.

The saying that has helped me with this is, "If you are born once, you will die twice. If you are born twice, you will die once."

This means that if you are born once, you will die twice. If I am born physically, but I am never born again because I have never received Christ as my Savior, then what is in front of me are two deaths. I will die physically, but then I will go into the second death, which is the lake of fire.

Conversely, if I am born twice, the very worst thing that could happen to me is I will die once. If I am born physically into the world and then I am born again spiritually, what is the worst thing that can happen to me? I can die physically—and that might not even happen if we are the Rapture generation—but I have no part, no place, no connection to the lake of fire.

You will notice that in this way of thinking, if the first death is not Annihilation, then how could the second death be Annihilation? That is how I am responding to their use of this expression 'second death.'

Norman Geisler writes in his 'Systematic Theology':

"For one thing..."<sup>3</sup>

Responding to the Annihilationist.

"...the second death is no more annihilation than is the first death. The first death is the separation of the soul from the body for a short time—"4

Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

---

<sup>3</sup> Geisler, N. L. *Systematic theology, volume four: church, last things*, 393

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

"...The first death is the separation of the soul from the body for a short time (until the resurrection)..."<sup>5</sup>

Which for us is the Rapture.

"...not the soul's annihilation; the second death is the separation of the body and soul from God forever."<sup>6</sup>

So if you are going to make the second death annihilation, and it is the exact same Greek word for death. How can you do that if the first death does not involve annihilation? See that? I mean, when you die physically, you do not cease to exist.

If you are a Christian, absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. You go into the presence of the Lord, awaiting your future resurrection body. There is no annihilation there. There is no ceasing to exist.

So, if the first death is not annihilation, then why would you turn around and make the second death annihilation? You have to be inconsistent in your approach.

Beyond that—and this is very important to understand—'death' in the Bible never means annihilation. 'Death' in the Bible never means ceasing to exist. What 'death' in the Bible always means is separation.

Now, in twenty-first century medical terminology, when we use the word 'death,' we talk about it in terms of ceasing to exist. But that is not how the Biblical writers use the expression 'death.' 'Death' in the Bible never, never, never, never means that. It never means cessation of existence.

It means separation from God.

When you become an Annihilationist and you start to use the expression 'death' to support your view of eventual nonexistence, you might be using the word 'death' the way it is used in medical terminology in the twenty-first century, but you are also using the word in a way that the Bible never uses that word.

Just look at the whole situation with Adam and Eve.

This is what God said to Adam at the very beginning: Genesis 2:16-17.

It says:

*"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die'"*  
(Genesis 2:16-17).

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Geisler, N. L. *Systematic theology, volume four: church, last things*, 393

We know how this story ended. Adam and Eve decided to partake of the forbidden fruit, and they died. Now, when they died, did they stop existing?

They continued to exist, but in a state of separation. That is the first use of 'death' in the Bible, and it does not mean ceasing to exist, it means separation..

When you look at Genesis 3:9-10, you will see very clearly that Adam and Eve did not stop existing even though they had died.

Notice Genesis 3:9-10. This is after their sin.

It says:

*"Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?'" (Genesis 3:9)*

Now, how do you have a conversation with someone that does not exist? Why is God calling out to Adam if he did not exist because he died?

'Death' obviously must mean something different than what the Annihilationists are arguing it means because Adam and Eve died just like God said they would, but they are still in existence.

*"...the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself'" (Genesis 3:9-10).*

There is no point in hiding yourself if you do not exist, right? So, obviously, this concept of death—the Annihilationists are doing something with it that the Bible does not do.

Did you know that before we come to Christ, we are dead in our trespasses and sins? Paul in Ephesians 2:1 explains that to us: what we were like before we came to Christ.

It says:

*"And you were dead..." (Ephesians 2:1).*

There is our word 'dead.'

*"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins," (Ephesians 2:1).*

Now, can I ask you a question? Before you knew Christ personally, were you in existence? I sure hope so, because someone preached the gospel to you. How do you preach the gospel to someone that does not exist?

Obviously, death does not mean nonexistence the way the Annihilationist is trying to use the term.

Acts 16:30-31 says—to a dead man, the Philippian jailer; he is dead as a doornail in the sense that he is born into the world (Ephesians 2:1: 'separated from God')—and he says:

"... 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'" (Acts 16:30).

Acts 16:30-31:

"They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...' (Acts 16:31).

There is a guy that was dead and was still in existence. If death does not mean nonexistence, then the second death does not mean nonexistence either. It simply means that you are in a place where you are eternally separated from God, which obviously would not be a good place to be in.

This comes from 'The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,' which is a classic exegetical work defining the Hebrew word for 'death.' (Remember, the Old Testament is written primarily in Hebrew, with a few touches of Aramaic in there. The New Testament being written in Greek.).

How does 'The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament' define 'death'? It never defines it as nonexistence. Now, you might define it that way today if you are into twenty-first century medical terminology, but who cares about that? We care about how the Biblical writers use the expression.

'The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament' says:

"Death is the consequences and the punishment of sin. It originated with sin. A grand theme of the Old Testament is God's holiness, which separates Him from all that is in harmony with His character. Death, then, in the Old Testament means ultimate separation from God due to sin."<sup>7</sup>

So, when someone comes along and says that what death really means is your soul goes into the common grave and ceases to exist there, using the Hebrew word for 'death' in a way that the Biblical writers never used the word—I heard this years ago from a Jehovah's Witness, in fact, I knew so little about the Bible at the time that I was emotionally drawn into what he was saying.

He was trying to tell me that death is just the common grave, which means cessation of existence. That is an easier concept to swallow, because it is hard to think of the unbelievers in a place of eternal conscious torment.

Emotionally, he had me, and intellectually, he had me too, because I did not really understand what death meant. But now I know better. He was abusing the Bible. Kirk Cameron is abusing the Bible.

When Eric Metaxas says anybody that calls Kirk Cameron a heretic is a heretic because he is my friend—that is what his tweet said: "He is my friend"—Eric Metaxas is spouting heresy. Do you see that?

---

<sup>7</sup> Elmer B. Smick, "māwet," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris and Gleason L. Archer and Bruce K. Waltke, 1:1169

I know he writes all these books about Bonhoeffer and has all these wonderful things to say about the culture war and all of those kinds of things, but what these guys are floating out there is heresy.

It is just outright heresy. They are manipulating words to get the Bible to say something that it is not saying.

Now; Old Testament written in Hebrew; New Testament written in Greek. Here is a very reputable Greek lexicon. This is Thayer's, and here we are dealing with the word 'thanatos,' which means 'death.' How did the Greeks define death? They defined it as follows:

"That separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended."<sup>8</sup>

What happens when you die is that your life on earth ended, but your soul continues to exist in a state of separation from God. There is absolutely nothing in these definitions about cessation of existence.

Take a look at 1 Corinthians 15:26-27. The Annihilationists like these verses.

1 Corinthians 15:26-27. It says:

*"The last enemy that will be abolished is death. FOR HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him" (1 Corinthians 15:26-27).*

They love these verses where it talks about how death has been abolished.

Notice 2 Timothy 1:10.

2 Timothy 1:10:

*"but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," (2 Timothy 1:10).*

The Annihilationist wants these things to mean that not only is death nonexistence, but you reach a point where death does not even exist anymore. They use that as, "You disappear if you are an unsaved person. You were never given the gift of immortality to begin with."

The thing to understand about 1 Corinthians 15:26-27 and 2 Timothy 1:10 is that they are a statement of the first death. Only the first death is abolished. In other words, when

---

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Death - Thanatos*, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testameti, 282

we get into the resurrected state, you are not going to have people dying anymore. They are in a resurrected body.

It is not a statement saying that the eternal separation from God in the second death goes out of existence. When those passages talk about the abolishing of death, Paul is talking about the time in history that will come when the first death is abolished.

He is not making any statement whatsoever concerning the second death. They also do a number on Sheol and Hades, Sheol and Hades, which they think mean death and oblivion—meaning cessation of existence.

But that is not how the Biblical writers use the expressions 'Sheol' and 'Hades.' For example, in that horrifying account of the rich man who died in unbelief and went into hell, which is given to us in Luke 16:29-31. Where exactly did that guy's soul go?

Well, if you look at Luke 16:23, you will see exactly where it went.

It says:

*"In—" (Luke 16:23)*

What is the next word?

*"...Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able to, and that none may cross over from there to us'" (Luke 16:23-26)*

Now you look at this. And did the guy disappear? Was he annihilated? Did he go into oblivion? Obviously not. And yet he is in Hades. Luke 16:23 tells you he is in Hades. He is in Sheol.

'Death' and 'Hades'—they want those terms to mean cessation of existence, oblivion. All you have to do is look at Luke 16:23 which says 'Hades' and read the rest of the story. He is not in oblivion. He is continuing to exist in a place of separation from God.

They do a number on Genesis 2:7. Let us look at that for a second. This is where we discover that we were formed out of the dirt.

Do not get too high of a view of yourself—when you start to get a little arrogant, just remember you came from the dirt and you are going back to the dirt from which you came. I am feeling dirtier every day, to be honest with you.

It says:

*"Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being"  
(Genesis 2:7).*

Here is man in his original state, having a physical being. Then God in the second step breathes into him what I think is the soul, the 'psyche,' eternality.

Now, they will take that verse and they will use it over in Genesis 3:19, where it says:

*"By the sweat of your face You will eat bread..." (Genesis 3:19).*

This is post-fall.

*"...Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).*

The Annihilationist loves this verse, because what they think what it means is, "Well, our bodies are going right back into the ground, so that means there is coming a point in time where unsaved people will not exist anymore because they are going right back into the ground. They are going right back into the dirt from which they came."

Yet it is just another example where they are abusing the verse because that verse, Genesis 3:19, is a comment on the body only. It is not a comment on what God breathed into the body, which is the life-giving soul.

There are two things that are happening in Genesis 2:7. There is physical formation of man from the dirt. Then there is step two, where God breathed into his nostrils the gift of life.

So, as part of the curse, when it says we are going back into the ground from which we came, it is not making a statement about part two. It is making a statement about part one.

It is the body that goes back into the dirt. It is not a statement about what happens to the soul. Do you see that? But they do not want you to focus on part two. They want this to be a statement about people in general, body and soul, that they cease to exist.

That is not what Genesis 3:19 is even talking about. If you want to know what happens to people after they die, I do not think it is hidden in the Bible. There is a separation of the body and the soul. Yes, the body may deteriorate and go back into the earth, but the soul lives forever.

Notice what happened to Jesus when he died. Matthew 27:50.

Matthew 27:50:

*"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit"  
(Matthew 27:50).*

Do you see that? See how the body went one direction and the soul went another. So, when Genesis 3:19 is talking about humans going back to the dirt from which they

came, it is talking about what happens to the body. It is not talking about the spirit, sometimes called the soul, that left Jesus.

Your soul lives forever, although your physical body does not, in its corrupted state. Notice what happened to Stephen in Acts 7:59—Stephen being the first martyr of the church age.

It says:

*"They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!'" (Acts 7:59).*

Does it look like his body and soul went back into the ground? That is not what is happening at all with Stephen. Yes, his body is dying as they are throwing rocks at him, and in its un-resurrected state, it will decay and go right back into the earth from which it came.

However, the soul is alive. The spirit is alive. It is separating from the body. In Stephen's case, because he was saved, absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

Although Stephen physically died here, he was more alive than ever before. Maybe I should say it this way: he was just as alive as before when that separation happened..

You have a clear Old Testament example of this happening with Rachel. Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin.

Genesis 35:18. This is Rachel's death as she is giving birth. By the way, God said there would be trouble in childbirth, right, as part of the consequences of sin?

Here is an outworking of it. This is Rachel dying.

*"It came about as her soul was departing—" (Genesis 35:18).*

What does it say? 'Departing.' It does not say she stopped existing. Her soul was departing. It is like moving. You move from address A to address B. By the way, if we are not the Rapture generation, and I die (and that has got to happen at some point), do not have some big pity party for me, because the truth of the matter is, I did not go anywhere.

I just moved; I moved uptown, right? I got a better place. Now I am not living on the wrong side of the railroad tracks anymore. You can memorialize me if you want to, but do not shed too many tears, because I will be happy as a clam, believe me.

That is what happened with Rachel.

Genesis 35:18:

*"It came about as her soul was departing..." (Genesis 35:18).*

'Departing' means what? Death, because it says in parentheses:.

*"...(for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin" (Genesis 35:18).*

Here is Rachel giving birth to the boy who was later named Benjamin. As she is dying, she gives him a name, and then her soul departs and goes into the presence of the Lord.

She did not stop existing, even though her physical body went back into the dirt from which it came. It is obvious when you look at these things that they are doing something with the second death that the Bible is not doing.

They are trying to turn 'death' into cessation of existence, which is how we use the term in the twenty-first century, but the Bible nowhere uses that expression, 'cessation of existence.'

People do not stop existing. With the unsaved, they exist forever in a place of separation, not nonexistence.

Another verse they use is Revelation 11:18. Let us go to that one, where it says 'destroy.'

To the Annihilationist, 'destroy' is like the Death Star shooting the laser against Alderaan.

What they want 'destroy' to mean is you disappear just like the planet disappeared when the laser beam hit the planet. That is what they think 'destroy' means.

They will use a verse like Revelation 11:18.

It says:

*"And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18).*

So, people are trying to apparently destroy the earth in the Tribulation. So, God says, "I am going to destroy you." When Annihilationists see the word 'destroy,' they think Star Wars—cessation of existence, that is what destruction means..

The Greek word there is 'diaphtheiro [διαφθείρω].'<sup>1</sup> There is a similar word used over in 2 Peter 2:12. 2 Peter 2:12. This is the word 'phtheiro [φθείρω],'<sup>2</sup> if I am pronouncing that right without the 'dia' prefix.

2 Peter 2:12 is speaking of false teachers, and it says:

*"But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed," (2 Peter 2:12).*

The Annihilationist says, "Look what happens to unsaved people. Look at what happens to unsaved false teachers. They are destroyed, meaning that they cease to exist."

Again, do those words 'phtheiro [φθείρω]' and 'diaphtheiro [διαφθείρω]' ever mean anywhere in the Bible 'cessation of existence'? The answer is no.

Let us talk about 'ptheiro [φθείρω]' first. Let me just show you a few usages of it. Notice 1 Corinthians 3:17.

1 Corinthians 3:17. This is talking about people that abuse the church.

It says:

*"If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are" (1 Corinthians 3:17).*

When people come in and abuse the church, and they—the Bible says, "destroy the church," does that mean they destroy it to the point where the church does not exist anymore? No, the church is in a state of wreckage. That is what it means by destroying.

It is like your car. You want to get a new car, so you have to get rid of the old car. You take it to the junk pile where they mash it and break it and put it in a state that is unusable. They destroy it.

But does that mean that the car that you took to the junkyard does not exist anymore? It is in existence. It is just in an unusable state. Do you see that? It is in an irreparable state. It is in a state of non-usefulness. It is in a state of non-utility.

It does not mean the metal went out of existence. This is what happens to unsaved people when they die. They go to a place of destruction, meaning they are in a place that is irredeemable. They are in a place that is irretrievable.

They are in a place where they are in a ruined state, but they are still there, just as the metal from the car is still in the junkyard. That is how the Bible uses this expression, 'destroy.'

It does not mean cessation from existence.

Notice 1 Corinthians 15:33, another use of 'phtheiro [φθείρω].' These Annihilationists want to just throw the word 'destroy' at you, and then they want to move on to their next point. But, wait a minute, let us look at what the Bible actually means by the term 'destroy.'

1 Corinthians 15:33:

*"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts...'" (1 Corinthians 15:33).*

That is the same word: 'phtheiro [φθείρω].'

*"...good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33).*

So, do not hang around people that have bad morals or else you are going to end up being exactly like them. Now, when I hang around people with bad morals and imitate their immorality, does that mean I do not exist anymore?

If I did not used to use profanity, but now I am hanging around people that use profanity and I start using profanity, I just got corrupted or destroyed, but I am still there using profanity. Are you with me?

Look at 2 Corinthians 11:3. (These are the uses of 'phtheiro [φθείρω].') 2 Corinthians 11:3.

Paul says:

*"But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray—" (2 Corinthians 11:3).*

That is our word 'phtheiro [φθείρω]':

*"—from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3).*

Paul says, "You know, I am really afraid the devil's going to come in here and hoodwink you and lead you away from the simplicity of the gospel into a works-oriented salvation." That is what he is worried about.

He is worried about their doctrine being corrupted. He is worried about their doctrine being ruined. He is worried about their doctrine being destroyed.

But does the doctrine stop existing? No, it is just now in a warped state.

Notice Revelation 19:2. Revelation 19:2 is talking about the harlot and the end times.

*"Because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting..." (Revelation 19:2).*

That is 'phtheiro [φθείρω]':

*"...the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her" (Revelation 19:2).*

When the harlot corrupts the world in the last days with the false religious system, does the world stop existing? No, it continues on in a warped, perverted state. That is how the Scripture is using this expression 'destroy.'

Now, how about the stronger expression where the prefix 'dia' is added at the beginning? 'Diaphtheiro [διαφθείρω].' Well, when you study that one out, it is used about five times or so in the New Testament. It never, never, never means to take out of existence..

Let me give you some examples.

Luke 12:33, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount teaching, says:

*"Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys" (Luke 12:33).*

That last word 'destroy' there—when the moths come and destroy earthly treasure, does that mean the earthly treasure does not exist anymore? No, the word does not mean that.

What it means is that the earthly treasure is in a state of corruption. "Why would you labor for earthly things that can be corrupted?" is what Jesus is saying. "Labor for heavenly things which are incorruptible."

Nobody would use this word 'destroy' and make it sound like the earthly treasure does not exist. That is how Annihilationists are throwing around the use of this word.

Notice 2 Corinthians 4:16. This is talking about our bodies.

*"Therefore we do not lose heart..." (2 Corinthians 4:16).*

Why in the world would I lose heart? Because I look at myself in the mirror, and I am not the man I used to be. If my whole self-image comes from how I look or used to look—particularly those people on TV that make money based on how they look—what do you do when you do not look like you used to look anymore? Something's going wrong with our bodies, amen?

Well, you lose heart. But Paul says—for the Christian—you shouldn't lose heart.

*"...but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man—" (2 Corinthians 4:16).*

This is what really counts.

*"...is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).*

When Paul uses this word 'decaying' of our bodies, he is using 'diaphtheiro [διαφθείρω].'

As I am getting older and I look at myself in the mirror, does that mean I do not exist anymore? Well, it would be hard to look at myself in the mirror if I did not exist, right?

What Paul is describing is my body, because of original sin, is going through a state of corruption.

Notice 1 Timothy 6:5. These are all the things that Kirk Cameron does not bring up on his podcast. There is never, as this famous saying goes, the other side of the story.

1 Timothy 6:5.

It says:

*"and constant friction between men of depraved mind—" (1 Timothy 6:5).*

That is 'diaptheiro [διαφθείρω]': Their minds are depraved.

*"...and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain" (1 Timothy 6:5).*

When he says "men of depraved minds," is he saying their minds do not exist anymore? Their minds went out of existence? Well, sometimes when you listen to these depraved people talk, you ask yourself, "What happened to his brain, man?"

But Paul says their brain did not disappear. Their brain, or their mind, became corrupted.

Notice Revelation 8:9. This is talking about the trumpet judgments, and it is talking about ships in the water.

Revelation 8:9; it says:

*"and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed" (Revelation 8:9).*

When this third trumpet judgment hits, the ships in the sea are destroyed. That is 'diaptheiro [διαφθείρω].' What happens when a ship is destroyed? It is broken up. The assembly of it is damaged to the point where it does not do its job anymore. It does not mean the wood and the planks and the matter just disappeared.

That is what hell is like. Hell is like being in a place where you can never be what you are supposed to be anymore, because you are separated from the God that made you. It does not mean you do not exist anymore—the way Annihilationists are using the expression.

While we are in Revelation, go back to their favorite verse, Revelation 11:18. You will notice there, when I read it, that the word 'destroyed'—'diaptheiro'—is used twice.

It says:

*"And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18).*

God is going to destroy those who destroy the earth. Whatever you are doing with the earth in terms of destruction, you are doing with people because the word is repeated twice there.

So, let me just ask you a basic question: when the Tribulation judgments come, does that mean the earth has just been taken out of existence? Absolutely not.

This earth is needed—to be renovated so God can bring in His earthly kingdom. Then one day, after the thousand years are over, it will be replaced by the new heavens and new earth.

But for a thousand years after this judgment, the earth is not destroyed. It is just ruined. So, using the same word back to back in the same sentence, what is God going to do with unbelievers in this judgment?

He is not going to take them out of existence. He is going to destroy them to the point where they are not usable anymore. They are not within His design anymore. They are in a ruined state, not in a non-existent state.

Now, what about the Antichrist? Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:8. We have done 'phtheiro [φθείρω],' and 'diaphtheiro [διαφθείρω].' Let me give you another word that is used for destruction: 'katargeo [καταργέω].'

God is going to 'katargeo [καταργέω],' or 'destroy,' the Antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:8:

*"Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of his mouth..." (2 Thessalonians 2:8).*

Here is 'katargeo [καταργέω].'

*"...and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).*

God is going to take the Antichrist and bring him to an end. The Annihilationist says, "There it is in the Bible. He is going to cause the Antichrist to disappear."

When the Antichrist is defeated, does he disappear? He does not disappear. He continues on in a state of separation.

Notice Revelation 19:20.

*"And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive..." (Revelation 19:20).*

They are still alive, even though they have been defeated. They have not been annihilated. They have not been eradicated.

But wait a minute: they just got destroyed—'katargeo [καταργέω].' Well, 'katargeo [καταργέω]' does not mean cessation of existence. It means they continue on in a ruined state.

*"...these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20).*

And guess what, folks? A thousand years pass and they are still in there. We talked about this because at the end of the thousand years, the Lord is going to take Satan and throw him into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are.

They are still in there a thousand years later. Why is that? Well, I guess this idea that some people have called conditional immortality is wrong. The Antichrist is immortal because he is still existing even though he has been destroyed.

Notice one more verse: Romans 6:6. Here is 'katargeo [καταργέω]' again. This is dealing with your sin nature. This is what happened to your sin nature the moment you placed your faith in Christ: your sin nature was destroyed.

The verb 'katargeo [καταργέω]' is used to describe the destruction of your sin nature the moment you trusted Christ.

Notice what Romans 6:6 says:

*"knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with..." (Romans 6:6).*

That is 'katargeo.'

*"...so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;" (Romans 6:6).*

Well, isn't that neat? When I trusted in Christ, my sin nature was done away with. Okay, then why is it that when someone cuts me off on the freeway, I go into a rage? I thought my sin nature was taken care of. It says in the Bible that it was done away with.

That is where the Bible comes along and says, "You do not understand what 'katargeo [καταργέω]' means. 'Katargeo [καταργέω]' does not mean nonexistence. It means your sin nature has been disabled. It has been defeated, not eradicated or annihilated."

If your sin nature had been moved into a state of nonexistence, you as a Christian would never be tempted by your sin nature anymore. Do you guys ever sin as Christians? There is one guy in here that has his hand up—the rest of you are sinning because you are lying.

Why do you sin as a Christian? Because you still have a sin nature.

Well, then, what does it mean when 'katargeo [καταργέω]' is used in reference to the sin nature? It means you do not have to obey the sin nature anymore. You have the resources of Christ to tell the sin nature no.

So, I am cut off on the freeway, and these feelings of anger well up within me, and I say to myself, "You know what? I do not have to go down that route because Jesus rendered my sin nature not eradicated, but inoperative to the point where I can tell it no."

Here is an example where 'katargeo [καταργέω]' does not mean annihilation. The Annihilationists will talk about how the Antichrist is annihilated and that is the word 'katargeo.' He is not annihilated. He continues to exist in a ruined state.

If you doubt the fact that you still have a sin nature, look at Romans 13:14. This is after Paul gives us this majestic treatment on the doctrine of salvation: sin, salvation, sanctification, promises of God, you are a new creature in Christ Jesus.

What does he say at the end of the book?

*"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Romans 13:14).*

Why would you make a statement like that when you just got finished telling us who we are in Christ and that we are new creatures? Paul says, "Well, you do not really understand what the word 'katargeo' means."

'Katargeo [καταργέω]' does not mean your sin nature disappeared. 'Katargeo [καταργέω]' means your sin nature—although it is still there and always exists to pull us back into its wicked clutches—has been defeated, but not annihilated, not eradicated.

So, when 'katargeo [καταργέω]' is used to describe unsaved people, it does not mean eradication at all the way Annihilationist are using these expressions 'diaphtheiro [διαφθείρω],' 'phtheiro [φθείρω]'—all words translated 'destroy' do not mean annihilation. They do not mean that.

Because many of these people do not really have a lot of—I do not want to say all of them—but they have not really gone through the discipline of training, so they do not really have any knowledge of the original language. (I am not an expert in Greek and Hebrew by any stretch of the imagination, but I know a little bit about it.).

They use the English translation of words from the twenty-first century as if that is the final say. They pour into the word 'destroy' a twenty-first century meaning when the reality is that the Bible did not originally come to us in English. It came to us in Greek.

So, the English word 'destroy' comes from another word or words; and when you study those other words, they never, never, never, never mean annihilation or eradication.