

THE FATE OF UNBELIEVERS CONDENSED

# THE UNREDEEMED

A POLEMIC AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL TORMENT

By

Charles R. Chesnutt

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## About the Author

Charles Chesnutt, Sr. is an attorney and graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. Other theological works of the author include *Believe in God*, *The House*, *A Reason for Adversity*, *Endless Love* and *The Fate of Unbelievers*. All of these works may be downloaded at [BIBLEBOOKS.CO](http://BIBLEBOOKS.CO).

No portion of this work has been endorsed by Dallas Theological Seminary.

The author lives with his wife Mary in Dallas, Texas.

## Dedication

The author dedicates this work to his wife, Mary, who help and insight, dedication and encouragement has been invaluable, and without which this book could not have been written.

## Forward

This book is an examination of the scriptures relating to the eternal fate of unbelievers.

This book took form after the author, out of simple curiosity, searched a concordance and discovered only one mention of eternal torment in the entire (non-Catholic) Bible. Although there are numerous scriptures that directly address the eternal fate of the unredeemed, none of these scriptures teach eternal torment. All of them (and there are no less than 50) teach that death is the final state of the unredeemed.

In order to make its case, this book examines those scriptures that support death as the final state of the unredeemed and those scriptures that are most often cited in support of eternal torment and.

This book is a concise and somewhat condensed version of the author's larger work on the subject entitled *The Fate of Unbelievers*. Two lengthy appendices are attached to the electronic version of this book. They are a collection and discussion of all scriptures that teach death as the final state of the unredeemed and a collection and discussion of all of those scriptures used to support eternal torment.

This book and others may be downloaded at BIBLEBOOKS.CO.

Charles R. Chesnutt, Sr.

## Chapter 1

### **The Wages of Sin is Death**

ROMANS 6:23

Perhaps the most famous facade in the world is one that was seen by the Apostle Paul on many occasions. It is the facade of the library at the ancient city of Ephesus.



The facade of the Ephesus Library is a magnificent and intricate multi-columned work of art that still stands today. However, anyone who walks through the front door of the library will discover only an empty room and a field. The library that once stood behind it has long since crumbled away.

The Christian doctrine of the eternal torment of the unredeemed is much like the facade of the Ephesian library. It is a centuries old intricate and carefully crafted facade standing on the main boulevard of Christian doctrine. It is as much a part of ancient doctrine as the doctrine of salvation by grace or the deity of Jesus Christ.

But when one walks past the door of Salvation by Grace, one finds Ephesians 2:8 or behind the door of the doctrine of the Deity of Christ one finds John 8:58. But behind the door of the doctrine of Eternal Torment there is only an empty room, presumption and circumvention.

However, behind the door called *The Second Death*, there are 50 scriptures that tell us the wages of sin is death (not eternal torment). They are as follows:

1. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Genesis 2:17
2. Knowest thou not since of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet, he shall perish for ever ...” Job 20:6,7
3. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Psalm 1:6
4. 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.
5. Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness...God shall likewise destroy thee for ever He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living.
6. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid of what man can do unto me ... For thou hast delivered my soul from death ... Psalm 56:11:13

7. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed forever. Psalm 92:7
8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death. Psalm 116:8
9. The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will He destroy. Psalm 145:20
10. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish. Proverbs 19:9
11. ... they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. Isaiah 1:28
12. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth shall die. Ezekiel 18:4
13. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from you evil ways; for why will ye die? Ezekiel 33:11
14. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help...I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death... Hosea 13:9,13
15. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance... Obadiah 16

16. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.<sup>1</sup> Matthew 3:12 (Luke 3:17)

17. Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Matthew 7:13

18. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both the soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

19. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned [consumed]<sup>2</sup> in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. Matthew 13:40

20. And Jesus said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Luke 13:2

21. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. Luke 19:27

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1. The Greek word for “burn up” in this passage is κατακαυσει, which means to destroy by burning or “burn up.” It is the same word used in Second Peter 3:10 denoting complete destruction. Neither the Greek word nor the English translation of it connotes eternal burning but instead means destruction by burning.

2. See footnote for Matthew 3:12. The same Greek word is used.



22. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more... Luke 20:35,36

23. 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.<sup>3</sup> John 3:16

24. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever... John 6:50

25. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death. Then the Jews said to Him, Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death. John 8:51, 52

26. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish John 10:28

27. Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. John 11:26

28. ...Deserving of death. Romans 1:32

29. Therefore just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. Romans 5:12

30. So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:21

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3. Note the symmetry here: either life or death

31. Do you know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness? Romans 6:16

32. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. Romans 6:21

33. The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23

34. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. First Corinthians 1:18

35. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. First Corinthians 15:26

36. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' First Corinthians 15:54

37. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; Who delivered us from so great a death... Second Corinthians 1:9

38. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. Second Corinthians 2:16

39. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. Second Corinthians 7:10

40. ... but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Second Timothy 1:10

41. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Second Thessalonians 2:9, 10

42. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Hebrews 2:9

43. Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Hebrews 2:14

44. Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death... James 5:20

45. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished ... but these ... shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness ... Second Peter 2:9, 12-13

46. The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Second Peter 3:9

47. I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Revelation 1:18

48. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. Revelation 2:11

49. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power ... Revelation 20:6

50. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Revelation 21:8

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Every scripture that directly addresses the final state of the unredeemed points to death as their final and eternal state.

Each of these scriptures is a warning that death is the ultimate wage of sin and the final state of the unredeemed. If it were true that eternal torment in the flames of hell rather than ordinary death is the wage of sin and the final state of the unredeemed, then there would be warnings about eternal torment.

But there is no warning about eternal torment.

There is only one scripture in the entire Bible that so much as mentions eternal torment and that scripture describes the eternal state of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet.

The 50 scriptures that teach death as the ultimate fate of the unredeemed

## Chapter 2

### What is Death?

VERILY VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, IF  
A MAN KEEP MY SAYING HE SHALL  
NEVER SEE DEATH

JOHN 8:51

The fifty scriptures that teach death as the ultimate wage of sin and the eternal fate of the unredeemed are a bar to the doctrine of eternal torment. Because if death is the eternal state, then eternal torment cannot be true because one cannot torment a dead body. In order to circumvent these scriptures, Eternal torment has redefined the Greek and Hebrew words for death.

Let us take a closer look at what death actually is. Of all things that are common to all people and all cultures certainly birth and death are the most common. Obviously, every culture develops a word (or various words) for death. And since death is the same in every culture, the words mean the same thing. Accordingly, the Greek and Hebrew lexicons define death largely the same as modern English. Death means the cessation of life.

Jesus Christ tells us that His ministry is to save us from death.<sup>1</sup> Paul tells us that death is the wages of sin.<sup>2</sup> John tells us that the part that the unredeemed will have in the Lake of Fire is “the second death,”<sup>3</sup> and God, speaking through the mouth

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1. John 8:51 "Verily, verily I say to you, If any man keep My saying, he shall never see death."

2. Romans 6:3 "The wages of sin is death..."

3. Revelation 21:8 "...their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

of Ezekiel tells is plainly that “the soul that sins shall die.”<sup>4†</sup> But according to eternal torment, none of these statements mean what they say.

Eternal torment denies that Jesus saves us from death. Instead, it has Jesus dying to save us from eternal life in hell. Eternal torment teaches that the wages of sin is not death but eternal torment. And it tells us that God could have chosen more accurate wording when He spoke through Ezekiel and said “The soul that sins shall die” because the soul that sins does not die. It is tormented eternally in the flames of hell.

The inherent fallacy of this argument is not only does this definition of death contradict all accepted Greek and Hebrew lexicons, but this definition of death is precisely the opposite of actual death. It is the definition of eternal life, not eternal death. But this definition does provide the requisite logical basis to jump from “the soul that sins shall die”<sup>5</sup> to “the soul that sins shall live in torment in hell for the rest of eternity,” so the definition is promoted and the contradiction is ignored.

Scripture uses 10 different Greek and Hebrew words for death to express these warnings. The doctrine of eternal torment gives every one of these words a new and previously non-existent meaning for the sole purpose of legitimizing itself.<sup>6</sup>

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4. Ezekiel 18:4. † The context of this verse shows that the reference is to actual souls, not bodies or people referred to as "souls."

5. Ezekiel 18:4

6. See Appendix 1 that contains all of these words in their original language with discussion.

The advocates of eternal torment have not redefined just one or two of these words. They have re-defined *all* the Greek and Hebrew words for death. According to eternal torment, all references to the eternal fate of the unredeemed always mean eternal life in hell all Greek and Hebrew words for death are used to describe the eternal state of the unredeemed. Therefore, all words that refer to the eternal state of the unredeemed have been redefined to mean eternal life in hell.<sup>7</sup> There are no other words left to refer to death as an eternal state.

Since all the words have been redefined, it is no longer possible to use any Greek or Hebrew word for death to convey actual death in the context of the eternal state of the unredeemed. Therefore, according to eternal torment it was impossible for Christ to have said that He saves us from actual “death” in John 8:51 because there is no such word. The Greek word used in John 8:51 is θάνατος (“thanatos”) which means ordinary death in Greek Lexicons.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, the Bible does speak of life after death. But that is not because death is not actual death but because what lives after death is the soul; the soul survives the death of the body. The soul survives until the final judgment when the body is resurrected and reunited with the soul for the purpose of final

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7. See Appendix 1 in the electronic version of this book wherein all of these words are listed in their original forms and fully discussed. See biblebooks.co.

8. See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. θάνατος wherein the word is defined as death as in “natural death,” “death as a penalty,” “death of Christ,” “natural death as a divine punishment,” “a manner of death” or “eternal death...”

judgment.<sup>9</sup> Scripture never calls into question what death is or what it means. The only issue raised by scripture is what has died (the body or the soul).

We know that “the wages of sin is death”<sup>10</sup> and that “the soul that sins shall die”<sup>11</sup> and that the hour is coming that the dead shall be raised to face a final judgment<sup>12</sup> and that following that judgment the unredeemed will be cast into the lake of fire and their part in the lake of fire will be the second death.<sup>13</sup>

We know from these verses that there are *two* deaths, not just one. Now let us examine the second death.

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9. John 5:28,29 “Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice 29and come out— those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.” Revelation 20:11 “And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened...and the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their deeds.

10. Romans 6:23

11. Ezekiel 18:4

12. John 5:29 “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”

13. Revelation 21:8 “Their part [the part of the unredeemed] will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”



## Chapter 3

### The Second Death

THEIR PART WILL BE...THE SECOND  
DEATH

REVELATION 21:8

**M**any Christians have never heard of the second death. It is rarely preached because it contradicts the doctrine of eternal torment. It contradicts the doctrine of eternal torment because if the unredeemed die in the lake of fire, they cannot be tormented because dead bodies cannot be tormented.

There are 4 scriptures that speak of the second death:

Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.<sup>1</sup>

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years.<sup>2</sup>

But for the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral persons, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Revelation 20:14

2. Revelation 20:6

3. Revelation 21:8

The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.<sup>4</sup>

The second death is by far the more important death because it is eternal. However, the first death (the death of the body) is not eternal because it is followed by a resurrection—a resurrection and either eternal life or eternal death.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.<sup>5</sup>

Those who are resurrected to judgment will die in the second death.<sup>6</sup> But the souls of the saved in Christ will not die because they will live forever:

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die (John 11:25,26).

Therefore, those who trust in Christ will die only once. And later they will be resurrected in what is called the first resurrection and reign with Christ for 1000 years.

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4. Revelation 2:11

5. John 5:28-29

6. Revelation 21:8 “[The] unbelieving...their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection over which the second death has no power; but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years.<sup>7</sup>

The proponents of eternal torment use several different ways to circumvent the fact that the second death is exactly that: death.

The primary circumvention is simply to re-define all the Greek and Hebrew words for death to mean “separation from God” rather than death. This theological fiat transforms “death” into its precise opposite: life. And not only does it turn “death” into life but it turns death into eternal life. Otherwise the unredeemed could not be burned alive forever. Of course, the re-definition is applicable only where the scripture addresses the eternal state of the unredeemed. Everywhere else the words for death mean what the Greek and Hebrew lexicons say they mean.

Other scriptures that refer to the second death do not support the “separation from God” argument.

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection over which the second death has no power<sup>8</sup>

This passage states that the second death has no power over the redeemed. But if the second death is an eternal state, it is the result of something (the judgment) but it has no power in and of itself.

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7. Revelation 20:6

8. Revelation 20:6

Whereas, the power of actual death is legendary.

O death, where is your victory? O death,  
where is your sting?<sup>9</sup>

This passage refers to death, not separation from God.

Death does not separate anyone from God. Only one thing separates anyone from God and that is sin.

Another circumvention is the argument that “second death” in Revelation 21:8 refers to the lake of fire, so “second death” is just another name for the lake of fire. But, as explained below, this is not grammatically correct.

Another circumvention is the argument that “second death” in Revelation 21:8 refers to the “part” that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire and that their “part” is a geographical division of the lake of fire. This is similar to legal descriptions of property contained in the deed records of a County Clerk. This argument is unpersuasive on their face because there is nothing in scripture to indicate that the lake of fire is divided into sections.

### ***Their “Part” in the Lake of Fire***

The...unbelieving...shall have their part  
in the lake which burneth with fire and  
brimstone which is the second death<sup>10</sup>

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9. Hebrews 2:14 “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”  
First Corinthians 15:55

10. Revelation 21:8 (punctuation removed)

In English, the phrase “which is the second death”<sup>11</sup> appears to be ambiguous. It can refer to “lake,” meaning that “second death” is simply another name for lake. Or it can refer to “part,” meaning that the part that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death.

If “which” refers to “lake of fire,” the passage is saying that either the name of fire is “second death” or that the lake of fire is synonymous with “second death.”

But if “which” it refers to “part,” it is saying that the part that the unredeemed have in the lake of fire is the second death.

However, there is no ambiguity in the original Greek because in Greek the pronoun is matched to its antecedent by the way the pronoun is spelled.<sup>12</sup> This difference in spelling is called “gender.” The same thing is true in European languages today, such as Italian, French and Spanish. Different nouns have different “genders” and the different genders have different endings or spellings. And pronouns that refer to them have the same gender. That way, they can be certain which noun to which a pronoun like “which” refers.

In Revelation 21:8, the gender of the pronoun “which” is neuter. That means that “which” refers to a neuter noun. But the Greek word for “lake” is feminine, so “which” does not refer to “lake.”

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11. Cf Revelation 20:11, 20:6, 20:14,15 (death of hell and death) and 21:8 (final judgment).

12. This is called the gender of the pronoun. The gender of the pronoun must match the gender of its antecedent. Different genders are spelled differently. The Greek “which” is a neuter pronoun so it has to refer to a neuter antecedent and the only neuter antecedent to which it can refer is “part.”

However, the gender of “part” is neuter. This means that “which is the second death” refers to “part” and not to “lake.” The passage is saying that the second death is the *part* that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire.

But why does scripture specify that their *part* will be the second death? Does someone else has a different part in the lake of fire? The answer to this question is a testament to the astounding accuracy of scripture.

Scripture has to specify that the *part* that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death because there is indeed someone else that has a different part in the lake of fire and that part is not death. That other person (or thing) is Satan and the antichrist and the false prophet. Their part in the lake of fire is not death but eternal torment.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore the reference to their “part” clarifies that the part that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is death, whereas the part that Satan will have is eternal torment. There are two entirely different things.

The reference to the part that Satan will have in the lake of fire is the only mention of eternal torment in all of scripture. The terms for eternal torment that apply to Satan are never applied to the unredeemed. Other scripture clarifies how the unredeemed and Satan are treated differently.

Satan and the false prophet have no part in the final judgment. They don’t get a judgment and there are no books from which they will be judged. They don’t get a resurrection. They are summarily thrown alive into the lake of fire without

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13. Revelation 20:10 “And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

a judgment<sup>14</sup> and they will remain there alive for the rest of time.<sup>15</sup> They do not get a first death and they do not get a second death. That's the point: Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet are not permitted to die.

On the other hand, the unredeemed get a resurrection and a trial and a judgment based upon the deeds that they during while alive<sup>16</sup> and in the end they are permitted to die.<sup>17</sup>

Satan's part:

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.<sup>18</sup>

The unbelievers' part:

But for the...unbelieving...their part in the lake...is the second death.

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14. Revelation 19:20 "And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur."

15. Revelation 20:10 "they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

16. Revelation 20:12 "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne and the books were opened...and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds."

17. Revelation 20:8 "Their part will be in the lake of fire, which is the second death."

18. Revelation 20:10

This coincides with the words of the prophet Ezekiel:

Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.<sup>19</sup> ◇

This coincides perfectly with the words of Christ when He tells us that he saves us from death:

...if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.<sup>20</sup>

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live”<sup>21</sup>

This coincides with John when he tells us that Christ saves us from perishing (a violent death in the lake of fire):

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish...<sup>22</sup>

Christ does not save us from the death of our bodies (the first death). It is appointed to everyone to die the first death:

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19. Ezekiel 18:4 ◇ Ezekiel goes on to say that the soul who sins but turns from sin will be saved. This turning from sin is called repentance and repentance is the result of a true commitment to Jesus Christ. “Easy believism” is certainly a reality because salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8,9) but at the same time “faith without works is dead”

20. John 8:51

21. John 11:25

22. John 3:16



Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.<sup>23</sup> ◇

Later, we will be resurrected and given a new body.

Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out— those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.<sup>24</sup>

And this coincides with all of the remaining 50 scriptures that teach death as the eternal state of the unredeemed.

If Ezekiel had wished to say that the soul that sins will die, there is simply no clearer words that he could use than “The soul who sins shall die.” The Hebrew word that he uses is מוֹת (“moot”), which means death plain and simple.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Hebrews 9:27 ◇ Here again is a testimony to the accuracy of scripture. The passage says that it is “appointed” to men to die once and after that the judgment. The word used is ἀπόκειται (“apokaytai”), which means “put away” or “stored up.” So the passage does not say that all men will die once; it says that one death is “reserved” or “stored up” for all men. The reason being, of course, that all men will not die the first death. Some will be removed from the world in the rapture of the church just prior to the commencement of the great tribulation.

24. John 5:28,29

25. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford Press, 1972), s.v. מוֹת meaning “die, of natural or other causes;” “die as a penalty;” “be put to a violent death;” death “inflicted by God.” † The word refers to various forms of death, as in any language, but unless it is used figuratively, it always means actual death. Also see Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Harris, Archer and Waltke (Moody Press, 1980) s.v. מוֹת, No. 1169, “This is a universally used Semitic root for dying and death.”

And if Christ intended to say that he saves us from death (eternal death), He could have used no clearer words than “Those who keep my saying will never see death”?<sup>26</sup> The Greek word that He uses is θάνατος (“thanatos”), which means death plain and simple.<sup>27</sup>

How then can the meaning of these words be changed without offending scripture?

### *Parable of Lazarus*

The Parable of Lazarus gives us insight into the afterlife. It describes life after death.

The parable (Luke 16:19-31) tells of a beggar named Lazarus who was spurned and ignored by a rich man. Both Lazarus and the rich man died. Their bodies died and their souls went into the afterlife. The soul of Lazarus went to a place of peace called Abraham’s bosom but the soul of the rich man went to hell but the two places were not so far apart that the rich man could not speak to Abraham.

The parable teaches torment in hell, but it does not teach that the torment is eternal and it does not mention the eternal state. It does not mention the eternal state because the eternal state does not begin until after the judgment and the judgment does not occur until the end of time (see Revelation 20:11-13).

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26. John 8:51

27. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. θάνατος wherein the word is defined as death as in “natural death,” “death as a penalty,” “death of Christ,” “natural death as a divine punishment,” “a manner of death” or “eternal death...”

Some people use the parable of Lazarus to teach that the word death does not really mean death in the Bible because after the rich man died he remained sentient (he could feel things like torture) and he could speak and he could reason.

This argument is meritless because the term “death” is not used to describe what happened to the rich man in hell. It is used to describe what happened to the rich man’s body when it died on earth. Life had ceased in the bodies of both of them but their souls survived and went to their respective places in the afterlife. The issue is therefore not what death is, but rather what has died. The bodies died and were buried but the souls were in the afterlife.

Since none of the scriptures that are used to support eternal torment for the unredeemed ever mention eternal torment,<sup>28</sup> the entire eternal torment argument rests upon a re-definition of death and upon scriptures that are said to teach eternal torment but do not.

Let us now examine some of those scriptures.

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28. See Appendix 2 *Scriptures Used to Support Eternal Torment*.

## Chapter 4

### **The Smoke of Their Torment**

THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT  
RISES FOREVER

REVELATION 14:10

**O**ne of the scriptures most often quoted to support the doctrine of eternal torment is Revelation 14:9-11.

And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand he also will drink the wine of the wrath of God which is mixed full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented day and night with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

This passage does not teach eternal torment for three reasons: 1) The passage is limited by its own terms to those who worship the beast in the end times, so by its own words it cannot refer to the unredeemed of all time; 2) it does not refer to the eternal state after death but instead to a condition on earth in the end times; and 3) it contains no statement of the duration of the torment.

1) At the beginning, the passage states that it applies to “anyone who worships the beast and his image” and at the end it states that it applies to “those who worship the beast and his image.” Therefore, the passage is clearly limited to beast worshipers and does not apply to all the unredeemed who have ever lived.

2) The passage does not refer to the eternal state. It refers to the condition on earth during the great tribulation. The fire and brimstone (sulfur) is not in hell; it is on earth. Jesus tells us that there will be literal fire and brimstone on earth, “the same as happened in the days of Lot:”

And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on

the day that Lot went out from Sodom<sup>1</sup>  
it rained fire and brimstone from heaven...<sup>2</sup>

3) There is no specified duration of the torment. The passage does not say that the torment is eternal and the great tribulation ends after 7 years. It says only that they will be tormented and that they have no rest day or night from their torment. It does not say how long this constant torment will continue.

Therefore, the passage cannot refer to the eternal state.

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1. The analogy here is to the rapture of the church. Shortly before the great tribulation referred to in Revelation 14:9-11, it will be as in the days of Noah before the flood and as in the days of Lot before the destruction of Sodom. Homosexuality will be a normal practice (Gen 19:38) and people will be living their normal lives but the wickedness of man will be great (Gen 4:4). In the days of Noah and Lot, a group of people were removed just before tragedy struck and in each case, the head of each group was identified as “righteous” (2nd Pet. 2:5,7; Gen. 6:9). So it is today. Christ is head of His church and He is righteous. Christ promises to remove us from the earth (Mt. 24:31; Jn 14:3; 1 Thess 4:16-18) and keep us from the hour of trial that is coming upon the world (Rev. 3:10). Exactly as in the days of Noah and Lot, the tragedy will be both unexpected and terrible. It will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2) and the tribulation at that time will be worse than has ever been or ever will be (Rev 3:10); and the heavens will pass away with a roar (2 Pet. 3:10). In that time men will long to die but death will flee from them (Rev 9:6). Therefore, He warns us to stay awake (Mt. 24:42) for we do not know when the time will come (Mark 13:32).

2. Luke 17:26-29

*Forever and Ever*

The phrase “forever and ever” does not refer to eternal torment, it refers to a column of smoke that extends as far as the eye can see. It does not refer to the duration of the smoke or the duration of the torment. It refers to an apparently infinite column of smoke.

The phrase “forever and ever” in the original Greek is exactly the same phrase that is used in Revelation 19:2,3, where scripture describes the destruction of the “great whore,” a city that was destroyed and “her smoke rose up forever and ever.” That passage pictures a column of smoke extending up as far as the eye can see, not a city that burns for the rest of eternity. There is no scriptural support for a city that burns for eternity.

The torture of the beast worshipers cannot continue for the rest of time because ultimately the earth and its works will be destroyed (Second Peter 3:10-12) and God will create a new heavens and a new earth where there will be no more mourning or crying or pain (Second Peter 3:13):

...wipe away every tear from their eyes;  
and there will no longer be any death;  
there will no longer be any mourning,  
or crying, or pain; the first things have  
passed away. (Revelation 21:4).

Revelation 14 also tells us that the torment of those on earth during the great tribulation will be witnessed by Christ and His angels. At that time Christ will be present on earth when He is revealed and He will be a witness to the great tribulation from heaven:

It will be just the same on the day that  
the Son of Man is revealed.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, Revelation 14:9-11 cannot refer to eternal torment.



## Chapter 5

### **Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction**

THESE WILL GO AWAY INTO  
ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, BUT THE  
RIGHTEOUS INTO ETERNAL LIFE

**MATTHEW 25:46**

THESE WILL PAY THE PENALTY OF  
ETERNAL DESTRUCTION

**SECOND THESSALONIANS 1:9**

When we come to a scripture that can have two meanings, we read it through the lens of our established doctrine and we choose the meaning that fits that doctrine. We do this because that is what the study of theology is. It is a search for meaning and continuity. And this is good, but the lens itself must be based upon scripture.

Matthew 25:46 teaches that those who do not turn to Christ for the forgiveness of their sins “will go away into eternal punishment...” If we read that scripture through the lens of eternal torment, we hear scripture saying that unbelievers will be tormented eternally.

But we hear the scripture teaching eternal torment not because it is teaching eternal torment, but because we expect it find it. But this scripture does not say eternal torment; it says eternal *punishment* and it does not say what that eternal punishment is and unless we are predisposed to conclude that the punishment is eternal torment, eternal torment is nowhere in the scripture. Matthew 25:46 does not identify the punishment because it does not have to. There are 50 other scriptures that tell us that the eternal punishment of the unredeemed is death. The eternal punishment is death.

But if death is the punishment, why does the scripture specify that the punishment is *eternal* when death is already eternal?

The passage specifies that the punishment is eternal because the punishment is death and the first death is far from eternal. The first death is only temporary because the soul survives the first death and later the bodies of the unredeemed will be resurrected and live again; but only to face judgment:

... an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment (John 5:29).

By specifying that the punishment (death) is eternal, the passage is differentiating between the first death and the second death. The first death is not eternal; but the second death is eternal.

This is why Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; the one who believes in Me will live, even if he dies.”<sup>1</sup> His soul will live even though his body dies. And when Christ said “If any man keep My saying, he shall never see death,”<sup>2</sup> He did not mean that we would never see *any* death. He meant that we would not see eternal punishment for sin, which is eternal death (the second death).

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1. John 11:25

2. John 8:51

### *Eternal Destruction*

And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power when He comes...<sup>3</sup>

This verse is very similar to Matthew 25:46, the eternal punishment verse. It says that unbelievers “will pay the penalty of eternal destruction.” Notice that Matthew 25:46 does not say “eternal punishing.” It says eternal *punishment*. And second Thessalonians 1:9 does not say “eternal destroying.” It says eternal *destruction*.

Both of these verses use the noun (punishment or destruction) and not the participle (punishing or destroying). The participle is a form of the verb (it does something) but the noun does nothing. It is simply the name of something. The difference is as great in Greek as it is in English. The words are spelled differently and they mean different things.

Scripture says that the destruction is eternal because it is permanent. Why then does the passage specify that the destruction is eternal? Because some destruction is only temporary. When bodies are destroyed in the first death that destruction is only temporary because they will be resurrected. Only the destruction in the lake of fire is eternal and permanent.

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resur-

rection of life, those who committed evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. John 5:28,29.

It is for this reason that scripture specifies that the second death is an eternal destruction.

So, why does scripture specify that it is destruction if it is just death? Because the underlying Greek word means death with a connotation of ruin<sup>4†</sup> and that is exactly what happens when an unredeemed man or woman has been judged and dies in a lake of fire. It is not “just a death.” It is a tragedy, the ruining of a life that, with Christ, would have been eternal.

Thus, the Greek grammatical structure of the phrases “eternal punishment” and “eternal destruction” make it clear that their English translations are accurate. They do not mean eternal punishing or eternal destroying. The words are nouns and they refer to things, not on-going action. The reader is directed to the full version of *Fate of Unbelievers* for a comprehensive treatment of the Greek syntax showing that these phrases do not mean eternal punishing or eternal destroying.

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4. † For instance, the word is used in First Corinthians 5:5 “I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

## Chapter 6

### **Their Worm Does Not Die**

THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND  
THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED

**MARK 9:48**

**A**nother argument for eternal torment is found in Mark 9 where Jesus warns us three times that if we sin we will fall into hell.

And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.<sup>1</sup>

But Mark 9 does not teach eternal torment for the following reasons:

1. The word “worm” means exactly that: worm. This word is never used to refer to people. So when the scripture says that their worm does not die, it is not referring to people. It is referring to worms.

2. The passages in Mark 9 do not say that anyone will be eternally tormented. They imply that there will be torment, but they do not specify exactly what the torment is nor do they state the duration of the torment.

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1. Mark 9:48

3. The passages refer to fire that cannot be quenched, but fire that is unquenchable is not necessarily eternal. The only fire that scripture specifies as eternal is the lake of fire. And the fires of hell are not the lake of fire.

4. The souls referred to in these passages are confined to hell, not the lake of fire. These are two entirely different places in scripture. Hell is a place of torment; the lake of fire is a place of death. It is synonymous with the second death.<sup>2</sup> The lake of fire is eternal; hell is not eternal because it too is cast into the lake of fire.<sup>3</sup>

5. The entire Bible states repeatedly that the end of the unredeemed is death and it never states that the final end of the unredeemed is eternal torment.

6. Christ was not saying that worms are people, nor was He teaching that there are eternal worms in hell. He was quoting from Isaiah 66:23,24 which tells of the fate of the enemies of God:

And they shall go forth, and look upon  
the carcasses of the men that have trans-  
gressed against Me: for their worm  
shall not die, neither shall their fire be  
quenched; and they shall be an abhorring  
unto all flesh.

Isaiah is prophesying that the carcasses of the enemies of God would be piled and left as a testimony of the cost of sin. Isaiah was referring to the eternal death of the enemies of God

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2. Revelation 20:14 "...This is the second death, the lake of fire."

3. Revelation 20:14 "Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire..."

and not to eternal torment because he specifies “carcasses” (dead bodies) of the men that have transgressed against God. The reason why their “worm does not die” is not because the worm are eternal but because there is a massive supply of bodies.

The picture described by Isaiah is a picture of Gehenna, which was an actual place outside of Jerusalem. Gehenna was a dump where refuse and dead bodies of criminals were thrown. It was continually burning.

Isaiah’s prophecy directly contradicts the doctrine of eternal torment because Isaiah says that the enemies of God will end up as dead corpses in a smoldering pile being eaten by worms. Whereas, eternal torment says that the enemies of God will be conscious sentient beings who are confined to the flames of hell. Both cannot be true.

Christ was analogizing hell to Gehenna and in doing so He was painting a picture of ignominious death. He was not teaching that there are eternal worms in hell that are eating living human beings who live eternally in flames. Not even Satan, who will be indeed tormented forever in the lake of fire is inflicted with eternal worms. Eternal worms in hell is one of the Catholic myths. There is no such thing as eternal worms.

## Chapter 7

### The Righteous Judge

THE DEAD WERE JUDGED OUT  
OF THOSE THINGS WHICH  
WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS,  
ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS

REVELATION 20:12

God is a righteous judge who judges everyone based upon the life that each one of us lives. God judges each one of us out of the books and according to our deeds.

...the dead were judged from the things  
which were written in the books, accord-  
ing to their deeds.<sup>1</sup>

But in the end, all souls who have not trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins will receive a death sentence and will die.

Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of  
the father as well as the soul of the son is  
Mine. The soul who sins will die. Ezekiel  
18:4.

The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23).

The concept of God's justice fair and although the final state of the unredeemed is death, everything that precedes that death is part of God's judgment as well. Every judgment on every person is therefore different. Eternal torment, however, would have everyone receiving the same punishment as Satan. This is neither logical, nor consistent, nor scriptural nor just.

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1. Revelation 20:12



If we sin, He tells us that there is way out. There is a Savior who died in our place. Those who heed that warning and turn to Jesus Christ are saved from eternal death. Those who do not will die in the second death, never to be resurrected again. But eternal torment, the most horrible of all conceivable punishments is reserved for the most horrible of all entities: Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet:

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone...[and will be] tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10).

That is not to say, however, that the unredeemed simply die and do not have to face consequences for their sins. Each one of them will suffer through a stay in hell before the final judgment is rendered and the second death is applied. Hitler, who created World War II or Himmler who designed and implemented the holocaust cannot escape his crimes with a bullet or a vial of poison. We live in a moral universe and in the end we will all will face our Creator.

But what of those evil men who turn to Christ? Do they escape? Yes, everyone who turns to Christ escapes. But the deeper and the longer they wade into sin the less likely it is that they will be inclined to sincerely turn to Jesus Christ and ask for the forgiveness of all that they have done. Why? Because the farther they go the more they justify themselves and harden their reason against the existence of a just God. It is safe to assume that Hitler did not attend an alter call before he committed suicide.

One example of an evil man who did turn to Christ is John Newton. He was a slave trader who sold stolen lives for a profit. But when he saw the futility of attempting to justify what he was doing, and saw the sin that he had committed, repented sincerely and came to Jesus. He went on to write the Christian hymn Amazing Grace. And when he reflected on the evil that he had done he saw God's grace as truly amazing.

Some have argued that the death described in the Bible is an easy out for those who have committed serious sin. But spending a millennium in hell and then being thrown into a lake of fire is no easy way out.

## Chapter 8

### Substitutionary Atonement

ETERNAL TORMENT  
CONTRADICTS THE DOCTRINE OF  
SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement teaches that the punishment for sin is death<sup>1</sup> and that Christ took that punishment for us.<sup>2</sup> In a spiritual sense, His death was our death.<sup>3</sup> It is in this way that He paid the death penalty for us. He was not a distant advocate of paid fine for our crimes. We were united with Christ when He died and in Christ when He was resurrected. His death was our death and His resurrection was our resurrection. When atoned for our sin, He was our substitute in the most profound sense of the word.

This is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. It arises from a progression of the following scriptures:

1. The wages of sin is death;<sup>4</sup>

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1. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death." Also see Appendix 1

2. Isaiah 53:4 "Surely He took on our infirmities and carried our sorrows...He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." Romans 5:8 "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

3. Romans 6:8 "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him..."

4. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death." See Appendix 1 for all 50 scriptures that say death is the ultimate penalty for sin.

2. Christ, who had no sin, became sin for us;<sup>5</sup>
3. Christ bore ours sins on the cross,<sup>6</sup> and suffered the consequence of sin that we deserved;<sup>7</sup>
4. Christ died for us;<sup>8</sup>
5. We were united with Him in the likeness of His death.<sup>9</sup>◇

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5. Second Corinthians 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"

6. First Peter 2:24 "He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." First Peter 3:18 "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

7. Isaiah 53:4-6 "He was pierced through for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

8. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

9. Romans 6:5-11 "...We have become united with Him in the likeness of His death...knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him...even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." Romans 6:6 "Our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." Romans 6:5-11 "...We have become united with Him in the likeness of His death..." Romans 6:3 "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Second Timothy 2:11 "For if we died with

6. His death was on our behalf;<sup>10</sup> and
7. Through His death, we have been redeemed and forgiven.<sup>11</sup>
8. Our penalty for sin was death,<sup>12</sup> and Christ paid it. He “died for us”<sup>13</sup> and “[tasted] death for every man.”<sup>14</sup>
9. We were in Christ in his resurrection.<sup>15</sup>

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Him, we will also live with Him” These verses show that the redeemed were spiritually united with Christ when He died and that being with Him in His death is something more than simply identifying with His death. ♦ These scriptures bring us as close as possible to being part of Christ’s death without being “in Christ” when He died. This is because it was His death that provided us with the possibility of being “in Christ.” He had to die first because prior to His sacrifice our sins remained. After He died we became spiritually “in Christ” and were resurrected with Him. See Col. 3:1, Eph. 2:6 (raised with Christ); 1 Cor. 1:2 (sanctified “in Christ”); 1 Cor. 15:22 (made alive “in Christ”). We were born again (made spiritually alive) in Christ as a *result* of His death.

10. Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus ... that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

11. Colossians 1:14 " In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"

12. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death."

13. Romans 5:8 " God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

14. Hebrews 2:9

15. Colossians 3:1 "If you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above..."

These scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ's death paid the penalty for our sin. His death was effectively our death because we were united with Him in His death. He died in our place. He was our substitute.

However the death of Jesus Christ was not permanent, as the second death of the unredeemed will be permanent. Jesus died and was resurrected 3 days later.

The reason why He was resurrected because 1) Christ had no sin of His own.<sup>16</sup> He was the unblemished Lamb of God and therefore capable of paying for the sins of the world by His death,<sup>17</sup> and 2) Because His death paid for the very sins for which He died (our sins).<sup>18</sup> Therefore, eternal justice required that He be resurrected.

It is for this reason that the definition of death cannot be altered. If death, as the final end of the unredeemed is not actually death but eternal life in hell instead, then Jesus did not pay our penalty because the penalty that He paid was death, not eternal torment.

Therefore, if the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is true, then Christ paid our sin-penalty by His death and the doctrine of eternal torment is error.

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16. Second Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

17. John 1:29 "Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

18. Romans 5:8 " God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The doctrine of eternal torment and the doctrine of substitutionary atonement cannot both be true. Christ tells us plainly that He saves us from death. Christ tells us that if we keep His saying, we will never see death. Therefore, it is death from which He saves us, nor eternal torment.

Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep  
My saying He shall never see death.<sup>19</sup>

In His entire ministry Christ never mentions eternal torment and there is no scripture that says Christ saves us from eternal torment. Indeed, *no scripture even mentions eternal torment except in relation to the eternal punishment of Satan* (Revelation 20:10).

Ultimately, both sides of the argument must look to the word used in Ezekiel 18:4 and the word used when the unredeemed stand on the very precipice of the lake of fire in Revelation 21:8. Both of those words (Hebrew and Greek) mean ordinary death. Teaching otherwise is to alter scripture.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, if the unredeemed, body and soul, do not die in the second death, what does? Eternal torment tells us, "Nothing. Nothing dies in the second death because the final death is not really death and no one ever really dies no matter what the word means."

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19. John 8:51

20. Revelation 22:18 "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book."

The belief that the death of the unredeemed is not really death but eternal life in hell is somewhat equivalent to the belief that communion wine is not really wine but blood, even though it tastes exactly like Cabernet.

Both of those beliefs were created for the purpose of harmonizing scripture with an erroneous doctrine. But they do not create harmony; they create disharmony. They compromise the integrity of scripture and destroy faith.

The error of eternal torment has the God of all justice and all love resurrecting the dead for the purpose of burning them alive forever and inflicting on them the same punishment as Satan. This error can be accomplished only by changing the meaning of all of the Greek and Hebrew words for death to mean eternal life in hell—but only when they refer to the eternal state of the unredeemed.

Those who endorse the doctrine of the eternal torment are unquestionably sincere and in good faith. But they are mistaken. The doctrine of the eternal torment of the unredeemed is error.





## Appendix 1

### Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed

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#### SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

EVERY PASSAGE THAT REFERS  
DIRECTLY TO THE ETERNAL STATE  
OF THE UNREDEEMED REFERS TO  
THAT STATE AS "DEATH."

The Hebrew and Greek words in this Appendix are the words for death that are used in the original manuscripts.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament repeatedly warn that sin causes death. There are 50 of these scriptures and they are all listed here.

However, these 50 scriptures cannot be warning us about the first death (the death of the body) because everybody has to die the first death, "It is appointed unto all men to die once."<sup>1</sup> The death of the body cannot be avoided by avoiding sin or by obtaining forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Our body will die whether we trust in Christ or not.

However, there are two deaths. There is the death of the body as reflected in Hebrews 9:27 and there is the death of the resurrected body and soul as reflected in Revelation 21:8. It is clear that these scriptures do not refer to the first death. Therefore, they must refer to the second death. The second death is God's final judgment against sin and sinners.

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1. Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

And, by implication, some of these scriptures also refer to sin causing spiritual death during this life as in "You were dead in your trespasses and sins."<sup>2</sup>

Once sin is committed, death is inevitable, "The soul that sinneth it shall die."<sup>3†</sup> Either the sinner himself will die or Jesus Christ will have died in his place.

Thus, all of the 50 scriptures listed here refer to the second death, which is the death of the soul as described in Ezekiel 18. All of these scriptures (from Genesis to Revelation) inflexibly warn that sin causes death. None of them mention eternal torment. There is no scripture that says the wages of sin is eternal torment. The wages of sin is always death.

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2. Ephesians 2:1

3. Ezekiel 18:4 † Ezekiel 18 draws a distinction between the soul and the body and teaches that it is the soul that dies from sin, not the body.

## Old Testament

### Genesis 2:17

מוֹת

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

The Hebrew word used here and translated die means exactly that, to die, not to be eternally tormented.<sup>4</sup>

This is the first scripture that teaches that death is the result of sin. Adam and Eve, who had been united with God, sinned by eating of fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This sin caused spiritual death in them and as a result of this spiritual death, their union with their Creator was breached and they were expelled from the garden. Thereafter, all of their progeny were born spiritually dead,<sup>5</sup> and therefore all were destined for the second (final) death.<sup>6</sup> The only way for any human who is cognizant of right and wrong to avoid the second death is to trust in Christ<sup>7</sup> Who became sin for us<sup>8</sup> and died the

4. See *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. מוֹת defined as “to die of natural or other causes, die as a penalty

5. Romans 5:12 “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men...”

6. Revelation 21:8 “...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

7. John 8:51 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” Christ is not saying that those who keep His saying will never die a mortal death; He is saying that they will never die the second (final) death.”

8. Second Corinthians 5:21 “For He hath made Him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

second death for us.<sup>9</sup> Salvation is accomplished by being born again.<sup>10</sup> The sin that caused spiritual death was the disobedience of Adam and Eve when they ate the fruit. But why? They had no fallen nature until *after* they ate the fruit. And why was the sin of Adam passed to his progeny? The answer lies in the fruit itself. Satan was correct when he told Eve that the fruit would make them as gods, knowing good and evil. But what he did not tell her was that if the knowledge of good and evil is wedded to the fallen nature of man the result is a man who can do either good or evil, a man who can—and inevitably will—sin. When the knowledge of good and evil is wedded to the fallen nature of man, man becomes an agent of righteousness or unrighteousness—inevitably both of them.

If man did not know the difference between good and evil, his choice to do either evil or good is meaningless. But with the fruit of the tree, his acts of righteousness are eternal. But he can and will sin and when he does, he will die eternally because sin kills. He is responsible for all that he does, both the good and the bad. He is man. He can curse God or bring Him glory but without the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he can do neither. It is no accident that he is as he is, and in the book of Genesis all of mankind, like a miniature portrait painted by the Master's hand, is encapsulated.

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9. Romans 5:8 “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

10. John 3:7 “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

**Job 20:6,7**

**אבד**

Knowest thou *not* since of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked *is* short, and the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; *yet*, he shall perish for ever ...”

This passage refers to the final end of the wicked. The word translated perish means to die, to be completely exterminated.<sup>11</sup>

**Psalms 1:6**

**אבד**

For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.<sup>12</sup>

**Psalms 37:20**

**אבד**

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.

This is a direct reiteration that the end of the wicked is death, ruined, destroyed, annihilated, vanish.<sup>13</sup>

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11. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. **אבד** defined as “perish, die, be ruined, destroyed, annihilated, vanish

12. Id.

13. Id.

**Psalm 52:1,5**

**נחץ**

Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God *endureth* continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; *and* lying rather than to speak righteousness...God shall likewise destroy thee for ever He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living.

This passage tells of the eternal fate of those who propagate the sin of the tongue. The Hebrew word that is translated “destroy” is accurately translated and means to root out, pull down<sup>14</sup> or, “the destruction of the life of an individual.”<sup>15</sup>

**Psalm 56:11,13**

**מוֹת**

In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid of what man can do unto me ... For thou hast delivered my soul from death ...

This word (“maveth”) means plain death.<sup>16</sup> Both the text and the context (“I will not fear what man can do unto me”) show that the death referred to in this passage refers to the death of the soul. That is, God has

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14. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. **נחץ**

15. *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*, R. Harris, G. Archer and B. Waltke (Moody Press, 1980)

16. A *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. **מוֹת** defined as “death, death by violence, state of death.”

delivered my soul from death despite what man has done to my body. Thus, the passage shows that God has delivered the writer's soul from death. The death of the soul is the second death.

The word is also used to refer to both physical and spiritual life:

I call heaven and earth to record this day  
against you, that I have set before you life and  
death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose  
life, that both thou and thy seed may live.<sup>17</sup>

**Psalm 92:7****שׁמַד**

When the wicked spring as the grass, and  
when the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is  
that they shall be destroyed forever.

The final end to the wicked is eternal, permanent, destruction. The Hebrew word used here means to be destroyed in the sense of being exterminated.<sup>18</sup> The word "...always expresses complete destruction or annihilation..."<sup>19</sup> The addition of the word "forever" in this scripture foreshadows Paul's statement in Second Thessalonians 1:9 that the unredeemed will be "punished with an everlasting destruction." There is no grammatical basis in either verse to argue that the destruction contemplated here could ever mean a destruction that is never completed but continues on for eternity. Here again is eternal destruction. Passages such as this one leave no question whatever as to the ultimate fate of the wicked: total and complete destruction. This concept is diametrically opposed to the concept of continued sentient existence forever.

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18. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. שׁמַד defined as "be exterminated, destroyed."

19. *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Strong, James (Thomas Nelson, 2010), s.v. 8045, p 245 Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary.



**Psalm 116:8****מוח**

For thou hast delivered my soul from  
death<sup>20</sup>...

Here is another scripture teaching that 1) there is a soul and it can die, and 2) it is death, not eternal torment, from which the soul is delivered. Eternal torment for unredeemed souls, being a doctrinal error, is not found anywhere in scripture. The doctrine is wholly conclusory. It is based upon conclusions derived from incomplete scripture references. For example, the doctrine cites "eternal punishment" as support, when the phrase eternal punishment does not state what the punishment is.

**Psalm 145:20****שמד**

The Lord preserveth all them that love him:  
 but all the wicked will He destroy.

Here we find insight into God's character. It is the heart of man that God looks to. This same concept is repeated in the New Testament in John 14:21, 23, where love, is evidenced by obedience. Wickedness and wicked doers, however, will in the end be destroyed, not eternally tormented. The Hebrew word used here is the same word used in Psalm 92:7. It means complete destruction or annihilation.<sup>21</sup>

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20. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. מוח defined as "death, death by violence, state of death."

21. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. שמד defined as "be exterminated, destroyed." See also *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Strong, James (Thomas Nelson, 2010), s.v. 8045, p 245 Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary stating that the word "The word "...always expresses complete destruction or annihilation..."

**Proverbs 19:9**

**אִבַּד**

A false witness shall not be unpunished, and *he that* speaketh lies shall perish.

The Hebrew word that is translated "perish" means to die or to be ruined.<sup>22</sup> Here the word could mean either or both. It could mean "ruined" with respect to the effect of lying on the false witness' reputation, or physical death as a punishment. But when compared with Revelation 21:8, it probably means eternal death:

"...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."<sup>23</sup>

Note the consistency in scripture. There are 900 years between these two verses and yet they could be in the same chapter.

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22. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. **אִבַּד** defined as "perish, die, be ruined, destroyed, annihilated, vanish

23. Revelation 21:8

**Isaiah 1:28**

**כלה**

... they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. (KJV)

The word that is translated consumed means to be spent, at an end<sup>24</sup> or to perish.<sup>25</sup> The word does not mean torment.

Another translation:

... and those who forsake Jehovah will perish.”

(Translation by C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch,  
*Commentary on the Old Testament* (William  
B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted  
1975), vol. 7, page 107, s.v. Isaiah 1:28.

The word that is translated consumed or perish means exactly that: consume or perish. Torment is a different word entirely.

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24. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. **כלה** defined as “to be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, spent.”

25. *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Strong, James (Thomas Nelson, 2010), s.v. 3615, p 245 Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary.

**Ezekiel 18:4****מוֹת**

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth shall die<sup>26</sup>...

In this passage we hear directly from the mouth of the Creator speaking through the prophet. He admonishes Israel to cease using the proverb “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” The forbidden proverb means that the sons will pay for the sins of their fathers. God first establishes His authority by stating that the soul of the father and the soul of the son belong to Him. This fact establishes that souls do exist and that they are not the same thing as bodies. This differentiation is present throughout Ezekiel 18.

Thus, when scripture says in verse 4 that the soul that sins shall die, it is referring to the soul, not the body, and it is saying that 1) it is the soul, not the body, that is responsible for sin, and that 2) the soul will die as a result of sin. The word used for “die” is the Hebrew word **מוֹת**. The meaning of this word is simple death.<sup>27</sup> It is never used to denote torment of any kind. This death can occur by any effective means. The warning that sin causes death to the soul could not be clearer than in Ezekiel 18. Only by repetition could scripture make this message any stronger. Scripture then repeats the doctrine and the word in Ezekiel 18:13, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, 28 and 31. Death is the final consequence of sin, not a living torment. There is no scripture that alters the very clear terms of Ezekiel 18:4.

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26. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. **מוֹת** defined as “death, death by violence, state of death.” or “to die of natural or other causes, die as a penalty.”

27. Id.

A definitive work on Hebrew discusses the meaning of the word death in Ezekiel 18:4. And refers to it as “equivalent to suffering death as a punishment...the complete destruction with which transgressors are threatened by the law,” as in Deut. xxx.15 (compare Jer. xxi.8; Prov. xi. 10)”<sup>28</sup>

In this chapter of Ezekiel and later scriptures in the New Testament, we see an illustration of the marvelous consistency of scripture. Ezekiel speaks of the death of the soul, but does not say when and how it occurs. Six hundred and fifty years later, Christ teaches that all those who keep His word will never see death (John 8:51), but does not state how that can be. Fifty years later John writes in Revelation and reveals that there are two deaths. In the end, the unredeemed will suffer the second death (Revelation 21:8), which is the death of the soul. That death is the מוֹת that is described in Ezekiel 18. It is death that is described in all of these scriptures, not eternal torment.

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28. (C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1975), vol. 9, page 249, sub Ezekiel 18:1-4.

**Ezekiel 33:11**

**מוֹת**

As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from you evil ways; for why will ye die?<sup>29</sup>

This passage teaches that 1) God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked and 2) unless the wicked turn from sin they will die. Obviously He is not speaking of physical death, because all men die at least once.<sup>30</sup> He was speaking of eternal death (Revelation 21:8). The same word for death that is used in Ezekiel 18:4 is used here. Again we see that the final penalty is death.

**Hosea 13:9,14**

**מוֹת**

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me *is* thine help...I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death...<sup>31</sup>

Hosea has castigated Israel for idol worship. Now the Lord speaks through Hosea and refers to the consequence of sin, which is eternal death. Ultimately Christ will offer redemption from that consequence. The reference is to the second death and the Hebrew word means death pure and simple.

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29. Simple death. See *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. **מוֹת** defined as “death, death by violence, state of death.” or “to die of natural or other causes, die as a penalty.”

30. Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"

31. Simple death. See *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testa-*

**Obadiah 16**

For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance...

The prophet tells of the eternal fate of the unredeemed and that their salvation is with the Jews. For the heathen it shall be as though they “had not been.” This is the opposite of eternal torment that teaches continued existence.

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*ment*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London, 1972) s.v. מוֹת defined as “death, death by violence, state of death.” or “to die of natural or other causes, die as a penalty.”

## New Testament

**Matthew 3:12 (Luke 3:17)**

κατακαίω

His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Some argue that since the fire of God is unquenchable, those who are cast into it will burn forever. But this passage teaches that the unquenchable fire will “burn up” the chaff, ie, destroy it by burning. This is a clear statement of what will happen to the unredeemed in the lake of fire. They will be “burned up” not tormented eternally. Likewise, The fact that the fire is unquenchable does not imply that those who are destroyed or burnt up in it will never really be destroyed or burnt up. The plain meaning is precisely the opposite. It means that they will be destroyed and burnt up.

The Greek word for “burn up” in this passage is κατακαύσει, which means to destroy by burning or “burn up.” It is the same word used in Second Peter 3:10<sup>32</sup> denoting complete destruction. Neither the Greek word nor the English translation of it connotes eternal burning but instead means destruction by burning. There is a way to express in biblical Greek the concept of an eternal destroying, but it is not found in scripture. This word should be distinguished from καύσις which refers to a burning for a purpose other than total destruction, eg. a cauterization.<sup>33</sup>

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32. Second Peter 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

33. Hebrews 6:8 (the only use in scripture)



**Matthew 7:13**

ἀπόλλυμί

Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

Here the scripture states again that sin leads to destruction.

**Matthew 10:28**

ἀπόλλυμι

Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both the soul and body in hell.

Here the scripture refers to the eternal fate, which is the destruction of the body and the soul. Note that “destroy” in this verse is equated with “kill.” The verse refers to the destruction or the killing of souls. Contrary to this scripture, the doctrine of eternal torment teaches that souls are never destroyed and never killed.

This scripture refers to death of souls as occurring in hell. Accordingly Revelation states that hell is cast into the lake of fire, “which is the second death.”<sup>34</sup> The souls who inhabit hell are eventually judged and cast into the lake of fire,<sup>35</sup> which is the second death for them<sup>36</sup> and eternal destruction as well.<sup>37</sup> Thus the second death is the death of the resurrected body and the soul. There is no scripture that refers to anything occurring to the resurrected body, the soul or the spirit following the second death.

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34. Revelation 20:14

35. Revelation 20:15 “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire..”

36. Revelation 21:8 “... which is the second death.”

37. Second Thessalonians 1:9 “...who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.”

**Matthew 13:40**

κατακαίω

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned [consumed] in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Again, we have the tares being burned up (consumed) not tormented. The reference to being burned up is a reference to the fact that the unredeemed will be cast into the lake of fire where they will die a "second death."

**Luke 13:2**

ἀπόλλυμι

And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Here, Jesus addresses the eternal state directly. He teaches that men who perish (die tragic deaths) are not necessarily any more sinful than the rest of us. But, even so, if the rest of us do not repent and turn from sin then we will perish as well. We may well die a peaceful death in bed rather than perishing in an accident, but if we do not repent of our sin we will perish eternally. Jesus was not speaking of perishing on earth in the first death; He was speaking of perishing in the second death. Thus, the second death is a *perishing*. It is dying a tragic and violent death a death that occurs as the result of being thrown into the lake of fire. The second death is a perishing (a dying); it is not eternal torment. It is exactly what Jesus says it is and that is "perishing." And it is exactly what John 3:16 says it is, "Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." The Bible never mentions eternal torment except for the eternal fate of Satan.

**Luke 19:27**

κατασφάξατε

But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

In this scripture, Christ, referring to the judgment, places the enemies of the Lord before Him and kills them. This treatment follows Christ's statement in John 8:51 that "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death [the second death]" as well as John 3:16, John 6:51 and John 10:28.

**Luke 20:35,36**

ἀποθνήσκω

But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more...

This verse is an astounding testimony to the accuracy of scripture. Here Christ states that the redeemed cannot die "any more" (ΚΙΥ). The word that is translated "any more" is ἐτι ("eti") which refers to something that won't happen again. For instance in Mt. 5:35 the word is used in this way, "Why should you bother the Teacher any further [eti]?" Long before Revelation was written, Christ knew that there would be a second death for the unredeemed, but not for the redeemed. So in this scripture, He is careful to insert "eti" to ensure the accuracy of His statement: the redeemed do die, but they will not die "again," as in the second death.<sup>38</sup>

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38. Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy is the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power..."

**John 3:16**

ἀπόλλυμι

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.

God gave His only begotten Son that we might have everlasting life rather than perishing (death). It is perishing from which Christ saves us, not eternal torment. The word used here implies death by destruction.

**John 6:50, 51**

ἀποθνήσκω

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever...

Here Jesus tells us what He saves us from. He saves us from dying. He is not saying that He will save us from the physical death of our bodies, because we will all die (Hebrews 9:27). He is saying that He saves us from the death of who we really are, the death of our soul. He is referring to the second death that was to be revealed in Revelation 21:8 some 30 years later.

**John 8:51, 52**

θανατος

Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps  
My word he shall never see death. Then the  
Jews said to Him, Now we know that you have  
a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets;  
and You say, If anyone keeps My word he shall  
never taste death.

Here Jesus teaches that those who do not keep his word will never see death. But all men die. So, what does He mean here? There are two deaths. The first is the death of the body; this is a death that all men must die. The second death is the judgment against sin and the final, eternal death of the soul. Jesus is saying that He will deliver us from the second death.<sup>39</sup> He is teaching that those who keep His word will avoid the second (and final) death described in Revelation 20:14, 21:8. The word for death used in this passage means plain death and the word used in Revelation 21:8, the second death, is the same word. The doctrine of eternal torment on the other hand teaches that the final judgment is not death. It is instead a continued existence, a body or a spirit kept alive for the sole purpose of torment forever. For Christ to say that He delivers us from dying makes no sense whatever if He really delivers us from never dying (being tormented forever in eternal fire).

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39. Id.

**John10:28**

ἀπόλλυμι

And I give them eternal life, and they shall  
never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them  
out of My hand.

In this passage again, the alternative to eternal life is not eternal torment but death by destruction (perishing). Christ saves us from perishing not burning forever. This passage is translated "never perish" in KJV. But the phrase is also translated "perish forever."<sup>40</sup>

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40. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. ἀπολλυμι, definition 2. destroyed, ruined, "Esp. of eternal death" referring to John 10:28.

**John 11:26**

ἀποθνήσκω

And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me  
shall never die.

Jesus is not teaching that the physical body of anyone who believes in Him will never die because all men die. It is appointed to all men to die once.<sup>41</sup> He is teaching that the soul (the real person) of anyone who believes in Him will be spared the second death.<sup>42</sup> Why? Because He gives them eternal life.<sup>43</sup> Those to whom He does not give eternal life are already spiritually dead<sup>44</sup> and will ultimately die eternally in the second death. It is for this reason that the Apostle John writes in Revelation 21:8 that all those who do not trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sin (unbelievers) will be cast into the lake of fire “which is the second death.” Thus the soul of every person who dies without Christ will die in the second death. It is therefore death from which Christ saves us, not eternal torment. As with John 8:51, it makes no sense for Christ to say that He delivers us from dying, when He really delivers us from never dying (eternal torment).

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41. Hebrews 9:27 “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” (NASV)

42. Revelation 20:6 “Blessed and holy is the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power...”

43. First John 5:11 “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

44. Colossians 2:13 “And you, being dead in your sins...”



**Romans 1:32**

θάνατος

Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God that those who practice such things are deserving of death...

This passage states plainly that the judgment of God for sin is death. The word used here means plain death. There is no mention of eternal torment.

**Romans 5:12**

θάνατος

Therefore just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

This passage is the core of New Testament theology. It teaches that sin results in death. See *The Effect of the Doctrine of Eternal Torment on Other Doctrines*:

**Romans 5:21**

θάνατος

So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The two alternatives are eternal death or eternal life. The word for death in this scripture means plain death.

**Romans 6:16**

θάνατος

Do you know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

Sin leads to death. The word for death used here means plain death.

**Romans 6:21**

θάνατος

What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

The final end of sin is eternal death.

**Romans 6:23**

θάνατος

The wages of sin is death.

This is the classic scripture that teaches that sin leads to death. The word used here means plain death, not eternal torment. This word is not mysterious in the least. It is the same word that Paul would have used when in Greece to describe what happened to the corpse of a dead cow by the side of the road to Corinth: death. The animal will never live again. It cannot move or feel anything. That is what thanatos means. And Paul uses the same word in this passage to describe what happens to the soul as the result of sin. Thanatos of the soul is what Jesus Christ abolished for all those who trust in Him.<sup>45</sup>

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45. Second Timothy 1:10 "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"

**First Corinthians 1:18**      ἀποθνήσκω

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The alternative to the cross is perishing, not eternal torment.

**First Corinthians 15:26**      θανάτος

The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

Christ taught that He would save us from death (John 8:51, 11:26). Then He was crucified and resurrected. His resurrection was proof that He could save Himself from death and proof that He can save us from death. Christ defeated death for us because we were “raised [from the dead] with Christ” (Colossians 3:1). Our enemy was death, not eternal torment.

**First Corinthians 15:52-54** θανάτος

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

This scripture promises that Christians (the redeemed in Christ) will be resurrected from the dead to eternal life and receive an imperishable resurrected body (a body that will never die). The unredeemed will also be resurrected from the dead. But their resurrection will be for the purpose of judgment.<sup>46</sup> The resurrected body of the unredeemed will not imperishable like the resurrected body of the redeemed; it will be perishable (it can die). We know this because the scripture quoted above tells us that it is the redeemed in Christ who will receive an imperishable resurrected body, not the unredeemed. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that the unredeemed will receive an imperishable body. Also, the unredeemed face a judgment that scripture calls the "second death."<sup>47</sup> It is therefore clear that the perishable bodies of the unredeemed die in the second death. That is the reason that the judgment is called the second death. They do not live forever in eternal torment; they die. It is for this

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46. John 5:29, 30 "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, and those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment..."

47. Revelation 21:8

reason that this scripture teaches that the victory is over death. Eternal torment is never mentioned.

**Second Corinthians 1:9**      θάνατος

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves,  
that we should not trust in ourselves, but in  
God which raiseth the dead; Who delivered us  
from so great a death...

Jesus Christ saves from death (the second death), not eternal torment. We will all die, but only those who have not trusted in Christ will die twice (first the body and then the soul). This passage is Paul's restatement of Christ's statement in John 8:51, "Verily, Verily I say you. If a man keep My saying, he shall never see [the second] death."

**Second Corinthians 2:16**      θάνατος

To the one we are the savor of death unto  
death; and to the other the savor of life unto  
life.

Here we find encapsulated the sum of it all. Life is either a progression of spiritual death moving finally to eternal death (death unto death) or it is a progression of spiritual life to eternal life (life unto life). Here, as in all similar scriptures, we find the two contrasted. It is always and inflexibly either life or death (eternal life or eternal death); it is never life or eternal torment.

**Second Corinthians 7:10**      θάνατος

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

The sorrow of the world (sin without repentance and Christ) leads to death.

**Second Timothy 1:10**      θάνατος

... but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *Who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Paul is not teaching here that Christ abolished physical death, because physical death will not be abolished until God throws death and hell into the lake of fire and creates a new heavens and a new earth where there is no more death.<sup>48</sup> There is only one other death that can be abolished, and that is the second death. This passage shows that Christ has abolished death, not eternal torment. Christ abolishes the second (eternal) death by giving eternal life. The doctrine of eternal torment on the other hand argues that despite this scripture and others, Christ did not abolish death because with the doctrine of eternal torment, no one ever dies, but instead continues to in conscious suffering forever. Christ never mentions eternal torment. The Old Testament never mentions eternal torment. The New Testament does mention but only in Revelation 20:10 and that is to describe the final, eternal state of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet.

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48. Revelation 21:4 " He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

**Second Thessalonians 2:9,10** ἀπόλλυμι

*Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

Here we find another very straightforward statement that those who are not saved will perish. The verse goes on to say that “they might be saved.” But saved from what? Scripture tells us: saved from perishing (death).

This passage teaches that all one must do to receive the love of the truth is to receive it. One does not manufacture it; one receives it. It is offered spiritually and at all times. Therefore, one must refuse it in order not to have it. It is neither a doctrine or a religious system that is offered here; it is truth that is offered and that truth is embodied in Jesus Christ.<sup>49</sup>

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49. John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

**Hebrews 2:9**

θανάτος

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Is not physical death that this passage addresses; Jesus Christ did not taste physical death for every man. Every man will taste physical death for himself. This passage addresses the second death. This passage teaches that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man. He died for every man.<sup>50</sup> In doing so, He became sin for us and in doing so made us righteous.<sup>51</sup> Originally the death penalty was ours<sup>52</sup> but He paid it for us. Thus in this passage the author of Hebrews states that Jesus tasted death, not eternal torment, for every man. The final punishment is death, not eternal torment.

Jesus tasted death for *every* man, not just some. Therefore the love of the Truth is offered to every man,<sup>53</sup> and this Truth is Jesus Christ.<sup>54</sup> Thus, one has only to receive the Truth in order to have it.

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50. Romans 4:25 “Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.”

51. Second Corinthians 5:21 “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

52. Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death...”

53. Second Thessalonians 2:9-10, *supra*

54. John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am...the truth...”



**Hebrews 2:14**

θανάτος

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Satan has the power of death (not the power of eternal torment), because he leads men away from Christ and causes them to die in the second death.

**James 5:20**

θανάτος

Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death...

The soul of the sinner is saved from death, not from eternal torment. If the soul of the sinner is saved from eternal torment and not death, then why does this passage say that the soul is saved from “death”?

**Second Peter 2:9, 12-13**

φθείρω

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished ... but these ... shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness ...

In this unmistakable statement against sin, Peter tells explicitly what will happen to sinners on the day of their judgment. He states that they will utterly perish in their own corruption. Another way to translate the word for perishing in their own corruption is “death” or “destruction.” He then states that this is the reward of unrighteousness. Again, the reward for unrighteousness is perishing or destruction, not eternal torment.

**Second Peter 3:9**

ἀπόλλυμι

The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Here, Peter states, with absolutely clarity, the will of God. It is God’s will that none should perish, that none should die - meaning the second death.

Salvation is a free gift that is continually offered to all men. All one need do is to receive it. <sup>55</sup>

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55. Second Thessalonians 2:10 “...they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

**First John 5:16**

θάνατος

If anyone sees his brother sin a sin *which* is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

This passage teaches that sin leads to death.

**Revelation 1:18**

θάνατος

*I am* He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Christ tells us that it is death and hell that He saves us from. He saves us from the hell that the rich man experienced in the parable of Lazarus and He saves us from death, the second death, that comes after hell itself is cast into the lake of fire. Invariably we find that there is no mention of eternal torment here or anywhere else in scripture, except as it applies to Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet. This is but another reiteration from the lips of Our Lord Jesus Christ that it is death and hell from which He saves us, not eternal torment. The Greek word that He uses to describe what happens is the classic Greek word for simple death.

**Revelation 2:11**

θάνατος

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

The final state of the unredeemed (as referenced in John 8:51) is the second death. There is no scripture that equates the second death with eternal torment for unbelievers. The Greek word for death here is has the plainest and simplest possible meaning; it means exactly that: death.

**Revelation 20:6**

θάνατος

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power ...

This passage teaches that the saved, those who take part in the first resurrection, are not subject to the second death.

**Revelation 20:14**

θάνατος

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This passage states that God will cast three things into the lake of fire. He will cast death, hell and whosoever was not found in the book of life (unbelievers) into the lake of fire. Scripture refers to casting into the lake of fire as the second death on three occasions: in Revelation 20:6 and in Revelation 2:11 and in this verse. Scripture is saying that each of these three will be destroyed in the lake of fire. Revelation 21:4 tells us specifically what happens to death in the lake of fire: it says “there shall be no more death.” Thus, when death dies in the second

death and ceases to exist. There is no further mention of hell after hell is thrown in to the lake of fire and other scriptures cited herein state that the unredeemed will have the same fate: death and eternal destruction. Eternal torment is nowhere to be found.

### **Revelation 21:8**

θάνατος (“thanatos”

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The lake of fire is the second death (the second “thanatos”) to everyone included in this passage. The second death is their part in the lake of fire. Satan, however, is not included in this passage, because he has a different part. His part is not death. His part is eternal torment.<sup>56</sup> It is for this reason that when Satan is cast into the lake of fire, there is no mention of a second death or even a first death, because Satan will not be permitted to die. This is the reason why scripture differentiates between the unbeliever’s part (Revelation 21:8) and Satan’s part (Revelation 20:10).

The structure of Revelation 21:8 shows that the pronoun “which” (ὅ) refers to “part” (το μέρος) and not to “lake” (τή λίμνη). The reason for this is that ὅ (which is either masculine or neuter) was used here rather than ἡ (always feminine) to refer to the neuter μέρος rather than the feminine τή λίμνη. If the Apostle had intended “which is the second death” to refer to “lake,” he would have used the feminine pronoun ἡ rather than

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56. Revelation 20:10 “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

the masculine/neuter pronoun *ó*. Therefore, the passage states that the part that the unredeemed have in the lake of fire is the second death. The word "death" in this passage means eternal death,<sup>57</sup> not eternal torment.



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57. Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian literature* (University of Chicago Press, Second Ed. 1958) s.v. *θάνατος*, "Eternal death...In Rv this (final) death is called *the second death*"

## Appendix 2

### Scriptures Used to Support Eternal Torment

The following scriptures are used to support the doctrine of eternal torment for unbelievers.

#### Old Testament

##### Psalm 86:12,13

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore  
... For great *is* thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell."

This scripture is used to prove that the soul that sins will be condemned to hell. Hell does exist and souls of the unredeemed will be tormented there but not eternally. Indeed, hell itself will be destroyed in the lake of fire.<sup>1</sup> It is certainly true that the soul that sins will be condemned to hell, but in the end the soul that sins shall die<sup>2</sup> because the wages of sin is death<sup>3</sup> and when that soul is cast into the lake of fire, scripture refers to it as the "second death."<sup>4</sup>

Psalm 86:12,13 does not mention eternal torment and therefore does not teach it. There are several references to hell and death in Psalms. None of them mention eternal torment.

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1. Revelation 20:14 " And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death"

2. Ezekiel 18:4 "...the soul that sinneth, it shall die." See also Ezekiel 18:20, 27, 32.

3. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death."

4. Revelation 21:8 "...shall have their part in the lake of fire...which is the second death."

**Isaiah 1:31****בער**

And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

The verses that precede this verse refer to the worship of idols fashioned from oak (verses 29, 30).<sup>5</sup> see the burning as a total consumption of both the idol and the idolater, “the idol [is] the spark which sets this mass of fiber in flames, so that they are both irretrievably consumed. For the fire of judgment, by which sinners are devoured, need not come from without.” We again discover the accuracy of scripture. This verse compliments its mate which was written millenniums later. There we find that unredeemed sinners will be thrown into the lake of unquenchable fire and be destroyed for eternity (Second Thessalonians 1:9), “...which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). The fire is indeed unquenchable but that does not mean that what it burns is not fully consumed.

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5. See C.F.Keil and F.Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Eerdmans Publishing, 1975 reprint) Isaiah 1



### **Isaiah 66:24**

And they shall go out 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.

Christ quotes this passage in Mark 9:44. The passage speaks specifically of corpses, not sentient conscious living people. No one is writhing in pain in this verse; they are all dead. The word “worm” in the Greek means exactly that: “worm.” This picture is a pile of dead bodies smoldering and eaten by worms as a message conveying exactly what scripture states repeatedly, that the wages of sin is *death*. This concept is taken from Gehenna, which was the Valley of Hinnom outside of Jerusalem where the Canaanites had performed child sacrifice. It was a place of horror, death and unspeakable sin. Perhaps the bodies here are the bodies of those who performed those sacrifices.

### **New Testament**

#### **Matthew 7:23**

And then I will profess to them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.

This verse has been quoted as proving that death in scripture does not mean death, but instead means separation from God. The verse simply does not say that. Jesus Christ excludes from Himself those who never knew Him, but this verse refers to souls who pretended to know Him but did not. It makes no mention of the final state of the unredeemed.

**Matthew 25:41**

Then shall He say unto them on the left hand,  
Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting  
fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

The everlasting fire referred to here is the lake of fire. The lake of fire is required to be everlasting because Satan will be tormented forever in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). However, just because the fire is eternal and the ordinary unbeliever is thrown into it following the judgment does not mean that the ordinary unbeliever will receive the same punishment as Satan. On the contrary, Revelation 21:8 states that the unbeliever's part in the lake of fire is a "second death" whereas Satan's part is "eternal torment."<sup>6</sup>

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6. Revelation 20:10 " And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

## Matthew 25:46

And these will go into everlasting punishment,  
but the righteous to eternal life

Those who teach eternal torment argue that this passage means that the unredeemed will never really die, but be burned forever in an everlasting punishing. But this is grammatically incorrect: word does not mean punishing; the word means punishment.<sup>7</sup> The scripture does not say what the punishment is. Many presume that the punishment is eternal torment, but not only does this verse not say mention eternal torment, the is only one verse that mentions eternal torment and that verse describes the eternal fate of Satan. The everlasting punishment referred to in Matthew 25:46 is death, the second death, which is what Revelation 21:8 describes to be what happens to unbelievers when they are cast into the lake of fire. Matthew 25:46 specifies that the punishment (the second death) is “everlasting” in order to distinguish it from the first death, which is not everlasting.

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7. There are four ways to express on-going punishing. See Comment Chapter 4

**Mark 9:43,44 (Matthew 8:18)**

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Those who argue for eternal torment argue that the word “worm” means 1) people, or 2) it means eternal worms that are eternally tormenting people who never die. This teaching is incorrect for the following reasons: 1) The Greek word that is translated “worm” means the same as the English word: it means “worm.” In this passage, Jesus was quoting Isaiah 66:24 that graphically represents death as the final end of sin: Isaiah states “... they shall look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” The Isaiah passage speaks of dead carcasses and their literal worms. 2) There is simply no scriptural support for eternal worms in an eternal hell torturing people who never die. If this were the case then God would be resurrecting dead sinners for the sole purpose of judging them and burning them alive and eaten by worms forever because they never came to Christ. Not even Satan is eaten by worms in addition to be tormented in the lake of fire.

This passage mentions unquenchable fire because it is referring to the fires of hell. Although the first of hell are unquenchable, hell not eternal and they end when hell itself is cast into the lake of fire and destroyed in the second death.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Revelation 20:14 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

However, the fire of the lake of fire is eternal because it will torment Satan for eternity (Revelation 20:10). The unredeemed, however, are judged for their own sins and their punishment for sin is death.<sup>9</sup> Their final end in the lake of fire is death.

### **Luke 13:28**

“... depart from Me, all *ye* workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when *ye* shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all other prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

This passage teaches only that the unredeemed will be aware of what they missed. It does not mention eternal torment.

### **Luke 16:23**

And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

This parable speaks of the torments of hell but there is nothing in this passage that says that those torments will last forever. Therefore, this passage does not teach eternal torment.

The torments of hell do exist, but these torments must end because death, hell and the unredeemed are all destroyed in the second death (Rev. 20:14). All of the unredeemed will face a final “second death,”<sup>10</sup> not eternal torment. Scripture repeatedly warns of this second death from Genesis through Revelation.

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9. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death."

10. Revelation 21:8 " But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

None of these scriptures indicate that this “death” is actually eternal torment:

It is the eternal death of the soul that all unbelievers must face, not eternal torment (Revelation 21:8):

Scripture states that death, having been subjected to the second death itself (Rev. 20:14) ceases to exist (Rev. 21:4). The same word is used to describe what happens to the unredeemed and to hell.

### **Second Thessalonians 1:9**

These shall be punished with everlasting destruction...

The Greek word here means “destruction” not destroying. The word translated “destruction” is a noun, not a participle. It describes a one-time occurrence and not an on-going act repeated for eternity. The passage means that destruction in the second death will be permanent and everlasting, meaning that there is no hope of a resurrection or spiritual existence as there was after the first death. There are other constructions of the Greek that would mean eternal destroying, but they are not used here. Ultimately, those who reject Christ will receive exactly what many anticipate: eternal destruction, ie. eternal death.

The alternative Greek grammatical constructions are examined in:

**Jude 7**

... as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

There is no question that the lake of fire is eternal fire because Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet will be tormented in it forever.<sup>11</sup> The question is therefore not whether the fire is eternal, but what will happen to the unredeemed when they are thrown into it. Simply because Satan is punished eternally in the lake of fire does not mean that all unredeemed humans will be condemned to the same fate as Satan. Indeed, scripture repeatedly states that each person will be judged according to his *own* works (Revelation 20:12,13), not Satan's works. Scripture teaches that they (their souls) will be punished in hell and later their souls will die the second death in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Jude does not mention eternal torment nor does it teach it.

**Jude 13**

... raging waves of the sea foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Darkness forever is a picture of eternal death. There is no mention of torment in this verse. This verse states that the darkness is *reserved* for the unredeemed, not that they will live eternally in it.

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11. Revelation 20:10 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

## Revelation 14:9-11

If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand ... 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.

By its own terms (both at the beginning of this verse and at the end of it), this passage refers only to those who worship the beast and receive the mark of the beast. Therefore this passage cannot refer to all of the unredeemed. It is limited to those who worship the beast.

That being said, although the torment of the beast worshipers is day and night, the passage does not say how many days and nights the punishment will last. That is, the phrase “day and night” means that it is constant; it does not mean that the constancy is eternal. The fact that the smoke will rise “forever” does not mean eternal torment; it means smoke rising forever.

Smoke rising forever refers to distance rather than time.

The context of this verse is judgment upon earth in the Tribulation period. The warning comes from an angel speaking to men on earth and it immediately follows the proclamation that the Great Whore (a city) has been destroyed, and the smoke of its burning rises forever as well (Revelation 19:2:3). Like the description of the fate of the Great Whore on earth, this passage is a description of the fate of beast-worshippers in the Tribulation. The passage refers to a particular torture of the Tribulation period in this life and not in the final state.



The argument that the unredeemed are being tortured forever because the smoke is rising forever is conclusory at best. Although the passage does refer to the smoke of their torment going up forever and ever, the passage alludes to Isaiah 34:9 where God's vengeance falls upon Edom and "the smoke thereof shall go up forever and ever." That passage does not mean that Edom will never stop smoking; it means that the smoke rises as far as the eye can see.

Another use of the same words to describe smoke rising forever is found in Revelation 19:3 that refers to the smoke of the great city that will rise forever. The reference in Revelation 19:3 and in Revelation 14:9-11 is to distance, not time. The great city will not smoke forever and neither will Edom because God will create a new heavens and a new earth where the first heaven and the first earth will pass away (Revelation 21:1) and burning cities will be no more. Thus the reference to a massive column of smoke, not smoke from a never ending fire.

### **Revelation 19:2,3**

...For true and righteous *are* His judgments:  
for He hath judged the great whore, which did  
corrupt the earth with her fornication, and  
hath avenged the blood of his servants at her  
hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her  
smoke rose up forever and ever.

This verse, cited by The Catholic Encyclopedia as scripture that explicitly teaches eternal torment, mentions neither eternal torment nor the unredeemed. Instead it deals with the physical destruction of a city. Her smoke rising up forever and ever is a physical column of smoke.

## Revelation 20:10

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

This verse is cited by The Catholic Encyclopedia as explicit scriptural proof of eternal torment for the unredeemed, but it makes no mention whatever of the unredeemed. It describes only the eternal torment of Satan, the false prophet and the Antichrist (the “unholy trinity”). This verse is irrelevant to the final state of the unredeemed. The treatment of the unholy trinity is radically different from the treatment of the unredeemed. This is the only scripture in the Bible that mentions eternal torment.

