

CLARIFYING MORE
BAFFLING
BIBLICAL PASSAGES

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

“CLARIFYING MARK 3:17
AND 9:49”

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XXIII

CLARIFYING MARK 3:17 AND 9:49

Mark 3:17

Greek Text

καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου
καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Ἰακώβου
καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτοῖς ὀνόμα[τα] Βοανηργές,
ὃ ἐστὶν Υἱοὶ Βροντῆς·

Vulgate

*et Iacobum Zebedaei et Iohannem fratrem Iacobi
et inposuit eis nomina Boanerges quod est Filii tonitrui*

RSV

And James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James,
whom he surnamed Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder.

The Meaning of the *Boane-* Found in *Boanerges*

Mann (1986: 249) commented about this verse as follows:

The title *Boanerges* represents a so far unsolved problem. Presumably the word should be divided as *Boane-riges* in the Greek text, but while the first part of the word can be easily understood as a rendering of the Hebrew *Bene* (sons of), there is no word similar in Hebrew or Aramaic to explain the second part as ‘thunder.’ Perhaps the best suggestion is still that of Lagrange (p. 65), that the Arabic *radjas* (*sic*)¹ did mean ‘thunder’ and that the word may have passed into common usage. . . . We can only conclude that Mark found a complicated word and made of it what sense he could.”

By way of contrast, Parker (1983: 70–71), arguing for the posteriority of Mark, stated, “He [Mark] knows little Hebrew or Aramaic. True, he likes to include words from those languages. But *every time he does, he gets something askew*”

(Parker's italics). To illustrate this point, Parker cited from Mark 3:17, "he surnamed them Boanerges, that is Sons of Thunder" and commented,

No one knows where the author got the syllables *boan* or *boane*: "son" is *ben* in Hebrew, *bar* in Aramaic. If the ending *-rges* reflects Hebrew *regesh*, that means not "thunder" but "bustle," or else "wrath." If it represents *ragaz* or *ra^cash*, both of these properly mean "tremble," "quake," as in "earthquake." Did Mark's source perhaps intend something like "quaking of the heavens"?

The answer to Parker's question is an emphatic "No!"² Taylor (1952: 231–232) had noted that Βανηργες (with just the α in lieu of the οα) appears in MS 565 and Βανηργεζ appears in MS 700, as well as the Syriac Sinaiticus, Harclean, and Peshitta's readings of ܒܢܝ ܪܓܝܫ (b^enai r^egesh)—all of which equal the Hebrew "the sons of (בְּנֵי) thunder." Taylor thought that either the α or the o in Βανηργες was a later intrusion or gloss. However, given the preponderance of manuscripts which read Βοανηργες, I argue below that Βοανηργες was the correct transliteration of the original Hebrew surname and that the Βοανη- element has nothing to do literally with the Hebrew בְּנֵי "the sons of." I also argue, contra Parker, that the -ργες element of Βοανηργες has nothing to do with the "quaking of the heavens."

Jastrow (1903: 147, 870) cited Hebrew בוע and בועי meaning "to swell, burst forth, whence (of sound) to shout, rejoice," and he called attention to the by-form נבע "to burst forth, to give forth, to utter." Given the ν in the βοανηργες of Mark 3:17, it is reasonable to assume that the verb בוע had not only the attested by-forms בועי and נבע (with an initial נ)

but also the by-form with a final ן, i.e., בָּעַן³—the participle of which would be בּוֹעֵן, and the plural construct of which would be בּוֹעֵנִי (vocalized like the עוֹלָמִי in Isa 45:17). This בּוֹעֵנִי was correctly transliterated⁴ by Mark, or his source, into Greek as Βοανη, meaning literally “the shouters of,”⁵ which Mark *paraphrased* as Υἱοὶ “the sons of.”

The Meaning of the *-rges* Found in *Boanerges*

The -ργές of βοανηργές is indeed the transliteration of the Hebrew רגש “thunder,” despite the reservation of many commentators to concur with this identification. Because רגש “thunder” is not attested in the standard Hebrew lexicons some have opted to emend the underlying Hebrew text from רגש to רגז “excitement, raging” or to רעם “thunder.” Taylor (1952: 232) noted that Lagrange (1929: 65) preferred to find the original in בְּנֵי רִגְזָה. Lagrange recognized “that רגש is not found in the sense of ‘thunder’ in Hebrew or Aramaic texts, but he pointed out that *radjas* (*sic*) has this meaning in Arabic, and suggests that it may have been current in popular usage.”⁶ Taylor noted that Torrey (1933: 298) stated also that “thunderstorm” would perhaps be a more accurate rendering of *r^egesh* and *rugsha*.

Rook (1981: 94), however, dismissed the proposals of the commentators who derived Mark’s βοανηργές from an original בְּנֵי רִגְזָה “excitement” or בְּנֵי רִגְשָׁה “commotion.” He concluded, “Taylor also suggests that the Arabic cognate *radjas* (*sic*) means ‘thunder,’ but a relationship between the word used by Mark and an Arabic loan word is suspect.” He proposed reading the γ of βοανηργές as the transliteration of a Hebrew ע. Thus, Mark’s βοανηργές came from a Hebrew

text having בני רעש, meaning “Sons of (the) quaking (heavens),” which, he asserted, creates of parallel to Mark’s interpretation of βοανηργές as “the Sons of Thunder.” Rook, however, offered no suggestion of how or why the Hebrew בני (= *bēnê* or *b^enê*) was transliterated as βοανη (= *boanē*).

In support of recognizing the -ργές of βοανηργές as being a Semitic term for “thunder,” the following evidence comes into focus.

- Aramaic ܠܗܫܝܚܐ “movement, noise” and ܠܗܫܝܚܐ “noises” (Jastrow 1903: 836, 1451; KBS 1189);
- Syriac ܪܓܫܐ (*rgš*) “uproar” (Payne Smith 1903: 529), which appears as ܪܓܫܐ (*r^egešy*) in Mark 3:17.
- and the Arabic cognates رجاى (*rajasa*) “it thundered” and رجاى / رجاى (*râjis / rajjâs*) “thunder, or a vehement sound” (Lane 1867: 1037; Wehr 1979: 378; Hava 1915: 242). Castell (1669: 3519) defined it as *tonuit, concussum fuit cum valido fragore, vehementiore sono.*⁷

However, Hebrew רגש, like its Arabic cognate(s), may well have meant more than “noise” or “thunder” or “to make a concussion with a powerful noise” (as defined by Castell). The consonantal Arabic رجاى meant not only “it thundered,” it was also the spelling for

- رجاى (*rajusa*) “it was unclean, dirty or filthy,”
- رجاى (*rajasa*) “he did a bad, an evil, an abominable, or a foul action,”
- رجاى (*rijs*) “uncleanness, dirt, or filth . . . anything that is disliked, or hated, for its uncleanness, dirtiness, or filthiness.”

This ambiguity with رجس (*rjs*) was probably true also with the Hebrew רגש. If so, Hebrew בני רגש could have meant not only “sons of thunder” but also “sons of filth.” For this reason Mark 3:17 does *not* read βενηργές, (= בני רגש), which would have been ambiguous as to whether James and John were surnamed “Sons of Thunder” or “Sons of Filth.” Mark rightly recorded their surname as βοανηργές, which rightly transliterates בועני רגש “the shouters of thunder.” But, instead of *translating* it, Mark *paraphrased* it as Υἱοὶ Βροντῆς, “Sons of Thunder.” Were בני used in the construct with רגש in a Hebrew consonantal text there would be ambiguity about the meaning of רגש; but when the construct בועני (= βοανη) “the shouters of” appears with the unvocalized רגש, the רגש must certainly mean “thunder” rather than “filth.” The verbs בוע and its by-forms בעי and בען, used for exuberant rejoicing, would not be the verbs of choice were the shouting of obscenities and verbal filth the subject of discussion. (By analogy, if English spelling were like Hebrew spelling, then *BS* could mean “*bass*” when used with along *sonorous*, or the *BS* could mean “*base*” when used along with *onerous*.)

Mark 9:48/49

Greek Text

πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται.

MSS **κ** B L W Δ, etc.

+ καὶ πᾶσα θυσία ἀλλὶ ἀλισθήσεται

MSS A C Θ L W, etc.

+ πᾶσα γὰρ θυσία ἀλλὶ ἀλισθήσεται

MSS D a b c d, etc.

Vulgate 9:48

*omnis enim igne sallietur
et omnis victima sallietur*

Douay-Rheims

For every one shall be salted with fire:
and every victim shall be salted with salt.

KJV

For every one will be salted with fire.
+ and every sacrifice with salt shall be salted.

Taylor (1952: 413) provides a helpful survey of the textual variants and contextual problems in these verses; and Gundry (1993: 526–528) presents a concise review of the many different interpretations proposed over the years for these verses (without proffering an interpretation of his own.) A common assumption of Taylor and Gundry—and most other commentators before and after them—needs to be challenged in order to understand properly the unity of Mark 9:42–50. That assumption is that the γέενναν, “Gehenna,” found in Mark 9:43, 45, and 47 refers to *Hell*,⁸ rather than to the literal *earthly* גֵּי הַנֶּחֱם “the Valley of Hinnom,” which was accessible through Jerusalem’s Dung Gate (שַׁעַר הַאֲשָׁפֶת) and became the municipal dump for corpses, carcasses, excrement, and garbage. There the maggots thrived on the rotting entrails and the partially cremated remains of those who were not wealthy enough or honorable enough to be buried. The spontaneous combustion of the methane gas generated by the offal, garbage, and dung produced endless fires and hot spots ready to reignite.⁹

Criminals executed by stoning for breaking the Law (such as “anyone who causes one of these little ones to stumble” [Mark 9:42]) were more likely to be cremated in the Valley of Hinnom than to be buried in the tombs of their fathers. In

Israelite and Jewish culture cremation was shunned because the body of the deceased would become dismembered.¹⁰ *Therefore*, it would be better to have a watery burial whereby one's body would at least for a while remain intact. Thus, Jesus' fair warning in Mark 9:42, "It would be better for [the offender] if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea"—rather than being cast onto the municipal dump beyond of the Dung Gate in the Hinnom Valley. Many would have agreed with Jesus that a watery burial was preferable to all the maggots, methane, and mutilation awaiting the corpse at Jerusalem's "Hinnom Mortuary."

Taylor's statement, "The fire of [verse 9:] 49 has nothing to do with that of [verse 9:] 48," is quite misleading, even though it is quite understandable in light of the ambiguity of Hebrew homographs and the limitations of Hebrew lexicography. What follows is a new interpretation Mark 9:49 based upon a retroversion of the Greek $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho \pi\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota} \acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\sigma\theta\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ into Hebrew as **כִּי הַכֹּל יִמְלַח בְּבַעַר**, which can mean not only "for everyone [who ever lived] will be salted with fire" but it can also mean "for everyone [deposited at the dump] will be dragged through the muck." This proposal is similar to Parker's suggestion (1983: 71–72) that

in the first clause, the translator has perhaps confused Hebrew *malach*, 'to vanish,' with *melach*, 'to salt.' The original verses of 48–49a would then have read, '. . . where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched, for everyone shall *vanish* in fire.'"

Homographs and Cognates of מ-ל-ח

The first Hebrew word requiring comment is **מְלַח**, which must lie behind the Greek $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}$ "salt" and the $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\sigma\theta\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha$ "shall be salted." As cited in the standard lexicons of Biblical

Hebrew (like BDB 571), מֶלַח had three meanings, namely

(1) מֶלַח “salt,” which is the cognate of Arabic ملح (*milḥ*), Syriac ܡܠܚܐ (*melḥā*), Aramaic ܡܠܚܐ. Its derivatives were [a] the verb מָלַח “to salt, to season,” [b] the noun מְלַחָה “saltiness” or “the barren salt plain which was the habitat of the wild ass,” and [c] the noun מְלֹחַ “a mallow plant which grows in a salt-marsh.”

(2) מֶלַח “mariner,” which is the cognate of the Akkadian *malāhu*, Arabic ملاح (*mallāḥ*), and Syriac ܡܠܚܐ (*malāḥā*), all meaning “sailor.”

(3) מֶלַח “to tear away, to dissipate, to vanish” the cognate of Arabic مَلَحَ (*malāḥa*) “he pulled, or drew a thing, he drew it forth quickly, vehemently.” This מֶלַח appears only in Isa 51:6, וְהָאֲרָץ וְהַשָּׁמַיִם כֶּעָשָׁן נִמְלָחוּ וְהַבְּיָרֵד תִּבְלֶה “for the heavens will *vanish* like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment.”¹¹

It is this third definition which appears in my translation of Mark 9:49 as “for everyone [deposited at the dump] *will be dragged* through the muck.”

However, מֶלַח probably had other meanings in Biblical Hebrew—meanings which were lost in later Rabbinic Hebrew and, consequently, are not found in standard Hebrew lexicons. But those meanings may well survive in Arabic cognates. Lane (1885: 2731–2734) listed the following definitions for ملح (*mlḥ* = מֶלַח) and مَلَحَ (*mlḥ*, which also = מֶלַח).

- (4) ملح (*malaha*) “he suckled” and *milh* “milk” and “the act of sucking” (an Indo-European loanword);
- (5) ملح (*malaha*) “he become fat”;
- (6) ملح (*malaha / mallaha*) “he became goodly, beautiful, or pretty / he produced something goodly, beautiful or pretty,” and مליح (*malih*) “goodly, beautiful, pretty”;
- (7) ملح (*milh*) “knowledge, science, learning” or “men of science, learned men”;
- (8) ملح (*milh*) and ملحَة (*milhat*) “a sacred or inviolable bond, or the like, or any compact, bond, or obligation, which one is under obligation to respect, or honor, or the cancelling or breaking of which renders one obnoxious to blame.” Lane included this explanation: “[This meaning is derived from ملح (*milh*) as signifying ‘salt;’ the eating of which with another imposes upon the two parties a sacred mutual obligation.]”
- (9) مליح (*malih*) “tasteless, insipid, applied to flesh-meat . . . that has no taste.”

Definitions 4–6 have no Hebrew cognates. However, definition (7) serves as a commentary on the ἄλατι in Col 4:6, ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι, ἄλατι ἡρτυμένος, “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with *salt*, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one.” The verb ἄρτύω means “arrange, prepare, make ready, of things requiring *skill or cunning*,” the culinary sense of “seasoning” is not required (Lidell and Scott 1966: 250). If the word “season” is retained in translation the idea expressed equals “*season with reason* so that . . .” Otherwise the idea could be expressed by

“*prepare with erudition* so that . . . ,” an idea similar to that found in 2 Tim 2:5, “study to show thyself approved”¹²

Definitions (1) and (8) serve as a commentary on Mark 9:50^b, ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἄλα καὶ εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις, “have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.”¹³

A similar idea which relates salt and honor appears in Ezra 4:14, “Now because we eat the salt of the palace (מֶלֶח מְלַחֲנָא הַיְכֵלָא) it is not fitting for us to witness the king’s dishonor”; and in 2 Chron 13:5, “Ought you not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel for ever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt (בְּרִית מֶלַח)?”

Parker (1983: 71), in his discussion of Mark 9:50 asserted that the verse “is hardly intelligible as it stands,” and asked: “Did the Aramaic first give the Hebrew *shalom*, then translate this into Aramaic *sh’lam* ? And did our author or a previous translator take this to be Latin *salem* [‘salt’]?” Parker seems to be unaware that Harris (1937: 185) appealed to a Latinism in his interpretation of this verse, noting that in idiomatic Latin ‘salt’ equals the accusative *salem* (not the nominative *sal*), which led him to conclude that “the writer, whoever he was, of this verse contrasted [Latin *salem*] *salt* and [Hebrew *shalom*] *peace* and made them correlative with one another.”

Mann (1986: 384–385), commenting on Mark 9:50, cited Harris’ interpretation and concluded that it was “still worthy of consideration.” But, in my opinion, the Semiticism /Arabism cited in definition (8), above, provides a far more reasonable interpretation of why ἄλα καὶ εἰρηνεύετε “salt and peace” were so formally linked, making a “covenant of salt” (בְּרִית מֶלַח) automatically into a “covenant of peace” (בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם).

Definitions (1) and (9) serve as a commentary on Mark 9:50^a, εἰ δὲ τὸ ἄλας ἀναλον γένηται ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ

ἀρτύσετε, “but if the salt has become insipid, how will you season it.” The Hebrew *Vorlage* could have read וְאִם יִמְלַח וְאִתּוֹ הַמֶּלַח בְּמַה תִּמְלַחוּ אֹתוֹ, wherein the noun מֶלַח “salt” is definition (1); the verb יִמְלַח “were to become insipid” is definition (9); and the verb תִּמְלַחוּ “you will season” is definition (1 [a]). The saying involved more than simple repetition of one lexeme. A verb and noun from one lexeme (*mlḥ*) and another verb from a second lexeme (*mlḥ*) provided paronomasia enhanced by assonance. But the lexemes *mlḥ* and *mlḥ* became homographs in Hebrew which created confusion.

ב-ע-ר Homographs and Cognates of

The second Hebrew word requiring comment in support of my reconstruction of the Hebrew text behind Mark 9:49 as כִּי הַכֹּל יִמְלַח בְּבֵעַר, “for everyone will be dragged through the muck” is בֵּעַר, stem III, meaning “dung, muck.” This בֵּעַר is the cognate of Arabic بَعَرَ (*ba^cara*) “he voided dung”; بَعْر (*ba^cr*) “dung”; and مَبْعَر (*mab^car*) “rectum, intestines, gut” (Lane 1863: 226–227; KBS 1: 146.). In my opinion, this rare word appeared in the Hebrew source used by Mark, and it was read by Mark as the more common homograph בֵּעַר “to burn, to ignite” and the name בְּעוֹר “Torch / Burning” and the noun בְּעָרָה “torch, fire” (BDB 128–129; Jastrow (1903) 183; KBS 1: 145–146). Other Semitic homographs could easily be confused with בֵּעַר, stem I “to burn” or stem III “dung”—like בֵּעַר stem II “cattle” and its Arabic cognate بَعِير (*ba^cir*) “ass, camel” and Ugaritic *b^cr* “to pillage” (*UT* 375: #495)], but none of them fit the context of Mark 9:49. (Hatch and Redpath [1897: 1242], listed eight different Hebrew words which were translated by πῦρ, including אֵשׁ,

נֹר, אֵשׁ and בְּעֶרְהָ.) The homographs בֶּעַר “fire” and בֶּעַר “dung,” along with the homographs מֶלַח “salt” and מָלַח “to drag,” provide the clues for reconstructing and reinterpreting the enigmatic saying “all will be salted with fire.”

CONCLUSIONS

The rush by commentators to interpret εἰς τὴν γέενναν “into the valley of Hinnom” of Mark 9:43, 45, 47 as a metaphor for *Hell* has been counterproductive. Certainly in Mark 9, τὴν γέενναν meant literally “the valley of [the sons of] Hinnom,” i.e., the place just beyond Jerusalem’s Dung Gate where more than just dung was deposited. In a culture where cremation and dismemberment were anathema the watery burial mentioned in Mark 9:42 may have been preferable to having one’s corpse dragged through the dung and the decay at a dump. Jesus gave a fair warning which had overtones of Deut 13:1–10, which spelled out the penalty for any Israelite who caused fellow Israelites to stumble from their love and allegiance to their God. They were to be stoned!¹⁴ In Mark 9:42–49, Jesus threatened the same fate for anyone who “causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble out of faith in me (ὁς ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ). Therefore, instead of being stoned and then dragged through filth, a clean watery drowning could be seen as a better option for an offender.¹⁵

But the *best* option was to enter the Kingdom of God as a righteous soul, even if dismembered. Jesus may have had in mind the faithful mother and her seven tortured and dismembered sons who defied Antiochus’ command to violate the Torah by eating swine’s flesh. One son, speaking out of a faith shared with his siblings and his mother,¹⁶ said to Antiochus “You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present

life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for His laws” (2 Macc 7:9).¹⁷ Jesus envisioned such faith from his little ones.

Mark’s Greek text makes it possible to add at least three lost lexemes to the Hebrew lexicons, namely (1) the בָּעַן “to shout, to rejoice” which survives in the Βοωνη in the surname Βοωνηργές of Mark 3:17; (2) the רָגַשׁ “thunder” which survives in the -ργές ending of Βοωνηργές; and (3) the בַּעַר “dung,” hidden behind the πῦρ “fire” in Mark 9:49. The בער/בערה which must have been in Mark’s source should have been translated either as κοπρία “dung heap, garbage pile” or βόλβιτον “dung, filth,” instead πῦρ “fire.”

The enigmas in Mark 9:49–50 become understandable once it is recognized that the Greek ἀλισθήσεται “shall be salted” and ἀλλ “salt” translated a Hebrew text having מִלַּח. That original מִלַּח in Mark’s Hebrew source—even though it was the מִלַּח which meant “to drag, to pull”—attracted to itself a number of other מִלַּח sayings which contained the מִלַּח meaning “salt.”¹⁸ In the oral tradition the precision in vocalization precluded ambiguities about what was being said; but the clarity of speech was lost when the sayings became scripted into consonantal texts which inadvertently created ambiguities due to homographs. Once מִלַּח “to drag” was misread as מִלַּח “to season,” secondary misreadings were inevitable, such as reading the rare בער “dung” as the more common בער “torch, fire”—which produced the problematic “for everyone will be salted with fire.” Mark’s Hebrew *Vorlage* probably read כִּי הַכֹּל יִמְלַח בְּבַעַר, meaning “for every [offender] will be *dragged* through the *muck*,” proving Jesus’ point that “it would be better for him [the offender] if a great

the sea” than to end up at the local dump. The unseen scavengers in the sea were regarded more favorably than the visible worms and the smelly smoldering offal just beyond Jerusalem’s Dung Gate.

NOTES

1. The quadri-literal stem رَدَجِس (*radjis*), allegedly meaning “thunder,” was also cited by Rook (1981: 94), who cited Taylor (1954: 232), who cited Lagrange (1929: 65). Mann (1986: 249), on the other hand, cited Lagrange directly. But I have been unable to find the quadri-literal stem رَدَجِس (*radjis*) in the lexicons of Castell (1669: 3522–23), Lane (1867: 1065), Hava (1915: 247), Dozy (1927: 521), or Wehr (1972: 387) [with the page numbers cited here being where the word should appear]. I have not seen the commentary by Lagrange in order to check out his source, but I suspect that a typographical error has occurred along the way wherein the letter *d* was inadvertently added to the transliteration of the tri-literal stem رَجِس (*rajis*) “thunder,” and the erroneous quadri-literal رَدَجِس (*radjis*) took on a life of its own.

2. Parker’s question (in 1983) about βοανηργές meaning “the quaking of the heavens” may have been inspired by Rook’s proposal (in 1981) that βοανηργές comes from an original בני רעש, meaning “Sons of (the) quaking (heavens),” which is discussed below.

3. See GKC 85^u and 86^s for a discussion of the affixed ך. The place name בְּעֹן (Beon) appears in Num 32:3 and in Jubilees 29:10; and the name Βαιάν (Baeon) appears in 1 Macc 5:4. Because בְּעֹן of Num 32:3 appears in Num 32:38 as בְּעַל מְעֹן, it is commonly assumed that the name בְּעֹן is an abbreviation of בְּעַל מְעֹן (Moabite Stone, line 9), or בֵּית בְּעַל מְעֹן (Josh 13:17 and the

Moabite Stone, line 30), or **בֵּית מְעוֹן** (Jer 48:23). However, it seems best to recognize the stem **בָּעַן** as a by-form of the root **בוע**, rather than a rare abbreviation for three different designators (see KBS 1: 145). If the place name **בָּעַן** is related to the verb **בוע** “to shout,” it would be analogous to the place name **הַמְוֹנָה** (in Ezek 39:16) which is derived from the stem **הָמָה** “to roar, to be boistrous.”

4. For the different ways in which the Hebrew **ע** was transliterated in Greek, see the *Supplement* in Hatch and Redpath (1897: 1–162), *passim*. It appeared as the smooth breathing mark ’, or as a γ, or it was simply ignored.

5. An analogy for the verb **בוע** having the by-form **בוֹעַן** with an affixed **ן** is the verb **בוש** “to be ashamed” having the by-forms **בִּשְׁנָה**, **בוּשָׁה**, and **בִּשְׁתָּה** — all meaning “shame.”

6. See above, note 1.

7. France (2002: 161) parenthetically noted “(*regesh* means ‘a crowd’ or ‘commotion’, and a related Arabic word means ‘thunder’; . . . ” W. L. Lane (1974: 135, fn 60) noted that “**רגש** does not mean ‘thunder’ in known Hebrew or Aramaic texts. A related word in Arabic, however, has this meaning and it is possible that the expression existed in the popular idiom of Jesus day.”

8. Lightfoot (1859: I: 85–86) in his commentary (first published in Latin between 1658 and 1674) noted, “The mention of it [the Valley of Hinnom] in the New [Testament] is only mystical and metaphorical, and is transferred to denote the place of the damned. . . . It was the common sink of the whole city; wither all filth, and all kind of nastiness, met.” Lightfoot (II: 425) had no comment for 9:42, but stated concerning 9:49, “for everyone of them [‘whose worm dieth not’] shall be seasoned with fire itself, so as to become

unconsumable, and shall endure forever to be tormented, as salt preserves from corruption.” Thus, the problem of how a millstone and a burial at sea can save a sinner from the eternal fires of *Hell* and its everlasting fire-resistant worms was not addressed.

9. The phrase in Mark 9:48, ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται, “where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched” matches the phrase in Isa 66: 24, כִּי תוֹלְעֵתָם לֹא תִכְבֵּה לֹא תָמוּת וְאִשָּׁם לֹא תִכְבֵּה, “their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched,” which became in the LXX σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτήσει καὶ τὸ πῦρ αὐτῶν οὐ σβεσθήσεται. Isa 66:24 belongs to a fragmented literary unit consisting of Isa 65:1–7, 66:17, and 66: 24. This unit had nothing to do with Gehenna or Hell, but speaks of the penalty to be inflicted upon the idolaters who worshiped in gardens and tombs. But they themselves would never be buried or entombed. The very same idea is found in Jeremiah 8:2, וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ לְדָמֶן עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה יְהִיוּ, “and they shall not be buried; they shall be as dung on the surface of the ground,” and in 9:22, וְנִפְלָה נִבְלַת הָאָדָם כְּדָמֶן עַל פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה, “the corpse of the man will fall like dung on the open field.” Jer 16:4, “They shall die grievous deaths: they shall not be lamented, neither shall they be buried; they shall be as dung upon the face of the ground,” and Jer 25:33, “They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung on the surface of the ground,” are also relevant.

10. Tim McGirk reported in *Time* magazine (October 21, 2005) that on the hilltop above the village of Gonbaz in southern Afghanistan some American soldiers burned the corpses of the two Taliban fighters. The U.S. military had asked the villagers to pick up the bodies and bury them according to Muslim ritual, but the villagers refused. The Australian journalist, Stephen Dupont, video-taped the cremation and when the tape was aired on Australian television on Wednesday, October 19, 2005, it unleashed outrage in Afghanistan and in the Muslim world. Mohammed Omar, a Kabul cleric, told newsmen, “the burning of these bodies is an offense against

Muslims everywhere. Muslims traditionally bury their dead. Bodies are burned only in Hell.” Four American soldiers involved in this battlefield cremation were officially reprimanded, though not charged with a criminal offense.

11. Jer 38:11 reads in part, וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁם בְּלוּי הַסְּחָבוֹת וּבְלוּי מְלָחִים, “and [Ebedmelek] took from there old rags and worn-out clothes.” The stem סחב “to pull, to drag about” is the cognate of Arabic سحب (*sahaba*) “to drag” (Lane 1872: 1314); and a synonym of מלח “to tear away, to fragment,” the cognate of Arabic ملخ (*malaha*) “to pull, drag, to break off” (Lane 1885: 2734a; Dozy 1927: II: 611).

12. Nauck (1953: 166–168) proposed reading the זרין וממולח “industrious and salted” at the beginning of the Talmudic Tractate *Derek Eretz Zuta* as “industrious and bright,” arguing that ממולח —meaning literally “having been salted oneself”—was a metaphor meaning “to be sagacious.” But, in light of definition (7) the Hebrew מלח was actually a homograph which was totally unrelated to the מלח meaning “salt.” Far from being a metaphor, it was an independent lexeme meaning “knowledge, science, learning.” But Nauck took the phrase ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἄλα in Mark 9:50^b to be a very literal translation of the Hebrew ממולח. The quotation of Rabbi Yehuda (Nauck 167), ולא יהא כקדרה שאין בה מלח, could have two interpretations. Nauck read it as meaning, “he should not be like a cooking pot in which is no salt.” But, in light of the fact that קדרה “cooking pot” was also used for “skull” (Jastrow 1903: 1318) and מלח could be the cognate of ملح (*milh*) “knowledge, learning” Rabbi Yehudah may have said, “he should not be like a skull in which is no knowledge,” i.e., he should not be a numbskull or nitwit.

13. The Alexandrian and Caesarean MSS lack the phrase in Mark 9:49^b *καὶ πᾶσα θυσία ἀλί ἀλισθήσεται*, “and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt,” which is clearly a reference to Lev 2:13,

וְכֹל-קֶרְבַּן מִנְחָתְךָ בַּמֶּלַח תִּמְלַח
 וְלֹא תִשָּׁבֵית מֶלַח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל מִנְחָתְךָ
 עַל כָּל-קֶרְבַּנְךָ תִּקְרִיב מֶלַח:

And every offering of your grain offering
 you shall salt with salt;
 you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God
 to be lacking from your grain offering.
 With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

14. Death to infidels for violating the first two commandments of the Decalogue was normative and routine, with most executions being so insignificant they warranted no historical notice. The stoning of the nameless woman caught in adultery (John 8:3–9) would have taken place without any historical record had it not been for the attempt of the scribes and Pharisees to have Jesus come to the woman’s defense and thereby have Jesus contradict Moses—then they could have stoned Jesus along with the adulteress. Similarly, Stephen’s being stoned as an infidel (Acts 7:54–8:3; 9:1–2) was just routine business for Saul of Tarsus who, having consented to Stephen’s death, proceeded “to lay waste to the church, and entering house after house he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison, . . . still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.” The number of and the names of Saul’s victims, aside from Stephen, were not worth any historical recognition or record. According to Acts 14:19 “Jews came there [to Lystra] from Antioch and Iconium; and having persuaded the people, they *stoned* Paul and *dragged* him out of the city, supposing that he was dead” (but Paul was actually just knocked unconscious and shortly recovered.). Theological vigilantes enforcing the Torah were accountable to no one. Their victims experienced an ignominious death; their remains being dragged away as trash to be burned. (See McDaniel 2005: 168.)

15. If *Gehenna* in Mark 9 meant *Hell* rather than the dump beyond the Dung Gate, it is difficult to understand why Jesus said that death by drowning (9:42) was the *better way* (καλόν) to get to Gehenna or to go to Hell. There is no hint that sea water would be able to quench the fires of Hell.

16. The mother, who witnessed the torturing and dismemberment of her children at their martyrdom declared to each son, “. . . the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws” (2 Macc 7:23).

17. Note also the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon 3:1–8,

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever.

The punishment of the wicked is spelled out in 3:10–13a, 18–19,

But the ungodly will be punished as their reasoning deserves, who disregarded the righteous man and rebelled against the Lord; for whoever despises wisdom and instruction is miserable. Their hope is vain, their labors are unprofitable, and their works are useless. Their wives are foolish, and their children evil; their offspring are accursed. . . . Even if they live long they will be held of no account, and finally their old age will be without honor. If they die

young, they will have no hope and no consolation in the day of decision. For the end of an unrighteous generation is grievous.

18. See notes 12 and 13.