

REPORT ON THE SECOND DEATH (EXCERPTED FROM A LETTER TO A FRIEND)

by
Martin Zender

Dear Readers,

God's Word must be believed or our faith is futile. I follow the "literal if possible" rule of Scriptural interpretation. The letter below refutes the unscriptural and erroneous teaching that the lake of fire—instead of being the literal second death as taught in Revelation 20:14—is somehow a period of either divine illumination or chastisement followed by enlightenment. I pray that God will use this letter to open eyes to His truth.

Dear Allen (name has been changed),

Thank you for sending me a copy of your report on the second death. I will deal with it as graciously as possible, while at the same time making myself clear. Your words are in Arial font, mine will be as you see here.

The 2007 Willard Bible Conference was a very inspiring event for me. I thought all the speaker's presentations were excellent and I came away feeling God's Spirit was very active. I was particularly looking forward to this event because I knew beforehand that two speakers were going to talk on a subject that has had me in a state of mixed emotions for several years, "The Second Death."



The interpretation of "The Second Death" by A.E. Knoch is that "The Lake of Fire" is literal and the Second Death is consummated at the Great White Throne Judgment. Martin Zender presented the A.E. Knoch version. Martin is a very hard working man of God. I truly believe God is going to use Martin in a very significant manner sometime in the future. Martin spoke on the "Second Death" and when he was finished I didn't think Phil Scranton--a noted proponent of a figurative second death--could present anything contrary with conviction. But when Phil finished presenting his view I was convinced that a "fresh" look at the Second Death was needed. I picked

up a copy of Phil's report "A Fresh Look at the Second Death." I've read the report several times and each time I read it exciting thoughts came into my mind. Someone was kind enough to send me a CD on which Phil speaks for 79 minutes on the Second Death. It also is very enlightening.

My experience in learning God's truths over the past several years is that each time I learn a new truth it excites and amazes me. My wife Mary and I were in the Worldwide Church of God from 1966 to 1978. After leaving that Church we were without spiritual guidance for 20-plus years. Early on in that period I reasoned that "salvation for all" made sense to me even though I was never taught it. Then in 2003 a friend gave me literature and cassette tapes by Martin Zender. That was the beginning of a lot of new truths revealed to me including salvation for all. Every new truth excited and amazed me! Each one made me feel happy! Each one made me praise God! Each one amazed me how the world's churches were so deceived!

When I first heard of the "Second Death" explanation according to A.E. Knoch, it did not excite me. It actually made me sad. It just did not make any sense.

I thought why would God resurrect people at the Great White Throne Judgment and immediately throw them into a literal lake of fire? What purpose would that serve? I thought of my parents who never hurt anyone, friends who are deceased but when alive were nice people. I could think of many people that I honestly thought were better than I. But I was told these people were unbelievers and therefore are to be cast into the lake of fire. But didn't God make them unbelievers? It was very confusing to me. I surmised that someday God would help me to understand this issue and like other issues bring excitement rather than sadness. That someday" arrived this past June, 2007 in Willard, Ohio thanks to Phil Scranton.



You are setting the tenor of your paper here, Allen, which is: It doesn't make sense to me, therefore it can't be so. And also: If I do not feel excitement about a thing, that thing cannot be so. I'm not denying the validity of your feelings, Allen, I'm just saying you're sounding an awful lot like the protestor of Romans, chapter 9. The protestor says, "Why, then, is He still blaming? For who has withstood His intention?" You say: "Why is God resurrecting people and then casting them into death when He Himself made them unbelievers? It doesn't make sense." Paul's answer to the protestor would also be his answer to you: "Oh, man! Who are you, to be sure, who are answering again to God?"

You're missing the most critical event at the great white throne: judgment. God does not immediately cast people into the lake of fire upon resurrecting them, as you suggest. God raises these people, judges them, and then those whose names are not written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

Your emotions may be compromising your ability to believe Scripture. You mention being happy about some revelations and sad about others, as if your disposition at any given moment determines truth. Are you happy when you read in Revelation, chapter 9, that one third of humanity will be killed? Are you happy when you read in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, that God will be sending humanity an operation of deception? None of these things make me happy, but they're nonetheless true.

You write: "I could think of many people that I honestly thought were better than I. But I was told these people were unbelievers and therefore are to be cast into the lake of fire. But didn't God make them unbelievers? It was very confusing to me."



What does certain people being better than you have to do with God's choices for eonian life? You should know that those chosen for eonian life are chosen "not in accord with acts" (2 Timothy 1:9). And now you make me confused: Are your parents and the "nice people" of this context believers or unbelievers? In one breath you say, "I was told these people were unbelievers," but then in the next breath, "Didn't God make them unbelievers?" So are they unbelievers, or aren't they? If they are believers, then they have no business at the great white throne, and I think you know that. So it seems you are acknowledging here that these people are unbelievers. Nice people can also be unbelievers, I think you know.

Your main difficulty with the great white throne judgment is that nice people who are unbelievers are returned to death along with rotten people who are unbelievers. You apparently do not have the same difficulty with nice people and rotten people suffering this common fate now. I'm not sure why it's acceptable to you now and would not be then, except that God's hand is not as plain now as it would be then. You missed the main point of my address in Willard, Ohio; namely, that death is not a punishment for what we do, but rather the result of what we are. Otherwise, you would not consider the second death—or any death—unfair to sinners of varying degree.

Back to your heart's desire. Since you want these nice people at the great white throne to survive their judgment unto Eon 5, you—along with Phil Scranton—are forcing the second death to be something other than what it is, which is death. You're looking for a gray element of the white throne judgment to squeeze life from, but unfortunately you've chosen the wrong element: the lake of fire, which is the second death. You'd have better luck squeezing orange juice from a pomegranate.

Any teaching that would turn a thing called “the second death” into a wonderful ministry of spiritual illumination has the stain of desperation stuck to it. Literal death is the absence of life; figurative death is senselessness. What is there besides the literal and the figurative? In Scripture, death is called an enemy; it is never—either in a literal sense or a figurative one—used to describe a period of either divine illumination or chastisement followed by enlightenment. It is always oblivion; in the case of figurative death, the oblivious people are breathing. In neither case are great revelations being grasped and appreciated.

What is worse, you are denying the conquering of death at the consummation. What’s the big deal about death being conquered if the dead aren’t really dead? It’s all a big yawn; much fuss about not much at all. According to Phil Scranton, and now you, not one being in the universe, following the great white throne judgment, will be dead; everyone will be alive. Here’s Phil’s teaching, next to God’s:

PHIL: FOLLOWING THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT, NOT ONE BEING IN THE UNIVERSE WILL ACTUALLY BE DEAD; EVERYONE WILL BE ALIVE—EVERYONE.

GOD: AT THE CONSUMMATION, THE LAST ENEMY IS BEING ABOLISHED: DEATH.

COMMENT TO GOD FROM THE GALLERY: *What enemy? What death?* You’re behind the times, God. Phil Scranton already abolished death way back at the great white throne.

According to Phil Scranton, death isn’t an enemy at all, but a friend that ushers “the dead” into a life of beneficial—albeit painful—tutelage under redeemed Israel. He says the second death is figurative. If the second death is figurative, then the abolition of death is figurative as well; one can no more literally abolish a figure of speech than capture a shadow in a jar. You can’t have it both ways, Allen. Either the second death is literal, or the great event of 1 Corinthians 15:26—the abolition of death—is a figure of speech. So when will you write a paper forwarding 1 Corinthians 15:26 as a figure of speech? When Phil does?

TRUTH: *Death* is to be abolished, not life.

Maybe Paul meant to say, in **1 Corinthians 15:26**, “**And the last enemy is being abolished: the figurative usage of death.**”

But he didn't say that.

* * *

So now I'm going to take your side. I am. But I first wanted to dissolve 1) the emotional basis of your argument, 2) the questioning of God's justice, 3) the mistaking of death for punishment, and 4) the glorification of death.



I'm beginning to suspect that the good unbelievers at the great white throne—the Mother Therasas and the Mahatmas—will be granted life there, albeit mortal life, while the unbelievers of more questionable character—the Hitlers, Husseins and Mansons—will revisit death in the lake of fire.



At God's throne, the great and the small are judged "each in accord with their acts." Some acts will be good, some evil. There is a scroll of life. Ah! A scroll of life. "And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." It is reasonable to believe that, because the scroll is consulted, there are names written here. Those whose names are recorded, then, are spared the second death and advance—albeit as mortals—to the new earth. The others? Returned to the grave until the consummation.

When we appear at the dais of Christ, some of us will receive applause (1 Corinthians 4:5), some will receive a wreath of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), and some will see their evil works torched (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Or maybe each of us will receive a little bit of everything. We know that the resurrection of life holds varying degrees of glory, just as there are various glories among the stars (1 Corinthians 15:40-41). My point is: as distinctions are recognized for believers at the dais of Christ, might not there also be distinctions recognized at the great white throne for unbelievers?

The argument may be made that distinctions are recognized, but judgments are applied while the recently dead are alive, to be followed by the re-death of these folks by virtue, not of their sins, but of their kinship to Adam. I am willing to believe this; I have believed it for years; it would be right of God; just. But that darn scroll of life is now looming large to me.

I believe there are only three vivifications, corresponding to three periods of vivification, as noted in 1 Corinthians 15:23-24: 1) the Firstfruit, Christ, 2) thereupon those who are Christ's at His presence, and 3) the consummation, when death is abolished. So I am not suggesting that those whose names are recorded in the scroll of life—if, indeed, there are any—are made immortal. I'm suggesting that, since only those whose names are not written in the scroll of life are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, the only alternative available for those whose names *are* recorded is transference to the new earth, where they will sustain their lives—as mortals—with leaves from the log of life, in the city of God (Revelation 22:2).

I realize that the word “condemned” in the *Concordant Literal New Testament* version of Revelation 20:13 makes this scenario impossible, but even A.E. Knoch acknowledges that only one of the three oldest manuscripts has “condemned” here. The others make this, “judged.” I think “judged” may be the correct reading.

Were I seeking life for nice people at the great white throne, I’d be seeking it from the scroll of life, not from the lake of fire, which is the second death. You and Phil Scranton, and now Ted McDivitt and Rick Farwell, are barking up the wrong tree. Aren’t the living more apt to be found in a book called “life,” rather than in a phrase containing the word death?

THE CASE OF MY MOTHER, AND OTHERS

But what if no one judged at the great white throne enters the new earth? What if each is judged righteously in accord with his or her acts by the only righteous Judge, and then returned to death? Isn’t God always just? Is there ever good reason to twist Scripture or pit our emotional ideas about justice against God’s righteous judging?

But now I shall expose your hypocrisy. Let’s assume that everyone at the great white throne, due to unbelief, goes into the second death. You have a problem with that. For one thing, you picture your parents and other nice people. I ask you this, then: Do you have a problem with nice unbelievers being dead for the 1,000 years? I have never heard that you do. For one thing, you cannot argue with what you know is a fact.

I know you believe that “the rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years should be finished” (Revelation 20:5), and that this “rest of the dead” includes a lot of nice people. I know you believe that only members of the body of Christ—believers—are snatched away, and that only faithful Israelites are raised at the former resurrection. And yet I have never heard a word of protest from you concerning this. That God would leave nice unbelievers dead at the snatching away makes sense to you. Why? Because you know that God distinguishes between believers and unbelievers, in spite of how nice they are. And yet you can’t stomach this same principle of judging at the great white throne. Why?



This is the hypocrisy. You acknowledge God’s just judgment in leaving nice unbelievers dead, but you can’t stomach the same just judgment when nice unbelievers are first raised, judged, then returned to death. This is where your emotions derail you, because you imagine, I think, that the nice unbelievers are tormented at the great white throne. (They’re not; they’re being judged. Only “those of faction, and stubborn, indeed, as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice” and those “effecting evil” receive “indignation and

fury, affliction, and distress” at the great white throne—Romans 2:8-9. For nice unbelievers, the judgment is much milder.) Then you assume that being cast into a lake of fire will hurt. It would if humans did it, but God is more merciful than humans.

My mother died several years ago; I loved her. But as far as I know, she died an unbeliever. Does this sadden me? Yes. I will be raised at the snatching away, before the 1,000-year kingdom, while my mother will remain in the grave. In other words, I will be alive for 1,000 years without my mother. But I’m alive without her now. Does all this sadden me? Yes. Will it sadden me when I am alive for the 1,000 years? Not as it does now.

My life now and my life during the 1,000 years have one thing in common: I will be alive without my mother. But there is a critical difference between my life and feelings now and my life and feelings then: I will have the mind of Christ, then. My spirit will fully control my emotions, keeping them from fighting God’s operation. Mind you, I am not putting forth here the Christian teaching that believers will callously look on while unbelievers get consciously tormented for eternity. For one thing, I am not talking about conscious torment, but death. For another, I am not talking about callously looking on, but possessing spiritual understanding.

God will do the right thing by my mother at the great white throne. What if she does not live during the fifth eon? It will be no different than her not living for the 1,000 years; except then, I believe, she will be asleep in Christ, having received Him at the great white throne. Isn’t the apostle Paul now asleep in Christ? Peter? John? Do you have a problem with that? Do you have a problem with believers now being asleep in Christ? Then why would you have a problem with it, then? It’s because of your emotions, which are leading you into hypocrisy.

Jesus Christ has been living in heaven for 2,000 years without His beloved Peter, without His beloved John, and without His beloved Paul. Has Jesus been depressed all this time? I doubt it. He has spiritual understanding concerning the dead, and I’m sure He already sees them in His mind’s eye as if alive. He tells us, now, as mortals, to walk as if alive from among the dead (Romans 6:8-14). Don’t you think Jesus follows His own advice concerning the presently dead—especially as He is in His glory at the right hand of God? Did He not say on earth, concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—who were dead at the time He spoke—that God was the God of the living, not the dead? And was this not while He was in His flesh? Now that He is at the right hand of God, would you imagine that time afflicts Him in a worse way than it did then? Or would it rather be that He is now the master of handling time?

After we are snatched away and made immortal, time will not affect us as it affects us now.

* * *

For the rest of your letter, Allen, you usurp the clear words of Scripture in favor of your own thoughts, ideas, and wishes. Here are the most startling examples:

God: “And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14-15).

Allen: “It makes more sense to me that they are alive and living outside of New Jerusalem” (pg. 5, par. 3)

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God: “This is the second death, the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14).

Allen: “New Jerusalem represents the Lake of Fire” (pg. 5, par. 3)

Yet the most enormous error in your report is, unfortunately, the very thing you base your theology upon. Here it is:

“The Second Death is spiritual” (pg. 9)

Just when I thought you could not possibly mean this, farther down the page I saw the following equation, in all capital letters:

“SECOND DEATH = SPIRITUAL.”

“The body apart from the spirit is dead” (James 2:26). Only the spirit can give life. As life is the antithesis of death, so also is spirit. There is no such thing as “spiritual death,” and neither can there be; “spirit” and “death” are mutually exclusive; whatever is touched by God’s spirit lives, and that from which God withdraws His spirit, dies:

“You send forth Your spirit, they [the beasts] are created. You gather away their spirit; they breathe their last and return to their soil” (Psalm 104:29-30).

And yet you use this impossible, contradictory and unscriptural phrase—“spiritual death”—several times in your letter, believing it somehow proves your point. It does prove something, but not your point.

How do you arrive at this strange phrase? In the following strange manner: You make the new birth of John 3:1-12 into a template for the second death. Here’s your formula, from page 9:

“FIRST BIRTH = PHYSICAL

SECOND BIRTH = SPIRITUAL

It's the SAME with the TWO DEATHS spoken of in the Bible!

FIRST DEATH = PHYSICAL SECOND DEATH = SPIRITUAL”



It’s axiomatic to you that since birth (a good thing) becomes spiritual the second time around, then death (a bad thing) also becomes spiritual. But birth and death are opposites. If the presence of the word “second” is all it takes is to make unlike things similar, then a second helping of ice cream is as good as a second helping of mud. Is this the way you see it? It’s like saying that since more life is good, then more death must also be good. Stated another way, your premise is: Since living beings have both a physical and a spiritual nature, then dead beings do, too.

HERE IS THE *SCRIPTURAL* VERSION OF YOUR CHART:

God gives spirit= physical life
 God gives more spirit= physical life + spiritual life
 God takes away spirit= physical death
 God takes away spirit again= physical death

Spirit plus spirit equals more spirit and more life, but the withdrawal of spirit (death) plus the withdrawal of spirit again, makes nothing spiritual, especially not death.

I recently saw a report on TV about children in Iraq that were either killed or maimed by explosives. One little 11 year old girl was shown lying unconscious in a hospital bed with very serious wounds. She later died. My thoughts began to think of the “Second Death” for this little girl. She most likely never heard of the one and only true God. The odds are she was an unbeliever and blameless as such. But if the “Lake of Fire” is literal she will be resurrected only to be immediately thrown into it to be burned to death once more! Does that make sense?

There you go again with your fallacious reasoning, imitating the protester of Romans, chapter 9. You say, “She was an unbeliever and blameless.” But since when does God *not* blame unbelievers? Again, yours is the argument of the protester of Romans, chapter 9, who says, “Why is He still blaming?” You’re practically quoting him, Allen. Are you sure this is a role you want to play? Do you really want to be one to whom it is said, “O man! Who are you?”

You repeat here the same critical mistake you made earlier, insisting that this girl “will be resurrected only to be immediately thrown into the lake of fire to be burned to death once more!” The exclamation point betrays the emotionality of your argument. This is the second time you’ve used the phrase “immediately thrown,” and the second time

you've misstated the truth. Those who are raised at the great white throne are not immediately thrown ("cast" the Scripture says) into the lake of fire, but are judged first. Seeing as how you've twice ignored God's righteous judgment, one gets the impression that you doubt its importance. Yet its importance cannot be overestimated; it is vital, the key to everything.

It is not my purpose to relate here everything Phil has said in his report. Rather I am going to add my comments to his. In a case or two my comments might not agree 100% with Phil's report but I believe we are both on the "Yellow Brick Road" to the truth of this issue.

Unfortunately, this "Yellow Brick Road" laid by Phil and others, leads to the same place it did in *The Wizard of Oz*: to a phantom city powered by special-effects for the sake of the emotionally vapid.



Here is an interesting Bible verse. I do not have a Concordant version of the Old Testament so this verse is from the New American Standard Bible.

Isa. 65:17 – 25.

(17) "For behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."

(18) "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing, And her people for gladness."

(19) "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her the voice of weeping and the sound of crying."

(20) "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred. And the one that does not reach the age of one hundred shall be thought accursed."

(21) "And they shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit."

(22) "They shall not build, and another inhabit, They shall not plant, and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, so shall be the days of My people. And My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands."

The KJV translates this verse as "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree

are the days of my people, and MINE ELECT shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”

(23) They shall not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the Lord, And their descendants with them.”

(24) It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”

(25) The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain, says the Lord.”

Here is my (Allen’s) take on these Scriptures.

- 1) This is plainly speaking about the new heavens and the new earth.
- 2) This is the 5th eon.
- 3) It is a period of peace, prosperity and happiness. Humans will be learning and growing in the knowledge of God. War no longer exists.
- 4) Humans will routinely live a hundred years.
- 5) Verse 22 speaks of God’s elect enjoying the work of their hands. I take this to be referring to the Israelites (Bride of Christ) who will be living as spirit beings in New Jerusalem. They will be teaching and aiding human beings to live, grow spiritually and prosper during the 5th Eon.
- 6) These humans will be those that lived prior to the return of Christ and from the Great White Throne Judgment who were either not in the former resurrection or not found written in the book of life. (Rev.20:11–15).



“I love the lake of fire!”

Allen, it’s your personal idea, not God’s Word, that those *not* found written in the book of life are living, growing spiritually, and prospering during the fifth eon. Compare what God says concerning those not found written in the scroll of life, to what you say concerning them:

God: “And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

Allen: And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was taught by Israelites to grow spiritually and prosper during the 5th eon.

They will be murderers, immoral, enchanters and idolators. (Rev. 21:8) These are the worse of the lot and include such despots as Hitler, Sadam Hussein, Attila the Hun, Charles Manson, Jeffrey Dahmer and other evil doers from all ages. Included will be the unbelievers that could include our

parents, friends, our children, neighbors and Mother Teresa type people. They will live perhaps another 100 years. Even though there will be peace and prosperity on the earth during this period these humans will be learning of God's blueprint of life and will be overcoming their human tendencies toward evil. (Rev. 22:1-2).

Here, once again, you pit your own personal ideas about life on the new earth against the words of God. Only this time you ascribe to your idea a verse reference:

Allen:

Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Attila the Hun, Charles Manson, Jeffrey Dahmer and Mother Theresa will perhaps live another hundred years during the fifth eon. They will learn of God's blueprint of life and will be overcoming their human tendencies (**Rev. 22:1-2**).

God:

"And he shows me a river of water of life, resplendent as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God and the Lambkin. In the center of its square, and on either side of the river, is the log of life, producing twelve fruits, rendering its fruit in accord with each month. And the leaves of the log are for the cure of the nations" (**Revelation 22:1-2**).

You assume the nations of Eon 5 to be comprised of those whose names are absent from the book of life. Nothing could be further from the truth. The nations consist of those living and born during the 1,000 years, and perhaps those whose names are written in the book of life. But it most certainly does not contain those whose names are absent from the book of life.

In Rev. 21 we read about New Jerusalem. It is a city 1500 miles square by 1500 miles high. It is inhabited by God the Father, Jesus and those written in the book of life. (Verses 22 & 27).

New Jerusalem has 12 portals or gates. Three are located on each side of the city. (Verse 12-14). In Rev.22:14-15 it states: "Happy are those who are rinsing their robes, that it will be their license to the log of life, and they may be entering the portals of the city. Outside are curs, and enchanter, and paramours, and murderers, and idolators and everyone fabricating and fondling falsehoods."

I have been told that the murderers, etc. outside New Jerusalem are actually dead because they were cast into the Lake of Fire.

Really? Who could have given you such a crazy idea? Where could you have heard something like that?

“And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire” (**Revelation 20:14-15**).

But the verse above does not say “Outside are the dead curs, and enchanters, and paramours, and murderers.....”

Why should it? We already learned two chapters previous that they are dead; they died in the lake of fire, which is the second death. When Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus, he did not say to Martha, “Where have you placed the dead body?” He said, “Where have you placed him?” Ah! Jesus didn’t call Lazarus dead, so he must have been alive. That’s the logic you’re applying to Revelation 22:15. Are you sure you still want to apply it?

It makes more sense to me that they are alive and living outside of New Jerusalem which figuratively represents the Lake of Fire where humans are learning and overcoming (Rinsing their robes) so that they too may enter into New Jerusalem through the portals. See Acts 14:22 and Rom. 5:3-4.

God: “And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14-15).

Allen: “It makes more sense to me that they are alive and living outside of New Jerusalem.”

God: “This is the second death, the lake of fire”; the lake of fire represents the second death.

Allen: “New Jerusalem represents the Lake of Fire.”

I believe the Lake of Fire is figurative, as explained by Phil Scranton.

I believe the lake of fire is literal, as explained by God.

We know that steel is made stronger by going through controlled heat. In Zech.13:9 it states “And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ And they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”

Humans living during the 5th Eon, on the earth outside of New Jerusalem are living in a figurative Lake of Fire. The Lake of Fire is the Second Death.

A little while ago you said that the New Jerusalem represents the lake of fire. Now you say the lake of fire represents (is) the second death. The transitive property states: If A represents B, and B represents C, then A represents C. Thus, according to your unique dichotomy, the New Jerusalem represents the second death. Do you really want to contend this? If you wish to contend that a spiritual city run by God represents either a lake of fire or death, then what is to stop you from contending that Satan represents Christ, or darkness represents light?

For the benefit of those you hope to instruct, you need to make up your mind about the lake of fire. Does it represent a spiritual city run by God, or does it represent death? There is quite a difference between the two. My recommendation is: BELIEVE GOD. God says it represents death.

MISHANDLING FIGURES OF SPEECH

For the rest of your letter, you make the same mistake Phil Scranton makes, and that A. Oosterhuis made before him: YOU REASON FROM AND BASE DOCTRINES UPON FIGURES OF SPEECH.

This is evident when you speak of “different types of death.” That you imagine the figurative use of death to be another kind of death has led you onto this unfortunate sidetrack. You and Phil and others assume that because death is used literally and figuratively, there are different kinds, or species, of death: one species (the figurative usage of death) where dead people are alive (living dead; zombies), and another species (the literal usage of death) where dead people are actually dead.

That’s the fiction, here’s the fact: Death is death; it’s the absence of life. The figurative use of death does not turn death into not-death (life) any more than the figurative use of bread by our Lord turned bread into not-bread (His body).



Since Jesus held up the bread and said, “This is my body,” are we now to infer that there are two species of bread in the world, one species that is actually bread—made of flour and salt—and another species that is not bread at all, but rather the body of Jesus Christ? Is this how you recommend we reason from Scripture? Then welcome to the deception of Catholicism. Yet it is this very error, applied to death—embraced and disseminated by Phil Scranton and others—that has led people astray on the topic of death.

The remainder of your report is built on similar sand: 1) reasoning from false premises, 2) faulty syllogisms, 3) a misunderstanding of figures of speech, and 4) a thorough disregard—in the matter of Revelation 20:14—of the law of the metaphor.

What distresses me about this departure from truth is that my teaching on the law of the metaphor—namely, that the predicate noun of a metaphor is never figurative—has been thoroughly ignored. Yet this is the law of language, applied to Revelation 20:14, which proves the second death to be literal. But you, Phil, Rick, and Ted have yet to answer this ironclad argument. No one has accepted my challenge and produced a Scriptural metaphor—or any metaphor, for that matter—in which the predicate noun is figurative. Why? Because none exist. Phil tried to answer the argument in his booklet, “The Second Death,” only to prove his confusion on the subject.

* * *

Allen, I pray that you are willing to adjust your thoughts to accord with Scripture. Look at all you can have by believing that the second death is literal: 1) You can uphold rather than trample a law of language; 2) death can be literally rather than figuratively abolished (1 Corinthians 15:26); 3) believers can be made immortal (1 Corinthians 15:23); 4) the new earth can be completely free of all evil doers (Revelation 22:15; they’re all dead [Revelation 20:14-15]); and 5) the city of God can be populated, not with figuratively dead people, but with those whose names are written in the scroll of life (Revelation 21:27).

Let us seek the living among the living, not among the dead.

I do not think it profitable to take the rest of your letter point-for-point, Allen. Besides, I am hoping that since you have now seen a Scriptural way of getting nice people into Eon 5 alive—the book of life—you will stop trying to do unscriptural things with the lake of fire, which is the second death.

Grace and peace,

Martin