

“Perdition”

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per-dish'un (*apoleia*, “ruin” or “loss,” physical or eternal):

The word “perdition” occurs in the English Bible 8 times (John 17:12; Philippians 1:28; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 6:9; Hebrews 10:39; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 17:8, 11). In each of these cases it denotes the final state of ruin and punishment which forms the opposite to salvation. The verb *apolluein*, from which the word is derived, has two meanings:

(1) to lose;

(2) to destroy.

Both of these pass over to the noun, so that *apoleia* comes to signify:

(1) loss;

(2) ruin, destruction.

The former occurs in Matthew 26:8; Mark 14:4, the latter in the passages cited above. Both meanings had been adopted into the religious terminology of the Scriptures as early as the Septuagint. “To be lost” in the religious sense may mean “to be missing” and “to be ruined,” The former meaning attaches to it in the teaching of Jesus, who compares the lost sinner to the missing coin, the missing sheep, and makes him the object of a seeking activity (Matthew 10:6, 15:24, 18:11; Luke 15:4, 6, 8, 24, 32, 19:10). “To be lost” here signifies to have become estranged from God, to miss realizing the relations which man normally sustains toward Him. It is equivalent to what is theologically called “spiritual death.” This conception of “loss” enters also into the description of the eschatological fate of the sinner as assigned in the judgment (Luke 9:24, 17:33), which is a loss of life. The other meaning of “ruin” and “destruction” describes the same thing from a different point of view. *Apoleia* being the opposite of *soteria*, and *soteria* in its technical usage denoting the reclaiming from death unto life, *apoleia* also acquires the specific sense of such ruin and destruction as involves an eternal loss of life (Philippians 1:28; Hebrews 10:39). Perdition in this latter sense is equivalent to what theology calls “eternal death.” When in Revelation 17:8, 11 it is predicated of “the beast,” one of the forms of the world-power, this must be understood on the basis of the Old Testament prophetic representation according to which the coming judgment deals with powers rather than persons.

The Son of Perdition is a name given to Judas (John 17:12) and to the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3). This is the well-known Hebrew idiom by which a person typically embodying a certain trait or character or destiny is called the son of that thing. The name therefore represents Judas and the Antichrist (see “Man of Sin”) as most irrecoverably and completely devoted to the final *apoleia*.