

Introduction

(By Gordon Lindsay)

I have known Thomas Welch the greater part of his life. In fact, I met him shortly after the amazing miracle in which he was brought back to life after being dead nearly an hour. To some people Tom's testimony will seem incredible, but the documentation of it is absolute.

After the engineer who was operating the yard engine had witnessed Tom's 55-foot fall, he at once sounded the alarm. The large mill was immediately shut down and perhaps 75 men participated in the attempt to locate the body, which was lying somewhere in the murky waters of the pond. Nearly an hour passed before they located the body and pulled it out and laid it lifeless in the mill office. They witnessed Mrs. Brocke's compassionate prayer and cry to God for Him to bring Tom back to life, and following the prayer, saw the flickering of his eyelids. Still more astonished were the men at the mill when they saw him back on the job Saturday, just six days later. Then on the following Sunday night they heard him relate his fantastic story in the little schoolhouse (where I, too, later preached). Not less amazing was the instantaneous miracle in the hospital on Friday when each broken bone instantly came into place.

As Tom testifies, he had become an infidel early in his life from reading books in his uncle's library, which included the works of Voltaire, Thomas Paine and Robert G. Ingersoll. His experience in the nether world instantly showed him the falsity of the philosophies of these notorious advocates of agnosticism and infidelity. In the brief time Tom spent there, he saw that the spirit of man exists after death of the body and he that rejects Christ must spend eternity elsewhere than with Him.

Not long after this experience I was converted in the same church, one pastored by Dr. John G. Lake, in Portland Tom kept his promise that he made to the Lord and on the hospital bed when he was miraculously healed. A year later he and I and L. D. Hall left Portland to begin preaching the gospel.

“Oregon’s Amazing Miracle”

By THOMAS WELCH

The fully documented story of Thomas M. Welch, who fell to his death a distance of 55 feet. He remained under water for at least three-quarters of an hour before his body was located. He was raised to life by the prayer of faith and was back to work the same week! This is truly one of the greatest miracles of the 20th century.



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Chapter I

Oregon's Amazing Miracle

The testimony you are about to read is true in every detail. God alone knows why it happened to me, and why I was chosen to be this kind of witness to the grace and love of Jesus Christ in this 20th century. I am indebted to Jesus beyond measure for what He did for me, and my only desire now is to be faithful and true to Him.

I find great satisfaction in living for Christ and in being a witness to His saving and healing power. As Hebrews 13:5-8 declares: "For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

I was born and raised in Northern Alberta Canada, and was the oldest of four children. My father passed away and was buried on my eleventh birthday. Four months later my mother died and left us orphans, to be taken care of by others. Death is very final. It takes away from us the ones we need and separates us from the ones we love the most, and all we have left are memories. Our home was a happy home. No matter how kind others may be, they can never fully take the place of mother and dad, especially when you were old enough to remember all the things about them that were different from everybody else. I don't remember ever hearing my parents quarrel. If they did, it never occurred in our presence. I am sure they loved each other and I know they loved us children.

Mother's father, my grandfather was a schoolteacher and a Lutheran minister of the old circuit rider school. All were pioneers in a very real sense. As children, we understood what the word obedience meant. Confirmation in the Lutheran church we accepted as an essential part of our education.

After mother's death I went to live with her brother, Uncle Sam, and Aunt Julia. She was a real fine person and treated me like her very own. I shall always be grateful to both of them for their kindness and love to me.

As life went on many things changed. God moves in mysterious ways. In the year of my eighteenth birthday, a very close friend and neighbor, Fin Brocke, and his wife left Canada and moved to Portland, Oregon. Mrs. Brocke was sick a lot of the time and no doubt they thought a change would help her physically.

As time passed by, we heard they had suddenly become very religious and were going to church every night, that Mrs. Brocke had been healed by prayer, and many other things that were hard to believe, knowing them like I did.

So when harvest had been gathered and the threshing season was over, a friend of mine and I decided to come to Portland and see for ourselves what this was all about. Surely at this point in my life God was directing my steps. For various reasons I had become very hard and critical of all religions, though I will not take the time or space here to go into this part of my story.

The Bible says, "God is Love." This I know is surely true, and it is very possible that no human intelligence will ever comprehend the magnitude of the love of God until we are living with Him in eternity. At this point in my life my steps were being turned toward the very thing I had been trying so hard to avoid. My friend and I left Canada for Oregon to see for ourselves and on November 24, 1923 we arrived at the Brocke home in Portland.

We found that everything we had heard was true. They told us they had accepted Christ as their Saviour and that Mrs. Brocke had been healed by prayer and faith. They certainly were a changed man and woman!

I listened to their story and was very impressed. I went to church with them many times. I liked the minister, the Rev. John G. Lake. He was a marvelous preacher, an ex-missionary to South Africa and a world traveler, that preached a message of love and power to heal and deliver from sin, bondage and sickness all who would believe. I enjoyed what I heard and I was glad for what had taken place in the lives of the Brockes, but nothing in me ever responded to what I had seen or heard. I was dead inside to the Spirit. Certain influences in my early teens had hardened my heart and mind. I had come to some conclusions About God and the Bible, the Lutheran doctrine on infant baptism,

and so on, until I felt that if there was a God at all I was as good as He.

The Gospel that Dr. Lake preached was wonderful if it were true, but I never could believe it was for me. The influences of the past were too strong to dismiss, even though I would have liked to believe this.

I stayed on through the winter with the Brockes. He was the chief engineer at the Bridal Veil Lumber Company on Larch Mountain, thirty miles east of Portland. That was a large steam-operated sawmill and logging company, which employed over 150 men in the combined operations. The Brockes had a home in Portland and also a place at the mill.

The 1st of July, 1924 I got a job as engineer's helper with Mr. Brocke. Now, what I am about to tell happened on Monday, the day I started working at the mill, at one-thirty in the after-noon. We were sawing "Jap squares," which in turn were flumed down the mountain in a trough filled with running water to the planer on the Columbia River, in the town of Bridal Veil. The stream that supplied the mill with water had a dam across it to provide water for the boilers, the log pond, and the flume to carry the lumber to Bridal Veil, a distance of four miles down the mountain.

The trestle over this dam was 55 feet above the water. I went out on the trestle to straighten out some timbers which were crossed and not moving on a conveyor. Suddenly I fell off the trestle and tumbled down between the timbers and into the pond, which was 10 feet deep. An engineer sitting in the cab of his locomotive unloading logs into the pond saw me fall. I landed on my head on the first beam 30 feet down, and then tumbled from one beam to another until I fell into the water and disappeared from his view.

There were 70 men working in and around the mill at that time. The mill was shut down then and every available man was called to search for my body, according to the testimonies of these men. The search went on for forty-five minutes to one hour before I was finally found by M. J. H. Gunderson, who has written his own account of this to verify the facts of this testimony.

Here is related my experience with death, the things I saw and heard and did during this hour the men were searching the waters of the pond for my body:

I was dead as far as this world is concerned. But I was alive in another world. There was no lost time. I earned more in that

hour out of my body than I could ever learn while in this body. All I remember is falling over the edge of the trestle. The locomotive engineer watched me go all the way down into the water.

The next thing I knew I was standing near a shoreline of a great ocean of fire. It appeared to be what the Bible says it is in Revelation 21:8: "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." This is the most awesome sight one could ever see this side of the final judgment.

I remember more clearly than any other thing that has ever happened to me in my lifetime every detail of every moment, what I saw and what happened during that hour I was gone from this world. I was standing some distance from this burning, turbulent, rolling mass of blue fire. As far as my eyes could see it was just the same. A lake of fire and brimstone. There was nobody in it. I was not in it. I saw other people whom I had known that had died when I was thirteen years old. One was an uncle of mine who died of consumption when I was thirteen. Another was a boy I had gone to school with who had died from cancer of the jaw that had started with an infected tooth while he was just a young lad. He was two years older than I. We recognized each other, even though we did not speak. They, too, were looking and seemed to be perplexed and in deep thought, as though they could not believe what they saw. Their expressions were those of bewilderment and confusion.

The scene was so awesome that words simply fail. There is no way to describe it except to say we were eye-witnesses now to the final judgment. There is no way to escape, no way out. You don't even try to look for one. This is the prison out of which no one can escape except by Divine intervention. I said to myself in an audible voice, "If I had known about this I would have done anything that was required of me to escape coming to a place like this." But I had not known.

As these thoughts were racing through my mind, I saw another man coming by in front of us. I knew immediately who He was. He had a strong, kind, compassionate face, composed and unafraid, Master of all He saw. It was Jesus Himself.

A great hope took hold of me and I knew the answer to my problem was this great and wonderful Person who was moving by me there in this prison of lost, confused judgment-bound souls. I did not do anything to attract His attention. I said again to myself, "If He would only look my way and see me, He could

rescue me from this place because He would know I never understood it was like this. He would know what to do." He passed on by and it seemed as though He would not look my way, but just before He passed out of sight He turned His head and looked directly at me. That is all it took. His look was enough.

In seconds I was back and entering into my body again. It was like coming in through the door of a house. I could hear the Brockes praying minutes before I could open my eyes or say anything. I could hear and I understood what was going on. Then suddenly life came into my body and I opened my eyes and spoke to them.

It's easy to talk about and describe something you have seen. I know there is a lake of fire because I have seen it. I know Jesus Christ is alive in eternity. I have seen Him. The Bible states in Revelation 1:9-11: "I, John . . . was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and, what thou seest, write in a book."

Among the many things John saw was the judgment, and he describes it in Revelation 20 as he saw it. In verse 10 he says: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the *lake of fire*." Again in Revelation 21:8, John says he saw the "*lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*." This is the lake I saw, and I am certain of this one thing, that in the end of this age at the final judgment every corrupt thing in this universe will ultimately be cast into this lake and be forever destroyed.

I thank God for people who can pray. It was Mrs. Brocke I heard praying for me. She said, "Oh God, don't take Tom; he is not saved." Presently I opened my eyes and said to them, "What happened?" I had not lost any time; I had been gone somewhere and now I was back. Soon after this an ambulance arrived and I was taken to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland.

I arrived there just before six o'clock in the evening, was taken into surgery and my scalp was sewn with many stitches. I was put in the intensive care ward. There was really not much the doctors could do. It was simply a matter of wait and see. I had no pain and my mind was very clear. A special nurse was assigned to stay with me. Here is where I lay until Friday at 11:30 a.m.

During these four days and nights, I seemed to be in constant communication with the Holy Spirit. I relived the events of my past life and the things I had seen, such as the lake of fire, Jesus coming to me there, seeing my uncle and the boy I had been in

school with, and the coming back to life again. The presence of God's Spirit was with me continually, and many times I spoke out loud to the Lord. The Holy Spirit helped me untangle my twisted philosophy until I understood what was really happening to me now. He showed me what had been wrong in the past, and He helped me to piece it all together until it made sense why this had happened to me. Then I began to ask God what He wanted in my life, what His will for me was.

By Friday morning my broken body was so stiff and sore I could hardly move at all. Then some time around nine o'clock the call of God came. The voice of the Spirit can be very real. He said to me, "*I want you to tell the world what you saw, and how you came back to life.*" This was a hard decision for me to make. I knew nothing about this. How could I do it? Here I lay in the hospital bed barely able to move my right arm.

The supreme moment in my life had come. I will never forget this time of decision. At 11:30 a.m. I had made up my mind. I had no doubts. I asked the nurse to leave me alone. This she did very reluctantly, of course, because she knew I was helpless. But she went out.

Then I spoke out to the Presence of God that was there and said, "Lord, if that is what you want me to do, I'll do my best, but I cannot do it lying here. You will have to get me out of this place."

This doesn't sound much like a prayer, but I was talking to God now and making a very solemn commitment. Instantly a warm, wonderful feeling like a gentle breeze hit the top of my head where I was hurt the worst and went on down through my body and out through my feet. I was instantly healed from head to foot. A suitcase with some clothing in it had been left by my bed earlier in the week. I dressed and left the room and hurried down three flights of stairs and was out on the street in possibly less than six minutes. The nurse never did come back in time to sound an alarm.

By this time I was afraid someone would see me and try to force me back into the hospital, because my head was all bandaged and I was a sight fit to scare anyone, but God was with me. A close friend of mine, Pete Burness, had a printing shop near the hospital. I had been there before and knew where it was, so I rushed to his place and safety. Pete did not seem too surprised when I went into his printing shop. Pete had been a soldier in World War I. He had learned to pray in the trenches. He had

served with the Canadian Army under the British, and holds some of the highest medals for bravery they have to give. All he said to me was, "Well, I see you are out." His "calm" really helped me then. After some conversation he gave me the keys to his car and said, "Go down to the house in the car. I'll ride the streetcar home today. You had better stay in as long as you are band-aged up like you are. You can't imagine what you look like."

I drove on down to his house. I caused quite a commotion at Pete's home when I went in. There were several people there and of course they could not believe what they saw when I came in. However, things quieted down pretty soon and I went to a dresser in Pete's room to see what I looked like. My hair had been cut off on top, and there were stitches everywhere. I got all the bandages off and tried to comb what hair was left. The comb got caught in a stitch and it began to bleed. I heard some voice say these words, "*You are not healed.*" My faith was being challenged. I stood still there for several minutes looking at my-self, and then I noticed Pete's safety razor was lying there. I took the blade out and with a tweezers to hold the end of the stitches, I cut and pulled out every stitch. There was no more bleeding. I was really healed and this proved it to me.

I have learned since that time that you have to be very positive in your stand against all the negative suggestions that come to discourage your faith in a time like this. Our natural mind many times robs us of a supernatural victory. Believe God and act whether you understand it all or not.

After some time of cleaning up, I went downtown to see the doctor that had been coming to my hospital room, a Dr. Brewer. When I walked into his office and he saw me, he very quickly stood up. He looked so surprised and said, "Man what in the world are you doing here?" I did not answer that because I was not sure either. Then he asked, "Are you all right? How did you get out of the hospital?" I replied, "Doctor, I ran out. Maybe they don't know yet that I am gone." He said, "Tell me what happened."

I said, "Doctor, the Lord has healed me and I am all right now." He came close to me and pushed in on my ribs that were broken and asked me, "'Didn't that hurt?" I replied, "No." It was true; there was no pain. "Well," he answered, "the Lord must have healed you. I am sure we did not. This is only four days and it takes from six weeks to two months for broken bones to heal when everything goes well." Then he asked, "Who removed the stitches from your head?" I said, "I did that myself," and told him about how I had done it.

Then I told him of how the Lord had dealt with me, how God had called me to go and tell this to the world. Among other things, I knew many would ask who my doctor was and this worried me because I was beginning to wonder what he would say. So I asked him, "What are you going to tell the people who come to ask you about me?" He very simply said, "Well, if you say God healed you, then it must have been God that healed you because I know we did not. It has been only four days." I never have known who or how many did go to see Dr. Brewer about me. Not once has anyone ever said he denied my testimony.

CHAPTER II

Back to Work Saturday

Friday was surely a red-letter day for me. Saturday morning I was back at the Palmer Mill and on the job. Nobody seemed to want to work that day. They were watching me work. After some hours of this I got disturbed myself, and told them that if they wanted to hear all about my healing, we could meet at the school-house on Sunday evening and I would tell them then what I had seen and how I was healed. This was satisfactory with all these men. So the word went out that we would meet Sunday night at eight o'clock.

Sunday night as I approached the little schoolhouse, not far from where I had fallen, I saw a large crowd. It was getting dark. I almost panicked and ran, but again the Lord strengthened me and I went on in. Most of the people did not recognize me as I crowded my way to the front. Mr. Brocke sang a song and had prayer. My zero hour had arrived.

I was nervous and not sure of what I should do next. As I stood there, God helped me and for the first time in my life I felt the anointing of the Holy Spirit to witness. It enveloped me like a cloud. This was the same Presence that had enabled me to walk out of the Good Samaritan Hospital. The same Presence had helped me to understand God's will for me to go and tell who-ever would listen about what I had seen, and to warn them of the judgment to come and tell them of the love of God for man that he might escape it.

Just seven days had gone by since all this had happened. This was my first time to face an audience. I stood there behind the teacher's desk in a little schoolhouse. The very air seemed to be electrified, and as I opened my mouth to speak again the Presence of God settled over me and the Holy Ghost came in and filled me with His message.

I told the people what God had done, what I had seen during the time these same men were looking for my body in the pond.

CHAPTER III

A Day Never to be Forgotten

(by Fin & Mabel Brocke)

I knew nothing about the Bible, but the Holy Spirit speaking through me quoted much of the second and third chapters of the *Prophecy of Nahum*. Later that night, with the aid of a Bible concordance we were able to find what the Spirit had said concerning the day of His preparation, "The chariots shall jostle one against another in the broad ways . . ." At that time I had no idea that what I was saying was in the Bible. It was not until Mr. Brocke searched it out that I later learned that it was. That of course was a sign to me of things to come concerning my own ministry.

I wish to emphasize here that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the most essential part of any person's preparation for the ministry. Without Him we can do nothing. With Him, we can do all things. It is the Holy Ghost that convinces the world of:

1st, sin; then of righteousness and of judgment.

St. John 16:9-11: ". . .Of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

To be effective in bringing the message of salvation and deliverance to a lost world, one must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Some have asked from time to time if I have ever had headaches or any of the aftereffects that usually follow this kind of injury. I never have had a headache in my life; my eyes and ears are almost perfect. I am still healed today.

The people who had played the most important role in this, of course, were Fin and Mabel Brocke. They had the faith and courage to believe God for a miracle at a time and in a place of great need. They acted on instant notice and were rewarded by instant results.

Then there was Julius H. Gunderson, who found my body in ten feet of water when everyone else was giving up the search. He searched until he found me. God rewarded him, too, for his faith. Mr. Gunderson and Fin and Mabel Brocke have written their testimonies of what happened that day and these testimonies are given here in their own words. Nothing has changed.

I had gone over the hillside to pick some berries, but the rain had chased me in. I was within a few yards of our house when I saw my husband coming, walking fast, and he called to me and said, "Mama, Tommy fell and he is dead."

It is just as fresh in my memory now as then, what I said and how I felt. I asked, "Why Tommy?" and I heard a voice say, "For the Glory of God." Then my husband said, "I came to get you to pray."

I went with him back to the mill office. We didn't talk but we did pray all the way. When we got back to the office the room was filled with men and there lay Tommy wrapped in a blanket on a table. His face and head were covered with blood; there was no pulse, no life. Surely we were in the presence of death. You could feel it, as well as see it.

Those men that were packed in there knew my husband. They knew he was a man of prayer, and that he had gone to get me to help him pray. They were expecting to see something happen. I went to one side of the table and my husband went to the other side. The Bible says in James 5:14 and 15: "*Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*"

My husband anointed him with oil according to the Scripture, and then he said, "Mabel, you pray." I placed one hand on his head and the other on his heart. A young man standing near took my hand off Tommy's head and said, "Can't you see that is where he is hurt?" It wasn't a long prayer. We just asked God to be merciful and raise him up. First we saw his eyelids move just a little; then the tears began to come and he tried to talk. He said, "What happened?" The words were far apart, as though they were coming from a far country. Then he said, "I can't help it

now." More life came into him and the men standing around were all amazed and happy. They had seen a miracle. The boss had called Portland for an ambulance soon after Tommy fell, and we knew it would be coming soon.

When they got him to the hospital, he was taken into surgery and they cleaned the wounds in his head and put a lot of stitches in his scalp. Seven ribs on his left side were broken; they band-aged him up for that. It took a long time to do all this and we waited until they brought him out of surgery. He didn't say any-thing so we asked him if he had any pain. He said, "No." They took him to the intensive care ward, and then he asked the nurse if he could have something to eat. They did give him something to eat before we left him to go back to the mill. My husband was the chief engineer so we had to go back that night.

I returned to the hospital the next morning. The doctors asked me not to stay long; they did not hold out much hope that he would live. It was hard for Tommy to talk and his words came very slowly. He said, "I have something to tell you. You know I was dead for a while, but I found myself way off in a wilderness. It was as if a huge magnet were drawing me into it, and a lot of other people too, and there was no way to get out. I saw my uncle and a boy I went to school with. There was a great big lake of fire and I felt as if I were being drawn into it. I was afraid. Then I saw Jesus coming from a way off. He came closer and was going on by, and I said, 'If He would only turn and look at me He would save me.' Then Jesus looked at me and I heard you praying. I opened my eyes as soon as I could and I saw you."

I had to leave then, but later on he told us about all the things he had seen. He talked a lot about the lake of fire and the ones there. He said there was not anybody in the fire, but they were in a prison waiting and there was no way to escape.

The next time we saw Tommy was on a Friday night, after work. We did not know about what had taken place in the hospital that morning. When we got to my sister's home in Portland, we found that he was no longer in the hospital and that he had been instantly healed and had left the hospital about eleven o'clock that morning. He was in the hospital just four days. He went back to the mill with us that night and was back to work on Saturday.

Sunday night he told his experience at the little school-house near the mill. The entire mill crew and their families were there. Many could not get inside the building; it was too small. They had seen a miracle. Now they wanted to hear about it. Need-

less to say, we were very grateful to God for letting us have a part in this great thing that He had done. Tommy has kept his word and has been telling his story and preaching faith and deliverance ever since.

Have faith in God. He never fails when we believe.

—Thorfin Brocke

—Mabel E. Brocke

This is the endorsed statement of Mr. J. H. Gunderson, 1703 S.E. 16th Avenue, Portland, Oregon:

I, J. H. Gunderson, was at the Palmer Mill looking for a job and visiting Fin Brocke on July 1, 1924, when at about one-thirty in the afternoon Tom fell and I witnessed this miracle of faith.

A locomotive engineer sitting in his cab saw Tom fall. He ran from his locomotive down into the main engine room to tell Mr. Brocke what had happened.

The mill was shut down and Mr. Brocke and I and others went to recover Tom, but he had fallen into the water, which was ten feet deep at this point. We had a hard time finding him because the water was dirty and we were fishing for him with pike poles with long handles. After some time, another man gave me the pole he was using and I began probing the water deep down because I felt that he must be on the bottom. This was right because after some time of this kind of searching I hooked onto his clothes and pulled his body near enough for us to get our hands on him, and we pulled him out. He was dead. There was no life in him at all. His head was smashed in on top and blood was everywhere.

Mrs. Brocke got word and came down to the mill. When she saw Tom lying there still and dead, she knelt down and put her hand on his head. The blood oozed out between her fingers as she cried out to God to spare his life and save his soul because Tom was not a Christian. As she cried out and prayed, I saw life come back into Tom and he moved for the first time since we had recovered him from the water. Then he opened his eyes and asked, "What happened?"

Over these years I have thanked God many times for the privilege I had of seeing a dead man come back to life in answer to prayer. I stood on the bank of that pond for at least thirty minutes while other men were fishing for his body. I was watching for air bubbles or some sign of where he was. I never did see any air bubbles. There was no water in his lungs. He never had breathed in all that time he was under the water. One of the men who had

been trying to find Tom had given up and handed me his pike pole. I pushed it down deep and it hooked onto his clothing. He must have been near the bottom. It must have been all of forty-five minutes to one hour from the time he fell until Mrs. Brocke prayed for him in the mill office.

This is my testimony as I saw it happen. I pulled Tom to the surface myself, and witnessed the miracle of life restored in him. I thank God for what I saw that day, and I thank God for the privilege of telling it here. It changed my life. It is the truth.

—Julius H. Gunderson

CHAPTER IV

What I Saw During the Hour of Death

Many people today, especially the teenagers and young adults in their early twenties, who come to special meetings and hear this testimony, ask me for Bible references on the *lake of fire*. Just recently a group of thirty-five young adults asked me to write down the Scripture references for them because they did not know how to search them out. They also said they had never heard any evangelist or pastor preach on this subject, and most of them seemed to be surprised to find that there really is such a place spoken of in the Bible. They were very familiar with the term *hell*, but knew nothing about the *lake of fire*.

Due to the fact that I saw the lake of fire and that I promised the Lord I would tell what I had seen, I feel that those who read this testimony should also read what the Bible says about the lake of fire and its ultimate purpose, and have therefore prepared this Bible reference:

Romans 6:23—"For the wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In Revelation 1:19 John received an instruction from Jesus Christ, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." This is past, present and future.

The important thing here is that John was told to *write the things which he had seen*. It's easy to describe something you have seen. Revelation 1:2 says John "bare record ... of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all the things that he saw." A record is information that is preserved in writing so it will not be forgotten. Revelation 1:11 says, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia."

We must bear in mind here that John is talking about the things at which he had been looking, and leaving a record of them for all future generations.

In Revelation 19:19, 20, John says: "And I saw the beast .. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet .. . These both were cast alive into *a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*" This will be the final curtain for these two; they never will get out. They are mentioned again after a one thousand year period. Revelation 20:10, "And the devil . . . was cast into the *lake of fire* and *brimstone*, where the beast and the false prophet are." Revelation 20:3 clearly indicates that Satan will be held captive in the "bottomless pit" for a thousand years, and then he will be turned loose again to deceive. Verses 7 and 8: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go out to deceive the nations . . ." Verse 9 shows that judgment will come as it did on Sodom in the days of Lot, ". . . a fire came down from God out of heaven."

Verse 10 then says, "And the devil ... was cast into the *lake of fire and brimstone*, where the beast and the false prophet are." These two had been cast alive into the lake of fire a thousand years previous to this and they are still here. And the last of verse 10 declares, ". . . and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Then in Revelation 20:11-13 we see the great white throne judgment. Verses 12 and 13 state that all the small and the great that had ever lived were called to stand before God and they were judged, "every man according to his works." Then verses 14 and 15 declare, "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Also in Revelation 21:6-8, John wrote these words: "And he said unto me, It is done." These words of a great hope are real for some, and words of dreadful finality for others. It is done —He has done all He can do. In verses 6 and 7: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life *freely*. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." But verse 8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." There will be no appeal from this final sentence. Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death."

II Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Phillips' translation quotes it this way: "Their punishment will be eternal exclusion from the radiance of the face of the Lord and the glorious majesty of his power."

St. John did see the *lake of fire*. I saw the *lake of fire*. There most certainly is such a place in existence now, and the Bible very clearly tells us why it is in existence. Perhaps the most eloquent illustration is in Matthew 13:40-43, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

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