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“HELL”

- What It's Not -

*compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, 2001
Scripture quoted from the NKJV unless otherwise noted
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If the first death is a sleep, and the second death is annihilation, then no **place** of containment or punishment is needed for the wicked.

STOP! You need to read our study “[Where are the Dead?](#)” before you continue with this study. Your understanding of many texts will change with your understanding of the nature of death (immortal soul vs. soul sleep). Which is why I placed the study dealing with death, ahead of this study, on prophecyviewpoint.com.

If there is some part of man (a soul) that continues with consciousness, after the death of the body, then it follows that God must have a place to imprison or isolate such wicked rebellious souls. On the other hand, if each human being exists only in the memory of God *between* physical death and resurrection, then no such place is needed.

We must explain **the doctrine of ‘Hell’ as the place of punishment** to which the spirits of the unsaved are consigned. How did the word ‘Hell’ get into our New Testament, and what does it really mean?

I’m going to explain how the teaching of eternal continuing conscious torment in a place called ‘Hell’ came into Christian doctrine from Greek mythology. It slowly infiltrated Jewish teaching and was then adopted as Christian doctrine.

The Roman Church dominated Christian teaching for more than thousand years. During this time, the doctrine of eternal torment was used to milk money from rich and poor. Fear of eternal torment allowed the Roman Church a stranglehold over those lands where Christian doctrine was taught. King and commoner alike obeyed, rather than face the possibility of torment in Hell. Study of the Scriptures was forbidden to the common people. Latin Bibles were chained in cathedrals. All was done to maintain control and power.

The doctrine of eternal torment has caused millions to live in fear of God, rather than to love Him as they would love a kind protective father. It has caused mothers and fathers to grieve inconsolably, believing their sons or daughters were doomed to eternal torment. It has driven millions to reject any belief in God whatsoever. If you are one of these millions, I pray this study will bring you great relief.

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TRADITIONALISTS vs. CONDITIONALISTS

Traditionalists believe that man was created with an “immortal soul” (two words not found linked in Scripture), and because man is immortal, he must continue to live forever, either in the Kingdom of God, or in Hell. God will banish the wicked to a place away from His presence. Older teachings emphasized actual torment in flames (the punishment aspect). More recent teaching suggests the suffering is caused by separation from God (the isolation aspect). Either way, the suffering continues forever.

Conditionalists believe that man was created mortal - subject to death. The whole person is subject to death - not just the body. Eternal life is the GIFT, received through Jesus Christ, by those who believe and repent (by the power of Christ in the life). Immortality is therefore conditional. Those without this new life from God, are doomed to the “second death” - spirit death, annihilation without hope of resurrection.

The first death (the first type of death) is an unconscious “sleep,” (a suspended animation). During this “sleep,” the dead exist only in the memory of God. Because God has retained a “memory” of each individual mind, He can resurrect each person into a body (either mortal or immortal) at the time of God’s choosing, with mind and memory intact. It is His retained memory (of each rebellious mind) that God will finally destroy forever - in the “Lake of Fire.” He will “blot out” or erase, all trace of them.

SHEOL

Sheol (Strong’s #07585):

A Hebrew word meaning “the grave” or “the abode of the dead.”

Rendered: ‘grave’ - 31 times, ‘pit’ - 3 times, and ‘hell’ - 31 times.

We will consider each text where ‘Hell’ was the choice of the King James translators for the Hebrew word ‘sheol’. There are other verses where ‘sheol’ is simply translated as “grave.” Jacob went to “sheol” (*Gen 37:35, 42:38, 44:29, 31*). One assumes he did not go to “Hell,” as understood by the Greeks - a place of punishment and torment. Job longed to hide in it for a while (*Job 14:13*). David saw it as a “resting place” but wanted to be released from it one day (*Psa. 16:9-10*). The righteous, the wicked and the ignorant - all went to “sheol.” They wait there for resurrection. “Sheol” is a place of waiting.

How did ‘Sheol’ become ‘Hell’ ?

The Ancient Greeks believed in an immortal conscious self which continued to exist after the death of the body, existing either in the realm of the gods, or in Hades, the place of punishment or banishment. The one banished to Hades could work his way out by good behavior, or he could be ransomed out by another (living in the physical realm or existing in the realm of the gods). This is the origin of the Catholic doctrine of prayers for the dead in Purgatory.

After Alexander the Great conquered Persia, Egypt and Judea, the Jews became Hellenized (Greek influenced). In about 300BC the ancient Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, to help Jews living in Egypt, who had lost the ability to understand Hebrew. This translation was called the Septuagint. The translators were seventy Jewish rabbis, who had been heavily influenced by Greek teaching and philosophy. They chose the Greek word 'hades' to translate the Hebrew 'sheol'. They did this because there was not a Greek word to convey the meaning of the Hebrew word 'sheol'. And the Greek 'hades' had a vastly different meaning within Greek culture, than the Hebrew 'sheol' - which simply meant "where the dead go" or "the grave."

(Hebrew OT) 'sheol' → (Greek OT) 'Hades' → (English) 'Hell'

Did you see the concept change? From a place to which everyone went, 'sheol' was translated into the Greek as 'Hades' - the place to which only the souls of evil men were banished. From there, the Greek 'Hades' worked its way into our English translations as 'Hell' - the place of eternal torment for the damned. At least the Greeks could work their way out of Hades. (That's the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory.)

HADES

(Strong's #86) - 'hades'

- Meaning: 1) the god of the lower regions, also called Pluto,
2) Orcus, the nether world, the realm of the dead
3) later use of this word: the grave, death, hell

Usage: - hell 10, grave 1; Total 11

LET'S LOOK AT EVERY PASSAGE where 'Sheol' was translated as 'Hades' in the Septuagint (ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament), asking the question, "Does this passage clearly tell us that Hell is a *present* place, to which only the wicked are sent?"

All of the verses in this section, will be shown from the ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION, because in this version the word 'Sheol' appears in the text rather than the translation 'Hades' or 'Hell'.

Psalm 139:8 [A Psalm of David] “If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!” (ESV)

David expected that Yahweh would be with him in Sheol. Wow! How many preachers have said that ‘Hell’ is separation from God. In this verse, Sheol is simply death or the grave. And God is with us even there.

Proverbs 5:5 “Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol.” ESV

In this verse and the next two, Solomon writes about the perils of adultery with an “immoral woman.” Such action leads to death. 1. Adultery was a death penalty offense. 2. Such an action is rebellion against the LORD and His law. 3. True - especially when there were no cures for venereal disease.

Proverbs 7:27 “Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.” ESV

Proverbs 9:18 “He does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol” (ESV).

Proverbs 15:11 “Sheol and Abaddon [*death and destruction*] lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man!” (ESV)

Abaddon is one name for Satan (Rev. 9:11).

Proverbs 27:20 “Sheol and Abaddon [*death and destruction*] are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man” (ESV).

Habakkuk 2:5 “Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own, all peoples” (ESV).

Death collects “all peoples” and so does wine. No nationality, race or people group is immune from the effects of alcohol.

LET’S LOOK AT OTHER VERSES,
WHERE THE MEANING IS LESS OBVIOUS.

Remember: Your understanding of many texts will change, depending upon your beliefs concerning the nature of man - mortal or immortal. See our study “Where are the Dead?”

Deuteronomy 32:22 [God speaking to Israel through Moses] “For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains” (ESV).

The “fire” of God’s anger at rebellion and wickedness, will ultimately consume (‘devour’) this earth with every man-made thing.

Peter wrote, “the elements will melt with fervent heat” on “the day of the Lord.” “The earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). There’s your fire and brimstone. God’s “jealousy” will ultimately consume even death and the grave. Isn’t that what He says in Revelation 20:14.

Death and “Sheol” will one day be cast into the “Lake of Fire.” The first death will be cast into “the second death.” Which means the wicked dead will then no longer exist, because “Sheol” will no longer exist.

Question: If Sheol is Hell (per traditional teaching), and the Lake of Fire is Hell, how can the LORD cast Hell into Hell? That doesn’t make sense. Now you’re starting to see that Sheol and ‘Hell’ cannot be the same.

The first type of death (physical death with God retaining a memory of you) and the second death (spirit death, when the Lord will destroy His memory of you) are not the same.

Psalm 9:17 “The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God” (ESV).

The “wicked” will be resurrected and judged at the Glorious Return of Christ, only to be “returned” to Sheol, to remain there until Sheol itself is later consumed in the “Lake of Fire” (Dan. 12:2-3, Rev. 20:14). If Sheol is God’s “memory bank” of the dead, then God can destroy that ‘memory’ at the end, to be finished forever with sin and unrepentant sinners.

It makes no sense to say that souls are sent to Hell immediately at death, then resurrected to be judged at the Glorious Return, then cast into the Lake of Fire, then brought back again after 1000 years to be judged again, then finally thrown back into the Lake of Fire forever. Talk about overkill!!!

The confusion has come about because the Bible describes two judgments for two distinct and separate groups of people. The first will take place at the Glorious Return. The second after the Battle of Gog-Magog. (Revelation Chapter Twenty places that battle during the 8th millennium.)

Psalm 55:15 [David contemplates the treachery of friends.] “Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart” (ESV).

David may want those who betrayed him, to be executed. They would know they have been judged. They would know that the sentence is final. This - I believe - is what it means to “go down to Sheol alive.” They would not remain conscious once they were dead. Compare Numbers 16:30-33. The rebellious Korah, along with his entire large family were swallowed up as the earth split apart. They went down alive “into the pit.” One would assume his wives and young children did not go consciously into ‘Hell’. They all just died.

Proverbs 15:24 “The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath” (ESV).

God is presented in Scripture as “up.” One must ascend to God. One must go down into the grave. Sheol is “beneath” - in the earth. Sheol is death. After their sin, Adam and Eve were told they would finally “return to the ground” to become dust (Gen. 3:19).

Proverbs 23:14 “If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.”

The parent who withholds correction, may condemn his son to an early death or even to eternal death. This verse does not contradict our teaching that the end, for the rebellious, and the unrepentant - is death.

Note: This verse was misused to allow for the physical torture of criminals or heretics.

Isaiah 14:9 “Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations” (ESV).

This passage is a prophecy about the “King of Babylon.” He would join other “leaders of the earth,” and all the “kings of the nations.” Death is no respecter of persons. All go to Sheol. This passage uses metaphor - as when “the trees of the fields will clap their hands,” or when Abel’s “blood cried out from the ground.” Death (Sheol) greets the mighty rulers.

Ezekiel 32:21 “The mighty chiefs shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of Sheol: “They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword” (ESV).

Ezekiel 31:15-17 “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day the cedar [*Pharaoh*] went down to Sheol I caused mourning; I closed the deep over it, and restrained its rivers, and many waters were stopped. [*Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea.*] I clothed Lebanon [*ally of Egypt*] in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field fainted because of it. [*Other pagan nations feared Yahweh and Israel because they saw what happened to Egypt.*] I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit. And all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the world below. [*Those killed by Pharaoh were glad of the LORD’s justice.*] They also went down to Sheol with it [*with the Cedar*], to those who are slain by the sword; yes, those who were its arm, who lived under its shadow among the nations” (ESV). (*This is metaphor!*)

Ezekiel 32:27 “And they do not lie with the mighty, (*not honored in monument tombs*) the fallen from among the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose iniquities are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living” (ESV).

This is war, and the aftermath of a battle. All of the above verses from Ezekiel 31 and 32 are from a prophecy concerning “Pharaoh and all his multitude.” We would agree that Pharaoh, along with every other wicked leader, did die and will die. They died the first death - physical death, and they will someday die the “second death” - spirit death, in the Lake of Fire.

Amos 9:2 “If they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them; if they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down” (ESV).

The LORD is speaking to Israel - the Northern Kingdom, sunken in idolatry. You cannot escape my wrath. Even if you hide in the grave, even if your tomb is placed in a very high place - I will just resurrect you to face me for judgment.

Conclusion: Sheol is simply “the grave.”

GEHENNA

(Strong’s #1067) - geenna, called ‘Gehenna’ or ‘Gehenna of fire’
A Greek word meaning: the place of the punishment.
Translated as ‘Hell’ or ‘Hell fire’ in the King James New Testament.

A word of Hebrew origin. Originally - “The Valley of Hinnom” [Valley of the Sons of Hinnom], also called ‘Tophet’. A valley WSW of Jerusalem, where the waste of the city was cast out and burned, including dead animals, and even corpses of executed criminals. The word later came to stand for the place of punishment, or for the punishment itself.

Gehenna was the Jerusalem garbage dump. How did Gehenna the garbage dump, become 'Hell' - the place of eternal torment in the afterlife?

BACKGROUND

Matthew and Mark quote Christ, who is quoting from Isaiah 66:24 - "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." Christ's use of the phrase follows His very consistent pattern of quoting from the Old Testament, and His use of familiar objects. The "fire" in the garbage dump was kept burning, and the worms were doing their work on the rotting mix.

Isaiah 66:24 "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

1. *The fire is consuming corpses - not live people.*
2. *The fire continues its work of consuming until there is nothing more to consume. There is no suggestion of unending torment here - just fire consuming corpses.*

'Gehenna' held meaning only for Israelites. The word is not found in Greek literature, in the Septuagint or in Josephus. The Valley of (the Sons of) Hinnom was a place of pagan idolatry and human (usually child) sacrifice, especially during the reigns of kings Manasseh and Ahaz (2 Chr. 33:6, 2 Kings 16:3 & 21:6). **The place was cursed of God.**

Jeremiah 7:31-33 "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart. Therefore behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away.'" (See also Jeremiah 19:2-13.)

When the Jews were finally allowed to return from captivity in Babylon, no one wanted to build on a place that was cursed of God. **They turned the place into a garbage dump.** During the second Temple era, it was used as place for burning refuse - including the corpses of executed criminals. The fires were kept burning constantly. Over time, Gehenna came to be used as a term meaning 'the place of punishment'. The name 'Gehenna' finally came to represent the punishment itself. The name brought to mind whatever was condemned, useless, corrupt, abhorrent, or cursed of God. During and after the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus, the Valley of Hinnom was filled with the bodies of dead Jews - just as the prophecy warned.

**Essentially Christ was saying,
“You will be thrown out like that garbage,
if you don’t repent and come to the Father through Me.”**

LET’S LOOK AT EVERY PASSAGE where ‘Gehenna’ or ‘Gehenna of fire’ occurs in the New Testament. We will find that Gehenna *is* a place of fire. We will find that the fire consumes corpses - NOT conscious people. We will find that the individual corpses do NOT continue to burn forever. They burn only until they are consumed.

The garbage dump is used to represent the “fire” of judgment day. **One is a metaphor for the other.** Both consume by fire. Both consume waste. Both consume corpses. But the “everlasting fire” is a ‘fire’ of divine origin. The Gehenna fire was not. The “everlasting fire” has existed from eternity and will exist for eternity. The Gehenna fire has not.

Matthew 5:22 “But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause [*nursing anger*] shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ [*good-for-nothing, or useless*] shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire [*gehenna of fire*].”

In the Ancient Middle East such insults could inflame hatred to the point of murder. In context Yeshua is teaching that murder begins in the heart.

Matthew 5:29 “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell [*gehenna*].” (See also Matt. 18:9 and Mark 9:47.)

Matthew 5:30 “. . . it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell [*gehenna*].” (See also Mark 9:43-44.)

Matthew 18:8-9 “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire (*gehenna of fire*).”

“Gehenna of fire” and “the everlasting fire” are used in the same passage to refer to the same punishment.

Mark 9:45-46 “And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell [gehenna], into the fire that shall never be quenched—where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’”
(See also Mark 9:43-44 & Mark 9:47-48.)

Essentially Christ is saying that there is nothing more important than your relationship with God. Nothing more important than eternal life. It is more important even than a hand or an eye. It is that important. Jesus was NOT saying that anyone should intentionally blind one eye or cut off one hand. He was making a statement about the importance of obtaining eternal life. Whatever held a person in sin, must be set aside. Even the loss of a foot or an eye is preferable to the loss of eternal life.

*We note especially that persons cast into Gehenna, are cast in **with physical bodies**. They are not cast in as disembodied spirits. (Even the Greeks did not believe that the physical body went to “Hades.”) On the day of judgment at the Glorious Return, the wicked will die with physical bodies. Their bodies will be left to rot as the last plagues consume the planet. The redeemed of Christ will go with Him to the Father’s House, to stand on the crystal sea before the throne of God.*

The word ‘Gehenna’ had taken on a new meaning within that culture. It had come to mean execution, the place of execution, or the place of disposal (of the body). It also conveyed the idea of disgrace and dishonor. Christ used ‘Gehenna’ to represent the destruction of the wicked, on the day of the His Glorious Return.

Luke 12:5 “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into Hell [Gehenna]; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”

The wicked are first “killed.” There is no one to bury the dead. Their bodies will be left to rot or burn (just like Gehenna). They are also left as food for vultures (Rev 19:21). This will take place at the “judgment of the great day” - at the Glorious Return.

Matthew 10:28 “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell [Gehenna].

IMPORTANT: The body AND the soul - will be destroyed by the LORD, in (or at) Gehenna. And if the “soul” is destroyed (meaning consumed completely) then how can it suffer for eternity?

Once again, this text has more than one level of meaning. If you believe, as I do, that God retains the memories and thoughts of each person - "the spirit" - which He will use to resurrect each one (the wicked for judgment and the righteous to eternal life), then you will understand this verse to say that God will destroy everything that remains of a wicked person, not just the physical body. Only at this point will such a person be "dead" to God. He will no longer exist.

At the Glorious Return of Christ, both righteous and wicked will be resurrected (Daniel 12:2-3). Once judged, the Beast and the False Prophet will be cast into the Lake of Fire. There is no return from that death. Note: "The Beast" and "the False Prophet" are systems of evil, served by many thousands. They are not just two individuals. In this context, the LORD truly will destroy both the souls and the bodies of those who fought against Him, and persecuted His people.

Matthew 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees - hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell [gehenna] as yourselves."

Matthew 23:33 "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell [gehenna]?"

James 3:6 "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell [gehenna]."

NOTE: Again this is metaphor. An evil tongue is said to be energized by Gehenna itself. Like Gehenna, an evil tongue is a destructive force.

TARTARUS

(Strong's #5020) Tartaroo. **Used only once in the Scriptures.**

2 Peter 2:4 "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [tartaroo] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;"

NOTE: This verse is NOT talking about human beings. The "angels who sinned" are spirit beings - not human beings.

Peter is using Tartaroo to represent a place of restraint - a holding place for those evil angels who "crossed the line." Some believe these angels are mentioned in Genesis Chapter 6 as "sons of God." (It's possible.)

Many believe these angels will be released from “Tartarus” at the fifth trumpet - to torment mankind for a short period just before the Glorious Return. (I think that possible.) Others believe that earth itself is the holding place. Still others believe these evil supernatural spirit beings will be held in a kind of prison for spirits until the final judgment after the 7th millennium. Opinions very widely. This verse should NOT be used as a proof text.

WE HAVE LOOKED AT EVERY VERSE where a word was translated as ‘Hell.’

Now let’s continue our study, looking at other passages which have been used to support the doctrine of “eternal conscious torment.”

BURNED IN FIRE

John 15:5-6 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Dead branches and unfruitful vines are pruned off and thrown into the fire. The fire appears to be burning what is already dead. This agrees with the image of Isaiah 66:24, and Jesus’ prophecy in Mark 9:45-46. The fire will consume the dead.

Matthew 13:49-50 “So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

According to the Apostle Peter, “the day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2Peter 3:10).

It is possible that many wicked persons will actually die by fire. Possible. Especially if nuclear weapons are involved. The “fire” may be the familiar type of fire that we know in the physical realm, OR “fire” as the glory of God, OR an unknown type of fire (like the “fire” created for Satan and his wicked angels). Peter does not tell us how long the wicked last in this fire at the Glorious Return, just that there will be fire.

Matthew 13:41-42 “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

2 Peter 3:7 “But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

The heavens and the earth (as we currently know them) will pass away at the Glorious Return of Christ. That will be “the day of judgment” for the rebellious wicked from Cain to the end of this age. See our study: “[Judgment Day](#).”

I believe there will be a judgment and destruction by fire at the Glorious Return of Christ, and a second destruction (by fire) at the Gog-Magog Battle of Revelation 20. The first will deal with those who have lived from Adam to Christ’s return. The second will deal with those resurrected at the 8th millennium, who refuse Christ after hearing the Gospel, and actually try to overthrow the reign of Christ at the Battle of Gog/Magog. Two judgment events for two different groups of people.

Luke 3:17 “His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 “. . . WHEN the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, WHEN He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints.”

*This does not happen UNTIL the return of Christ in glory.
No one is being punished now.*

“Everlasting destruction” would mean those so judged and obliterated would never be seen or heard from again - forever. I don’t see eternal conscious torment in this text. Just an execution that will never be reversed.

Malachi 4:1 “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,” says the LORD of hosts, ‘that will leave them neither root nor branch.’”

False prophets, hypocrites, and faithless disciples along with ‘trees’ producing bad fruit, ‘branches’ bearing no fruit, ‘chaff’ and ‘weeds’ (all symbolic of spiritually dead and wicked people) - all are said to be thrown into the ‘fire’ (Matt. 7:19, Lk. 3:19). “All who do wickedly” will be burned up.

This fire takes place “at the end of the age” (1 Peter 3:10). It is NOT presently burning in a place of conscious torment.

THIS IS A FUTURE EVENT - NOT A PRESENT PLACE.

The fire which burned up Sodom and Gomorrah is said to be “an example” of this “fire” (Jude 1:7, 2 Peter 2:6). Those cities are NOT still burning. And nowhere does Scripture say that the former inhabitants of Sodom lived on in perpetual conscious torment.

Luke 17:29 “ . . . but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

Psalm 11:6 “Upon the wicked He will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup” (*Genesis 19:24 - Sodom and Gomorrah*).

The “fire and brimstone” at the end of this age, may be caused by an asteroid hit, by weapons of mass destruction, by molten lava, by the sun “heated seven times hotter,” by “the glory of the LORD” or by some as yet unknown force. In the study titled “Millennium,” we look at passage after passage describing the complete and utter destruction of this earth, following the Glorious Return of Christ. The LORD will remove His people. Then the earth will be left a desolate wilderness without inhabitant. There is no suggestion that the wicked will live on forever in conscious torment.

Luke 17:29 “ . . . on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

A PAST EVENT is used to describe a FUTURE EVENT.

This age will end. Those who refuse Christ will be destroyed. This earth will be destroyed just like the city of Sodom. “The elements will melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:10). Brimstone results from the melting of elements (sulphur specifically). This is not a place where human beings - as disembodied spirits - experience perpetual conscious torment for eternity. This is permanent total destruction!

PERISH

(Strong's #622) apollumi {ap-ol'-loo-mee} a Greek word.

Meaning: 1) **to destroy** 1a) to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin

1b) render useless 1c) to kill 1d) to declare that one must be put to death

1e) **metaphor - to devote or give over to eternal misery in hell**

1f) to perish, to be lost, ruined, destroyed 2) to destroy 2a) to lose.

Usage: perish 33, destroy 26, lose 22, be lost 5, lost 4, misc 2; Total 92

Simply put - to perish means to be killed or destroyed at the hand of another. To perish without hope of resurrection means to die forever.

Did you notice that Strong's also "defines" 'perish' as metaphor for "eternal misery in 'hell'". He is giving a nod to traditionalists, who use the word in this way. The word itself cannot be shown to directly or clearly mean "to suffer eternal conscious torment."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PERISH ?

John 10:27-28 [Christ] "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

Those who live forever will "never perish." Live forever is the opposite of die forever.

Obviously - both righteous and wicked die physically. They die the first type of death (sometimes more than once - like Lazarus). To God these people are just sleeping. They are not "perished." He remembers them. Jesus was speaking here, of "the second death" - spirit death, the permanent death that will happen only once, to the unrepentant wicked. This is the death from which there is no resurrection.

THE WICKED WILL PERISH.

They will vanish like smoke.

Psalm 37:20 "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away."

*Some translations say "like the **glory of the pastures**" instead of "as the **fat of lambs**." David wasn't looking at flowers or grass in the Tabernacle courtyard. He was looking at sacrifices. Israelites were forbidden to eat the fat. All the fat was to be burned on the Altar. Hence David's use of the phrase "as the fat of lambs." It was consumed in fire.*

David lamented the apparent success of the wicked - until he entered the Tabernacle. There he saw something that caused him to understand “what would be their end” (Psa. 73:3-17). He saw the sacrifices, burning on the altar. David tells us that the wicked will be consumed in fire - “like the fat” was consumed on the Alter. The wicked will consume away into smoke.

Most Christians today understand that the sacrifices on the Alter symbolized Christ, but not many understand that they also symbolized the wicked who will be destroyed by the fire of God. The “blood sacrifice” sealed a “blood covenant.” The person who broke such a covenant (without heart repentance) would suffer death. Those who embrace Christ as their Sacrifice and Savior, will not die this death.

Isaiah 41:11-12 “Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; They shall be as nothing, And those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them -- Those who contended with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing.”

They will vanish away, like the smoke of the sacrifices.

Romans 1:32 “. . . knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death,” [not eternal conscious torment].

UTTERLY DESTROYED

Acts 3:23 “And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.”

Moses promised that God would someday send a prophet like himself, who would speak the words of the LORD to Israel. “That prophet” was Yeshua Messiah (Deut. 18:15,18,19). Those who would not hear Him would be “cut off” from the people of God.

karath (Hebrew) “cut off” → (Greek) exolethreuo → (English) “utterly destroyed”

“Karath” (#03772) is translated “cut off” in the Old Testament of the KJV. When a person accused of a high crime came before the High Priest, the priest would pray and then reach blindly into a special pouch for one of two stones (Exo. 28:30). One meant life. The other death. The one condemned to death in such manner was regarded as cursed by God Himself. His name would be blotted out of the genealogical records of Israel. Gradually the word “karath” was attached to anyone who died by execution. Our Savior was regarded as “cursed of God.”

Those who would not “hear” Christ would be “cut off” from the people of God. Those who do not belong to Christ, will finally be destroyed forever. They will suffer “the curse” - which is death. There is no suggestion of eternal conscious torment.

Psalm 37:9 “For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.”

Psalm 37:34 “Wait on the LORD, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.”

Wow!! The righteous will see it, when the wicked are “cut off.” They will “see it” at the Glorious Return, and they will “see it” (from inside The City) at the Battle of Gog-Magog.

DIDN'T JESUS SAY THERE WILL BE
“WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH” ?

Doesn't that imply real suffering for those condemned ?

*In Scripture, neither weeping nor gnashing of teeth is used to describe the response to physical pain. Weeping signifies deep remorse or sorrow. **Gnashing of teeth signifies great anger.** While we today would recognize clenched teeth as a response to physical pain, in Scripture it is not used in this way.*

Lamentations 2:16 “All your enemies have opened their mouth against you; They hiss and gnash their teeth.” *This is vehement anger.*

Psalm 112:10 “The wicked will see it and be grieved; He will gnash his teeth and melt away; The desire of the wicked shall perish.”

The Hebrew word translated “grieved” is ka`ac (#03707) meaning “to be angry, vexed, indignant, or wrath.” The emotion is paired with the physical response - gnashing of teeth.

Psalm 37:12-13 “The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.”

Acts 7:54 “When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him” [at Stephen - just before stoning him to death]. (NIV)

SONS OF THE KINGDOM

Cast to 'outer darkness'

Matthew 8:11-12 "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"The glory of God illuminates the City, and the Lamb is its light." (Rev. 21:22-25).

Luke 13:28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out."

The weeping and gnashing is the response to being cast out from the Kingdom. Only those who once thought themselves included and assured of eternal life, could experience being "cast out." When the (former) "sons of the kingdom" see that they have forever lost the Kingdom of God, they will weep, and gnash their teeth.

The term "sons of the kingdom" refers to Israelites. Christ especially used the phrase to include the hypocritical Jewish authorities of His day. I would also include those hypocrites who call themselves Christian, because all believers are "grafted in" to Israel (the Olive tree of Romans Cpt 11), therefore they also, can be "cut off."

Matthew 22:13-14 [*Christ - in a parable about an uninvited guest*] "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

Matthew 25:30 [*Christ - in a parable*] "And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 24:50-51 [*In a parable*] ". . . the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 13:41-42 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

This scene will take place on the Day of Judgment, at the Glorious Return of the Son. The earth will be burned up, and the outcasts along with it.

At the Glorious Return, there will be a great resurrection - multitudes of both righteous and the wicked (Dan. 12:2-3). The redeemed will be caught up to meet Christ in the sky. The wicked will hear judgment pronounced against them. They are condemned, "cut off" and left behind to die as the earth is consumed by the final plagues.

Matthew 13:49-50 "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

When the wicked realize they are 'cast out' from the Kingdom of God, and are consigned to death, they respond in two ways. Some will weep and wail. Others will 'gnash their teeth' with body choking fury.

WHAT ABOUT REVELATION 14:11?

Doesn't this verse say that the lost are tormented forever?

Revelation 14:11 "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

THIS IS THE VERSE!

The teaching of torment without end is based on this one verse.

Let's break it down:

1. The "Beast" of Revelation Chapter 13 comes to rule the world just 3.5 years before the return of Christ in glory. So this prophecy is speaking of those who live while the "Beast" rules.
2. When Christ returns, the saved will be caught up from the earth (*1 Thess. 4:17*). They will go with Him, to the place He has prepared in the Father's House.
3. Those who have worshiped the "Beast" will be left behind on the earth. They will suffer the full wrath of God without mercy, poured out as seven last plagues (*Rev. 14:10, 15:1, 16:1*). In the midst of these plagues - they will "have no rest day or night" until they finally die.

The catalyst for the last plagues may be of human origin, of divine origin, or may be caused by evil angels. All may combine. We know that God will allow that destruction.

4. The earth with its works will be “burned up” - right along with the bodies of the wicked. (*2 Peter 3:10*).
5. The seven last plagues wipe out all life on earth. Every element necessary for human life is gone. Jeremiah saw the earth “after the great day of the LORD,” and “it was without form and void” (*Jer. 4:23*). These are the same Hebrew words used in Genesis 1:2, describing the earth before anything was created. (See our study “Millennium.”)
6. The smoke ascends “forever and ever.” The third angel of John’s vision, uses words from Isaiah 34:2-10, which is a prophecy about the “land of Edom” - said to be burned with unquenchable fire. The “fire” at the end of this age will be LIKE that “fire.” That fire is NOT STILL BURNING today. Neither is the fire that consumed Sodom. We do not see “smoke ascending.”

The words “forever and ever” literally mean “unto the age of the ages.” No one has clearly defined those words. It is assumed to be the last age - the eternal age. Does it mean that the ‘smoke’ is gone when eternity begins? John may simply be saying that the destruction is irreversible - just as it was for “the land of Edom.”

The phrase “forever and ever” is also used in Revelation 20:20, to describe the torment of the Devil and his angels who will be cast into the Lake of Fire at the Gog/Magog Battle. Christ referred to “the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (*Mat 25:41*). They are spirit beings, not physical human beings. I personally believe, for all the reasons already outlined in this study, that spirit beings may last longer in the special ‘fire’ prison than human beings, who will be consumed instantly. **Only God has immortality** (*1Tim. 6:13-16*), which means that Satan and his angels will finally die.

Elements of Revelation 14:11 are quoted from Isaiah 34:2-10. Let’s read thru that passage. It was a prophecy concerning the “land of Edom” (Esau). It is ALSO a prophecy of the Second Coming.

Isaiah 34:2-10 “For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, [possibly satellites] And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree. ‘For My sword shall be bathed in heaven;’ . . .”

Isaiah 34:2-10 [continued] For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion. Its streams shall be turned into pitch, And its dust into brimstone; Its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; No one shall pass through it forever and ever."

*NOTE: **If the earth is consumed to nonexistence, then it cannot not "lie waste."** Those returning could not restore the ruins of Jerusalem and Judea.*

I point this out because some believe this earth and the "heavens" of this dimension, will pass out of existence. Hebrews 1:10-12 suggests this earth and "the heavens" created in "the beginning" will one day be gone. This will not happen at the Glorious Return, because the resurrection of "the rest of the dead" will take place on this earth, at the 8th millennium.

I believe this present "earth" will be "burned up" after the Gog/Magog rebellion. I believe that Yeshua will create a brand new "earth" for His redeemed. The New Jerusalem will descend to that "earth."

When Christ returns in glory, the stars will fall from heaven, and the sky will recede "as a scroll when it is rolled up" (*Rev. 6:13-14*). These elements are included in Isaiah's prophecy. The armies of all nations will be "utterly destroyed." The land will be turned into burning pitch, and the fire will be unquenchable. Corpses will not be buried. There will be no one left to bury the dead. The wicked are left - where "vultures gather" (*Matt 24:28, Luke 17:37*). "It is the day of the LORD's vengeance." This is judgment day. This is the Second Coming - The Glorious Return!

The condemned are tormented "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." The angels are present to deliver the righteous - not to watch the torment of the wicked. They rescue the redeemed, just before the seven last plagues begin. As in the story of Noah, and the story of Lot - deliverance comes just in time. Lot saw the city burning, and Noah heard the cries of the doomed as the rain fell.

The condemned are tormented - yes - by the seven last plagues, and by their own grief and hatred. We agree that there will be fire, but the fire will eventually go out - after it has consumed all life on planet earth.

The phrase "**weeping and gnashing of teeth**" tells us that the grief and the anger are in response to full realization of rejection, and of certain death. The "sons of the Kingdom" are "cast out." They see others accepted (like the despised Gentiles). They see the redeemed caught up to meet the Savior Messiah in the clouds (*1 Thess. 4:17*). These things will happen at "the end of the age," on "the day" when the Master returns.

UNQUENCHABLE FIRE

The fire which will “burn up” the earth with its works (2 Peter 3:10) is obviously “unquenchable.” There is no remedy or means by which to put it out (*quench it*) before the fire runs out of fuel. Jesus said He would, “burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Luke 3:12 & Matt. 3:12). The point being that the chaff is “burned up.” It does NOT continue to burn forever.

We all understand that the Book of Revelation uses a great deal of symbolism. “The smoke of their torment” ascending “forever and ever” may be the LORD’s way of saying that the judgment will be final and unchangeable. The words do NOT necessarily mean that the wicked will continue in torment without end.

We cannot base a doctrine on one phrase, from one verse of Revelation.

PERDITION

Let’s look at another word from the King James Version of the Bible, which has been used to represent a place of continuing conscious torment.

Strong’s #684 - *apoleia* {ap-o'-li-a} - a Greek word.

Meaning: 1) destroying, **utter destruction** 2) a perishing, ruin, destruction

Usage in the King James: perdition 8, destruction 5, waste 2, damnable 1, to die + #1519 1, perish + #1498 + #1519 1, pernicious 1; Total 20

Do any of the following passages suggest that “apoleia” means eternal conscious torment?

Matthew 7:13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction (*apoleia*), and there are many who go in by it.”

Mark 14:4 “Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, ‘Why this waste of perfume?’” (NIV) (*Matthew 26:8 uses same word.*)

Obviously the word in this context describes as ‘waste’ the use of that expensive perfume to anoint the feet of Christ. As we might say, “What a waste of money.”

John 17:12 “While I was with them [*the disciples*] in the world, I kept them in Your name [*Father*]. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition [*Judas*], that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

“Son of perdition” is translated as “son of destruction” in the NIV, ESV and CJB.

Acts 8:20 “But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!’”

If “perish” in this text, is “Hell” - in the traditionalist sense - then Peter is telling the man, “Go to Hell and take your money with you.” I doubt Peter would have cursed the man in this way. The word is translated “go to ruin” in the CJB.

Acts 25:16 “To them I answered, ‘It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction (*apoleia*) before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.’”

The Romans could not deliver anyone to a traditionalist “Hell,” but they could execute. Here “perdition” means death by execution. In the KJV the word is translated as “to die.”

Romans 9:22 “What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,”

Philippians 1:28 “. . . and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.”

The Christians were not terrified. They were calm in the face of persecution and this was a proof to their persecutors - a proof that the Christians were speaking the truth, that a day of judgment and destruction would come. The ESV, NAU, CJB all translate the word as “destruction.” The NIV uses “be destroyed.”

2 Thessalonians 2:3 “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,”

In context, Paul is writing about the Antichrist - the great enemy of Christ. Paul uses the same words - “son of perdition,” which Christ used of Judas the betrayer. NIV uses “doomed to destruction.” ESV and NAU use “the son of destruction.” CJB uses “the one destined for doom.”

Any suggestion of continuing conscious torment for eternity - so far ?

NO!

2 Peter 3:7 “But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

The heavens and the earth “are reserved for fire - UNTIL the day of judgment.” That “day” will be the Glorious Return of Christ. The wicked will be resurrected to face the LORD for judgment. Then they will be destroyed by the “fire” of God. Their bodies will be consumed as “fire” consumes the earth (2 Peter 3:10). The NIV, ESV and NAU all translate the word as “destruction.” Most folks know the nuclear powered nations possess enough “fire” power to destroy this planet several times over! Whether the “fire” is man made or of divine origin, it will be “fire.”

Revelation 17:8 “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.”

The “beast” here is Satan, who will be imprisoned in the “bottomless pit” for a thousand years following the Glorious Return. The beast of Revelation Chapter 13, is a religio-political system powered by Satan, involving thousands (perhaps millions) of individuals. It will rise to rule the whole world near the end of this age. This system will be destroyed, along with those who served it. The Beast and his “false prophet” will be cast into the Lake of Fire when Christ returns in glory. The NIV, ESV, NAU and CJB all use “destruction.”

Revelation 17:11 “And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth (*the little horn*), and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.”

The “beast” is “going to destruction” in the NIV and ESV, NAU, and CJB. See also Hebrews 10:39, 1 Tim. 6:9, 2 Pet. 2:1, 2 Pet. 2:2, & 2 Pet. 3:16.

We CANNOT determine, from any of these Scripture verses, that the word “perdition” points to eternal conscious torment. It simply means “destruction.”

LIFE vs. DEATH

Ezekiel 18:20 “The soul who sins shall die.”

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Everlasting life is life without the possibility of death. Everlasting death would mean death without the possibility of resurrection. To perish in the Lake of Fire is to die forever.

John 10:27-28 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Death” - *not eternal conscious torment*

TEN REASONS TO REJECT ETERNAL TORMENT

1. The teaching of eternal torment claims that the lost will continue living forever, which is contrary to the plain words of Scripture: “The soul who sins shall die” (*Ezekiel 18:20*).
2. The teaching of eternal torment robs us of our God of love whose “mercy endures forever” and substitutes a being whose wrath is never appeased (*Psalms 107:1*).
3. The teaching of eternal torment cannot be reconciled with the character of Jesus Christ as presented in the Scriptures.
4. The redeemed, who will have a part in the final judgment, could never condemn fellow human beings to unending torture. Their sense of justice could never permit such an atrocity. “Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (*1 Corinthians 6:2*).
5. Eternal torment imposes a punishment all out of proportion to the crimes committed by individual human beings. Jesus said, “I judge, and my judgment is just” (*John 5:30*).
6. Eternal torment for the lost would cast a shadow forever over the happiness of the redeemed. God has promised that He “shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (*Revelation 7:17*). The LORD would need to use artificial memory manipulation to wipe out any conscious thought of a lost one suffering in “Hell.” I do not believe our God resorts to manipulation - ever.
7. The teaching of eternal torment demands that God preserve a place of sin and sorrow forever, where the Devil would take pleasure from tormenting the objects of God’s love. We are promised that Satan will be destroyed (*Hebrews 2:14*).
8. Eternal torment would immortalize suffering, sorrow, and pain. God’s promise is that these things will be no more. “And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away” (*Revelation 21:4*).

9. Only God possesses immortality (*1Tim 6:13-16*). Every created life can die (including Satan and his angels). No created life is self-sustaining. Which means that God would need to sustain the lives of those conscious souls suffering in Hell. God himself would have to prolong the torment.

Is our God an insatiable tormenter? I think not!

10. We reject the teaching of eternal torment because of the fruit it has brought forth. It has fueled the teaching of atheism. It has driven many to depression or insanity, with constant fear. It has drained the resources of families for centuries, as they give money for Masses to pray the souls of loved ones from Purgatory to Heaven. It has caused thousands of others to do unspeakable things in the name of God. Many who led out in the infamous Inquisition of Europe or the witch-trials of early America were religious men who believed they were carrying out the will of God. These devout persecutors tortured “heretics” in order to *save* their souls from Hell.

SUMMARY

1. The doctrine of Hell - as a place of continuing conscious torment - resulted from poor translation, or mistranslation, of two Hebrew words - “Sheol” and “Gehenna.”
2. The dead all go to “sheol” - righteous, wicked, ignorant, indifferent. Sheol is simply a place of waiting - for resurrection. We at Prophecy Viewpoint believe that God retains a memory of each individual - uploaded to the heavenly “cloud,” if you will. He uses this “memory” to resurrect each one, with mind and memory intact.
3. Gehenna was an ancient burning garbage dump outside of Jerusalem. Jesus used this figure to predict that the bodies of the lost would be burned like that garbage.
4. No one is in “Hell” now. The dead are sleeping. The wicked will be resurrected to face judgment at the Glorious Return of Christ to the earth. Then they will be left to die in the plagues. Their bodies will be burned up, as the earth is consumed by fire.
5. The Bible clearly presents a choice - life or death. NOT life or eternal conscious torment.
6. The Bible clearly says that the wicked will “perish.” To perish is to die.
7. Those who “worship the beast and his image” will be “tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb” (*Rev. 14:10*). This suffering will happen during the last plagues, following the Glorious Return (and the rescue of the redeemed). Those who serve the Beast power will be left behind to be destroyed. Their suffering will not continue forever - because they will die.

CONCLUSION

God has commanded that we love Him with all our hearts and with all our strength. I could not love with all my heart and trust, an all-powerful Being that I thought capable of torturing me for two minutes, much less for all eternity. My purpose in this study, was to show that Scripture does not support the doctrine of eternal conscious torment.

I could not cover in one study, my understanding of God's judgments. (See the links at the end of this study.) I believe there will be a judgment at the Glorious Return, and another judgment following the Gog-Magog Battle of Revelation Chapter 20. That Battle will take place during the 8th millennium.

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
Rachel Cory-Kuehl
Prophecy Viewpoint*

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1. *Immortality or Resurrection?*
"A Biblical Study on Human Nature and Destiny," by Samuele Bacchiocchi
2. *The Fire That Consumes*, "A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment, THIRD EDITION," by Edward William Fudge

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