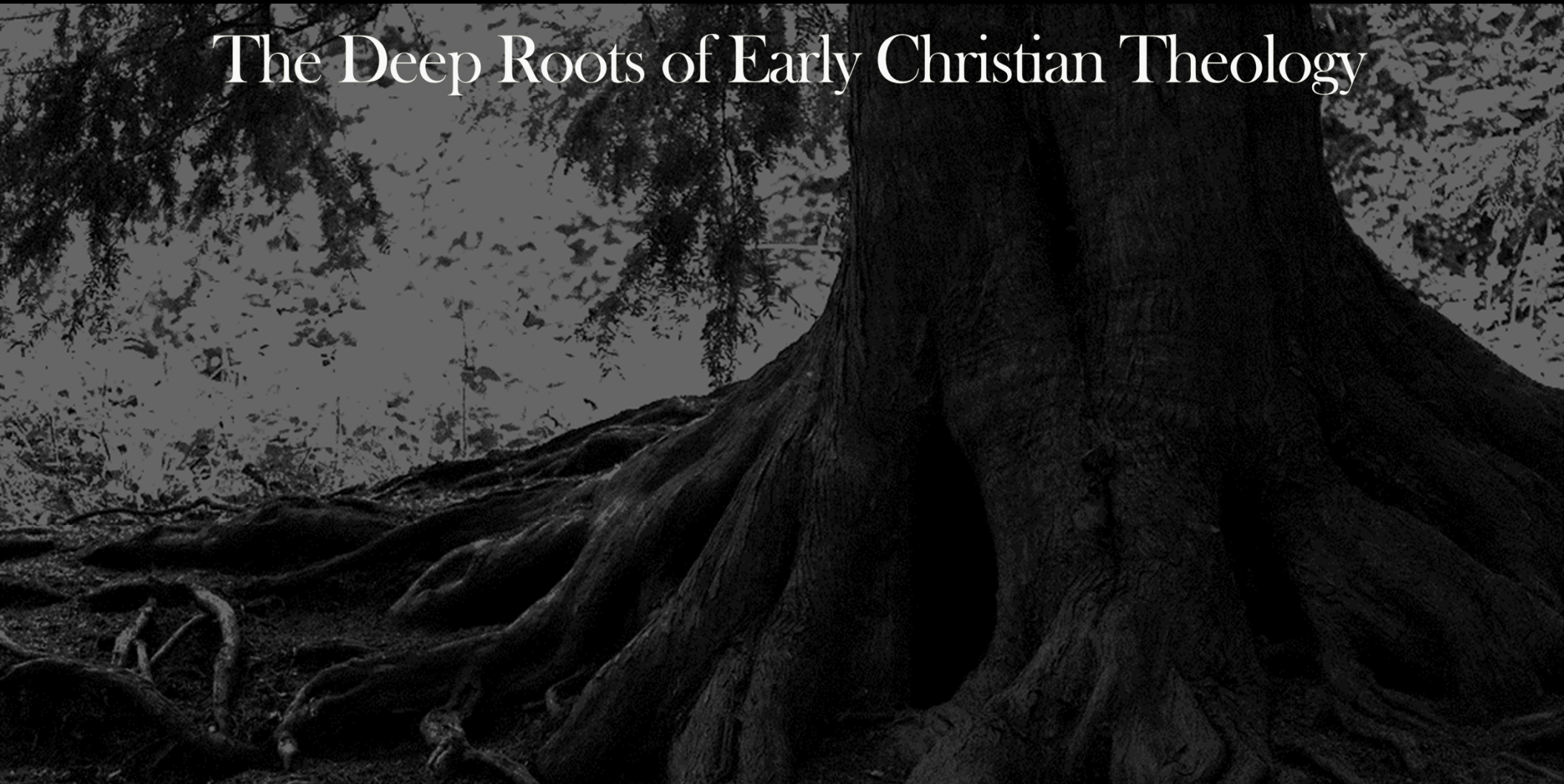




THE ANÁSTASIS CENTER
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & MINISTRY

Reconstruction

The Deep Roots of Early Christian Theology



Reconstruction: Objectives

- Deconstructing Christian faith is common
- Common outcomes: Collapse? Holes?
- Why construct at all?
- Early Christianity helps us discern a strong foundation

Reconstruction: Objectives

- Identify controversial issues commonly debated in Western Christianity
- Examine early Christian views on the issue
- Identify if, where, and why Christians shifted on the issue
- Recover a framework for approaching the issue in today's context



THE ANÁSTASIS CENTER
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & MINISTRY

Reconstruction

The Deep Roots of Early Christian Theology

- 4/30 Slavery: How the Early Church Got It Right
- 5/7 Women in the Early Church
- 5/14 The Goodness of God and the Healing of Creation:
Ministry According to Athanasius of Alexandria
- 5/21 Does God Have a Dark Side? Hell in the Early Church
- 5/28 Scripture: How Authoritative Is It? Why Do We Need It?
- 6/4 Scripture: Is the Bible the Product of Empire? Violence?
- 6/11 Politics, the Church, and Jesus' Restorative Justice
- 6/18 Sexual Ethics and the New Creation
- 6/25 The Person, the Face, and the Climb Up the Mountain:
Gregory of Nyssa and the Shaping of Desire



THE ANÁSTASIS CENTER
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Does God Have a Dark Side? Hell as the Love of God

Mako A. Nagasawa

The Anástasis Center for Christian Education and Ministry

Outline

- Introduction: Defining Heaven and Hell (10 min)
- Theology: How to Define God's Character (10 min)
- Discussion (10 min)
- Church History (15 min)
 - Theme 1: Divine fire
 - Theme 2: Human being, human becoming
- Discussion (15 min)
- Scripture: Divine Fire (10 min)
- Scripture: Human Being, Human Becoming (15 min)

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Defining Heaven: Self-Centered Rewards?



Defining Heaven: Self-Centered Rewards?



Defining Hell: Self-Centered Fears?



Defining Hell: Self-Centered Fears?

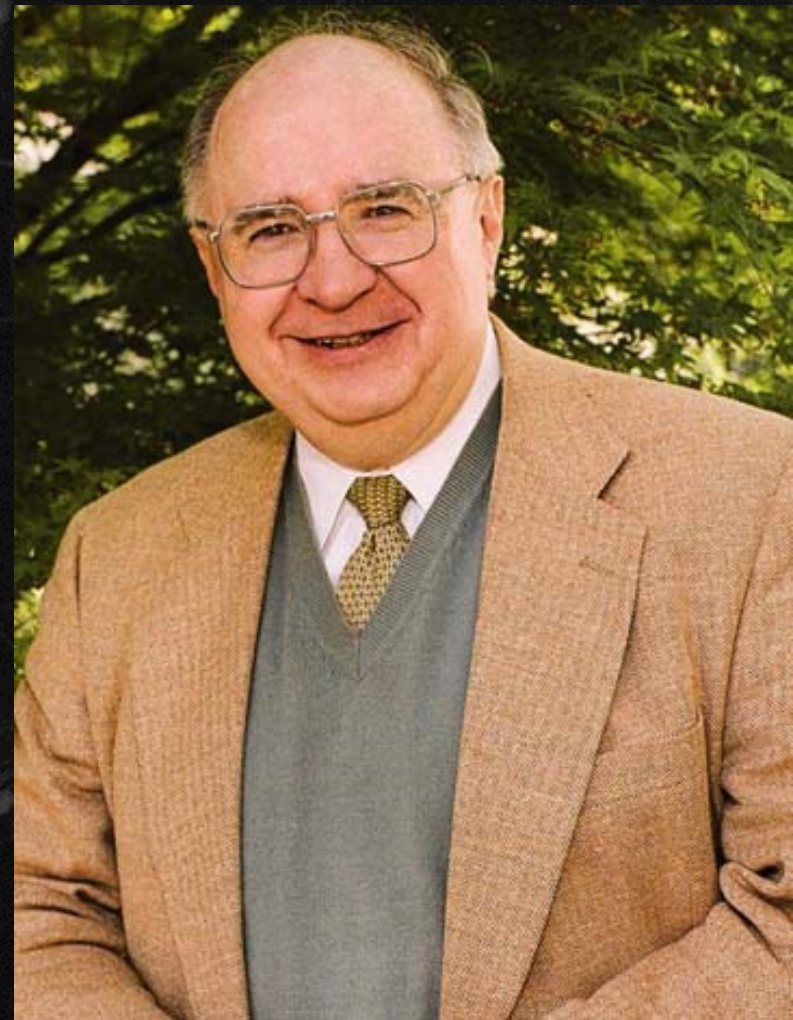


Defining Heaven and Hell: A Center In Yourself?

- Jesus is just a gatekeeper?
- What if your desires are messed up?
- What if God is actually trying to fix your desires?
- Then you can't start with yourself and your current desires

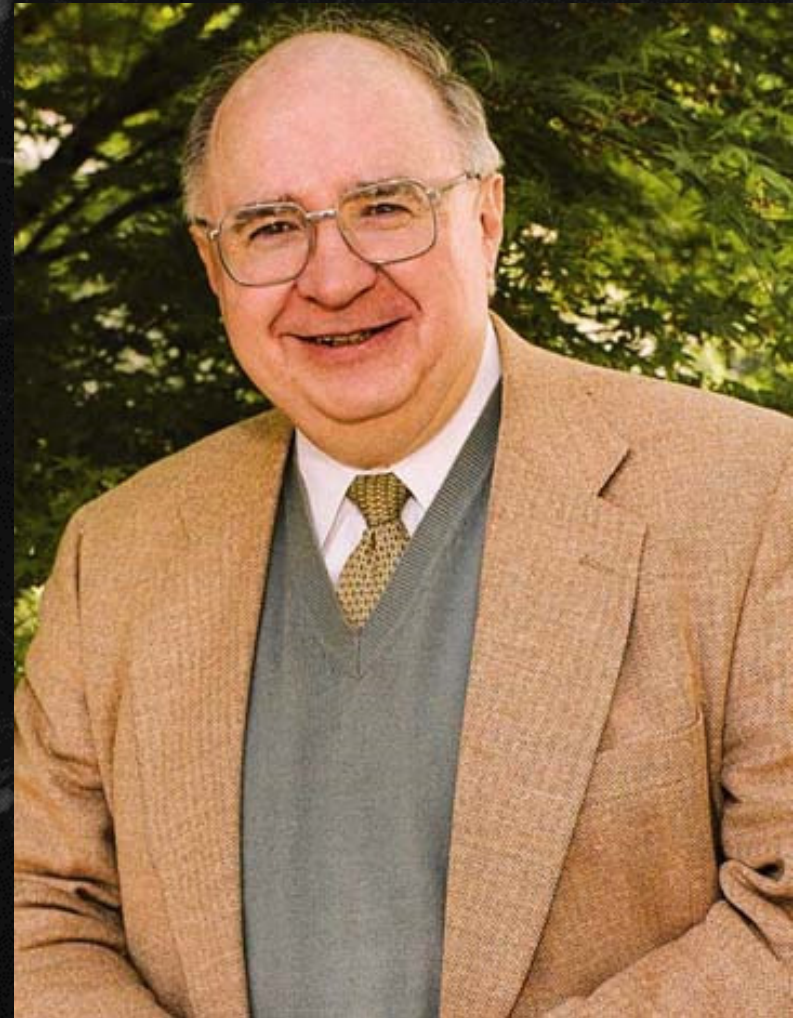
Defining Heaven and Hell: The Character of God Comes First

- “Damnation does not mean that God ceases to love the one damned.
- If that were true, then the sinner would be more powerful than God...
- God is love, *agape*
- God’s love is constant, unchanging, perfect
- Can the sinner change God?



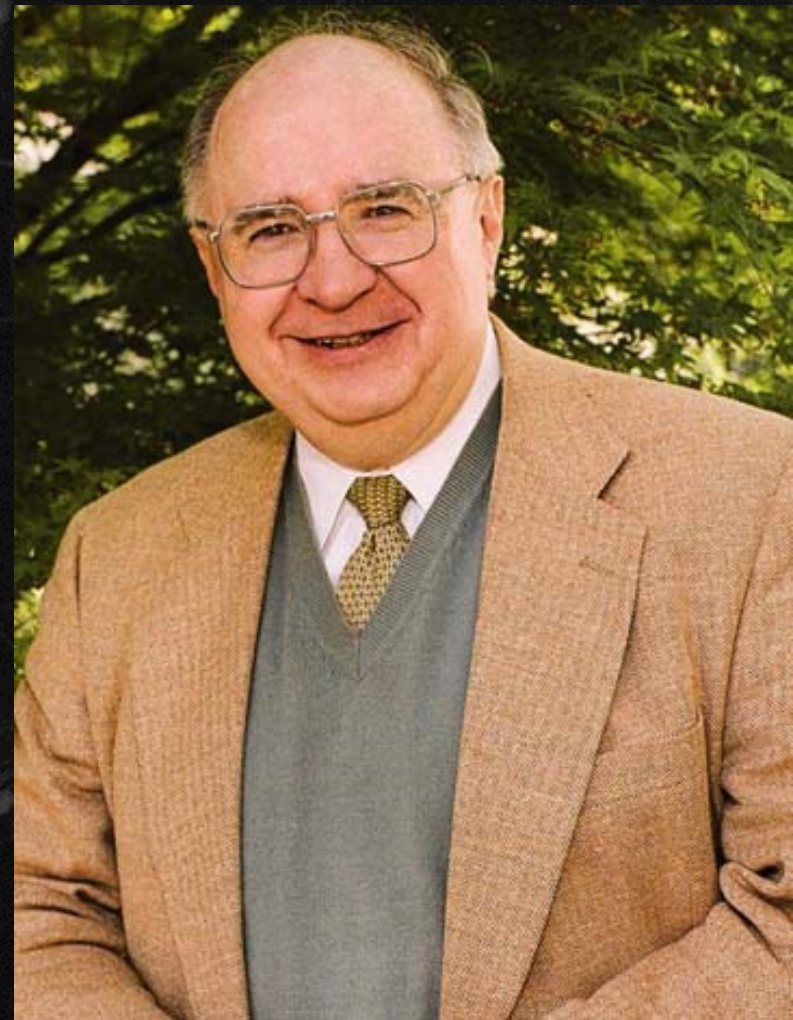
Defining Heaven and Hell: The Character of God Comes First

- “Damnation means that the sinner refuses finally and absolutely to accept being loved and to love in response.
- The damned may not love God, but God continues to love the damned.



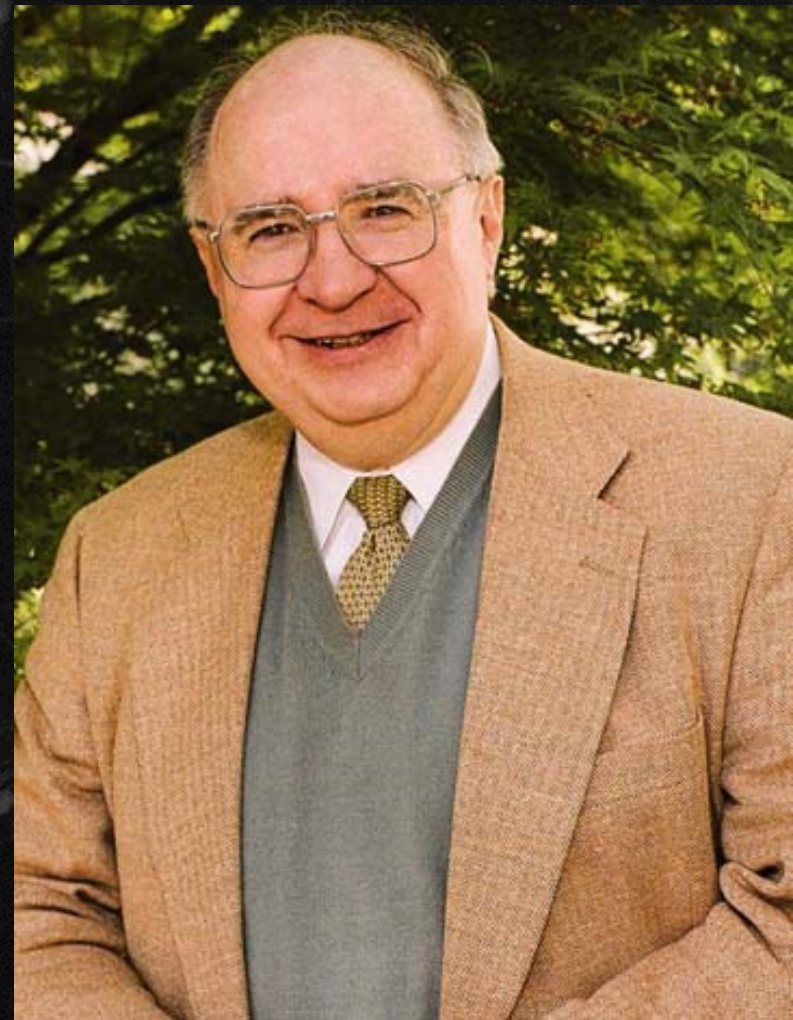
Defining Heaven and Hell: The Character of God Comes First

- “If God does not love you, you’re not damned. You simply aren’t.
- What supports our existence and holds us in being is God’s love.
- Therefore, of course, God loves the damned. God loves everything that exists just because it exists. Indeed, that is what makes it exist: God loves it into being...



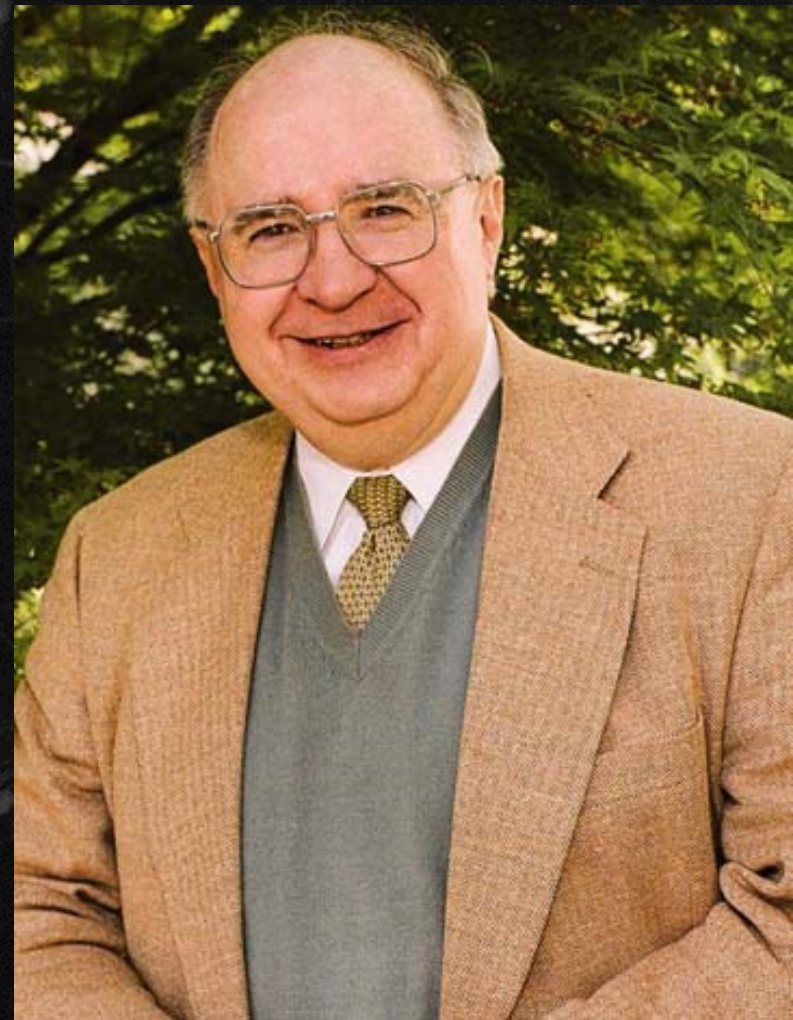
Defining Heaven and Hell: The Character of God Comes First

- “An image from Gregory of Nyssa at the end of the fourth century.
- Picture yourself walking out on a bright sunny day
 - With healthy eyes: You will experience the sunlight as something wonderful and pleasant and beneficent.
 - With a diseased eye: You will experience the sunlight as something terrible and painful and awful, something to shy away from.
 - Well, the sun didn't change. You did...



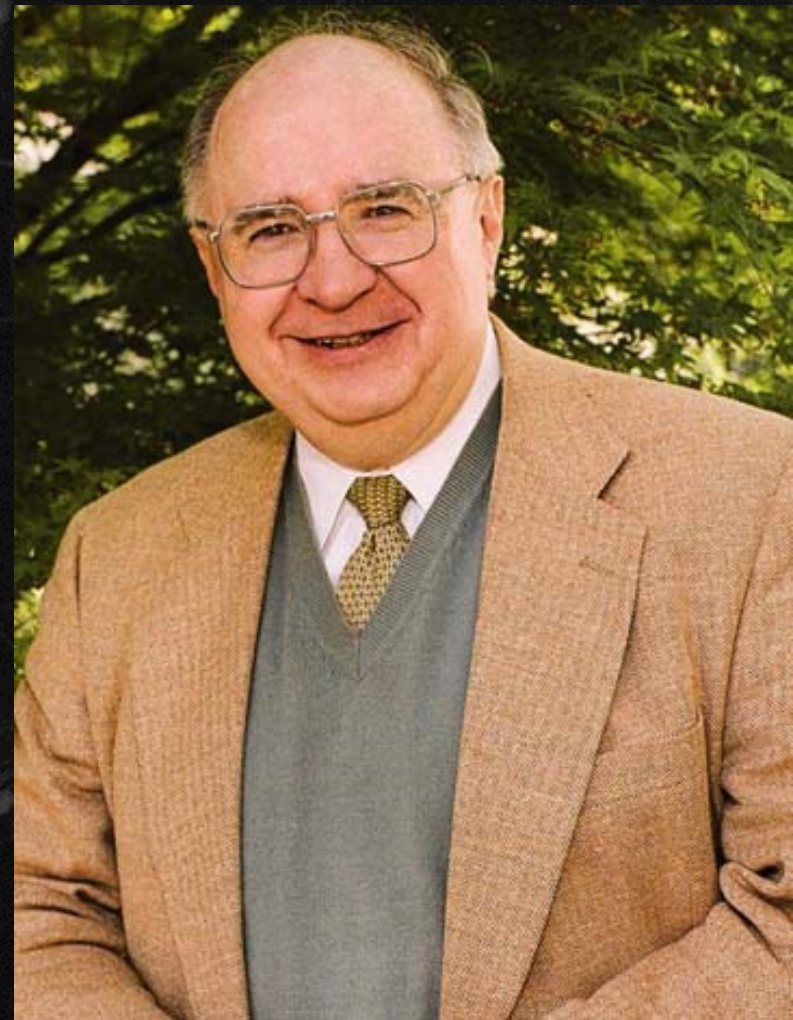
Defining Heaven and Hell: The Character of God Comes First

- “Heaven and hell are exactly the same thing: the love of God.
 - If you have always wanted the love of God, congratulations, you got heaven.
 - If you don't want the love of God, too bad, you are stuck for all eternity.
 - God remains God.



Defining Heaven and Hell: The Character of God Comes First

- “God makes the sun shine on the just and the unjust, the rain fall on the good and the wicked. If you don’t want rain or sun, too bad, you are still going to get them.
- The question is not that God changes in response to us. It is that we are judged by our response to the absoluteness of God’s self gift.”
 - Michael Himes, S.J., *Doing the Truth in Love*, p.14 – 15





Really? What's the Evidence?

Outline

- Introduction: Defining Heaven and Hell (10 min)
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“God as Lightswitches”?



Love

Wrath

Holiness

Mercy

Etc.

Systematic Theology: How to Integrate these Characteristics?



Love

Wrath

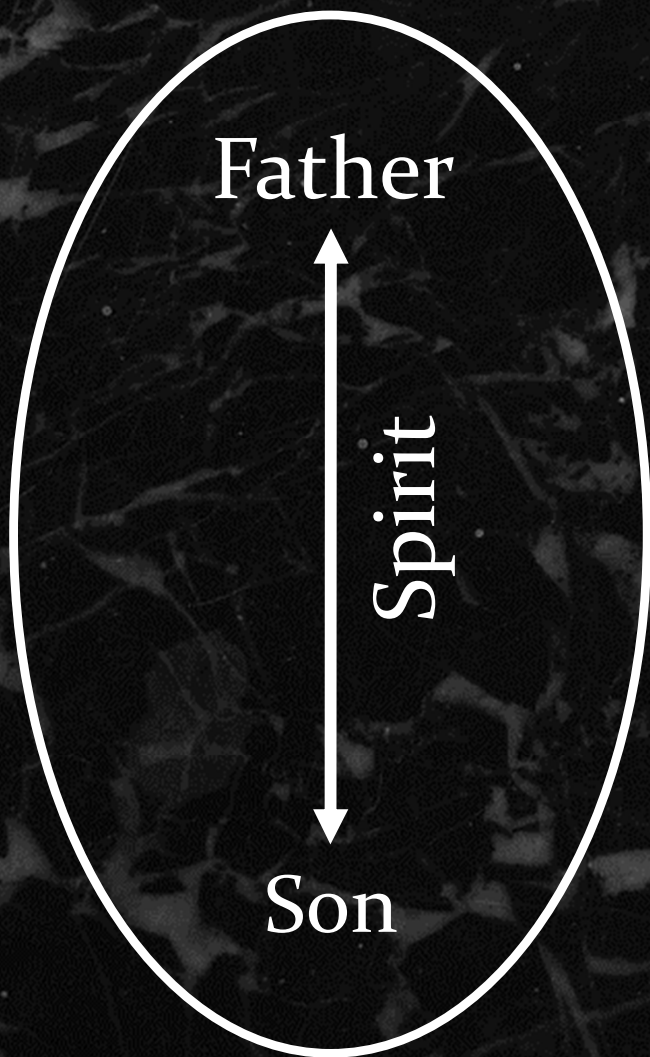
Holiness

Mercy

Etc.

What is God's Nature?

God as Trinity



God as Singularity



God's Primary Characteristics? Before Creation

God as Trinity

- Loving
- Good
- Personal
- Relational
- Family
- Friendship
- Unified
- Community
- Other-centered

God as Singularity

- ??

God's Primary Characteristics? Before Creation

God as Trinity

- Is Love (summary)

God as Singularity

- ??

God's Secondary Characteristics?

After Creation: Recall Athanasius

- “For their deeds **must correspond** to their natures” (*Against the Heathen* 16.4)
- “But the God of all is **good** and exceeding noble by nature, and therefore is kind; for one that is **good** can grudge nothing: for which reason he does not even grudge existence, but **desires all to exist, as objects for his loving-kindness**” (*Against the Heathen* 41.2)
- “For it were not worthy of God's **goodness** that the things He had made should waste away... what was God in His **goodness** to do? ... For neglect reveals weakness, and not **goodness** on God's part... It was, then, out of the question to leave men to the current of corruption; because this would be unseemly, and unworthy of God's **goodness**” (*On the Incarnation* 6.5 – 10)

God's Secondary Characteristics? After Creation

God as Trinity

- Is Love
- Holy
- Wrathful
- Merciful
- Just
- Sovereign
- Powerful
- Wise, etc.

God as Singularity

• ??

Secondary characteristics are how God relates to creation

- Holiness requires commonness, etc.

God's Secondary Characteristics? After Creation

God as Trinity

- Is Love
 - • Holy
 - • Wrathful
 - • Merciful
 - • Just
 - • Sovereign
 - • Powerful
 - • Wise

- Must be integrated
 - E.g. How is God's justice an *activity* of His love?

God as Singularity

- ??

- No need to integrate
 - Can be arbitrary, be and do anything

Discussion Questions

Basic Definition: Holiness means “set apart from”

1. Before God created, was God “set apart from” anything?
2. Is God’s holiness a primary or fundamental attribute of God, equal to God’s love? One of many lightswitches?



3. Or is holiness a secondary attribute: a certain *activity* of God’s love in relation to creation? How?
4. When Isaiah says, “Holy, holy, holy” (Isa.6:3), what is the larger context? What happens next?

Systematic Theology

- Which model of God is Trinitarian?

God is loving



God in Jesus
offers new humanity
to ALL, opposes all
human evil down to
its source in us

God is arbitrary



God
saves
some
(mercy)

God
damns
others
(retributive
justice)

Systematic Theology

- Does God change fundamentally just because He created us and we sinned?
- “God is love” becomes “God is love and wrath”?? How?

God is loving



God in Jesus
offers new humanity
to ALL, opposes all
human evil down to
its source in us

God is arbitrary



God
saves
some
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God
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Systematic Theology

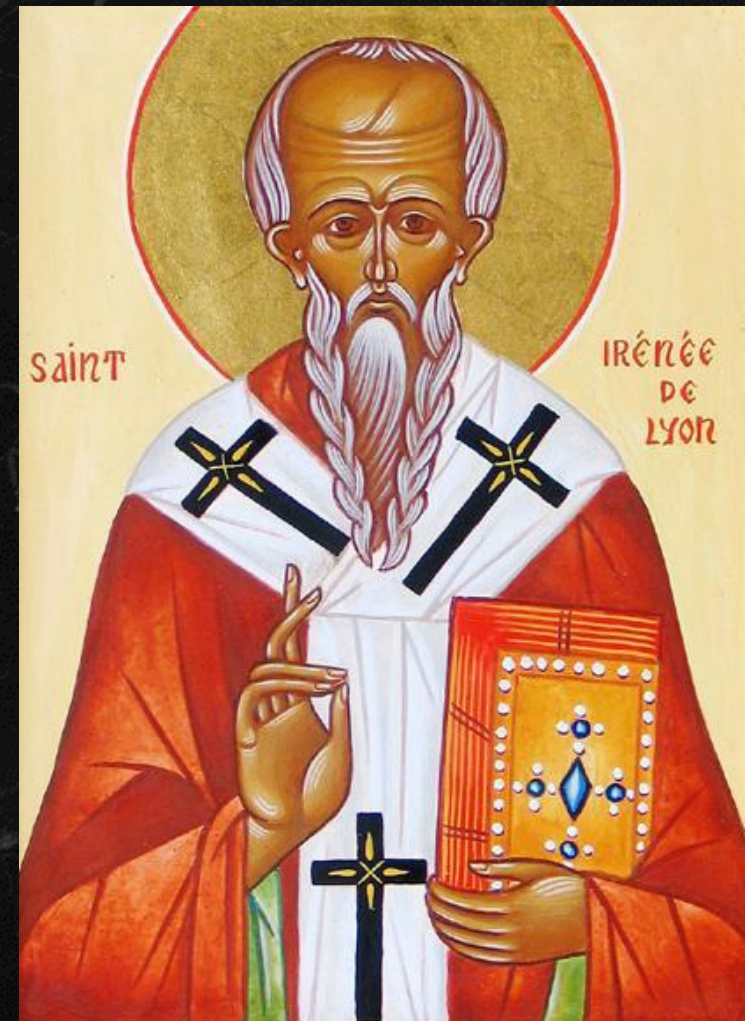
- Did anyone else notice that that is a problem?
- Yes, let's see what they said!

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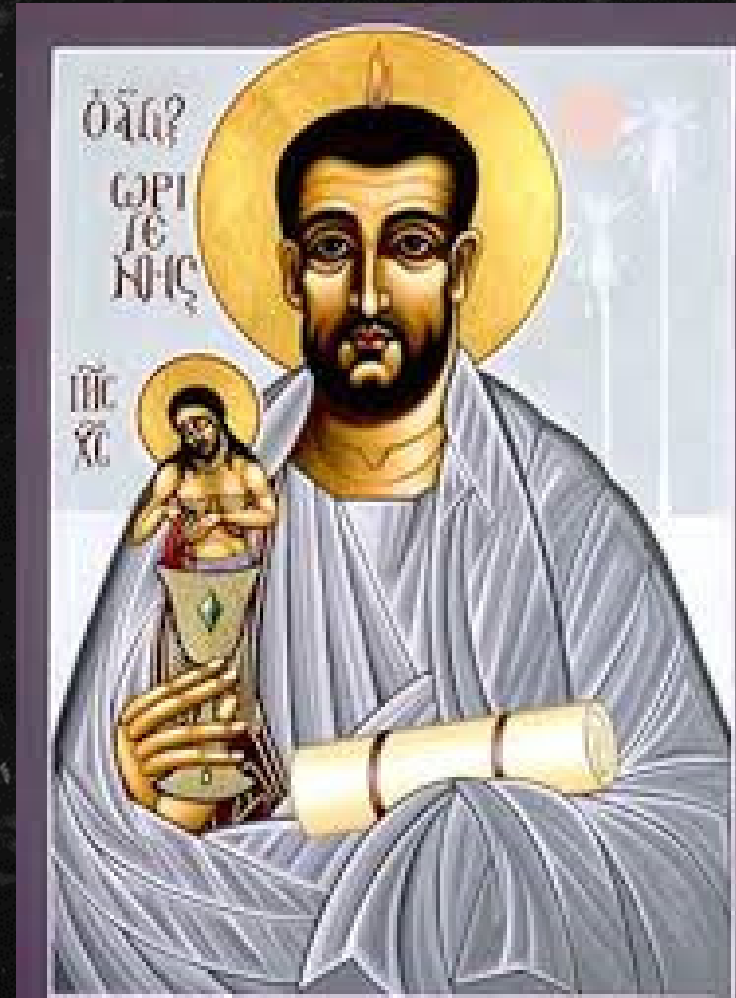
Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “For one and the same God [who blesses those who believe] inflicts blindness upon those who do not believe, but who set Him at naught; just as the sun, which is a creature of His, [blinds] those who, by reason of any weakness of the eyes cannot behold his light; but to those who believe in Him and follow Him, He grants a fuller and greater illumination of mind.”
 - Irenaeus of Lyons (130 – 202), *Against Heresies* 4.29.1; cf. 4.39.1 – 4



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “...the sun, by one and the same power of its heat, melts wax indeed, but dries up and hardens mud not that its power operates one way upon mud, and in another way upon wax; but that the qualities of mud and wax are different, although according to nature they are one thing, both being from the earth.”
 - Origen of Alexandria (185 – 254), *De Principiis*, book 3, chapter 1 ‘On the Freedom of the Will’, paragraph 11



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “God is good, dispassionate, and immutable...Thus to say that God turns away from the wicked is like saying that the sun hides itself from the blind.”
 - Egyptian monk and leader of monasticism Anthony the Great (251 – 356), *Philokalia*, Vol.1: On the Character of Men, 150



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “Every inordinate affection is its own punishment.”
 - Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430), *Confessions* book 1



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

An Imaginary Dialogue

- *Jesus*: Hello there!
- *Person* (rather taken aback): You...so it's true...
- *Jesus*: Yes, it is me.
- *Person* (sighing): Well, I hope you're going to treat me well for all the good I did? Lots of ice cream?
- *Jesus*: I think you have the wrong idea about what's going on here. I don't have ice cream.
- *Person*: What do you mean? I don't understand. I did a lot of good on earth.

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- *Jesus*: Well, I did make you in my image. So you retained a sense of goodness that comes from me.
- *Person*: What?! That goodness came from *me*! So I should be able to get all the ice cream I want now, right?
- *Jesus*: I'm afraid you have the wrong idea. I offer you myself and the best possible version of yourself.
- *Person*: You? I don't want you. I thought there was some reward involved.
- *Jesus*: There is *me*. All things to come will come from *me*. You want other things because your human nature is sin-sick. You need me to heal you.

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- *Person*: What?! I'm *offended*! How can you say I need to be healed? I'm not that bad.
- *Jesus*: You have addicted yourself to junk food: money, alcohol and porn, when I have better experiences for you; independence, when I have even more to give you. Your sin-sickness is resisting me.
- *Person*: I am resisting you, because you never gave me what I wanted in life. Even now you're not giving me what I want, and what I deserve! Like my wife! You took her from me! Twice. At her so-called "conversion." Then at her death. You took her.

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- *Jesus*: She is not yours.
- *Person*: She loved me, until you started taking her from me!
- *Jesus*: I did not cause her death. I healed her from our mutual enemy: the corruption of sin, which leads to death of all kinds.
- *Person*: You corrupted her. You stole her from me! Give her back to me the way she was.

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- *Jesus*: You would do her evil by reducing her to her former state of weakness when she accepted your ego. But that is not possible now. She does love you, but only because she shares my love for you.
- *Person*: You took her from me, like you're taking everything away from me.
- *Jesus*: I'm taking away the appetizers, to give everyone the main course. I'm taking away the appetizers, because you humans corrupted them into the junk food. Now is the time for much better.

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- *Person:* You are the one who corrupts everything you touch! Like *her*!
- *Jesus:* Your wife's tastes have matured now, because she is growing up now, with me. Would you like her to explain it to you?
- *Person:* No! I don't need her! And I don't need you! Why can't you just give me more time? You have plenty of it!
- *Jesus:* More time won't help you. It is time for your tastes to grow, desires to grow, and abilities to grow, *infinitely forward*. The time has come for you to leave childish things behind.
- *Person:* Oh, so *I'm* childish now? When you don't respect *me*? Leave me alone!
- *Jesus:* I will not leave you alone. I *cannot* leave you alone. It is not my nature. I love you.
- *Person:* You love me? You're stalking me! This is what you call "love"?

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- *Jesus*: For all eternity, I will call you to surrender yourself to me, to let me burn away the disorder in you. That is my love.
- *Person*: Nothing you do could make me love you. You're repulsive, and the closer you get, the more I hate you. Stop it! You're tormenting me!
- *Jesus*: *You* have made it so.

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “In eternity God supplies good things to all because He is the source of good things gushing forth goodness to all... After death, there is no means for repentance, not because God does not accept repentance – He cannot deny Himself nor lose His compassion – but the soul does not change anymore... people after death are unchangeable, so that on the one hand the righteous desire God and always have Him to rejoice in, while sinners desire sin though they do not have the material means to sin... they are punished without any consolation. For what is hell but the deprivation of that which is exceedingly desired by someone? Therefore, according to the analogy of desire, whoever desires God rejoices and whoever desires sin is punished.”
 - Syrian priest John of Damascus (c.675 – 740), *Against the Manicheans* 94.1569, 1573



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “The gates of hell are locked on the inside.”
 - C.S. Lewis (1898 – 1963), *The Problem of Pain*



Hell: *Why* It's Like That, Two Views

Legal: Prison Sentence

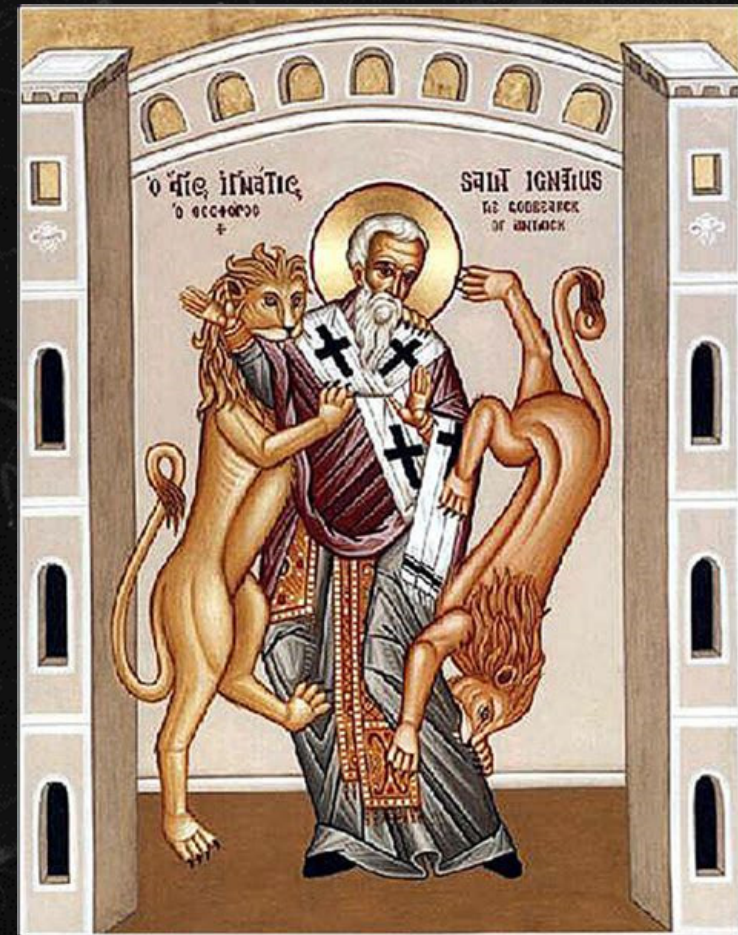
- God's wrath – like a judge
- God hates you
- God punishes you by throwing you into a prison or torture chamber
- You desire to be with God, but He says no
- Hell is against your desires
- Hell is infinite wrath and retributive justice
- God is backward looking

Medical: Addiction Treatment

- God's wrath – like a surgeon
- God hates sin-sickness in you
- God denies your addiction, demands you let him perform the surgery
- You desire to be without God, but He says no
- Hell is your desires
- Hell is infinite love and restorative justice
- God is forward looking; you are backward looking

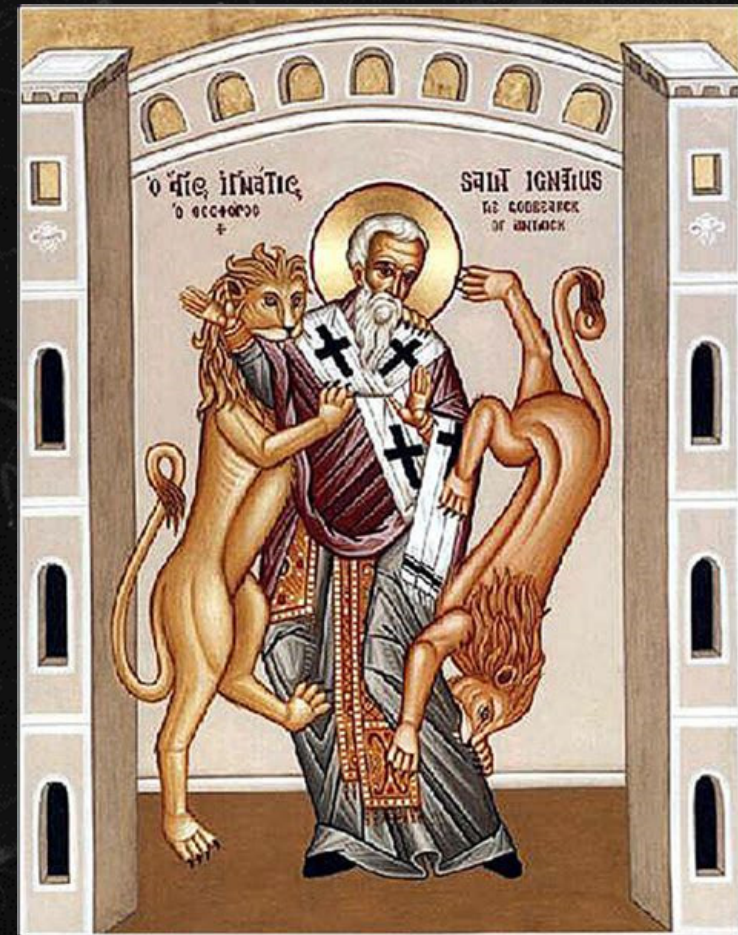
Human Being, Human Becoming

- “For I remark, that two different characters are found among men--the **one true coin, the other spurious**. The truly devout man is the right kind of coin, **stamped by God Himself**. The ungodly man, again, is false coin, unlawful, spurious, **counterfeit**, wrought not by God, but by the devil...



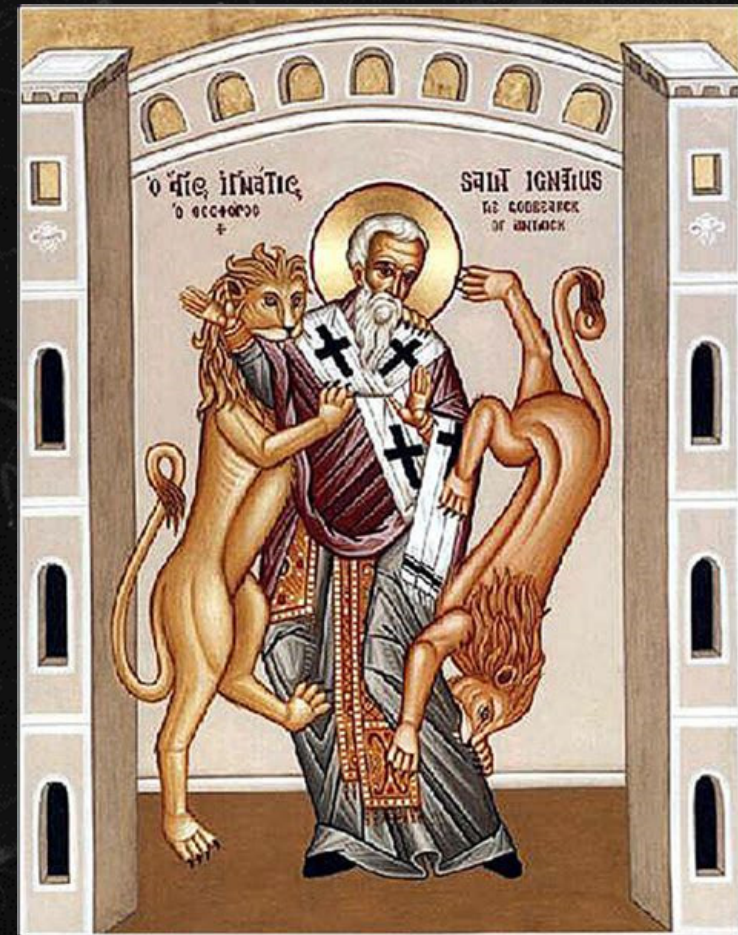
Human Being, Human Becoming

- “I do not mean to say that there are two different human natures, but that **there is one humanity, sometimes belonging to God, and sometimes to the devil.** If any one is truly religious, he is a man of God; but if he is irreligious, he is a man of the devil, made such, not by nature, but **by his own choice...**”



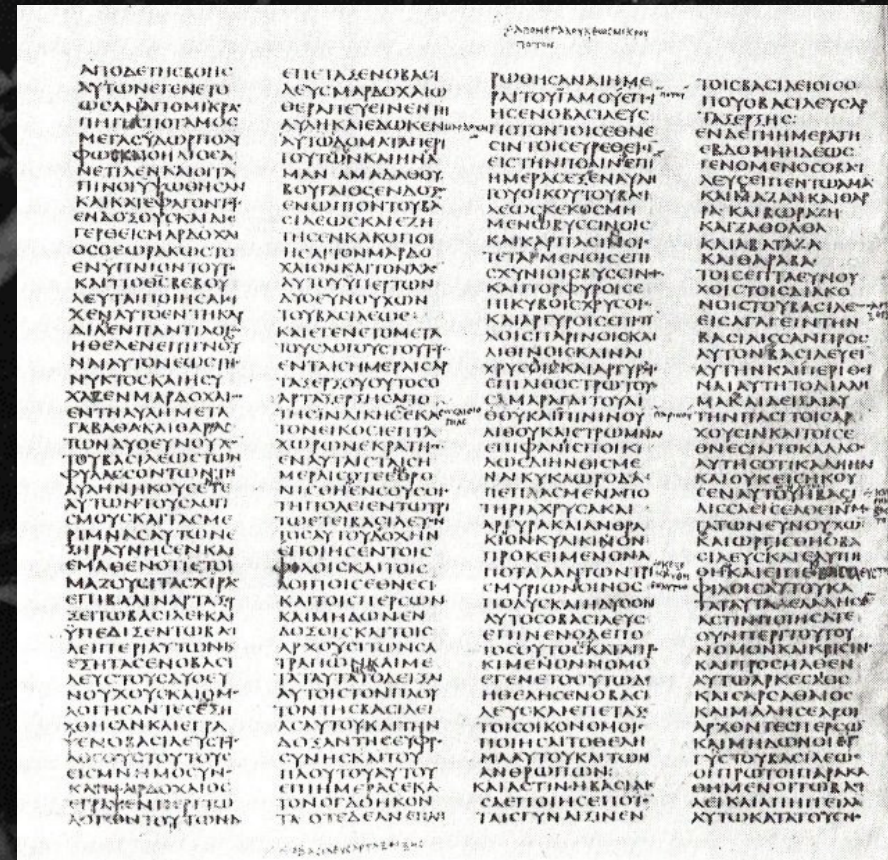
Human Being, Human Becoming

- “The unbelieving bear the **image** of the prince of wickedness. The believing possess the **image** of their Prince, God the Father, and Jesus Christ, through whom, if we are not in readiness to die for the truth into His passion, His life is not in us.”
 - Ignatius of Antioch (c.35/50 – 108/117), *Epistle to the Magnesians*, longer version, ch.5
 - Coins are made by empires
 - Drawing on the Book of Revelation: “the mark of the beastly empire” vs. “the mark of Jesus”



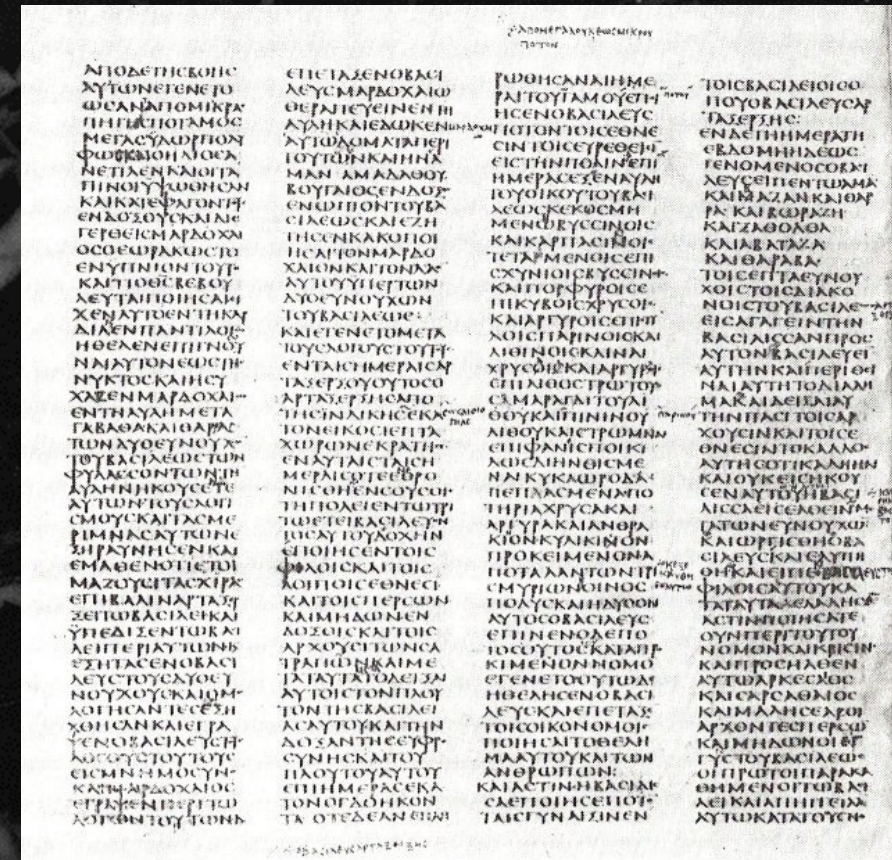
Human Being, Human Becoming

- “Let us then utterly flee from all the works of iniquity, **lest these should take hold of us**; and let us hate the error of the present time, that we may set our love on the world to come: let us not give loose reins to our soul, that it should have power to run with sinners and the wicked, lest we **become** like them.”
 - Epistle of Barnabas* (2nd century), ch.4
 - Romans 1:21 – 32; 1 Corinthians 6:9 – 11; Ephesians 4:17 – 19; 5:5; Colossians 3:5 –



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “But the way of darkness is crooked, and full of cursing; for it is the way of eternal death with punishment, in which way are **the things that destroy the soul**, viz., idolatry, overconfidence, the arrogance of power, hypocrisy, doubleheartedness, adultery, murder, rapine, haughtiness, transgression, deceit, malice, self-sufficiency, poisoning, magic, avarice, want of the fear of God.”
 - Epistle of Barnabas* (2nd century), ch.20



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “In order then that we also may extinguish all the furnace of **disordered pleasure** here, and so escape the hell that is there, let these each day be our counsels, our cares, and our practice, drawing towards us the favor of God, both by our full purpose concerning good works, and by our frequent prayers. For thus even those things which appear insupportable now, will be most easy, and light, and lovely...



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “Because, so long as we are in our **passions**, we think **virtue** rugged and morose and arduous, vice **desirable and most pleasing** but if we would stand off from these but a little, then both vice will appear abominable and unsightly, and virtue easy, mild, and much to be **desired**.”
 - John Chrysostom of Constantinople (349 – 407), *Homilies on Matthew's Gospel, Homily 16*



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “In eternity God supplies good things to all because He is the source of good things gushing forth goodness to all... After death, there is no means for repentance, not because God does not accept repentance – He cannot deny Himself nor lose His compassion – but the soul does not change anymore... people after death are unchangeable, so that on the one hand the righteous desire God and always have Him to rejoice in, while **sinner desire sin though they do not have the material means to sin... they are punished without any consolation.** For what is hell but the deprivation of that which is **exceedingly desired by someone?** Therefore, according to the analogy of desire, whoever desires God rejoices and whoever desires sin is punished.”
 - Syrian priest John of Damascus (c.675 – 740), *Against the Manicheans* 94.1569, 1573



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Discussion

1. How would the early Christians say, “You need to give your life to Jesus”?
2. How would they say that there is an urgency in coming to Jesus?
3. How are the early Christians reading Scripture? What do you think about that?

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The Motif of Fire

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Ambrose of Milan (c.337 – 394)
 - “And Isaiah shows that the Holy Spirit is not only Light but also **Fire**, saying: And the light of Israel shall be for a **fire** [Isaiah 10:17]...
 - For our God is a consuming **Fire**, as Moses said [Deuteronomy 4:24]... For the bush was **burning** but was not consumed, because in that mystery the Lord was showing that He would come to illuminate the thorns of our body, and not to consume those who were in misery, but to alleviate their misery; Who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with **fire**, that He might give grace and destroy sin. [Matthew 3:11]...

The Motif of Fire

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Ambrose of Milan (c.337 – 394)
 - “What, then, is that **fire**? ...that **fire** which improves good deeds like gold, and consumes sins like stubble. This is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit, Who is called both the **fire** and light of the countenance of God.
 - “And as there is a light of the divine countenance, so, too, does **fire** shine forth from the countenance of God, for it is written: “A **fire** shall burn in His sight.” For the grace of the day of judgment shines beforehand, that forgiveness may follow to reward the service of the saints.”
 - Ambrose of Milan, *On the Holy Spirit*, book 1, chapter 14, paragraphs 164 – 165, 169 – 170

The Motif of Fire: Pentateuch



The Motif of Fire: Pentateuch

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Pentateuch
 - First appearance: **Flaming sword** (Gen.3:24)
 - Guarding way back to the tree of life
 - Symbolizing the word of God (Rev.1:16, etc.) which cuts and burns away the corruption of sin
 - Second appearance: **Flaming torch** (Gen.15:17)

The Motif of Fire: Pentateuch



The Motif of Fire: Pentateuch

*And Mount Sinai was all in smoke
Because the Lord descended upon it in fire . . .
and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount.
And Moses went up.*

Exodus 19:18, 20

The Motif of Fire: Pentateuch

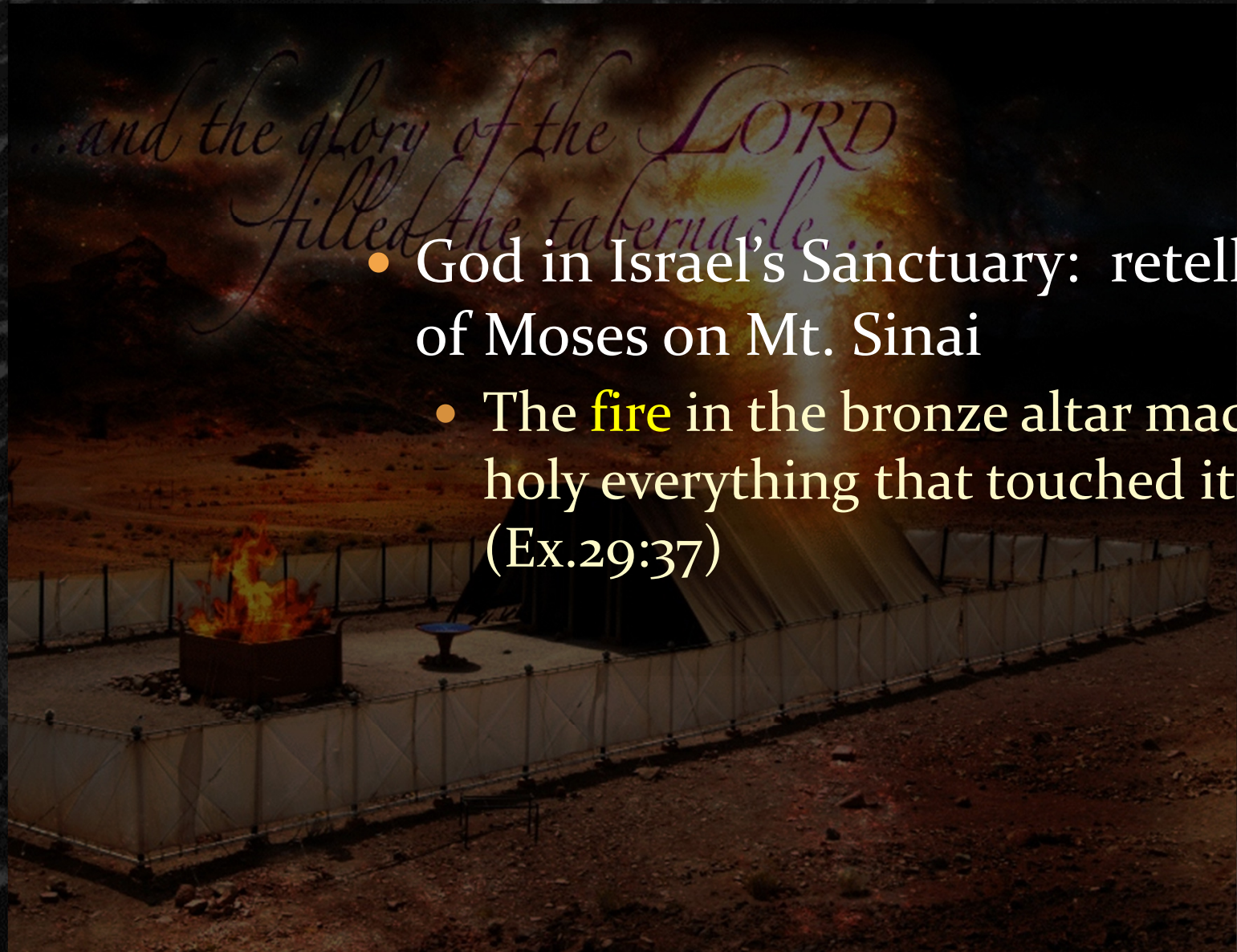
*And Mount Sinai was all in smoke
Because the Lord descended upon it in fire . . .
and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount.
And Moses went up.*

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Pentateuch
 - God as **fire** on Mount Sinai inviting Israel up (Ex.19:13; Dt.5:5), and transfiguring Moses' face (Ex.34)

The Motif of Fire: Pentateuch



The Motif of Fire: Pentateuch

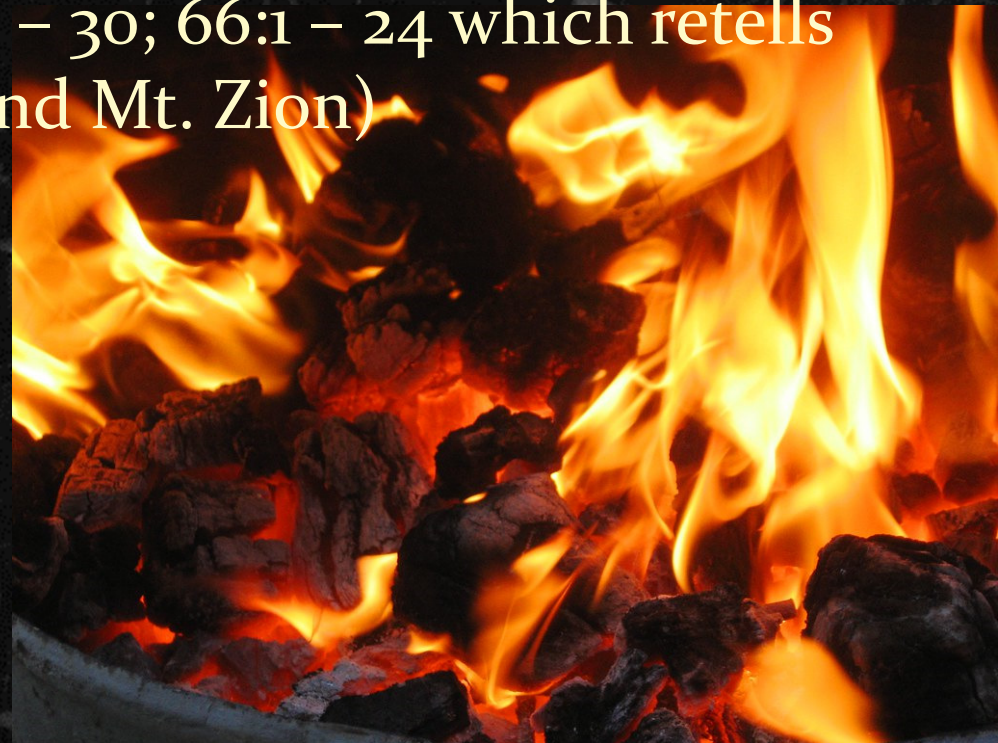


*...and the glory of the LORD
filled the tabernacle...*

- God in Israel's Sanctuary: retelling of Moses on Mt. Sinai
 - The **fire** in the bronze altar made holy everything that touched it (Ex.29:37)

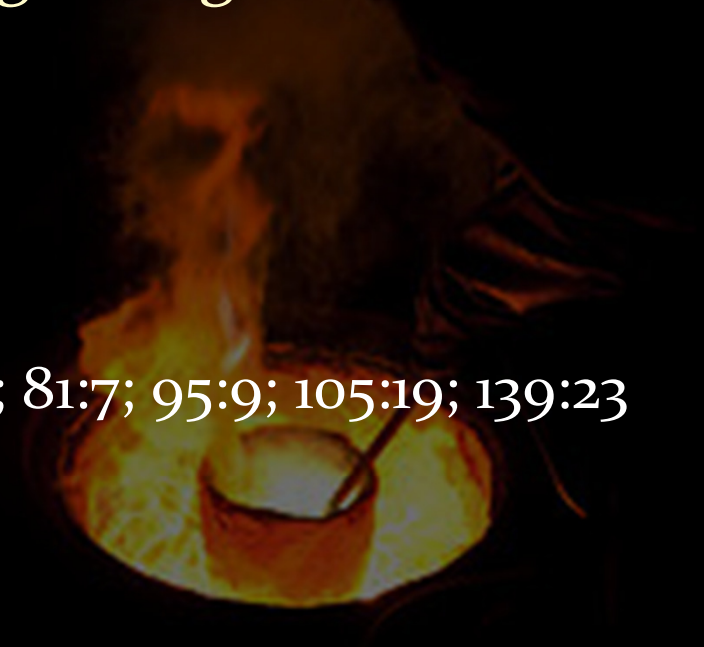
The Motif of Fire: Isaiah

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Isaiah
 - “I will smelt away your dross” (Isa.1:25; 4:4 – 5)
 - God cleanses lips by a **fiery coal** (Isa.6:6)
 - Liturgy of Saint James: eucharist is the fiery coal
 - Fire *becomes destroying* for those who want to hold onto their impurity (Isa.29:6; 30:27 – 30; 66:1 – 24 which retells God's presence on Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion)



The Motif of Fire: Malachi

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence
 - “For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.” (Mal.3:2 – 3)
 - Jeremiah 9:7; 11:2; 12:3; 17:10; 20:12
 - Ezekiel 1:4, 13, 27; 8:2; 22:19 – 22
 - Zechariah 13:9
 - Psalms 7:9; 11:4 – 5; 12:6; 17:3; 26:2; 66:10; 81:7; 95:9; 105:19; 139:23
 - Proverbs 17:3
 - Song of Songs 8:6



The Motif of Fire: Matthew

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Jesus in Matthew's Gospel
 - "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the **fire**. As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove his sandals; he will baptize you with the **Holy Spirit and fire**. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable **fire**." (Matthew 3:10 – 12)
 - How you experience divine **fire** depends on you

The Motif of Fire: Matthew

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Jesus in Matthew's Gospel
 - How you experience divine **fire** depends on you (positively):
 - Jesus:
 - Will baptize with Spirit and fire; the Spirit is fire (3:7 – 12)
 - Anointed by the Spirit to purify his humanity (3:13 – 4:11)
 - Say those in Galilee are seeing a “great light” (4:16)
 - Visible “light” when the Spirit transfigures him (17:1 – 13; implicitly 28:1 – 3)
 - Commissions his disciples to baptize with his teaching (28:20)

The Motif of Fire: Matthew



Mosaic of Jesus transfigured on Mount Tabor,
from the 5th century, St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican

The Motif of Fire: Matthew

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Jesus in Matthew's Gospel
 - How you experience divine **fire** depends on you (positively):
 - "Light of the world... a city on a hill..." (Mt.5:14 – 16)
 - "Oil lamps" (Mt.25:1 – 13)

The Motif of Fire: Matthew

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Jesus in Matthew's Gospel
 - How you experience divine **fire** depends on you (negatively):
 - "Whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the **fiery** hell." (Mt.5:22)
 - "Throw them into the **furnace of fire**; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt.13:42)
 - "Throw him into the **outer darkness**; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt.22:13)
 - "Throw out the worthless slave into the **outer darkness**; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt.25:30)

The Motif of Fire: Matthew

- Fire and darkness:
 - Israelites said “no” to God’s invitation to come higher up and further in, and *did not ascend to the top*
 - “You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the very heart of the heavens: darkness, cloud and thick gloom...’ I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; *for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain*” (Dt.4:11; 5:5)

The Motif of Fire: Luke

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Jesus in Luke
 - Acts
 - The Holy Spirit is **fire**, refining or destroying (Lk.3:9 – 18)
 - At Pentecost, the Spirit comes with “tongues of **fire**” (Acts 2:1 – 3)
 - Each believer a miniature Mount Sinai
 - Jewish calendar: Pentecost commemorates the giving of the Sinai Law at Mount Sinai
 - How you experience divine **fire** depends on you

The Motif of Fire: Luke



Pentecost by by Holger Schué from Pixabay

The Motif of Fire: Paul

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Paul
 - “Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with **fire**, and the **fire** itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is **burned** up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through **fire**.” (1 Cor.3:12 – 15)

The Motif of Fire: Revelation

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Revelation



- “His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of **fire**. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a **furnace**... and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged **sword**; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.” (Rev.1:14 – 16; 2:18)

The Motif of Fire: Revelation

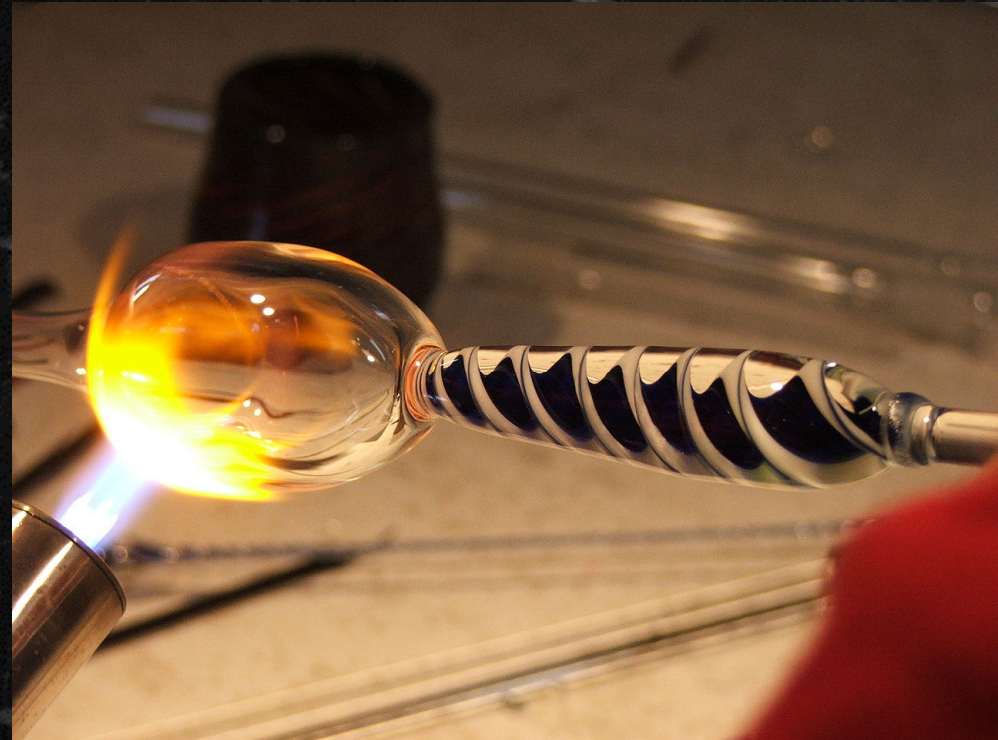
- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Revelation
 - “I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by **fire** so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.” (Rev.3:18)
 - Wealth = Health = Life
 - Jesus' New Humanity

The Motif of Fire: Revelation

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Revelation
 - Fire is destroying for those who cling to impurity:
“tormented with **fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels and *in the presence of the Lamb*” (Rev.14:10; cf. 2 Thess.1:9; Gen.19:24)

The Motif of Fire: Revelation

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Revelation
 - “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was **pure gold**, like **transparent glass**.” (Rev.21:21)



The Motif of Fire: Revelation

- **Fire** is symbolic of God's *refining* presence: Revelation
 - “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the **lake of fire**. This is the second death, the **lake of fire**. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the **lake of fire**.”
(Rev.20:12 – 15)

The Motif of Fire: Revelation

- Another example of *literary* interpretation: “Lake of fire” (Rev.20:14 – 15)
 - Lake: a remnant of the primordial chaos-waters
 - Water and Land in Creation
 - Genesis 1: Seas surround land
 - Revelation 20 – 22: Land surrounds “lake”
 - Red Sea
 - God drowned the Egyptians who pursued Israel
 - Sea of Galilee
 - Geographic wind-tunnel considered unstable, dangerous
 - Jesus drowned pigs possessed by demons

The Motif of Fire: Revelation

- Another example of *literary* interpretation: “Lake of fire” (Rev.20:14 – 15)
 - Fire: God’s refining presence
 - Where: A physical region
 - Who: People experience the refining love of God as torment
 - Why:
 - They have become addicted to something else, are not stable
 - A “lake of fire” suggests a contradiction
 - “Hell is in the midst of heaven”

Outline

- Introduction: Defining Heaven and Hell (10 min)
- Theology: How to Define God's Character (10 min)
- Discussion (10 min)
- Church History (15 min)
 - Theme 1: Divine fire
 - Theme 2: Human being, human becoming
- Discussion (15 min)
- Scripture: Divine Fire (10 min)
- Scripture: Human Being, Human Becoming (15 min)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: John

- Sequencing the Questions
 - Before you ask the question, “What is hell like?”
 - You must ask the question, “What does sin do to us?”
- Sin is an attempt at self-negation (John 18 – 19)
 - Jesus: “I am” (18:5, 6, 8)
 - Simon Peter: “I am not” (18:17, 25, 27)
 - Pontius Pilate: “What is truth?” (18:38)
 - Jewish leaders: “We have no king but Caesar” (19:15)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: John

- Sequencing the Questions
 - Before you ask the question, “What is hell like?”
 - You must ask the question, “What does sin do to us?”
- John’s Gospel: Which father have you chosen?
 - God?
 - “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father... If God were your Father, you would love Me...”
 - The devil?
 - “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the **desires** of your father.” (Jn.8:38, 42, 44)
 - “Authority/power to become children of God” (Jn.1:12)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: John

Genesis: Creation	John: New Creation
In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Gen.1:1)	In the beginning was the Word (Jn.1:1)
Seven “days”	Seven Miracles Seven Discourses Seven “I am” Statements
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 (Gen.2:7)	Jesus breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn.20:22)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: John

Genesis		John	
In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Gen.1:1)		In the beginning was the Word (Jn.1:1)	
	7 Miracles	7 Discourses	7 "I am" Statements
1	Water to wine (2:1)	Second birth (3:1 – 21)	Bread of life (6:35)
2	Nobleman's son (4:46)	Living water (4:1 – 42)	Light of world (8:12)
3	Invalid man (5:1)	Son and Father (5:16 – 45)	Door (10:7)
4	Multiply bread (6:1)	Bread of life (6:22 – 71)	Good shepherd (10:11)
5	Walk on water (6:16)	Children of God (8:12 – 59)	Resurrection, life (11:25)
6	Blind man (9:1)	Good shepherd (10:1 – 38)	Way, truth, life (14:6)
7	Lazarus (11:1)	Upper Room (13:1 – 17:26)	True vine (15:1)
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 (Gen.2:7)		Jesus breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn.20:22)	

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: John

- Sequencing the Questions
 - Before you ask the question, “What is hell like?”
 - You must ask the question, “What does sin do to us?”
- Revelation: Whose mark (image) have you (the coin) received?
 - Mark of Jesus (Rev.7:3; 9:4; 22:4)
 - Mark of the Beast (Rev.13:16 – 18; 14:9 – 11; 16:2; 17:5; 19:20; 20:4)
- Fire used to mint coins, stamped with Emperor’s image
- Ignatius of Antioch (c.35/50 – 108/117), *Epistle to the Magnesians*, longer version, ch.5 uses the metaphor of the two coins

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Peter

- Sequencing the Questions
 - Before you ask the question, “What is hell like?”
 - You must ask the question, “What does sin do to us?”
- Second Peter
 - Humans can become “animals”
 - “These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct... They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight... They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed... They are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you... A dog returns to its vomit... A washed pig returns to the mud.” (2 Peter 2:12 – 22)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Peter

- Sequencing the Questions
 - Before you ask the question, “What is hell like?”
 - You must ask the question, “What does sin do to us?”
- Daniel
 - Humans can become “animals”
 - Nebuchadnezzar became like an animal (Dan.4:24 – 33)
 - Human empires can become “animals” (Dan.7:1 – 14)
 - The four Gentile empires were like bizarre beastly empires, against the creation order of Genesis 1:1 – 2:3
 - The Son of Man (Israel), like Adam, will rule among the beasts

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: John

- Sequencing the Questions
 - Before you ask the question, “What is hell like?”
 - You must ask the question, “What does sin do to us?”
- Evidence in Scripture?
 - The theme of *human being* – *human becoming*

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Big Picture Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.1:1 – 2:3)



The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Big Picture Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.1:1 – 2:3)
 - Positive: God made us in His image, to grow in His likeness (Gen.1:26 – 28)
 - Life-bearing
 - Working, speaking (like God) as ruling, resting



The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Relational Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)



The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

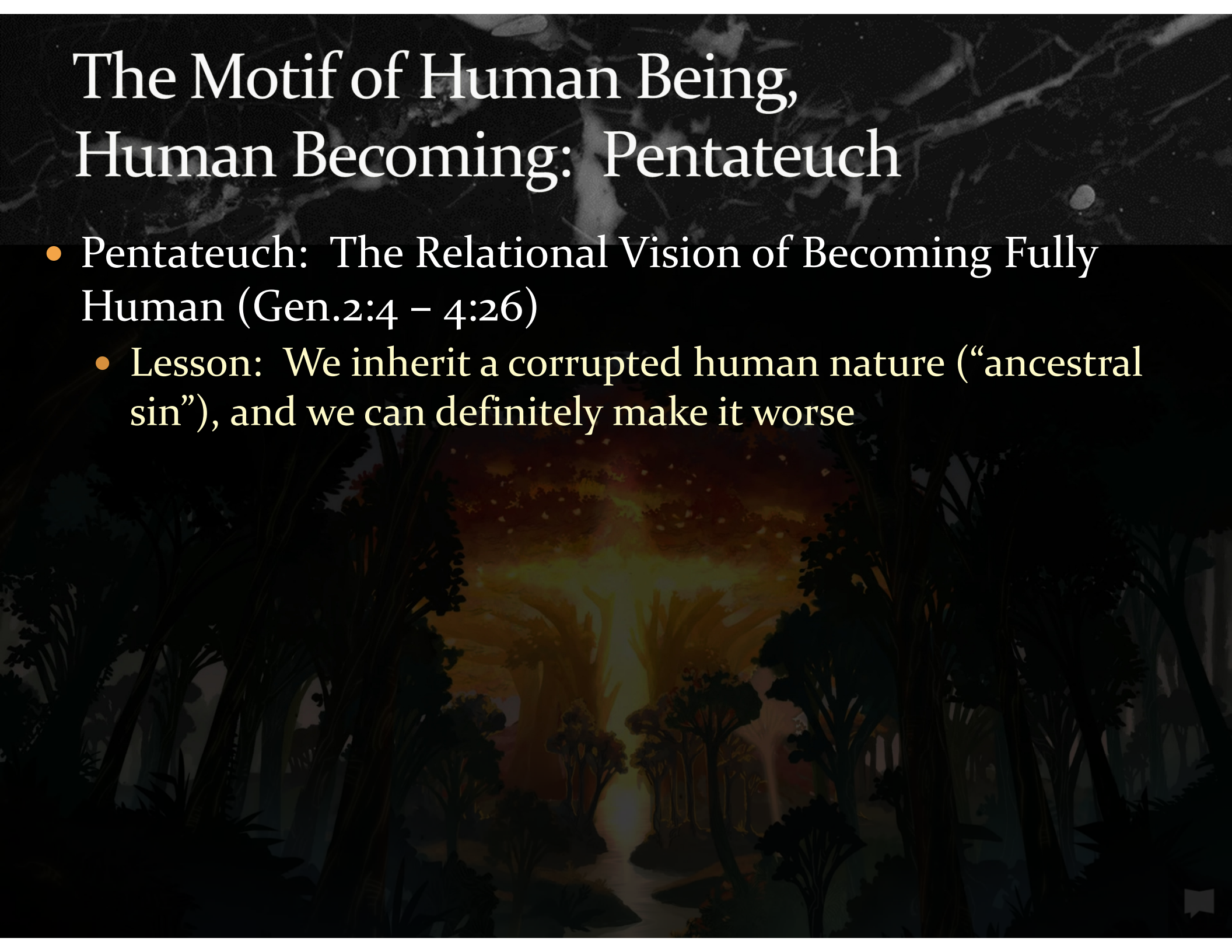
- Pentateuch: The Relational Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)
 - Positive: God offered life (Gen.2:9, 16)
 - Positive: God offered the knowledge of good and evil by letting Him define good and evil (Gen.2:9 – 17)
 - Your human nature exists in others, too
 - Know and name the creation
 - Understand healthy boundaries
 - Spread the garden
 - Spread human life
 - Each new human marriage is a recapitulation/retelling of Adam and Eve (Gen.2:24 – 25)
 - The Two Trees: God's law-giving *serves* His life-giving

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Relational Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)
 - Negative: human nature corrupted
 - Adam and Eve internalized the power and desire to define good and evil (Gen.3:1 – 7)
 - We are relativistic absolutists and absolutist relativists
 - Sin like a venomous animal (Gen.3:1 – 7; 4:7; Ex.7; Num.21)
 - Negative: human nature further corrupted
 - Cain, killing his brother, also damaged himself (Gen.4:11)
 - Alienated from the land more than others (cf. 3:17 – 19)
 - Built a city-empire of injustice (4:16 – 24)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Relational Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)
 - Lesson: We inherit a corrupted human nature (“ancestral sin”), and we can definitely make it worse



The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Relational Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)
 - A Methodological Mistake: Treating Gen.1 – 3 as “Creation and Fall”
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Pope Benedict XVI, etc.
 - Amputates Gen.4 from “the fall narrative”
 - We fail to perceive “human becoming” getting worse
 - Human nature is static?
 - Theological anthropology suffers
 - Personal (human nature as a partnership)
 - Relational (brotherhood and sisterhood)
 - Institutional (cities, empires)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Relational Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)
 - Recall:
 - Gen.1:1 -2:3 is one literary unit (an introduction hymn to Genesis)
 - Gen.2:4 – 4:26 is one literary unit (one of ten genealogical “toledot” units in Genesis)
 - 2:4 Heaven and earth
 - 5:1 Adam
 - 6:9 Noah
 - 10:1 Shem, Ham, Japheth
 - 11:9 Shem
 - 11:27 Terah
 - 25:12 Ishmael
 - 25:19 Isaac
 - 36:1 Esau
 - 37:2 Jacob

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: The Relational Vision of Becoming Fully Human (Gen.2:4 – 4:26)
 - Recall:
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 - 2:4 Heaven and earth
 - 5:1 Adam
 - 6:9 Noah (new humanity?)
 - 10:1 Shem, Ham, Japheth
 - 11:9 Shem
 - 11:27 Terah (new humanity?)
 - 25:12 Ishmael
 - 25:19 Isaac (new humanity?)
 - 36:1 Esau
 - 37:2 Jacob (new humanity?)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: Israel Becoming a “New Humanity”? (Ex.1 – Num.36)
 - Positive: God on the mountain (Eden-Sinai-Zion)
 - Moses ascended, face shone with glory (Ex.34; Num.6:22 – 27)
 - Israel stayed on the ground
 - Negative:
 - Hearts still uncircumcised (Lev.26:49)
 - Even Moses was unfaithful (Num.20)
 - Human nature still poisoned (Num.21:4 – 7)
 - First generation delivered from Pharaoh, serpent (Ex.7)
 - Second generation still poisoned, internally (Num.21:4 – 7)
 - Jesus is like the serpent on the pole (Jn.3:14 – 15)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Pentateuch

- Pentateuch: Israel Becoming a “New Humanity”? (Deut.1 – 34)
 - Positive: God’s call to internalize the commands
 - Write on hands, foreheads, doorposts (Dt.6)
 - Circumcise your heart (Dt.10:16)
 - Positive: God will circumcise our hearts to restore us from exile (Dt.30:6)
 - Positive: Joshua is filled with the Spirit (Dt.34:9)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Wisdom

- Proverbs and Psalms
 - Positive: Become like a tree in a garden (Ps.1)
 - Positive: Write God's law on hearts (Pr.3:3 – 8; 6:21; 7:1 – 5)
 - Positive: Receive God's Spirit and words (Pr.1:1 – 9, 23; 2:1 – 3, 10 – 12; 8:22 – 36)
 - Positive: Be refined by God (Ps.17:3; 26:2; 66:10, 12; 105:19)
 - Positive: God wants truth in us (Ps.51:6)
 - Positive: God shapes our desires and rejoicing (Ps.19:8; 37:4; 119:16, 18, 27, 32, 36, 135; Pr.3:15; 8:22 – 36)
 - Positive: Behold God's face (Ps.11:7; 17:15; 22:24; 24:6; 27:8 – 9; 30:7; 31:16; 34:5; 67:1; 69:17; 80:3, 7, 19; 105:4; 119:135; 143:7)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Wisdom

- Proverbs and Psalms
 - Negative: Sinfulness also shapes our desires (Pr.6:25; 8:36)
 - Negative: God will have to make a clean heart for us, in us (Ps.51:9 – 11)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Hebrews

- Jesus purified and perfected human nature
 - “Purification from sin” (1:3)
 - Jesus “learned obedience... and having been made perfect” through his faithfulness, death and resurrection, “he became the source of eternal salvation” (5:7 – 10)
 - Jesus at birth was not instantly “perfect”
 - Jesus “wrote the law on his heart” (8:6 – 13, quoting Jer.31:31 – 34)
 - The Sinai covenant “can never... make perfect” (10:1)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Hebrews

- We are being perfected by faith in Jesus
 - The Old Testament saints:
 - “Apart from us they would not be made perfect” (11:40)
 - Jesus:
 - “The author and perfecter of faith” (12:2)
 - Us:
 - We are among “the spirits of the righteous made perfect” (12:23)
 - God:
 - “For our God is a consuming fire” (12:29) to purify and perfect

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- God's faithfulness, Jesus' faithfulness, and the Sinai covenant
 - Romans 1:17a and 3:1 – 8
 - Did God abandon Israel/Sinai covenant?
 - God's righteousness = faithfulness to the covenant
 - Romans 1:17b and Habakkuk 2:4
 - The Sinai covenant is weak (Hab.1:4)
 - "Live by faith" – faith that God will bring forth new life
 - Romans 10:4
 - Jesus is the climax (*telos*, end-goal) of the covenant

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Negative: All human beings are corrupted and in decline
 - Immoral Gentile:
 - Human **desires** are in decline (1:21 – 32)
 - Judgmental Gentile:
 - Hypocrisy should wake us to **desire** the good (2:1 – 16)
 - Jew:
 - Still in exile, should **desire** “circumcision of heart” to honor and fulfill the covenant (2:17 – 3:8)
 - All:
 - Sin affects human nature; our choices shape our **desires** (3:9 – 20)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Jesus purifies and perfects human nature: medical substitutionary atonement
 - Jesus fulfilled the covenant through his own faithfulness
 - *pistis Christou* (3:22)
 - Israel's side: To circumcise the heart
 - God's side: To give a circumcised heart
 - God displayed Jesus publicly as a *hilasterion* (3:25)
 - Background: Yom Kippur and the sacrificial system
 - Literally “mercy seat” or “place of atonement”
 - Jewish sacrificial system: God as dialysis machine
 - God took Israel's impurity into Himself
 - God sent it far away from Israel, like circumcision
 - God gave back purified life
 - Jesus is the truly human one, and spiritual “organ donor”

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Positive: Faith in Christ “fills to the full” the faith of Abraham and Sarah
 - **Desire** for new life out of dead bodies
 - Faith that God brings new life (4:1 – 15)
 - Results in new life in us (4:16 – 25)
 - Jesus was “raised for our justification” (4:25) to be “in us” by the Spirit
 - Jesus is “the justified one,” truly circumcised one (cf. Rom.2:28 – 29)
 - Donald Fairbairn, “Justification in St. Cyril of Alexandria with some Implications for Ecumenical Dialogue,” edited by Matthew Baker and Todd Speidell, *T.F. Torrance and Eastern Orthodoxy: Theology in Reconciliation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), ch.6
 - We have real participation in him, not imputation, by the Spirit

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Positive: Life in Christ, Christ's life in us
 - Christ's life in us by the Spirit, the hope of glory (5:1 – 11)
 - We grow in **hope** (5:5)
 - “We shall be saved by **his life**” (5:10)
 - Jesus' life over death and sinfulness
 - Topples the reign of human death (“the condemnation” – not more than mortality)
 - Topples the reign of sin via human mortality from Adam (5:12 – 21)
 - We died and rose to new life with Christ, in Christ (6:1 – 11)
 - Jesus crucified “the old self” (6:6) – the underlying corruption
 - i.e. Jesus makes death work backwards
 - Implied: You already **desired** to change

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Positive: Life in Christ, Christ's life in us
 - Bondservant analogy:
 - Self and members
 - Be slaves to righteousness in Jesus, not to sin (6:12 – 23)
 - Different masters (Jesus vs. sin) pay different wages
 - Sin, not God, “pays wages” of death
 - **Desire better** for yourselves (6:21 – 23): “what benefit did you then derive?”

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Positive: Life in Christ, Christ's life in us
 - For Jews (7:1)
 - Dying, rising with Christ = emerging on the other side of the Sinai covenant (from exile, to restoration) (7:1 – 4; cf. Dt.30:6)
 - Why the Sinai covenant? Why Israel?
 - Could not abolish coveting, and even made it worse (7:5 – 13) but
 - Helped Jews diagnose
 - The “I myself” apart from “the sin which indwells me” (7:14 – 25)
 - The “the good that I **want**” apart from the “the evil I do not **want**” through **desires**
 - The need for a new humanity, a healed human nature, a circumcised heart
 - Not “Israel just needs to suffer” – not an issue of passive obedience

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Reversal in Jesus, medical substitutionary atonement:
 - God sent Jesus because the commandments were “weakened by the flesh” of Israel
 - Jesus finally “condemned sin in the flesh” of his own body by never sinning and killing the thing that was killing us (8:1 – 4)
 - Implied: Jesus’ **desires** overpowered the corruption of sin

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Positive: Life in Christ, Christ's life in us
 - Positive: We participate by the Spirit in Jesus' achievement (8:5 – 11), which is the “circumcision of the heart” that the covenant required (8:4; 10:4; cf. Dt.10:16; 30:6)
 - We **desire** liberation from the corruption of sin, like the creation (8:12 – 25)
 - The Spirit, Son, and Father are “for us” (8:26 – 39)

The Motif of Human Being, Human Becoming: Paul in Romans

- Positive: Jesus' new humanity for all humanity
 - In the world:
 - God desires all Jews and Gentiles to know Jesus (9 – 11)
 - God's **desires** are Paul's **desires** (9:1 – 6; 11:26 – 36)
 - In the church:
 - Christians of Jewish and Gentile backgrounds living together (12 – 16)
 - Christians participate in the mission
 - Do good to enemies: “Heap **burning coals on his head**” (12:20)
 - Love feels like hell, if you're an enemy

The Themes of Fire and Becoming

- **Divine fire** is a *literary theme* in many biblical books
 - Methodological mistake: Fire is intended to be painful for its own sake
- **Human becoming** is a *literary theme*
 - Methodological mistake: Human nature and human desires are static
 - *Human becoming* is concentrated in Genesis and the Pentateuch, as paradigmatic, governing the rest of the biblical canon, as:
 - Humans as “image of God”
 - Marriage as monogamous, male-female
 - Humans as co-gardeners with God

The Themes of Fire and Becoming

- Methodological Mistake:
 - Breaking up a literary theme into pieces
 - Drawing conclusions based on the pieces
 - Three examples from Acts
 - Example 1: Tongues and the Spirit:
 - Only times the Spirit bestows tongues?
 - Example 2: Imprisonment:
 - Only times God breaks the apostles out of jail?
 - Example 3: The apostles' speeches and evangelism:
 - Creation? (to Gentiles)
 - Fulfillment of Messianic passages? (to Jews)
- That would be bad literary methodology

The Themes of Fire and Becoming

- From Deserving to Desiring
 - “For what is hell but the deprivation of that which is exceedingly **desired** by someone? Therefore, according to the analogy of **desire**, whoever **desires** God rejoices and whoever **desires** sin is punished.”
 - John of Damascus (c.675 – 740), *Against the Manicheans* 94.1569, 1573



The Themes of Fire and Becoming

- From Deserving to Desiring
 - “What is hell? I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love.”
 - Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821 – 1881), *The Brothers Karamazov*
 - E.g. endless jealousy?



The Themes of Fire and Becoming

- “The gates of hell are locked on the inside.”
 - C.S. Lewis (1898 – 1963), *The Problem of Pain*



The Themes of Fire and Becoming

- From Deserving to Desiring
 - Do we desire Jesus?
 - For ourselves
 - For others
 - Human deeds and human words are vital
 - Our choices shape our desires
 - We do not “merit” or “deserve” salvation
 - We must participate in our own healing in Christ’s humanity
 - Salvation is from the corruption of sin (Mt.1:21)

The Themes of Fire and Becoming

- From Deserving to Desiring
 - Is there a score kept? Where?
 - On a scoresheet in God's mind?
 - On our human nature?
 - Protestant suspicions of "good works" – why?
 - Athanasius: "try virtue a bit, and see how hard it is" (*On the Incarnation* 57.3)
 - See *Christian Mysticism and the Shaping of Desire*
 - Reconstruction 2021, Session 8
 - Reconstruction 2022, Session 9

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- God's refining power, feels like destroying power



Implications

- God's Character
 - God is 100% good, trying to undo 100% of the evil of humanity
 - Consistently and thoroughly Trinitarian
- Church Unity
 - The teaching of the earliest, united church, for a thousand years+
 - Everyone else must explain their departure from this
- Personally Relevant
 - What/Who do you desire?
 - Urgency: Address your addiction *now*; later is harder

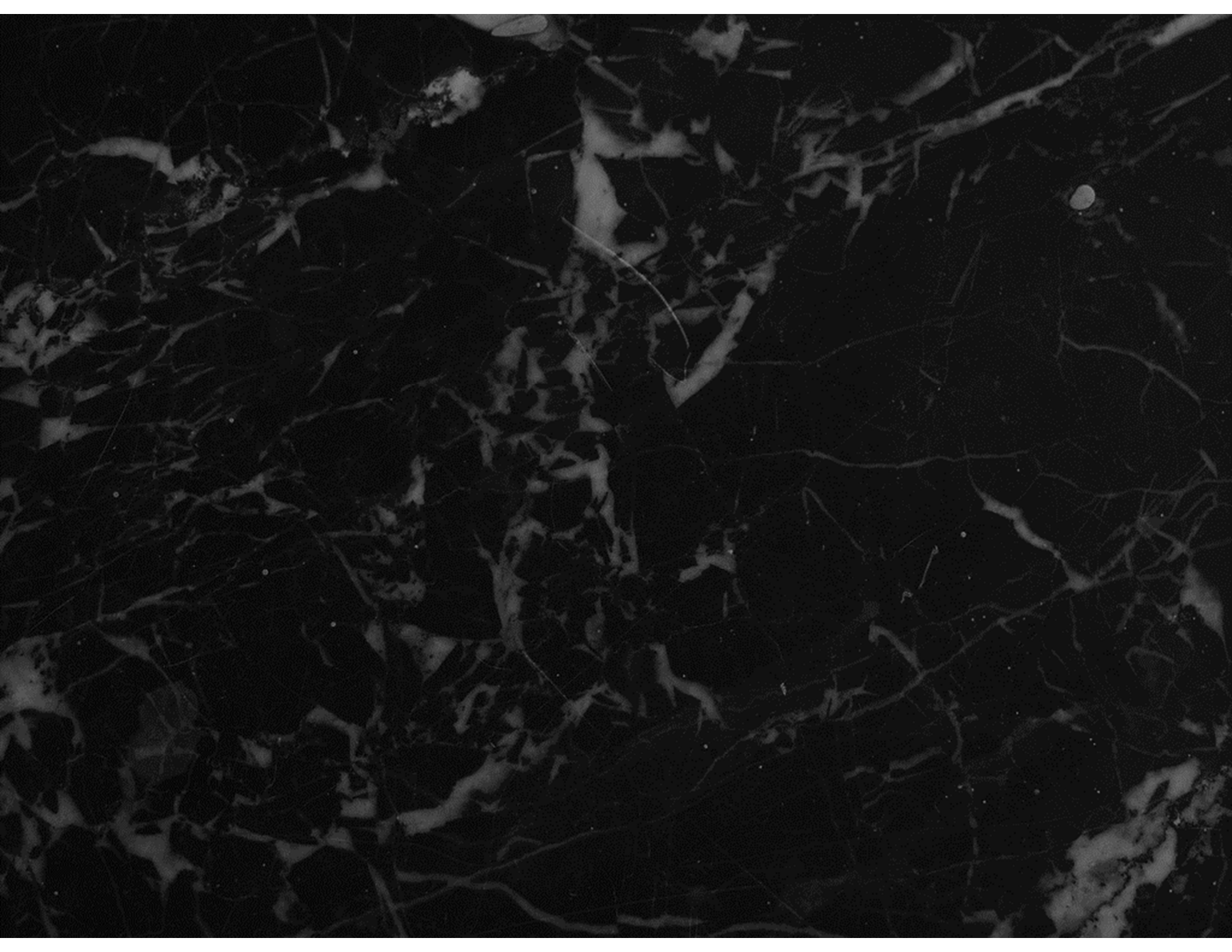
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God's Goodness: In the Theme of Fire in Scripture



Appendix A: Quick Comparison

Two Views of Hell

Legal: Prison Sentence

- Scriptures Emphasized:
What it's like

- 'Original sin' =
inherited guilt

- Fire is punishing

- Darkness is being
abandoned by God

Medical: Addiction Treatment

- Scriptures Emphasized:
Why it's like that

- 'Ancestral sin' =
inherited corruption

- Fire is refining

- Darkness is their self-imposed
blindness, un-creation

Two Views of Hell

Legal: Prison Sentence

- Scriptures Emphasized:
What it's like
- Sin is lawbreaking
- God's wrath is against us for lawbreaking, for the consequences of sin

Medical: Addiction Treatment

- Scriptures Emphasized:
Why it's like that
- Sin is addiction and self-destruction, then lawbreaking
- God's wrath is against the corruption in us, the source of our sin (Rom.1:18; 7:14 – 8:4)

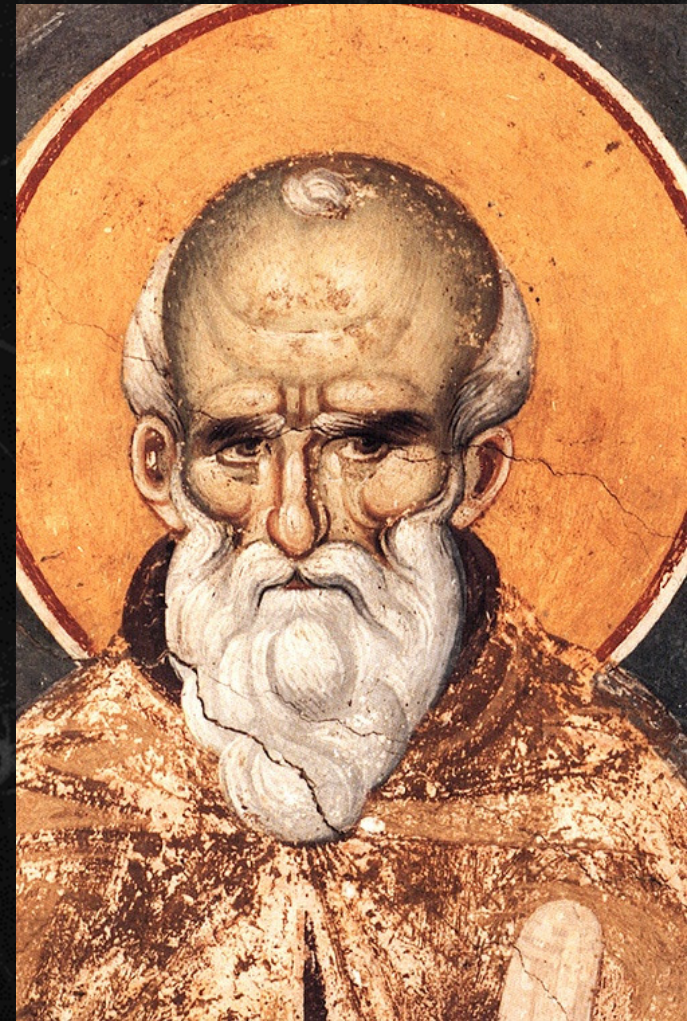
Atonement, Salvation, Destiny

	Majority Protestant	Patristic & Eastern
What framework?	Legal (judicial)	Medical (being, ontology)
What is human sin?	Wrong actions	Wrong condition
Jesus dealt with sin...	At his death only	From conception to death
God's wrath went from...to...?	Father to Son, or God to God	Jesus to the corruption in his human nature
Jesus is the	Victim	Victor
God saves us from	Himself	The corruption in us
Salvation is	Forgiveness	New identity, healing
Gets us into the	After-life	Mission-life
Election is	Only for some?	Mission-partners 'chosen ppl'
Human free will	Is questionable	Is essential to our becoming
Hell is	A prison	Jealousy amid love
God's nature is	Love and Wrath	Love only

Appendix B: Patristic Quotes on Hell

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “God is the sun of justice, as it is written, who shines rays of goodness on simply everyone. The soul develops according to its free will into either wax because of its love for God or into mud because of its love for matter. Thus just as by nature the mud is dried out by the sun and the wax is automatically softened, so also every soul which loves matter and the world and has fixed its mind far from God is hardened as mud according to its free will and by itself advances to its perdition, as did Pharaoh. However, every soul which loves God is softened as wax, and receiving divine impressions and characters it becomes the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”
 - Maximus Confessor (c.580 – 662), *Chapters on Knowledge*, par.12



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “The sorrow which takes hold of the heart which has sinned against love, is more piercing than any other pain. It is not right to say that the sinners in hell are deprived of the love of God...But love acts in two different ways, as suffering in the reprovéd, and as joy in the blessed.”
 - Isaac the Syrian (c.613 – c.700), cited in Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p.234; and Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, p.181 – 82



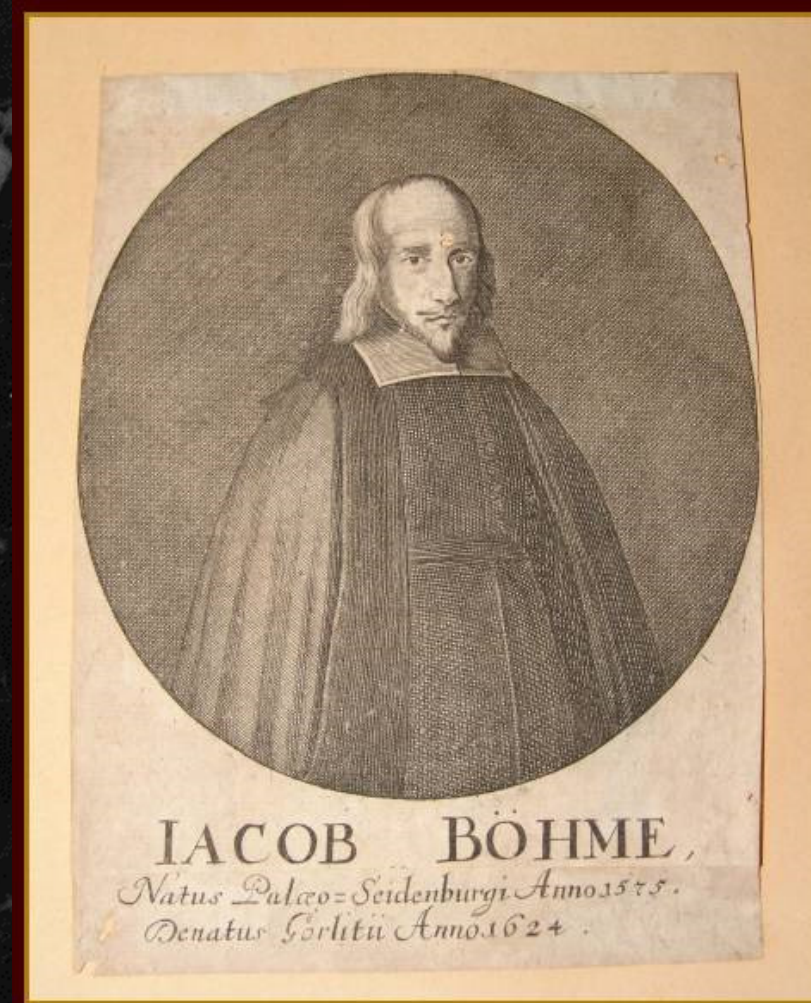
Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “The Eastern Orthodox church teaches that heaven and hell are being in God's presence which is being with God and seeing God, and that there is no such place as where God is not, nor is hell taught in the East as separation from God. One expression of the Eastern teaching is that...God's presence...is punishment and paradise depending on the person's spiritual state in that presence.”
 - Wikipedia, “Christian Views on Hell”



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “Hell is in heaven and heaven is in hell. But the angels see only the light, and devils only the darkness.”
 - Jakob Boehme (1575 – 1624)



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- “What is hell? I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love.”
 - Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821 – 1881),
The Brothers Karamazov
- Endless jealousy?



Hell: *Why* It's Like That

- Who believes this?
 - The united church for a thousand years+
 - The entire Eastern Orthodox church
 - C.S. Lewis (Anglican), *The Great Divorce*
 - J.R.R. Tolkien (Catholic), *LOTR*, e.g. Gollum
 - Karl Barth (Reformed), *Church Dogmatics*
 - T.F. Torrance (Reformed), *Atonement*
 - Donald Bloesch (Reformed), *The Last Things*
 - Roberta Bondi (Methodist), *Out of the Green Tiled Bathroom*
 - Michael Himes, S.J. (Catholic), *Doing the Truth in Love*
 - Karl Rahner (Catholic), *Theo Investigations Vol.VI, Ency. of Theo.*
 - Hans Urs Von Balthazar (Catholic), *Dare We Hope*
 - Pope John Paul II (Catholic), *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*
 - Richard John Neuhaus (Catholic)
 - Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J. (Catholic)

Hell: *Why* It's Like That

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre-
To be redeemed from fire by fire.
Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.



T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

Appendix C: Patristic Quotes on Human Being, Human Becoming

The background of the slide is a dark, high-contrast image of marbled paper. The pattern consists of intricate, swirling veins of light gray and white against a deep black or dark charcoal base, creating a complex, organic texture.

Human Being, Human Becoming

- “The sun also blinds those whose sight is dim: and they whose eyes are diseased are hurt by the light and blinded. Not that the sun’s nature is to blind, but that the substance of the eyes is incapable of seeing. In like manner unbelievers being diseased in their heart cannot look upon the radiance of the Godhead.”
 - Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315 – 386), *Catechetical Lectures* 6.29



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “We shall be raised therefore, all with our bodies eternal, but not all with bodies alike: for if a man is righteous, he will receive a heavenly body, that he may be able worthily to hold converse with Angels; but if a man is a sinner, he shall receive an eternal body, fitted to endure the penalties of sins, that he may burn eternally in fire, nor ever be consumed...



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “Therefore, brethren, let us be careful of our bodies, nor misuse them as though not our own. Let us not say like the heretics, that this vesture of the body belongs not to us, but let us be careful of it as our own; for we must give account to the Lord of all things done through the body. Say not, no one sees me; think not, that there is no witness of the deed. Human witness oftentimes there is not; but He who fashioned us, an unerring witness, abides faithful in heaven [Ps.139:7], and beholds what you do....



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “And the stains of sin also remain in the body; for as when a wound has gone deep into the body, even if there has been a healing, the scar remains, so sin wounds soul and body, and the marks of its scars remain in all; and they are removed only from those who receive the washing of Baptism. The past wounds therefore of soul and body God heals by Baptism; against future ones let us one and all jointly guard ourselves, that we may keep this vestment of the body pure...



Human Being, Human Becoming

- “...and may not for practicing fornication and sensual indulgence or any other sin for a short season, lose the salvation of heaven, but may inherit the eternal kingdom of God; of which may God, of His own grace, deem all of you worthy.”
 - Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315 – 386), *Catechetical Lectures* 18.19 – 20

