



# A Traveler's Guide to the Afterlife

*A Bible Literacy Study Guide on the Eternal Destiny of the Individual*

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## Hell and Eternal Destruction

# Hell and Eternal Destruction



- [The Afterlife Diagram](#)
- [Hell Defined](#)
- [Significant Scriptures](#)
- [Hell in the Old Testament](#)
- [Hell in the Intertestamental Era](#)
- [The Purpose of Hell](#)
- [Gehenna](#)
- [Valley of Hinnom](#)
- [Views of Hell](#)
- [Eternal Punishment](#)
- [Hell and Gnashing of Teeth](#)
- [The Worms and Fire of Hell](#)
- [Outer Darkness](#)
- [The Lake of Fire](#)
- [The Second Death](#)
- [Questions for Discussion](#)
- [References](#)



**The Afterlife**

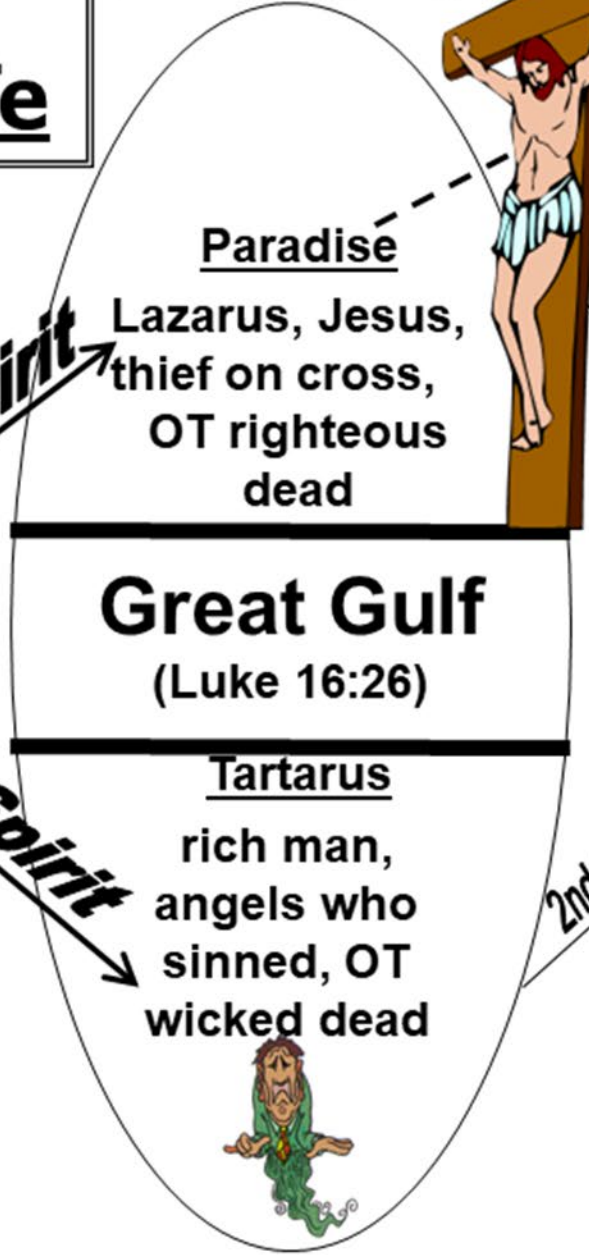
Hades (NT)

Paradise

New Heaven & New Earth  
(Rev. 21:27)



**Body Dies**  
(Eccl. 12:7)



Paradise

Lazarus, Jesus,  
thief on cross,  
OT righteous  
dead

**Great Gulf**  
(Luke 16:26)

Tartarus

rich man,  
angels who  
sinned, OT  
wicked dead



Sheol (OT)

*Eph. 4:8-9*

*1 Thess. 4:13-18*

*2nd Coming & Resurrection*

*2nd Coming & Resurrection*

**Judgment**  
2 Cor. 5:10

*Mt. 25:46*

*Mt. 25:41*

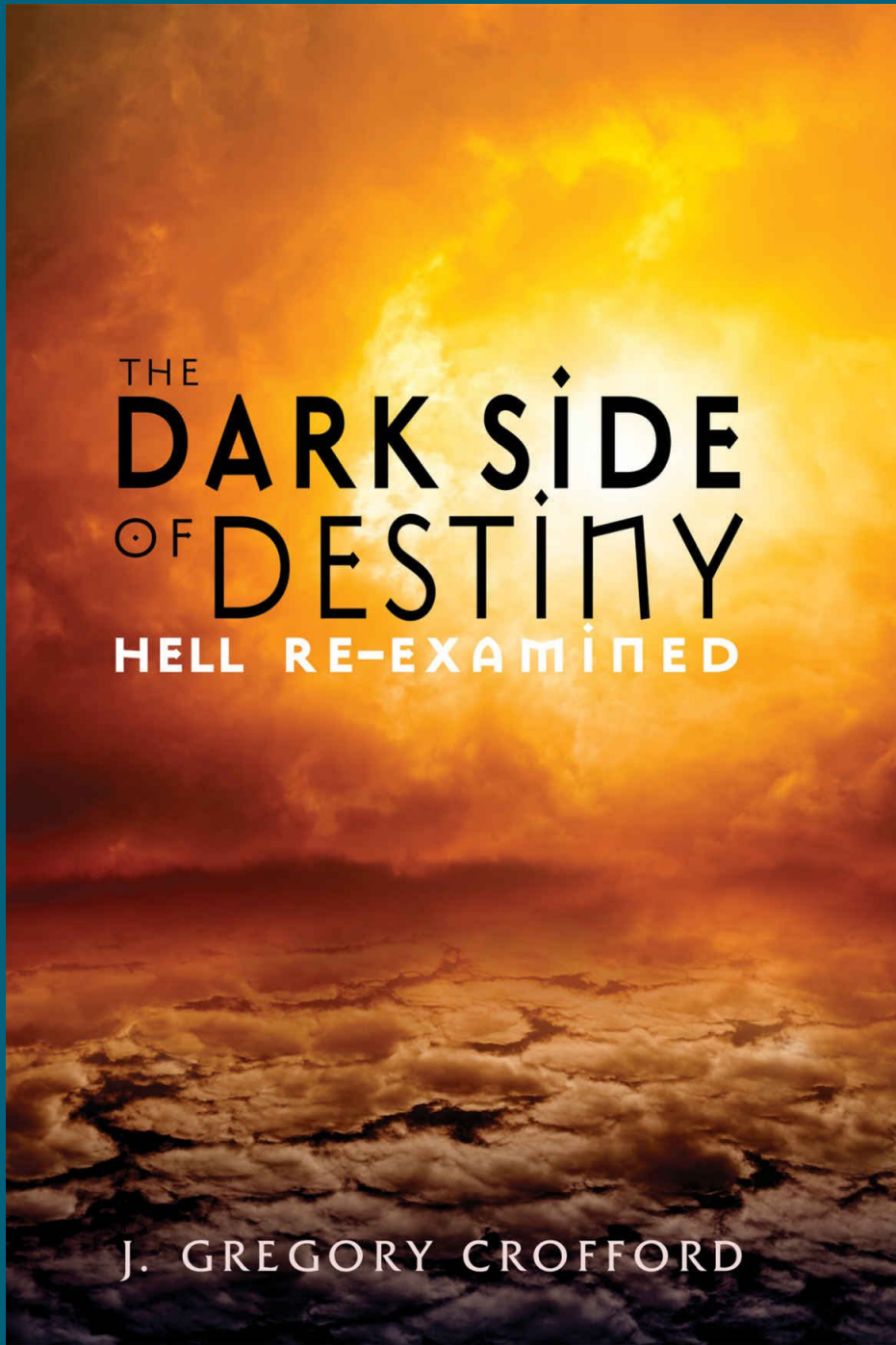
Hell  
(Rev. 21:8)

# HELL

## A FINAL WORD

THE SURPRISING TRUTHS I FOUND IN THE BIBLE

**EDWARD WILLIAM FUDGE**



# THE DARK SIDE OF DESTINY

HELL RE-EXAMINED

J. GREGORY CROFFORD



# Hell Defined



- The place of eternal punishment for the unrighteous.
- Jesus used the awful scene of the Valley of Hinnom as a symbol of hell. In effect he said, "Do you want to know what hell is like? Look at the valley of Gehenna."
- Hell may be described as God's "cosmic garbage dump." All that is unfit for heaven will be thrown into hell.
- In Mark 9:46 and 48, hell is described as a place where "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched."
- Repeatedly Jesus spoke of outer darkness and a furnace of fire, where there will be wailing, weeping, and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12; 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28).
- Obviously this picture is drawn from the Valley of Hinnom.

# Hell Defined



- The Book of Revelation describes hell as "a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev 19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8).
- Into hell will be thrown the beast and the false prophet (Rev 19:20).
- At the end of the age the devil himself will be thrown into it, along with death and *hades* and all whose names are not in the Book of Life. "And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev 20:10 b).
- Because of the symbolic nature of the language, some people question whether hell consists of actual fire. Such reasoning should bring no comfort to the lost. The reality is greater than the symbol.
- The Bible exhausts human language in describing heaven and hell.
- The former is more glorious, and the latter more terrible, than language can express.

# Significant Scriptures



- Malachi 4:1—"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when *all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze*, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.
- Matthew 10:28—And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can *destroy both soul and body in hell*.
- Matthew 22:13—Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and *cast him into the outer darkness*. In that place there will be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*.'



# Significant Scriptures

- Mark 9:47-49—47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48 'where *their worm does not die* and the *fire is not quenched*.'
- Revelation 20:14-15—14 Then Death and Hades were *thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.* 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was *thrown into the lake of fire.*
- Revelation 21:8—But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the *lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.*"



# Hell in the Old Testament



- In the Old Testament *Sheol* denotes the abode of the dead; conscious souls face a shadowy existence in this "land of oblivion" (Job 10:21; Ps 88:12; Eccl 9:10; Isa 14:10).
- Since death is not a natural occurrence but issues from the fall, the Old Testament confidently awaits God's demonstration of his lordship over *Sheol* by raising the righteous to life (Gen 2-3; Ps 16:10; 49:15; Isa 25:8; Hos 13:14).
- While God's kingship also has implications for the wicked, here the Old Testament is more reserved.
- The Old Testament infrequently suggests a bodily resurrection for the wicked (Dan 12:2), a final judgment and retribution for evil deeds (Ps 21:10; 140:10; Mal 4:1-2).
- Nevertheless, the contemptible and horrible destiny of the wicked, irretrievably isolated from the righteous, is clear (Ps 9:17; 34:15-16).

# Hell in the Intertestamental Era



- The intertestamental literature constructed divergent scenarios for the wicked dead, including annihilation (4 Ezra 7:61; 2 Apoc. Bar. 82:3 ff.; 1 Enoch 48:9; 99:12; 1 QS iv. 11-14) and endless torment (Jub. 36:11; 1 Enoch 27:1-3; 103:8; T. Gad. 7:5).
- *Sheol* frequently became an interim location for the dead, distinguished from the place of final punishment (1 Enoch 18:9-16; 51:1).
- This final punishment was usually located in a valley south of Jerusalem, known in Hebrew as *Ge Hinnom* or the Valley of Hinnom (2 Apoc. Bar. 59:10; 4 Ezra 7:36), and in Greek as *gehenna* (2 Esdr. 2:29).

# Hell in the Intertestamental Era



- While some intertestamental writings equate hell with the "lake of fire" in this "accursed valley" of Hinnom (1 Enoch 90:26, 27; 54:1, 2), others use it to denote a place in the underworld (Sib. Or. 4:1184-86).
- In addition, the respective scenarios for the wicked, whether annihilation or eternal torment, shaped images of God's judgment.
- For instance, at times fire consumes the wicked (1 Enoch 99:12); in other texts fire and worms torment their victim to a useless existence (Judith 16:17).

# The Purpose of Hell

## Sinners Will Occupy Hell



- While God created us for a loving relation with himself, at the fall humankind rebelled.
- God's judgment falls on all sinners, unless they have faith in Jesus.
- After the provisional state of Hades and the final judgment, God's wrath culminates in hell.
- According to the New Testament, the objects of God's wrath range from the pious hypocrites (Matt 23:33) and those failing to help the poor (Matt 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31) to the vile and murderers (Rev 21:8).

# The Purpose of Hell

## Sinners Will Occupy Hell



- Some argue that only an explicit repudiation of Jesus attracts God's eternal wrath, referencing Luke 12:8-9. However, Jesus says "the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). In other words, he came offering grace to a world that was "condemned already" (John 3:17-18).
- Since hell is not a natural fixture of creation but results from the fall and is destiny of the wicked, the New Testament occasionally personifies hell as the demonic forces behind sin.
- The sinful tongue is itself aroused and "set on fire by hell" (James 3:6).
- Similarly, Jesus labels the Pharisees "sons of hell," identifying the root of their hypocrisy (Matt 23:15).

# The Purpose of Hell

Hell exists for the requital and retribution of evil deeds



- Hell is the place of God's final judgment.
- Here God, our King and Supreme Judge, finally rectifies wrongs through his retributive wrath.
- Here the damned will be paid back for the harm they have done (Matt 16:27; Luke 12:47-48; 2 Peter 2:13; Jude 15; Rev 14:9-11).
- Wrath is not the natural consequence of evil choices in a moral universe or the sinner's misconstrual of God's love. Rather, as Paul's use of *orgee* shows, wrath is an emotion or feeling in the Godhead, and thus God's personal action (Rom 1:18-32).
- By extrinsically imposing penal conditions on the sinner, God rectifies wrongs and reestablishes his righteous rule (Matt 25:31-46; Rom 12:19; 1 Cor 15:24-25; 2 Cor 5:10).

# The Purpose of Hell

Hell is a final place of bondage and isolation from the righteous



- After the resurrection and the final judgment, the wicked and even Hades are thrown into hell.
- The New Testament describes hell as a place: a furnace (Matt 13:42,50), a lake of fire (Rev 19:20; 20:14-15; 21:8), and a prison (Rev 20:7).
- The wicked are imprisoned here so they cannot harm God's people (Matt 5:25-26; 13:42,50; 18:34; Jude 6; Rev 20:14-15).
- While the parable of Lazarus and the rich man occurs in Hades, the intermediate state, and not *Gehenna*, it does foreshadow the latter.

# The Purpose of Hell

Hell is a final place of bondage and isolation from the righteous



- Jesus says an unbridgeable spatial chasm separates these two so no one can "cross over from there" (Luke 16:26).
- John's vision in Rev 21 of the new city on a high mountain confirms this separation between the blessed and the damned after the day of judgment.
- Scripture provides no warrant for those speculative images of the righteous rejoicing in the torture of the damned.
- The prophecy in Isa 66:24 also seems to refer to this eschatological event as Jesus uses the image of the worm that does not die and the fire is not quenched.



# The Purpose of Hell

Sinners suffer penalties in hell



- Jesus repeatedly accentuates hell's dreadfulness and horror: "if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out... . It is better ... to enter life with one eye than to ... be thrown into the fire of hell" (Matt 18:9).
- At the final judgment, God will declare, "I don't know you... . Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire" (Matt 25:12,41).
- The wicked in hell are excluded from God's loving presence and the "life" for which humans were originally created (John 5:29).
- The damned are "thrown outside, into the darkness" (Matt 8:12; 22:13).

# The Purpose of Hell

Sinners suffer penalties in hell



- Consequently this "second death" (Rev 21:8) is a useless and ruined existence (Matt 25:30; Luke 9:25; John 3:16-18; 2 Thess 1:9; 2 Peter 2:12; Jude 12; Rev 21:8).
- Sin has thoroughly effaced every virtue.
- The reprobate have become obstinate in their rebellion against God, like "unreasoning animals" (Jude 10,13; 2 Peter 2:12-22). Consequently, the doors of hell can be locked from the inside, as C. S. Lewis observes.
- Scripture suggests that there are degrees of punishment in hell.
- The one "who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows."
- More severe is the punishment due to the disobedient who were "entrusted with much" (Mark 12:40; Luke 12:48).

# Gehenna



- The Greek transliteration of the Aramaic *gehinnaam*, which itself goes back to the Hebrew *gey hinnom*: "Valley of Hinnom" (also "valley of the son (sons) of Hinnom"; cf. 2 Chron 28:3; 2 Kings 23:10, etc.).
- Because of such associations, by the first century B.C. *gehenna* came to be used metaphorically for the hell of fire, the place of everlasting punishment for the wicked.
- Talmudic literature abounds in references to *gehenna* with fascinating opinions -- e.g., that the depth of *gehenna* is immeasurable or that the sinner is relegated to a depth commensurate with his wickedness.
- References to a fiery hell are found in both Philo and Josephus and also in the Qumran literature.

# Gehenna



- Of the twelve occurrences of *gehenna* in the NT eleven are in the Synoptic Gospels and one in James.
- All the Synoptic references are to words of Jesus and have the same meaning as above.
- *Gehenna* shares some common ground with Hades/Sheol; however, the latter is more consistently the interim abode of both good and bad souls after death prior to judgment, while *gehenna* is the final and everlasting place of punishment for the wicked following the last judgment.
- The numerous references to *gehenna* tell forcefully against a doctrine of universalism.
- Attempts to soften or ignore this material concerning the lot of those who refuse to repent of sin constitute distortion of the biblical witness.



# Valley of Hinnom

- [HEN nahm] -- a deep, narrow ravine south of Jerusalem.
- At the high places of Baal in the Valley of Hinnom, parents sacrificed their children as a burnt offering to the pagan god Molech (2 Kings 23:10).
- Ahaz and Manasseh, kings of Judah, were both guilty of this awful wickedness (2 Chron 28:3; 33:6).
- But good King Josiah destroyed the pagan altars to remove this temptation from the Hebrew people.
- The prophet Jeremiah foretold that God would judge this awful abomination of human sacrifice and would cause such a destruction that "the Valley of the Son of Hinnom" would become known as "the Valley of Slaughter" (Jer 7:31-32; 19:2,6; 32:35).
- The place was also called "Tophet."

# Valley of Hinnom



- Apparently, the Valley of Hinnom was used as the garbage dump for the city of Jerusalem.
- Refuse, waste materials, and dead animals were burned here.
- Fires continually smoldered, and smoke from the burning debris rose day and night.
- Hinnom thus became a graphic symbol of woe and judgment and of the place of eternal punishment called hell.
- Translated into Greek, the Hebrew "Valley of Hinnom" becomes *gehenna*, which is used 12 times in the New Testament (11 times by Jesus and once by James), each time translated in the NKJV as "hell" (Matt 5:22; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6).

# Views of Hell

## Traditional View



- The tradition of everlasting torment, as expressed by its most able advocates, depends on five undergirding assumptions:
  1. The OT is silent about the wicked's final end;
  2. The doctrine of unending conscious torment was the uniform Jewish view of Jesus' day;
  3. Jesus' references to Gehenna all presuppose this supposed "uniform" view;
  4. NT language on this subject demands unending conscious torment; and
  5. Historic Christian orthodoxy requires unending conscious torment.

# Views of Hell

## Conditional View



1. The OT utilizes some 50 Hebrew verbs and 75 figures of speech to describe the ultimate end of the wicked -- and every one sounds exactly like total extinction.
2. The notion of unending conscious torment arose for the first time in anything resembling biblical literature in the non-canonical book of Judith—in a clear "twisting" of words taken straight from Isaiah.
3. By Jesus' day, there were at least three "Jewish" ideas about the end of the wicked: (a) annihilation at the grave; (b) resurrection for everlasting torture; and (c) resurrection for judgment followed by total and irreversible extinction in hell.
4. When our Lord taught on this subject, he generally used Old Testament language which most naturally describes complete disintegration of the entire person in the "fire" of the Age to Come.



# Views of Hell

## Conditional View



5. New Testament writers choose the word "hell" (gehenna) to describe the fate of the lost only in the Gospels, only speaking to Jews, and only when addressing people familiar with the geography of Jerusalem.
6. Most often, New Testament authors use the words die, death, destroy, destruction, perish and corruption to describe the end of the wicked -- in contexts which suggest the normal, straightforward meaning of these ordinary terms.
7. All New Testament expressions thought to teach eternal torment come from earlier biblical literature—where they regularly describe destruction that is irresistible, total, and which cannot be reversed.
8. No passage of Scripture teaches the inherent or natural immortality of the "soul," "spirit," or any other aspect of the human creature.

# Views of Hell

## Conditional View



9. Although Scripture clearly affirms a resurrection of both just and unjust, the Bible nowhere says the lost will be raised immortal, as the saved will be.
10. The notion of everlasting torment appears explicitly in Christian literature for the first time in the writings of the Apologists, who expressly base it on the Platonic assumption that the soul is "immortal" and cannot be destroyed.
11. No creedal formulation of the undivided Church requires eternal conscious torment.

# Views of Hell

## Annihilationism



- From Latin *nihil* (nothing), annihilationism expresses the position of those who hold that some, if not all, human souls will cease to exist after death.
- Warfield observes three main forms of this view:
  - Materialist: all human beings inevitably cease to exist altogether at death;
  - Conditional Immortality: while human beings are naturally mortal, God imparts to the redeemed the gift of immortality and allows the rest of humanity to sink into nothingness;
  - Annihilationism Proper: humankind, being created immortal, fulfills its destiny in salvation, while reprobates fall into nonexistence either through a direct act of God or through the corrosive effect of evil.
- The view of historic orthodoxy has always maintained both that human souls will eternally endure and that their destiny is irrevocably sealed at death.
- The same may be said of life or eternal life (John 10:28; Rom 6:22-23; Gal 6:8).

# Views of Hell

## Annihilationism



- It is freely granted that in all such passages life and immortality are represented as the privileged possession of the redeemed, but it is claimed that in these connections these terms do not represent merely continued existence, but rather connote existence in joyful fulfillment of humankind's high destiny in true fellowship with God (John 17:3).
- Cessation of existence, it is urged, is implied in various scriptural terms applied to the destiny of the wicked, such as death (Rom 6:23; James 5:20; Rev 20:14), destruction (Matt 7:13; 10:28; 1 Thess 1:9), and perishing (John 3:16).
- In the biblical record, those who spoke most about future punishment in its irrevocable finality are Jesus and the apostle John, the very ones who also represented most glowingly the supreme glory of God's love and the unshakable certainty of his ultimate triumph.

# Eternal Punishment

## Traditional View



- It is plain from the Bible that sin will be punished (Dan 12:2; Matt 10:15; John 5:28-29; Rom 5:12-21), and the duration of this punishment is sometimes expressed in the NT by the use of *aioon* or one of its derivatives (e.g., Matt 18:8; 25:41,46; 2 Thess 1:9).
- *Aioon* means "old age," and it was used of the never ending "age to come," which gave to the corresponding adjective *aioonion* the meaning "eternal," "everlasting."
- These words are used of "the King of ages" (1 Tim 1:17), of "the eternal God" (Rom 16:26), and when glory is ascribed to God "for ever" (Rom 11:36) and God is blessed "for ever" (2 Cor 11:31).
- It is important that the same adjective is used of eternal punishment as of eternal life (Matt 25:46 has both).

# Eternal Punishment

## Traditional View



- Jesus referred to "hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:47-48).
- He spoke of fearing God because he, "after he has killed, has power to cast into hell" (Luke 12:5).
- He said that there is a sin that "will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matt 12:32).
- Similarly John writes, "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him" (John 3:36).
- And against the strong body of NT teaching that there is a continuing punishment of sin we cannot put one saying which speaks plainly of an end to the punishment of the finally impenitent.

# Eternal Punishment

## Conditional View



- "Eternal" fire is fire which belongs to the Age to Come. It is eternal in the sense that its effects will be everlasting.
- Sodom and Gomorrah, which were "reduced to ashes," illustrate the punishment awaiting evildoers (2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7).
- God will "destroy both body and soul" in hell (Matt. 10:28). The wicked, once destroyed, will be gone forever.
- Jesus also speaks of "eternal punishment" (Matt. 25:46), although he does not tell us here of what that punishment consists.
- Paul explains it in more detail, however, when he says that Jesus will "punish" the lost with "everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:9).
- From this destruction there will be no restoration, recovery or return forever.

# Eternal Punishment

## Conditional View



- When the New Testament uses the adjective "eternal" to describe words involving processes or activities, the result is everlasting, not the process itself.
- "Eternal salvation" does not suggest an unending process but rather a result that lasts forever (Heb. 5:9).
- The same is true of "eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:2), "eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12) and "eternal sin" (Mk. 3:29).
- In the same way, "eternal punishment" is not "eternally punishing," and "eternal destruction" is not "eternally destroying."



# Eternal Punishment

## Conditional View



- The wages of sin is death, and the gift of God is eternal life (Rom. 6:23). This life and this death both concern the Age to Come. Each lasts as long as the other.
- The saved will be resurrected immortal and deathless to enjoy life with God forever.
- The lost will be raised for condemnation—but they are not given immortality or deathlessness. Instead they perish in the Second Death, the Lake of Fire, and are gone forever.

# Hell and Gnashing of Teeth



- Traditionally Christians have understood the phrase "gnashing (or grinding) of teeth" to refer to the unending pain which they presume the lost will endure throughout all eternity.
- The expression "grinding (gnashing) of teeth" occurs throughout the Bible, where it always describes someone who is so angry at another that he could devour that person like a wild animal.
- The most familiar example probably appears at the martyrdom of Stephen.
- The evangelist denounces his attackers as murderers of the prophets, to which they respond by "gnashing their teeth at him" (Acts 7:54).

# Hell and Gnashing of Teeth



- Ancient Job used this expression of God, whom he perceived to be infuriated at him. "His anger has torn me and hunted me down," Job says, "He has gnashed at me with His teeth" (Job 16:9).
- David selects this picturesque phrase to make a similar point. "Like godless jesters at a feast," he says of his enemies, "they gnashed at me with their teeth" (Psalm 35:16).
- Indeed "the wicked" person in general "plots against the righteous, and gnashes at him with his teeth" (Psalm 37:12).
- Jeremiah describes Jerusalem's enemies, who "have opened their mouths wide against" the holy city. "They hiss and gnash their teeth" (Lam. 2:16).

# Hell and Gnashing of Teeth



- Seven times in the Gospels -- six times in Matthew and once in Luke -- Jesus speaks of "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in connection with the final banishment of the lost from God's presence.
- Three of these scenes portray "outer darkness," in contrast to the festivity of the Kingdom (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).
- Two texts picture exclusion, without further detail (Matt. 24:51; Lk. 13:28).

# Hell and Gnashing of Teeth



- Two passages have the lost in a "furnace of fire" (Matt. 13:42, 50). The important point is that wherever they are -- they are grinding their teeth in anger, not in pain.
- Psalm 112 puts the frosting on the cake in our study of this expression. The author pictures the blessedness of the faithful for the first nine verses, concluding with the promise that "His righteousness endures forever; his horn will be exalted in honor" (Psalm 112:9). Then comes the punch-line. "The wicked will see it and be angry; he will gnash his teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked will perish" (Psalm 112:10).



# The Worms and Fire of Hell

- The phrase first comes from Isaiah 66:24, which portrays the righteous going out of the city of Jerusalem, following God's final judgment on the wicked, and viewing their dead corpses in the city "dump" -- where maggots ("the worm") and smoldering garbage fire ("the fire") race to consume them.
- It is a scene, Isaiah says, of disgust or abhorrence (v. 24).
- Note that the picture includes dead corpses, not living beings. It involves shame, not pain.
- These are the "corpses of those whom the Lord has slain."

# The Worms and Fire of Hell



- Throughout the Bible, the figure of "unquenchable" fire refers to fire which cannot be resisted, and which thus completely burns up whatever is put into it (Matt. 3:12; Ezek. 20:47-48; Amos 5:5-6).
- When Jesus borrows language from Isaiah 66:24 for his own teaching (Mk. 9:48), we must read the Scripture he quotes if we wish to understand his meaning.
- That biblical text clearly describes total destruction, not conscious torment.
- Since Jesus says nothing to change the original meaning, but rather confirms it in other places (see Matt. 10:28), we are safe to leave it just as it stands.

# Outer Darkness



- In every scripture reference in the NT, outer darkness accompanies weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).
- The messianic banquet is reserved for those who come when God invites regardless of social standing or occupation.
- In these passages Jesus describes outer darkness as a place (there—*ekei*).
- In the OT, darkness was characteristic of *Sheol*, but that is probably not in Jesus' mind here.
- More appropriate is the darkness associated with the judgment of the day of the Lord in the prophets.
- There too, "the cry" is bitter (Zeph. 1:14).
- Zephaniah's picture ends with the "fire of his jealousy," by which "the whole world will be consumed" (Zeph. 1:18).



# The Lake of Fire



- God's final retribution of punishment.
- After Armageddon the beast and false prophet will be tossed into this "lake of burning sulfur," joined by Satan at the millennium's end, and "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev 19:20; 20:10).
- After the final judgment, Hades (the personification of God's adversaries) and the wicked are cast here (Rev 20:14-15).
- Jesus calls this "fiery furnace" *gehenna* or hell (Matt 13:42; 18:8-9; 25:41).
- The Old Testament explicitly portrays God's fiery judgment at history's consummation, but not hell (Isa 66:15-16,24; Ezek 38:22).
- This concept is developed during the intertestamental period (1 Enoch 90:24-6; 103:8; 4 Macc. 12:12; 4 Ezra 7:38).

# The Lake of Fire



- Jesus extensively uses the imagery of "hell-fire" (Matt 5:22; 7:19; 13:40-42,50; 18:8-9; 25:41; Mark 9:43,48-49; Luke 16:24; John 15:6), derived from the Old Testament descriptions of God's retributive judgment, particularly Sodom's ruin (Gen 19:24; Lev 10:2; Num 16:35; Isa 34:10; Luke 17:29; Jude 7).
- This lake of fire and associated imagery convey three important ideas.
  - Thrown into this lake, the wicked are permanently separated from God's love and good creation, and thus experience the "second death" (Rev 20:14; 21:8).
  - Fire denotes God's searing holiness exacting retribution for evil deeds (Heb 10:30; Rev 14:9-11).
  - This "unquenchable fire" either portrays hell as everlasting in duration or everlasting in its finality (Mark 9:43,48; Rev 20:10).

# The Second Death



- Christian use of the phrase "second death" is based upon its occurrence in Revelation, in which it is found four times (2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8), the only biblical instances of this expression.
- It is defined as the "lake of fire" into which are placed at the very end of God's judgment all those not found in God's book of life and finally, Death and Hades themselves.
- Those who are God's faithful people are promised that the second death has no claim on them.
- The expression presupposes that the first death is physical death at the end of one's life.

# The Second Death



- The identification of second death with the lake of fire may reflect the tradition within apocalyptic language identifying final judgment with fire (e.g., Ezek 38:22; 2 Esd 7:36-38; Matt 25:41; Rev 14:10).
- Presumably the "second death" terminology was a common phrase in at least some circles of ancient Judaism.
- In Christian theology second death refers to the final condition of those outside of God's salvation.
- There is debate as to whether the term indicates eternal punishment, probably the majority view of the church's theology, or annihilation, a view held by Adventists and a growing number of evangelicals.



# Summary on Hell and Eternal Destruction

- The Bible teaches that humans are perishable creatures wholly dependent upon God for existence. *Gen. 2:7; Ps. 103:14-16; Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:16.*
- Two historical events which biblical writers use most often to illustrate God's final judgment against the wicked are the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. *Gen. 6-9; 19:24-29 2 Pet. 3:5-7; Jude 7.*
- Based on an actual event, the Bible uses the expression "eternal fire" to signify fire that destroys forever (Sodom and Gomorrah). *Jude 7; Matt. 25:41; 10:28.*
- Throughout the Bible, "gnashing of teeth" denotes extreme anger and hostility. *Job 16:9; Ps. 35:16; Lam. 2:16; Acts 7:54; Matt. 13:43; Luke 13:28.*



# Summary on Hell and Eternal Destruction

- When Scripture speaks of smoke rising "forever," it signifies a destruction that will be irreversible. *Gen. 19:27-28; Is. 34:10-15; Rev. 14:11; Mal. 4:1-3.*
- The "worm" in the expression "worm that dies not" is a maggot that feeds on something dead. *Is. 66:24; Mark 9:47-48.*
- The OT final description of the end of sinners states that they will be ashes under the soles of the feet of the righteous. *Mal. 4:1-3.*
- Throughout the Bible, the expression "unquenchable fire" always signifies fire which is irresistible and therefore consumes entirely. *Is. 1:31; Jer. 4:4; 17:27; Ez. 20:47-48; Am. 5:5-6; Matt. 3:12.*
- Jesus personally described Gehenna (hell) as a place where God is able to destroy both soul and body. *Matt. 10:28.*



# Summary on Hell and Eternal Destruction

- The phrase "eternal punishment" signifies punishment which occurs in the Age to Come with everlasting results. *Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9.*
- The context and "punch line" of the Rich Man and Lazarus talk about the urgency of responding to God while there is opportunity. *Luke 16:9-16, 31.*
- Throughout his writings, Paul says that the lost will die, perish, and be punished with eternal destruction. *Rom. 6:23; 1 Thess. 5:2-3; 2 Thess. 1:9; 1 Cor. 3:17; Phil. 1:28; 3:19.*
- The NT uses the adjective "immortal" to describe the resurrection bodies of the saved but not of the lost. *1 Cor. 15:54-57; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Jn 5:11-13.*

# Questions for Discussion



1. What is hell?
2. Why is there a hell?
3. Does eternal punishment refer to the process or the result of a punishment which is final and complete? Explain your answer.
4. What does the metaphor of “outer darkness” imply?
5. What is the meaning of the metaphor “weeping and gnashing of teeth?”



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