

58. The meaning of the word “perish” needs some work in our context since its English definitions are, “to become destroyed or ruined” (M-WCD [’03]); “to suffer death, complete ruin, or destruction” (NOAD [’01]); “to be ruined” (WNTCD [’62]).
59. The Hebrew word is אָבַד (*’obed*): “to lose or suffer loss.”
60. First it must be remembered that the soul never dies but the body does. Physical death occurs in time. The body goes back to the dust from which it was originally created.
61. Where the soul departs depends on its spiritual status at the point of physical death. If the person is a believer, the soul, in interim body, becomes “absent from the body and face-to-face with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8).
62. On the other hand, if a person dies physically without having placed his personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, then his soul, in interim body, is transferred to the Torments compartment of Hades.
63. There the soul possesses Forever Life. He remains incarcerated there until he is transferred into the third heaven just prior to the destruction of the universe (2 Peter 3:10–13).
63. Before the Great White Throne judgment he will be supplied with a resurrection body, found guilty of his efforts to acquire salvation through the production of human good and evil and then sentenced for all eternity to the lake of fire.
64. This throne of judgment is described in Revelation 20:11–15. This incarceration is referred to as the “second death” in verse 14.
65. It is this “second death” that is implied by the word “perish” in John 3:16. Nevertheless, the soul never dies.
66. The issue that must be resolved in a person’s earthly life is where will his soul spend eternity? In heaven or the lake of fire? The unsaved make the choice to perish which means to be lost and estranged forever.

(End JAS1-50. See JAS1-51 for continuation of study at p. 501.)

67. Those who place their personal faith in Christ for salvation are told by the Lord in John 3:16 that they will be delivered from the lake of fire and be imputed eternal life.
68. But there is a crucial misunderstanding of this verse due to the adoption of information decreed by the Council of Ferrara-Florence and the Council of Trent:

Council of Ferrärä-Florence, ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church (1438–45) was not a new council but was the continuation of the Council of Bâsel which Pope Eugenius IV transferred from Bâsel. The Greek delegation included the patriarch of Constantinople Joseph II and the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus \pā-lē-'äl-a-gas\.

Discussions were held on purgatory and on the phrase *Filioque* (“and from the Son”) of the Nicene Creed. After much discussion, the Greeks agreed to accept the *Filioque* and also the Latin statements on purgatory, the Eucharist, and papal primacy. The decree of union between the two groups was signed on July 6, 1439.

Doctrinally, the council is of interest because of the exposition of the Catholic doctrines of purgatory and the primacy and plenary powers of the pope set out in *Laetentur Caeli*.¹

69. The decree regarding Purgatory was formulated by the Council of Ferrara-Florence and the Council of Trent:

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has from the Sacred Scriptures and the ancient tradition of the [church] Fathers taught in Councils and very recently in this Ecumenical synod that there is a purgatory,² and that the souls therein are helped by the suffrages [prayers for the dead] of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar [the Eucharist]; the Holy Synod enjoins on the Bishops that they diligently endeavor to have the sound doctrine of the Fathers in Councils regarding purgatory everywhere taught and preached, held and believed by the faithful.³

¹ “Ferrärä-Florence, Council of,” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. (2010), 4:745.

² “This view has no Old Testament or New Testament support, runs counter to the biblical doctrine of a final judgment, and is flatly contradicted by a passage which the Roman Catholics regard as Scripture, Wisdom of Solomon 3:1–3” (R. K. Harrison, “Intermediate State,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976], 3:296).

³ “Purgatory,” in *Purgatory: Catholic Doctrine*, New Advent, Kevin Knight, 2012, accessed August 29, 2017. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12575a.htm>

70. Purgatory allegedly replaced the lake of fire as a “holding pattern” where people are detained, their future dependent upon the prayers or “suffrages of the faithful.”
71. The Lord’s promise of eternal life by faith in Christ is rejected. The Catholic Church instead cites authority from the “Sacred Scriptures,” “the ancient tradition of the church Fathers in councils,” “the prayers of the faithful,” and the “sacrifice of the altar [the Eucharist],” some may be cleansed of their sins and transferred to heaven.
72. This is why Catholics use the phrase, “the *hope* of eternal life.” Their definition of the word “hope” is not the confident, certain, absolute sense of **ἐλπίς** (*elpís*), but a undetermined possibility that is based on works that enable the parishioner to make it into purgatory when the acts of those still living might promote him to heaven.
73. Therefore, those who follow the teachings of the Catholic Church believe that faith in Christ delivers them from the lake of fire in exchange for the possibility of winding up in purgatory.
74. The possession of eternal life is not the result of faith in Christ but a possibility provided by one’s good works while living and the “hope” of the prayers and works of those who remain behind, with any luck, resulting in extrication from purgatory into heaven.
75. Therefore, John 3:16 clearly indicates the error of the Galatians involvement in works in Galatians 5:4. Here is expanded translation of:

James 1:26 If any fearful person holds the subjective opinion that he is religiously devout, and yet does not bridle his own tongue with application of resident doctrine but deceives his own *kardía*, this man’s devout production is worthless. (EXT)

76. This brings us to the final verse in James Chapter 1:

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (NASB)

1. Verse 26 has the believer operating within a pseudo system that is characterized by sins of the tongue. Here the tongue is being used to expose a false doctrine which adds works to the divine principle of grace for salvation.
2. Functioning within a works system, the religious believer assumes himself to be devout. One of the ways this occurred in Galatia was the notion that the Jewish practice of circumcision was necessary for salvation.
3. There are many other examples of works that people import into the grace system but are unauthorized by Scripture.
4. The unbridled tongue communicates the lie in efforts to lure others away from grace and into legalism.
5. Legalism is a façade designed to certify a person as religious so that he personally receives the glory. This is only effective upon the unsaved, the benighted, and other legalists.
6. Verse 27 presents the opposite of human works by presenting “pure and undefiled religion.” The word “pure” is the adjective **καθαρός (katharós)**.
7. Here the word is used in the spiritual sense of being free of the pollution of sin, human good, and evil. This refers to a believer who is current on rebound, consistent in the study of the Word, and conscientious in its application to life and circumstances.
8. To this is added the word, “undefiled.” It is also an adjective **ἀμίαντος (amíantos)**: “unpolluted, unstained, undefiled by sin.”
9. We could say that this word is purified by the addition of the alpha privative **ἀ (a)**, which purifies the meaning of the following word, **μίαντος (miántos)**, “polluted, stained, defiled,” which is quite the opposite.
10. It is used figuratively here, but as Rick Hughes pointed out on his visit with us this August, it literally refers to being physically defiled.
11. His example was not only graphic but also accurate. The root word is **μιάινω (miáinō)**: “to pollute.” But may be illustrated by an ancient problem-causing device.