

GOING TO...

Helen A. Handbasket



A revelation of Biblical proportions concerning the calculated and evil mistranslation of one Greek word in the fifth century promoting the myth (lie), of "eternal" conscious torment in hell...woven through this intriguing tale is a memoir by a: follower of Christ, Vietnam Veteran-(fun-loving combat medic survivor), former alcoholic/drug addict, scribbling scribe, guitar player, often struggling, yet faithful servant of the Lord...and grateful recipient of His infinite Love and Grace.

Rick Adair

Eternal conscious torment in Hell is a lie. The author proves this fact while weaving his humorous, yet heartfelt, memoir in what he calls, "off-ramps," to provide readers with a breather from this life-changing Biblical discussion.

Going to...Helen A. Handbasket

By Rick Adair

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12745.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

GOING TO...

Helen A. Handbasket



A revelation of *Biblical* proportions concerning the calculated and evil mistranslation of *one* Greek word in the fifth century promoting the myth (lie), of "eternal" conscious torment in hell...woven through this intriguing tale is a memoir by a: follower of Christ, Vietnam Veteran—(*fun-loving* combat medic survivor), former alcoholic/drug addict, scribbling scribe, guitar player, often struggling, yet faithful servant of the Lord...and grateful recipient of His infinite Love and Grace.

Rick Adair

Copyright © 2023 Rick Adair

Print ISBN: 978-1-958878-92-7

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-441-1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia, U.S.A.

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2023

Table of Contents

Preface	xiii
Chapter 1: Old MacDonald had no farm: <i>E, I, E, I, Oh, My!</i>	1
Chapter 2: Lovely Little Lisa, Adolf...and filthy rags.....	5
Chapter 3: What the <i>Sam-Heck</i> does Helen know?.....	9
Chapter 4: To know Gnosis or not know Gnosis...is that a question?	13
Chapter 5: Finding sanctification \ae in the Gap.....	19
Chapter 6: The Tao Te...Who?	25
Chapter 7: Heartbreak, relapse, recovery...what would Barbie do?	29
Chapter 8: Adventures with Post Traumatic <i>Circus</i> Disorder.....	33
Chapter 9: Lest ye be like child <i>actors</i> and teenage <i>jazz guitarists</i>	41
Chapter 10: Ah yes, paradox: a beautiful day... that's <i>hotter than Hell</i>	45
Chapter 11: Love...leave it on the back burner.....	49
Chapter 12: The plot thickens...for all eternity?.....	57
Chapter 13: Where can a bloke find a decent Bible around here?.....	61
Chapter 14: Human-breathed inerrancy vs. the inerrancy of God's Love	65

Chapter 15: No need for slight-of-hand when your hand is an iron fist.....	69
Chapter 16: Origen of Alexandria was a very bad good man.....	75
Chapter 17: Doing <i>hard time</i> with teenage joyriders and runaways	79
Chapter 18: Jazz drummer boy in a rice paddy... “ba, rumpa, pa, MEDIC!”	87
Chapter 19: Molten lava is good for the soul... Merry Christmas	95
Chapter 20: <i>Paying</i> attention with the currency of self	99
Chapter 21: Peripheral issue...my ass	103
Chapter 22: What the <i>hell</i> does this have to do with... Hell?	107
Chapter 23: My little nightmare...a year <i>after</i> the My Lai massacre	115
Chapter 24: No purple heart for bum-tripping on acid	125
Chapter 25: “Hey Doc, I’m a Poppa”	135
Chapter 26: Music theory?...Sure, if it doesn’t interfere with playing my guitar	145
Chapter 27: Has objective reality retired...or just gone insane?.....	149
Chapter 28: One Greek word for man, one leap backward for mankind.....	153
Chapter 29: I love God, I love potato chips...I love semantics	159

Chapter 30: Dropping off wisdom at the Good Will	165
Chapter 31: I pulled you over because your pronouns have expired.....	171
Chapter 32: The Magic Kingdom...for adults only	177
Chapter 33: Church History, “Move along folks, nothing to see here.”	185
Chapter 34: Ten bazillion years in Heaven? Say again?	187
Chapter 35: Seats in the upright position...have a barf-bag handy.....	199
Chapter 36: My neighbor is a Zen farmer, he raises...questions	209
Chapter 37: Vital choices: Brainwashing...or a Misspelled Tattoo?.....	213
Concluding Remarks	219
Photos	225
Acknowledgements	231
Appendix	233
The Flower.....	235

Preface

“He who answers a matter before he hears *it*, *It is* folly and shame to him.”

–Proverbs 18:13 NKJV

Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett, in their magisterial edition of the King James Bible, refer to the Bible as “*a book essentially in exile from its original context.*”

Let’s face it, theology can be a dry topic even when tackled by Christians, like me, who are full of exegetic zeal...whatever that is. I believe God, our Father in Heaven, approves of having a sense of humor even when we’re discussing His Word and the various interpretations (exegesis), of those Words. Is it possible I received this text from God? No, but I did receive my sense of humor from Him.

“Listen my children, you can lighten up a bit while arguing with each other about what I, as you like to say, *breathed* into Scripture concerning certain mysteries, and I would also consider it an honor if you checked your self-righteous indignation at the door...it never helps your case. How about a hint? None of you has solved, or will solve, all the mysteries of My Bible...hence the reason I called them *mysteries*. However, the old movie, “Lost in Translation,” which, in my most humble of opinions, rates less than one tomato, has an intriguing title...I’ll leave it at that. Like I told Paul about that thorn in his side, ‘my Grace is sufficient.’ And that goes for my child, Richard, who has dared to surround, what he imagines to be My Words, with quotes. Relax, I don’t have any lightning bolt exhibitions

planned in his vicinity... however, you might tell him the ice, My ice actually, that he's walking on is thinner in spots than it appears. As you can see, I'm still fond of parables and metaphors. Whether my gabby wanna-be disciple Richard has any wisdom here is for you to decide...you have My book. Read it. Speaking of which, it may, or may not, have any relevance that my disciples and scribes wrote My original scrolls in Greek and Hebrew, again, I leave this for you to unravel what is yours to unravel, and to figure out what is to remain a mystery until My return. I will say, some jots and tittles might be more important than others... *and* there is a reason, a mystery perhaps, I didn't provide the scribes with laptops and laser printers. I sent the Helper to you for a reason. To help...just ask. My Grace is abundant for those who love, obey My commands, continue to love, pick up their Cross and follow My Son...and, you guessed it, LOVE! That's all you need for now...don't forget to leave your porch light on."

When writing, I usually edit out clever tangents that wander from the topic at hand...I discovered along the way that, "clever," has a short shelf life. However, I have uncharacteristically left much of this stream of consciousness intact. At times, getting to the heart of this conversation concerning heaven and *eternal* Hell is a bit like skinny-dipping in the Lake of Fire itself. I believe taking an occasional off-ramp into my memoir-memories for a breath of fresh air, will make the journey "to Hell and back" more interesting...*and maybe...more fun.*

Note: A Pastor I recently spoke with read the title of this book and advised me to, "...not take this serious subject matter too lightly." To be irreverent is my last wish when

broaching this very serious subject matter...“For to me, to live is Christ,” (Phil. 1:21). And yet, I have specifically geared my audience toward non-academics, while at the same time, welcoming Bible scholars to *jump in the pool*, so to speak...especially if they can offer new information or point out any serious Wiki-flaws.

Chapter 1: Old MacDonald had no farm: *E, I, E, I, Oh, My!*

The stigma long attached to the word Universalism must be addressed so readers have, at least a chance, of being on the same page when this term is used. I will primarily use Origen of Alexandria, (185-253 AD), as an example of one of many scholars and Church founding fathers, who were thought of as Universalists...even though Origen didn't think of himself as one. He simply acknowledged the theological *possibilities* of Universal Reconciliation and/or Conditional Immortality, often known as Annihilationism, (the belief that “the wages of sin is death...” to be permanently put out of existence). Many Christians hear the term *Universalist* and immediately imagine a sentimental Christian who thinks everyone, saved or unsaved, trots off to heaven immediately after dying and, if they happen to believe in Hell, the Hell they imagine is probably similar to Disneyland on a cloudy day. When we refer to Christians as Universalists—*hopeful* or *confident*—often we don't know if they believe[d] in Universal Salvation or simply believe[d] in the question: Does the Bible support the *possibility* of Universal Reconciliation? The more I pray, research, and study Scripture, the more I believe in the *probability*, if not certainty, of Divine Universal Reconciliation.

Note: Having come to this eschatological belief in the *possibility* of Divine Mercy, or, Universal Reconciliation, through the back door of Conditional Immortality, the following might be construed as a warning of sorts to those poor souls who take despicable and, hopefully not, inextinguishable delight in the thought of their neighbors,

and even family, suffering endless torment while they observe the fireworks from their *gated community* in heaven. Lest we forget, this will be a community where, "...[the] gates will never be closed," (Rev. 21:25). This is the same *Promised Land* where I believe these misguided souls will be welcomed with open arms should their route to heaven be a bit more circuitous than they anticipated. When any of us suffer theological doubts of any stripe, reverting to *Love* as a default position will undoubtedly serve all of us well.

There are, however, many verses that can support Conditional Immortality. This is why I believe both are possible, but not *probable*, in God's plan for final Judgement. This treatise is going to illustrate in rigorous detail, if not limited scope, the seemingly irrefutable evidence that eternal conscious torment was not, and is not, a course of action our Father in Heaven, Abba, would even consider, to say anything of actually implementing. I will make this argument based solely on Scripture, hermeneutics, exegesis, eschatology, and patristics...fancy words for the study of Biblical translation, interpretation, end-times, and the wisdom, theology, and history of the Church founding fathers. Common sense, when available, will also be an ally...as it always is. Let's begin.

George MacDonald (1824 -1905) was a Scottish author, poet, and Christian minister. He was one of the most remarkable Christian writers of all time... he also happened to be Lewis Carroll's mentor, author of *Through the Looking Glass* and *Alice in "Wonderland."* MacDonald, who refused to give interviews on the lecture circuit in America, wasn't as famous as Carroll, and yet Carroll referred to his mentor as, "the master."

One of MacDonald's novels, "Sir Gibby," is about a dumb (doesn't speak), street urchin in 1800s Scotland who is portrayed brilliantly as a *Christlike* figure. Listening to his book was like being caught outside without an umbrella in a deluge of Divine Grace. Not just in terms of edification or sanctification, but my love of books in general...which began at twelve with my teenage detective buddies, "The Hardy Boys." Outside of the Bible, I've never read, or listened to, any book that has so heightened my love of Christ as the testimony and pure wisdom of a young lad known as, Sir Gibby.

As someone who now appreciates with immense reverence the untainted wisdom of George MacDonald, I was delighted to find this quote from him concerning the notion of *eternal punishment*, as he put it, "administered by Divine right." He referred to it...

"...as loathsome a lie against God as could find place in heart [sic] too undeveloped to understand what justice is, and too low to look up into the face of Jesus. It never in truth found place in any heart, though in many a pettifogging brain. There is but one thing lower than deliberately to believe such a lie, and that is to worship the God of whom it is believed."

—George MacDonald

Don't hold back, George, what do you really think? (I'm just grateful *my* brain hasn't done any pettifogging lately...I hear it can be quite unpleasant.)

And then there was the pious "Church lady" with stern Sunday School authority who squawked at me, "The Bible

clearly says that unsaved sinners die and go to Hell for all eternity.”

“No, actually, it doesn’t say that, at least not in the Greek New Testament,” I said with my own tenor of Sunday School tyranny.

“So, you’re one of those wimpy Universalist who doesn’t believe in Hell,” her husband snorted with distinctly un-Christian-like disdain.

“Ostensibly, the only difference between you folks and me,” I declared, “is I don’t believe anyone, including the poster-boys for evil, Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Mao, and *Dennis the Menace*, go to Hell for all eternity.”

They walked off in a huff, the man mumbling, “Damn heretic.”

Chapter 2: Lovely Little Lisa, Adolf...and filthy rags

I'm sure evil men and women will spend what *seems* like an eternity treading hot water; but what about, Lisa, my metaphorical Buddhist friend from China...a virtuous, yet unworthy sinner and teenage girl who died at 18 in a car accident... and who never encountered a Bible? Even unworthy sinners can, relatively speaking, be virtuous to some degree. The Bible doesn't teach that all sinners are wicked...just unsaved. Depending on the motivation of the doer of good deeds, I'm sure some *filthy rags* aren't as dirty as others, (Isaiah 64:6). For example, the folks who help others because they believe it's the right thing to do...as opposed to the person who helps others to earn bonus points towards the purchase of their golden first-class ticket to heaven.

Does anyone really believe God would have our young Buddhist friend (Taoist, Jewish, Confucianist, Bahai, Muslim, Shinto, Zoroastrian, or even atheists, etc.), bunking with Hitler? It's hard to imagine God would even put her in the first ring of *Dante's Inferno*...(I'm still looking for the chuckles in his "Divine Comedy.") I'm referring to the least uncomfortable ring of the Inferno which is characterized by endless despair and the absence of hope. Hitler, Mao, and Ted Bundy would ostensibly be in the 9th, or last concentric circle of Dante's imagined Hell. It is very unlike me to borrow apocryphal theology from the Catholic sector, (I've never even read the Apocrypha), but I do it simply to illustrate a point as pure speculation. Consider, *just for a moment*, JUST the CONCEPT... a thought experiment perhaps: imagine an educational purgatorial postmortem *last chance* repentance

rest stop, or something like it. Hold your horses, don't run off to design your *heretic* protest poster just yet! If it makes you feel better, maybe instead of *purgatory*, we could refer to it as, "the outskirts of Gehenna," or, maybe, "Heaven's waiting room?" I feel the need to occasionally remind readers that I believe in God's Righteous Judgement and punishment that will, in my opinion, be beyond unpleasant for the wicked; I just don't believe that it will last for eternity. I do believe with every fiber of my being that God's Love is an umbrella covering His Divine attributes and *infinite* Mercy. Scripture clearly states there will be different levels of punishment in Hell, consider:

"Woe to you, *scribes*, and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation." –Matt. 23:14, NKJV (bold my emphasis)

If Hell was, in fact, eternal, what could possibly be considered a "greater condemnation?" Would God tack on extra time after their *eternity* sentence was completed? Logic seems to dictate that "greater condemnation" supports the notion of Divine reconciliation...or, death, also known as Conditional Immortality. Obviously, Hitler and Lisa won't be receiving the same postmortem judgement. Wherever Lisa is going, provided it's not heaven, one thing I'll die by...so to speak, it isn't *eternal*. The word, "scribes," never stood out to me in this verse until just now. Maybe the Lord was giving us a clue about the possibility, or even likelihood, that scribes with nefarious motives might be able to pull off mistranslating the one Greek word that this entire manuscript hinges on. Could it be within the realm of reasonable possibilities that God, knowing the Greek word mistranslated as *eternal*, would

be transcribed, and printed for at least 1600 years, was challenging our faith in His Perfect Love, Mercy, and Forgiveness? Maybe, just maybe, he wanted at least a few warriors who would have the courage to defend His infinite attribute of Love...despite the ironclad faith of millions in the fragile, yet seemingly unassailable, notion of absolute inerrancy in the *copies of copies, of copies, of copies* of God breathed Scripture.

“Many Protestant Christians have never read a book on the history of their religion, and so do not know that the words translated as ‘Hell’ in the New Testament were never originally intended to represent a place of eternal punishment. Many members of clergy, who are required to get extensive educations before they commence preaching in pulpits, seem inexplicably unaware that an eternal Hell was not invented until the mid-sixth century, and was not commonly accepted as such by Christians for years afterwards.”

–Barbara Amell, March 16, 2021

<https://www.worksofmacdonald.com/musing-on-macdonald/2021/3/16/the-believing-faculty-george-macdonald-on-universal-salvation>

Chapter 3: What the *Sam-Heck* does Helen know?

I am a follower of Christ who is defined by my love of the Lord. Having said that, let's talk some more about Hell and *eternal* damnation.

As you read on, please keep this in mind if you become consumed, or simply distracted, with some version of:

“Excuse me, Helen, [it's *Rick* you nincompoop], do you have any idea how many biblical scholars have scoured every word of the Greek, Latin, and Aramaic manuscripts, not to mention, every ‘jot and tittle’ of the Hebrew texts since the sixth century? Do you really believe there is anything new under the sun when it comes to Biblical translations? What audacity you must possess to think you've discovered any significant revelation concerning Scriptures during the measly seven decades you've been prancing around on earth mesmerized by your own delusions of grandeur.”

First of all, I don't *prance*...horses prance. Second, generally speaking people who criticize me are nowhere near this eloquent... although most can certainly be as self-righteously indignant and judgmental as I am on occasion. And third, the only important point beyond my sarcasm and juvenile wit...virtually every word (and cut-and-paste Wiki credited factoid), to follow will be exhibits, “A” through “Zoroastrianism,” to expose the perpetrators of mistranslating ONE, I repeat and repeat again, ONE, Greek word in over 100 Bible translations into over 3,000 languages. I will explain exactly—or in close proximity to, *exactly*—how and why it happened, how and why the lie has been perpetuated for

centuries, and exactly why it is monumentally important to expose this, perhaps, *Satanic* lie. Merely a “peripheral issue” to many unexamined souls, this is vital information concerning the Good News...the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I will also make it abundantly clear this exposé is paradoxically far from being news; it has been shouted from the rooftops since before the sixth century...with many of those rooftop town-criers squashed like bugs by the ancient Church for trying to expose this lie that slanders our Father in Heaven.

If you haven't figured out the Greek word in question, “Be anxious for nuttin,’ pard; it’s just up around the bend, ‘bout a half-mile past Hanson’s old barn and across from the Jack-in-the-Box.” Let’s begin...again.

If theological colleges since the sixth century until today, taught more about patristics, (the study of the founding Church fathers), the use of allegory in Scripture, and the implications of New Testament authors training in the art of rhetoric, we might not have been saddled with the burden of teaching, to say anything of believing, the inane, dangerous, and destructive theology of *eternal conscious torment*. We might also have been relieved of pushing the inerrancy Boulder-of-Sisyphus up and down the mountain of common sense for the mistranslation of ONE seven letter Greek word just coming over the horizon dead ahead. *Inerrancy* has, in a very real sense, become its own branch of theology; question one *jot or tittle*, and, bada-bing, bada-boom: instant heretic...Satan’s favorite recipe. Just add water and a pinch of wicked intent. Let me make it clear that I believe in the, perhaps, 95% to 99.9% inerrancy of New Testament Scripture, especially the original Greek manuscripts. Except for the obvious small differences in insignificant details found in the Gospels that are

of no theological consequence, with the one caveat being at the center of this debate...whether we think it's a peripheral issue or not. And that is the incorrect translation of the Greek word, "*aiōnios*," as, "eternal." (*aiōnios*, from, *aeon*, the root of our, "eon.") An in-depth correct translation of *aiōnios* to follow.

Let's think about this for a moment. Jesus spoke Aramaic and could read Hebrew, and maybe understand Koine Greek, but didn't teach in Hebrew or Greek. Although, there are bits and some substantial papyrus pieces of the books that would eventually become the Bible; the earliest record of just a list of the 27 New Testament books was in a letter written by Athanasius, a fourth century bishop of Alexandria, dated 367 AD. The first New Testament canon was created at the counsel of Hippos beginning twenty-five years after this. So, who came up with the *correct* canon beginning 360 long years after the death of Christ? The Ethiopian Orthodox Bible has 81 books. The other Orthodox Bibles have 74 books. The Catholic Bible has 73 books. The Protestant Bible has 66 books, and the current Jewish Bible has 24 books. Of course, *your* canon is the correct one.

GOING TO...

Helen A. Handbasket



A revelation of Biblical proportions concerning the calculated and evil mistranslation of one Greek word in the fifth century promoting the myth (lie), of "eternal" conscious torment in hell...woven through this intriguing tale is a memoir by a: follower of Christ, Vietnam Veteran-(fun-loving combat medic survivor), former alcoholic/drug addict, scribbling scribe, guitar player, often struggling, yet faithful servant of the Lord...and grateful recipient of His infinite Love and Grace.

Rick Adair

Eternal conscious torment in Hell is a lie. The author proves this fact while weaving his humorous, yet heartfelt, memoir in what he calls, "off-ramps," to provide readers with a breather from this life-changing Biblical discussion.

Going to...Helen A. Handbasket

By Rick Adair

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12745.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**