

For God so loved the world that He gave
His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes
in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

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“Buy the Truth and Sell it Not.”

Proverbs 23:23

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This edition was completed by Charles R. Chesnutt, Sr. on October 6, 2024.

This book is dedicated to Mary, whose help and encouragement
have been invaluable.



Destiny

God gives the power to choose;

So we can win or we can lose.

But He predestinates as well;

How both are true, I cannot tell.

But this I know and know full well:

No one has to go to hell.

C.R. Chesnutt

Forward

The author, Charles Chesnutt, Sr. holds a Masters Degree in Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary and a Juris Doctorate from Louisiana State University. He is currently a practicing attorney in Dallas, Texas. His opinion regarding the erroneous Christian doctrine of eternal torment for the unredeemed has not been endorsed by Dallas Theological Seminary.



This book is a series of discussions and comments designed to show that scripture does not teach that the unredeemed dead will be tormented eternally for their sins. Instead, scripture teaches that the unredeemed are confined to hell pending final judgment and following the final judgment, they will die in what scripture calls the "second death."

The book approaches the topic by addressing the scriptures that are most often cited as support for eternal torment and shows that they do not support the doctrine. The doctrine of eternal torment is wholly conclusory and there is no scripture in the entire Bible that teaches it directly. Support for the doctrine rests upon the presumption that the doctrine is true and the citation of scriptures that do not mention the doctrine but are broad enough to include to it. Only one scripture in the Bible that mentions eternal torment and that scripture describes the eternal fate of Satan. All references to the Bible refer to the accepted canon of scripture only, not the Apocrypha.

Proponents of the doctrine circumvent the fact that *every* scripture in the Bible that refers to the eternal punishment of the unredeemed calls that punishment death. They accomplish this circumvention by re-defining death to mean "separation from God" or "eternal life in hell," but only where the word refers to the eternal state of the unredeemed. That definition is not contained in Greek or Hebrew lexicons.

The doctrine of eternal torment has blurred the very crisp scriptural progression of life after the death of the unredeemed. It has resulted in a theology that is filled with contradictions. And in its haste to create the pen-ultimate horror of punishment and pain, the doctrine ignores the fact that scripture teaches two deaths, the second being the eternal death of the unredeemed. The second death is rarely taught in evangelical churches because the doctrine of eternal torment cannot explain what dies in the second death.

In the process of writing this book, I was struck again and again with the matchless consistency of scripture when it is read for its plain meaning. Its inerrancy and divine authorship became more and more evident as I went deeper and demanded verification with ever increasing severity. What emerged was a paradigm of magnificent and intricate organization and accuracy. The inerrancy and divine authorship of scripture are *everywhere* in scripture—hidden in plain sight.

This book is written on two levels. Each chapter is a discussion (question and answer) concerning particular scriptures used to support eternal torment. Each is followed by a comment that discusses the scripture in more depth.

This book was written to be read in electronic format (a pdf file), but it may also be printed. Each electronic page contains links to each chapter and indicators to show the reader where he is. This method makes the entire book instantly available from any page.

I began this book after attempting to find a scripture that teaches that the unredeemed will be tormented eternally. I quickly discovered that there is no such scripture and was drawn into deeper study.

If the reader is reluctant to question a doctrine that has so long been taught as true, he will find this book to be instructive. Honest judgment with an open mind cannot be rendered until both sides are fully understood.

Over a period of fifteen centuries, scripture has reiterated its warning that *sin kills*. It is true. Sin kills but sin does not cause eternal torment. There is an end to the existence of the unredeemed and that end is called the "second death" because that is exactly what the second death is: death.

When we finally face our Maker, He may tell us that the 50 scriptures that refer to the eternal state of the unredeemed as "death" do not mean what they say. But I doubt it.

Charles R. Chesnutt, Sr.
July 4, 2022

How to Navigate this Book

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The book is designed to be read in page view (page by page instead of scrolling). You can change to page view by clicking the page view icon on your reader.

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Symbols used in this book:

* A chapter with sub-contents

† Comment on the text of a scripture

◇ Comment on the accuracy of scripture

↻ End of a chapter

↻ End of subchapter

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Chapter 1

An Unlikely Conversation

REVELATION 14:10

It was a February morning in the year 1954, or perhaps it was 1953. The exact date is uncertain and no one was paying attention anyway to a conversation that took place on Sunday morning outside a country church somewhere in the hills.

The young woman wore a pink and white bonnet and the young man was rather unremarkable. Both, however, had the honor of being committed Christians to whom the presence of Christ had been made known.¹ They had been talking about the church picnic for several minutes when the conversation took an unexpected turn.

“Well, John.” Said the young lady, “I understand why you don't like it, but I personally believe that if you don't trust in Jesus, God will resurrect you after you die, throw you into hell and burn you alive for the rest of eternity.”

“Really?” He replied. “And where did you learn this?”

“It's in the Bible,” she said, rather indignantly. “You read the Bible, don't you?”

“I read the Bible every day,” said John. “But I do not find that in scripture.”

“It's all through scripture,” she said. “All you have to do is read it. Jesus talked more about hell than anyone. Everybody knows God will send you to hell if you don't trust in Jesus. That's how much God hates sin.”

“Really,” said John, “I must have missed it. Can you show it to me?”

“Certainly,” she said. “It's in Revelation 14:10. It says that they will be tormented for the rest of eternity.

“Who?” Asked the man.

“Who what?”

1. See John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

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“Who will be tormented for the rest of eternity?”

“All those who didn’t trust in Jesus, of course,” replied the young woman.

“I cannot find where that verse says that all those who didn't trust in Jesus will be tormented for the rest of eternity.”

“I can read it to you.” She replied. “Hand me your Bible.”

“Please,” he replied, handing her his Bible, “read it to me.”

“It's as plain as the nose on your face, John. Here it is: 'and He will 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 goes up forever and ever; and they have not rest day and night...'² Are you satisfied now?”

“I don’t think you read the entire verse. What does the rest of the verse say?”

“Ok....” She replied.

"Look right above where you have just read."

"Okay. 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand...'"

“So, it doesn’t apply to everybody who didn't trust in Jesus. It applies to everybody who worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand.”

"It can apply to the rest of the unbelievers, too."

"Not really. Look at the verse just after it. It says 'They have no rest day or night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.' So, if you read the whole verse, you have both before it and after it saying that the words in between apply to beast worshipers. Only beast worshipers. Read it for yourself."

“Ok, so this particular verse may not actually say that it applies to all unbelievers. But you have to read all the other verses together with this one.”

“But you agree that this particular verse does not apply to all unbelievers. Is that right?”

2. Revelation 14:10,11

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"This particular verse does not actually specifically apply to all unbelievers. But there are other verses." She said.

"But if we want to find a verse that teaches that God will torture all the unredeemed for eternity, it will have to be a different verse. Is that right?"

"Yes, and there plenty of others."

"And what about these beast worshipers. Where will they be tormented?" John asked.

"In hell, of course."

"Maybe. But this verse is in Revelation and the beast worshipers are people worshiping the antichrist on earth. Could it be that they are tormented on earth in the great tribulation?"

"Of course not. This verse proves they are burned alive for eternity in hell." She said.

"Even though it does not mention hell?" Asked the young man. "It says that they will be tormented 'in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb.' Are the holy angels and Jesus Christ in hell?"

"Probably not. But they will be tormented day and night with fire and brimstone. That sounds like tortured in hell to me."

"Sounds more like its talking about the beast worshipers being tormented on earth during the great tribulation."³† Said John.

"That could be, but it also says they will be tortured day and night forever."

I understand that they will be tormented day and night with fire and brimstone" said John. "But the verse does not say forever. The verse does not say how long the day and night torture will continue."

"Well," she said, "It does not specifically say that they will be tormented for eternity, but where there is smoke there is fire and the smoke of their torment is rising forever. The verse means that they are tormented forever because their smoke rises forever. And the torment must be happening because they are smoking!"

3. Matthew 24:21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall" † Most conservative evangelical scholarship teaches that the great tribulation will occur during the end times, preceding the return of Jesus Christ to earth.

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"I understand how you can say that," said John. "But there is another meaning. The word forever in both scriptures can mean a seemingly unlimited distance, as well as an infinite expanse of time. It is speaking of a column of smoke that rises as far as the eye can see. We say the same thing in English, 'It goes up forever.'"

"Well, something's got to be burning for that smoke to be there," she replied.

"It means smoke rising as far as the eye can see," said John. "It means the same as Revelation 19:3 which is translated as 'Her smoke rises up forever and ever' The same words are used. If it meant that the smoke was rising for eternity, then God would be burning a city for eternity and there is no basis in scripture for cities that burn forever.

"On the contrary, Scripture says that God creates a new heaven and a new earth⁴ and that there will be no more death and no more pain.⁵ This would mean no cities will be burning forever." He said.

"Well, there are plenty of other scriptures to say that everybody who doesn't believe in Jesus is going to be burned alive in hell forever!"

"But not this one," said John. "And actually, there is no scripture that says anyone other than Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet will be tormented forever.⁶ And even that one does not say forever, but rather it uses words that can mean eternity or not.

"What do you mean?" She asked.

"I mean there are two words that could have been chosen. The first means a very long time or it means an eternity. The second always means eternity; it never means a segment of time. And it was the first that was chosen, not the second.⁷ And its the same thing in Revelation 14:11.

4. Revelation 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ..."

5. 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."

6. 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."

7. Revelation 14:11 "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." † The phrase "ascendeth up for ever and ever" can mean forever and ever or it can mean segment of time. *A Greek-En-*

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"So it could it mean either one," she said.

"When you have a scripture that could mean one thing or the other, you should read that scripture for what it says. Then you should look to other scriptures to complete that one scripture. That's what you should do with Revelation 14:10."

"Name one. Name one that completes Revelation 14:10. I mean I want one scripture that says the unredeemed will not be tormented eternally." She said.

"Which one do you want me to name?" There are more than 50 of them.⁸ Perhaps the best known is Romans 6:23 that says the wages of sin is death."

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁹

There was a long pause. "Well that's because death and eternal torment are the same thing." She replied.

"Well, no. They are not the same because a dead body is not conscious and it has no physical sensation. You cannot torment someone who is dead. Death never means torment. Death and torment are two entirely different words with two entirely different meanings. Are you saying that they mean the same thing?"

"Yes. They mean the same thing. So, when Paul said the wages of sin is death, he didn't really mean death."

"So, when he said that, he meant that the wages of sin was not death but life, and not only that but pain in that life forever?"

"Yes." Replied the girl. "But I would not call it life. You have consciousness, so you know what has happened to you, and you have feeling because you have to feel pain. When Paul said the wages of sin is death he did not mean that you die, not the way you are thinking. He meant that the wages of sin is not death but being forever in pain."

"Does the Bible ever directly state that the unredeemed will be conscious and be able to feel for eternity?" He asked.

glish Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (ed) (Second Edition 1958) s.v. αἰών. The same is true for Revelation 20:10 (αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων), it can mean eternity, but it also can mean at segment of time.

8. See *Appendix 2*, Scriptures Teaching Death as Final Penalty for the Unredeemed.

9. Romans 6:23

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"Yes. Everybody will because nobody ever dies. Don't you know that. Everyone lives forever. You will either go to heaven or to hell forever."

"So you can't die?" He asked.

"Certainly you can die. It's after you die that you go to heaven or hell. Nobody stays dead."

"Ok. So why did he say that wages of sin is death? Because if the result of sin is death, you sin, you die. It was a warning."

"So what if its a warning?"

"A warning that sin causes you to be eternally tortured?"

"Yes. A warning that sin causes death and that you will be tortured eternally."

"I see. And that is included in the word for death?"

"So what about Lazarus?" She responded. "In the parable was a man who died and then rose again and was tortured in hell."

"Thats true. There is a stay in hell that is necessary for every unredeemed sinner. We are not told how long it is or what each sinner must go through. We are only told that he must go through it."

"Well then." She said, "There you have it. He has already died. He is in hell. He is tortured. What is there not to believe?"

"After he is in hell, there is the judgment." He said.

"Ah. That is correct. I forgot about the judgment."

"After the judgment. What happens to him?" He asked.

"His torture continues for eternity."

"No." He said, "he dies again. He dies a second time."

"There is only one death." She said.

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"No. There's two.¹⁰ And when the unredeemed dies the second time, his soul dies. That is the end of that man. Why would there be a second *death* if nothing dies? Why have any *death* if nothing dies? And after the second death there is nothing. Absolutely nothing. But be careful," he said "it is omitted in the concordance that follows some Bibles."

"Okay. Well I have to go." And she turned and went raising her hand to say goodbye."

And she turned and went.



10. Revelation 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8

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Comment on Smoke Rising Forever

Revelation 14:9-11 is a sandwich between two identical scriptures, one before it and one after it. Each of these scriptures specifically limit the passage to those who worship the beast in the end times. Therefore, under no circumstances can Revelation 14:11 refer to the general class of all of unredeemed "Comment on Smoke Rising Forever."

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If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink the wrath of God...and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and forever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.¹

In addition to these two limitations, the passage does not refer to eternal torment:

1. The context shows that the passage refers to a condition on earth during the tribulation, not the eternal state. Here is the context:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...²

2. It does not mention eternal torment. It is quoted as support for eternal torment only because some people presume that eternal torment is its meaning.

3. The passage deals with *living* persons. If this passage means that all those with the mark of the beast will be tormented eternally, then it would mean that once someone received the mark of the beast he

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1. Revelation 14:9-11

2. Revelation 14:8-10

couldn't turn to Jesus Christ for salvation even if he wanted to. That would contradict Revelation 22:17^{3†} which provides that any living soul may turn to Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

4. The use of the present tense in the passage shows that the passage refers to a present condition, a condition on earth during the great tribulation. When scripture uses the present tense, it is indicating an on-going action in the time period indicated. The verb used is προσκνουντες ("prosknountes") and it is translated "worship," not "did worship" the beast or "had worshiped" sometime in the past. It refers to those who currently worship the beast during the time period indicated in the passage. Those who currently worship the beast will be currently plagued. The time period is the end of days because it is during those days when the beast arises and meets his just end.⁴ Therefore, the passage refers to the physical consequences of those who worship the beast during the time of the end (the great tribulation). The tribulation will be so terrible that many will wish for death but cannot die.⁵

5. The reference to fire and brimstone means exactly that: fire and brimstone. Brimstone is burning sulfur. Sulfur and brimstone is a component of gun powder and other explosives.

6. The phrase "forever and ever" refers to a column of smoke (the smoke of their torment). The reference, however is not to time but to distance. "Forever and ever" is a translation of the phrase αἰωνος αἰωνων ("aionas aionon"), which literally translated means "ages of ages." It is a colloquialism that can refer to either time or distance and when it refers to eternity it can mean eternity or it can mean a segment of time. For instance, Revelation 19:2,3 uses the same phrase to refer to distance smoke rising exactly as in Revelation 14:11:

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.

3. Revelation 22:17 "And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." See also Romans 10:13 "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." † It is certainly true, however, that no man can come to the Savior unless the Father draw him (John 6:44), but these verses taken together mean that there is no restriction upon whom the Father may draw. The Lord does not wish "for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (Second Peter 3:9) and there is no scripture that says Revelation 22:17 does not apply here.

4. Revelation 13:1 "And I stood on the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea..."

5. Revelation 9:6 "And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them."

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And again they said Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever.⁶

The column of smoke was so high it could be seen far off:

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come.⁷

The reference to the burning of the great whore in Revelation 19:2,3 means that the smoke will rise up as far as the eye can see; it does not mean that the city will continue to burn forever. There are no eternally burning cities in scripture.

Another reason why the city does not burn forever is that the previous age will pass and there will be a new heavens and a new earth that has no burning cities. Isaiah says, "Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight! For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."⁸ Also, in Second Peter "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."⁹

The same meaning holds true when the same phrase is used in Revelation 14 to refer to the "smoke of their torment." It does not mean that the smoke will never stop. It means that the smoke will ascend as far as the eye can see.

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever [αἰῶνας αἰῶνων]; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.¹⁰

The statement that they have no rest day or night does not mean that they will live forever in that torment. It does not mean that they will never die or that after their death and after their final judgment they will be effectively burned alive forever. And it does not mean that their bodies shall not be included in the prophecy of Isaiah 66:23,24.¹¹◇

6. Revelation 19:2,3 (KJV)

7. Revelation 18:10

8. Isaiah 65:17

9. Second Peter 3:13

10. Revelation 14:9-11 (KJV)

11. ◇ See infra

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7. References and allusions to constant torment during the great tribulation are elsewhere in Revelation as well.¹² These references simply do not change the meaning of the term "second death,"¹³ where the word for death (thanatos) means conventional, garden variety, common death.¹⁴ If eternal torment is to be believed, the word means eternal existence and torment here; and death elsewhere.

8. The Greek word aione (as in "forever and ever") means an "age" or an "era," which is a time period that has a beginning and an end.¹⁵ Aione is the root for the English word eon or "age," which is a long period of time with a beginning and an end. Scripture uses aione to mean "world."

For instance:

Be not conformed to this world [age, "aione"]:
but be ye transformed by the renewing of your
mind...¹⁶

...and the care of this world [age, "aione"], and
the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word...¹⁷

...but whosoever speaketh against the Holy
Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in
this world [age, aione], neither in the world to
come.¹⁸

...the harvest is the end of the world [completion
of the age, aione].¹⁹

12. Revelation 9:6 "And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them." See "eternal torment" in Appendix 1.

13. Revelation 21:8

14. If All of the quotes given to support the second death (Revelation 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8) use the word θάνατος (thanatos): garden variety death.

15. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. αἰών defined as age, time, very long time or eternity, segment of time, age ("as well as everything non-Christian; it includes the striving after worldly wisdom").

16. Romans 12:2

17. Matthew 13:22

18. Matthew 12:32

19. Matthew 13:29

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And her smoke rose up for ever and ever
[aione].²⁰

Thus, "ages of ages" can refer to either time or to distance.

However, there is another word that scripture uses to denote eternity in all of its uses. That word is αἰώνιον²¹ ("aionion"), eternity, endless time. The Holy Spirit did not choose to inspire the use of αἰώνιον (aionion) in Revelation 14, but instead chose αἰών ("aione"). The reason is that the Holy Spirit intended to draw a picture of a column of smoke that rises as far as the eye can see, exactly as in Revelation 19 or, alternatively, smoke that rises until the end of the age.

Now compare to Isaiah 66:23,24 that makes an explicit reference to the fate of all those who have transgressed against God.

Then they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind.²²

In this verse we find encapsulated the biblical end of all of the unredeemed. We have the unquenchable fire, the abhorrence, worms eating the corpses, all of which is a monument to the tragic and eternal result of sin. But the passage is not a testimony to eternal torment.²³ Quite the opposite. It refers to corpses (dead people); it does not refer to living, semi-dead sentient people locked forever in an eternal furnace.²⁴

It is a testimony to the accuracy of the other forty nine verses that teach death as the final end of the unredeemed. The transgressors in this passage are not alive; they are dead corpses eaten by worms. The fire and the smoke In Isaiah 66:24 may well continue for the rest of eternity,

20. Revelation 19:2,3

21. See A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. αἰώνιος defined as eternal, without beginning or end, without end. This word always means eternal, forever or eternity.

22. Isaiah 66:24

23. It's not mentioned here.

24. Isaiah 66:23,24 ♦ Note: It is the corpses of men that they see, not the living persons or the specters as is taught by those advocating eternal torment. The word is ירנבב (vowel points omitted) it means carcasses, dead bodies or corpses. Gesenius, William as translated by Robinson, Edward, by Brown, Francis, Driver, S.R., and Briggs, Charles A., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford University Clarendon Press, 1972), the only meaning of רנב is corps, carcass.

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but the fire and smoke are not elements of their punishment. They are monuments to God's silent scream that echoes through scripture like the muffled wail: Sin kills! Why won't you listen!

Summation

The Isaiah passage is explicit, but the passage in Revelation 14 has been read in different ways. When the concept of torture and smoke of the torture ascending forever are read together, some conclude that they are referring to eternal torment. But this reading requires the reader to ignore the context of the phrase ("smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever"), to ignore the twice stated limitation to the fate of the beast worshipers, to ignore the Great Tribulation and ignore the other meaning for the column of smoke. This understanding of the passage is conclusory at best. And where a biblical passage is conclusory, we must consider other (non-conclusory) scriptures to determine its meaning.

And there is no scripture that explicitly teaches eternal torment for the unredeemed^{25†} and there are 50 non-conclusory scriptures that explicitly teach that the ultimate end of the unrepentant sinner is death.²⁶ Therefore, the conclusion that the passage refers to smoke rising as far "as the eye can see" is far more consistent than the alternative.

Also, Isaiah 66:24 explicitly refers to the enemies of the Lord as "corpses." Their end is death, the second death²⁷ not eternal torment. That is why scripture states that their part in the lake of fire will be the second death. Indeed, if they do not die in the second death, what does?²⁸

If one believes that Revelation 14:11 refers to the eternal torment of all of unredeemed mankind, one must also believe the following:

25. † The passages that are most often used to support the doctrine of eternal torment are listed in Appendix 2. None of these passages contain a direct statement upholding eternal torment. They are all conclusory and they rest upon each other. Direct support for eternal torment is not found in scripture. To find it, one must go to the Apocrypha (the Catholic Bible) and the reports of Catholic visionaries such as Lucia Santos of Fatima who claimed to have seen hell during World War 1 when she was 10 years old. See further discussion in Comment on Chapter 2.

26. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

27. Revelation 21:8

28. See Comment on Chapter 6, *What is Death* and Appendix 3, *Word Study on Death.*"

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One must believe that the verse applies to all of the unredeemed even though the application of the verse is limited to beast worshipers only.

One must believe that the phrase used to describe the smoke rising means smoke rising for an endless time, although the same words are used again in Revelation to describe the smoke rising from a city—not for an endless time.

One must believe that the same word used in Revelation 19:2,3, refers to a city that will burn forever even though there is no scripture or scriptural concept that teaches that any city will burn forever or that the lake of fire smokes.

One must believe that because the smoke rises for an endless time, the torment that causes it must also continue for eternity, although scripture makes no mention of the duration of the torment itself.

One must believe that although Revelation 21:8 and numerous other verses (Appendix 1) specifically state that death (not eternal torment) is the final result of sin, those verses don't really mean death but instead an eternal sentient state of being.²⁹

One must believe that the verse describes life after death when the context of the passage is teaching about the great tribulation.

One must believe that if this verse refers to all those who worship the beast being tormented eternally it is the only verse in the Bible where the Father is precluded from drawing someone to Jesus Christ, ie means that they are lost before they die.

All of the scriptures that are used to argue eternal torment as the eternal state of the unredeemed are broad enough to include either eternal death or eternal torment.³⁰ But all of the scriptures that speak directly to the eternal state of the unredeemed are uniform. They all say that the eternal state of the unredeemed is death.³¹

Why would a just God resurrect everybody but the Christians and burn them alive forever? Think about that. And for any *one* sin?

Why would infinite justice punish every unbeliever with the same punishment as Satan?

29. See Comment on Chapter 6, *What is Death*

30. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Used to Support Eternal Torment*

31. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

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The doctrine of eternal torment asks this question, "Hath God really said that the wages of sin is death?"³²† And then it answers the question with "No. The wages of sin is not death. The wages of sin is eternal torment." This is an evident error. The wages of sin is death.

When we read the Bible for its plain meaning, all circumventions, gaps and inexplicable conclusions resolve themselves into a magnificent and consistent structure of eternal Truth. But reading the scriptures through a distorted lens of eternal torment results in re-defining "death" to fit the parameters of myth.³³ It results in gross inconsistencies in fundamental doctrines,³⁴ and a skewed misunderstanding of who God actually is.³⁵



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- 32. Romans 6:23 (KJV) † See also Appendix 1 that lists all the scriptures that say that eternal death is the consequence of unforgiven sin.
 - 33. See Chapter 6, Comment on *What is Death?*
 - 34. See Appendix 7, *The Effect of the Error on Other Doctrines*
 - 35. See Chapter 3, *Comment of the Righteous Judge*

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Chapter 2

The Parable of Lazarus

IN HELL HE LIFT UP HIS EYES, BEING IN
TORMENTS, AND SEETH ABRAHAM AFAR OFF,
AND LAZARUS IN HIS BOSOM

LUKE 16:19-31

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

THE PARABLE OF LAZARUS DESCRIBES A
TORMENT IN HELL BUT DOES NOT TEACH THAT
THE TORMENT IS ETERNAL

About a week following his conversation with the young lady in the bonnet, our friend John heard a knock on his door. When he opened the door he was looking at two Elders from his church.

“John,” said the first Elder, who was the older of the two, “We would like a word with you.”

“Why, certainly, said John, “Please come in.”

Now, John was fully aware of the purpose of their visit, because the church that he attended was careful to ensure that all its members embraced its doctrine. As a matter of fact, he had expected a visit because he knew that the young lady would not hesitate to discuss their conversation with the next person she saw. He felt a bit uneasy, but he was happy to engage them.

When all were seated and John had served them coffee, John said “Gentlemen, to what, or rather to whom, do I owe the honor of your visit?”

“John,” said the first Elder, “I will go directly to the point. We have come here to discuss a doctrinal error that you have unfortunately propagated at church. It is our understanding that you have made it known that you no longer believe in hell. Is that correct?”

“No,” he responded. “Scripture speaks of hell, so I certainly do believe that there is a hell.”

Wishing to bring the confrontation to a point, he added "However, scripture does not speak of eternal torment or eternal torture of unbelievers, so I do not believe in it. According to the Bible, the eternal fate of the unredeemed is death, not eternal torment.”

“Yes, John. We are concerned that you have strayed from the correct doctrine.”

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“Well, sir,” he replied, “If the correct doctrine is that all unbelievers will be resurrected and burned alive for the rest of eternity, I have certainly strayed from it. However, I might add, I have strayed from it because scripture does not teach it.”

“Would you be willing, John, to bend your convictions if we are able to show you where scripture does indeed teach eternal torment?”

“Why certainly. I will always yield to scripture. I would be more than happy to correct my views, and thank you for your time and trouble. And would you will be willing to bend your view if scripture bears *me* out?”

The first Elder continued, “Well, we have already been informed of your position relating to the torment of those who worship the beast in Revelation 14:9-11. We have chosen not to pursue that scripture because that passage refers specifically to those who worship the beast in the time of the great tribulation and not to all of the unredeemed. But there are other scriptures that you may not have considered. Are you aware of Jesus' teaching about Lazarus in Luke 16?”

“I am quite familiar with the Parable of Lazarus. If I recollect correctly, Jesus was teaching about His own resurrection through the use of a parable. In that parable, a rich man had ignored (and probably scorned) Lazarus, who was a beggar who used to sit at the rich man's front gate. After the rich man and Lazarus had both died, the soul of Lazarus was placed in Abraham's bosom and the soul of the rich man went to hell.”

“That is correct, John. The rich man was tormented in hell and Lazarus was not.”

“And does the parable state that the rich man's torment was eternal?” John asked.

“Yes it does, John.” Said the first Elder.

“I was not able to find it in the Parable of Lazarus. Can you point it out to me?”

“Why certainly, John. Let me read it to you. Verse 23 reads,

And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away.¹

1. Luke 16:23

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"You see, John," said the Elder, "The word that is translated hades means hell. It's just a different form. The verse means that the rich man was in hell and being tormented for eternity. I hope you understand now."

"Well," said John, "I am still having trouble. I see that the verse says that he was sent to hell; and I see that the verse says that he was tormented. But I don't see where the verse says that he was tormented for the rest of eternity."

"John, hell is eternal and the torments of hell are eternal. So, the rich man was tormented in hell for eternity."

"Believe me," said John. "I fully understand what the doctrine teaches, but I would like to see it in the Bible. And as far as the Parable of Lazarus goes, it does not seem to be there. Is it somewhere else?"

"It's everywhere John."

"I understand that you see it everywhere. But, please be patient with me, I am still looking for where the Bible actually says it." Said John. "Can you help me?"

"Certainly. There are many scriptures teaching that the unredeemed will be tormented in hell for the rest of eternity," said the first Elder.

"Perhaps you can show me one of them?"

"We will get to all of the relevant scriptures later," said the first Elder.

"Can you tell me just one of them?"

"We have not put them all together yet. But we have them and we will tell you all of them when we get them organized."

"I would be interested to discuss the first one whenever you are ready to tell me what it is," said John. "However, I think we can both agree that we won't find it in the parable of Lazarus. If I remember correctly, the rich man asked that Lazarus send back a warning to his brothers, so that they would not end up in the same place that he did."

"Yes," said the Elder, "The rich man could not escape from hell, and he wanted to warn his brothers."

"Correct," said John. "The rich man was a disembodied soul that was carrying on a conversation while it was being tormented."

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"Yes, and being tormented in hell," interjected the second Elder.

"And" said John, "Father Abraham told him that even if someone were to be raised from the dead, his brothers would still not believe."

"Exactly."

"Some people will never believe under any circumstances." Said John. "And everybody is going to eventually sin, one way or another."²

"Yes." Declared the first Elder. "And God chooses some to be saved from hell."

"You are right." Said John. "God chooses some and not others to be saved."³

"Yes," answered the first Elder.

"And the ones that He does not choose, what happens to them?" Asked John.

"They go to hell."

"And what does God do to them in hell?"

"He keeps them in hell and then resurrects their bodies, judges them guilty of sin and then he burns them for the rest of eternity." Said the first Elder.

"In flames?"

"Yes. He tortures them in flames for the rest of eternity."

"And they can feel the pain of the fire?"

"Yes"

"And they are conscious?"

"Yes."

"So they are effectively alive while being burned?"

2. Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

3. Ephesians 1:4,5 "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself"

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"Well," said the first Elder, "Yes, you could say they are effectively alive while being burned."

"So God burns them alive forever because they did not come to Christ and the reason they did not come to Christ is because God did not choose them?"

"I know it's not a pretty picture," said the first Elder. "But it just shows how much God hates sin."

"And have you ever read First John 4:8"

"Why certainly John. I have read First John 4:8. It says that the one who does not love does not know God."

"That's right; and the second half of the verse says that God is love."

"John, I see where you are going with this. I know it's not a pretty picture, but you have to understand that burning the unredeemed for the rest of eternity is an act of love."

"Really? It appears to be more than 'not a pretty picture,'" said John. "It appears to be grossly inconsistent and unjust. You are saying that God, Who *is* love,⁴ *destines* all men to commit sin.⁵ Then He chooses to save some but not others⁶ and all men sin.⁷ So, those who are not chosen for salvation are destined by God Himself to suffer the most excruciating punishment imaginable because they did exactly what God had created them to do - not trust him - and were not chosen."

John continued, "I know that is what you believe, and I would believe it too because God is not only loving, He is also just and sin must have a consequence. The only question is what that consequence is. And as far as I know, there is no scripture that says that the consequence of sin is to be tormented for eternity in hell."

"Now John." Said the first Elder, "Isn't that a little extreme? You say that there is *no* such scripture??"

4. First John 4:8 "God is love"

5. Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

6. Ephesians 1:4,5 "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself"

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

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"Let me ask you this," said John, "Will all these scriptures that you are promising to show me contradict Romans 6:23 where Paul teaches that the wages of sin is death?"

"No," said the first Elder. "There are no contradictions in the Bible."

"Then how," asked John, "can the wages of sin be death and eternal torment at the same time? They are two different things."

"Because death in the Bible does not really mean death." Said the second Elder.

"Oh." Said John. "Now I see. Death is not really death as long as it is referring to eternal torment. So, every scripture in the Bible that speaks to the eternal state of the unredeemed and says that their eternal state is death, none of them really mean it?"

"Right." Said the first Elder. "You see it in the parable. Both the rich man and Lazarus died. But after they died the rich man is conversing with Father Abraham. So there you have it. Death is not really death in the Bible because if death was really death, they would be really dead!"

"No." Said John. "It is not a question of whether death is really death. It is a question of what has died."

"What do you mean?" Asked the second Elder.

"On earth their bodies died and were buried. Totally dead. The rich man's body is not conversing with Father Abraham. It was buried somewhere in Israel."

"Ok," said the second Elder. "So what was conversing with Father Abraham?"

"His soul," said John. "His soul was what was conversing with Father Abraham."

"Because the soul does not die with the body." Responded the second Elder nodding his head.

"That's right," said John. "A man's soul does not die with his body."

"Well then, when does the soul die?"

"The soul of the unbeliever dies in the second death." Said John.

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"The second death? You said the second death?" Remarked the first Elder. "You're saying there are two of them?"

"There is a death for the body and a death for the resurrected body and soul.

"John, John, you are going overboard here. There is no second death." Said the first Elder.

"No, I'm not. Look at the scripture..."

"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."⁸

and

"And death and hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."⁹

"Now the question is what is death? Is it really death or is it eternal torment?"

"Now John lets be ..."

"Because if death is eternal torment why didn't the Holy Spirit just say so? He could just as easily have said 'He who overcomes shall not be hurt by eternal torment.'"

"Wait. John does have a point there ..." Said the second Elder.

"And if death means eternal torment why did He say death? What word did He use? Is it the same word? I mean is it the same word as in Romans 6:23. Because if it is the same word ..."

"Now John ..."

"No. Look ..." Said John.

"Look at what?" Said the second elder.

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8. Revelation 2:11

9. Revelation 20:14

"Its same word. Both scriptures use the word thanatos. And that is the same word that is used in Romans 6:23. Thanatos. Ordinary death. It's the same thing in all the verses. Thanatos means ordinary death every time it is used."¹⁰

"I'm going to have to look closely at that." Said the first Elder.

"It is late," said the second Elder. "Maybe we can meet and talk again."

"Excellent." Said John. "And bring me the scripture that supports eternal torment next week!"



10. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

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Comment on The Parable of Lazarus and the Second Death

It was the soul of the rich man that was in hell, not his body. His body had died but his soul had not. His soul did not die with his body because souls do not die with bodies.¹ After his body died His soul continued to live and it was conscious, it could think and it could communicate. It could feel; it could be tormented both mentally and physically. It was alive.

Souls do not die with bodies. When the body dies, the soul becomes separated from the body and goes to either heaven or hell, exactly as described in the Parable of Lazarus. But the soul of the rich man had not yet been judged because judgment day had not yet come.

The final judgment of the unredeemed is called the Great White Throne Judgment.² The disembodied souls remain in Hell until they are resurrected for the purpose of judgment.³ The eternal state for the unredeemed is what happens to them after the Judgment and that is eternal death, the "second death." They die in the second death; that is why it is called "death."

This is the second death, the lake of fire.⁴

But the fearful and unbelieving ... and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death.⁵

In the end they die.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life."⁶

1. Matthew 10:28 "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." † Scripture teaches that God gives a new body to a previously existing soul for the purpose of eternal life (Rev. 20:6) or for the purpose of judgment (John 5:29). The soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4) and that death shall occur in the second death (Rev. 21:8). The soul that is forgiven shall live eternally (Rev. 20:6).

2. See Revelation 20:11-15

3. John 5:28,29 "[T]he 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."

4. Revelation 20:14

5. Revelation 21:8. Death is θάνατος (thanatos), plain, garden variety death.

6. Romans 6:23. Death is θάνατος (thanatos), plain, garden variety death.

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But the believers shall not suffer the second death. On them the second death has no power.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death has no power.⁷

The soul dies because the "wages of sin is death;"⁸ the wage of sin is death not eternal torment.⁹ There are 50 scriptures that say explicitly that the ultimate consequence of sin is death.¹⁰ And, as shown in Appendix 1 and 2 in this book, there is none that say eternal torment.

Unfortunately, doctrine of eternal torment somehow draws adamant defenders who are willing to redefine the meaning of death in order to make the doctrine fit. It is necessary to re-define death because, as we mentioned, there is no scripture that teaches eternal torment as the consequence for sin, but there are 50 that teach death as the consequence.

Therefore, one of the core issues addressed by this book is what the first and second death are. The first death is exactly what it says is "death." And the second death it is exactly what it says it is and that is "death," not eternal torment. The death of the soul. The *same word* is used for both of them.

Understanding this makes a massive difference in who we understand God to be¹¹ and a significant clarification of existing doctrines.¹²

Exactly what does the parable of Lazarus teach us?

1. There is life after death. But that life is not material life because the bodies of both Lazarus and the rich man have died and are presumably buried (the first death);
2. Since the bodies of Lazarus and the rich man have both died, we are not seeing a dead body talking. We are seeing two souls. We are seeing the soul the rich man in hell and the soul of the beggar in "heaven."
3. The two souls are cognizant, conversant, aware and sentient;

7. Revelation 20:6. Death is θάνατος (thanatos), plain, garden variety death.

8. Romans 6:23. Death is θάνατος (thanatos), plain, garden variety death.

9. Eternal torment is βασανισθήσονται (they will be tormented) εις τούς α

10. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State*

11. See Chapter 3, *The Righteous Judge*

12. See Appendix 7, *The Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines*

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4. But there is a consequence for unrepented sin and that consequence is death.

5. The rich man's sin was to spurn the beggar. This is a clear reference to the warning that Christ gives us to never turn a deaf ear to the poor:

Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink,

I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

And they too will reply, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

Then the King will answer, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me.'¹³

Thus, when the parable of Lazarus is read with the Matthew 25 passages we see a one of a kind picture: both the warning from the lips of Christ and the life-after-death result of the failure to heed the warning.

But for all of its clarity, the parable does not address the final state of the unredeemed, because the soul of the rich man had not yet been judged. The rich man was in hell awaiting his judgment, the Great White Throne judgment that will be based upon his own deeds and the choices that he made in his lifetime:

Then I saw a great white throne and the One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them.

13. Matthew 25:41-45 † There are, of course, numerous reasons to ignore street mendicants. They may be collecting money for drugs or other illicit purposes. But under normal circumstances, they would not be standing on street corners if they did not really need the money. The Christian should not waste the opportunity to give money with a gospel tract.

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And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne.

And there were open books, and one of them was the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their deeds, as recorded in the books.

The sea gave up its dead, and Death and Hades gave up their dead, and each one was judged according to his deeds.¹⁴

Hell is a holding cell where those who reject Christ and will bear the weight of their own sin, exactly as the rich man did. Then they will be judged. After the final judgment, the unredeemed will face the ultimate judgment for sin and that judgment is death.

The wages of sin is death.¹⁵

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 ...¹⁶

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?¹⁷

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death...¹⁸

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.¹⁹

Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.²⁰

14. Revelation 20:11-13

15. Romans 6:23; See also Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

16. Psalm 56:11,13

17. Ezekiel 33:11

18. Hosea 13:14

19. John 3:16

20. John 8:51

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How will that death occur? First, all of the living souls residing in hell will be reunited to their bodies for the purpose of judgment:

...[T]he 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.²¹

Then God will execute the judgment and the penalty, which is death in the lake of fire:

But to the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and sexually immoral and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death.”²²

For those who do not fall into the rather coarse categories included in Revelation 21:8 (murders, sexually immoral, sorcerers, etc.), but are "unbelieving" nevertheless, there are three observations about these people.

The first observation is the definition of the root Greek word that is translated "unbelieving" in Revelation 21:8 is ἀπιστέω ("ah pistay o"). This word means to [affirmatively] "disbelieve" or "refuse to believe."²³ If this is the correct reading then, some manner of affirmative rejection of Christ would be necessary in order to qualify a soul for eternal death in the lake of fire. This leaves open the question of what happens to the passive unbelievers.

The second point is the last verse in Isaiah:

They they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against me. For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind.²⁴

21. John 5:28, 29

22. Revelation 21:8

23. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (Univ. of Chicago Press, second ed. 1958) s.v. ἀπιστέω

24. Isaiah 66:24

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This verse seems to be addressing those who committed intentional and significant transgressions (note that they are corpses, dead men).

The third point is found in belief and condemnation as stated by Christ:

He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.²⁵

Again, we see that there must be actual rejection. The simplicity and at the same time the immense depth of what is actually occurring in belief or disbelief is expressed in Christ's summation of the divine judgment. He skips over the question of what is belief or unbelief and plunges down to the very heart of who we are:

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light for their deeds were evil.²⁶

What sufficient belief is or what words must be said in prayer or what doctrines must be understood before the key to heaven will turn—they all resolve themselves into trivialities and ineffective theological formulas in the face of Christ's profound conclusion: it *all* turns on sin. We knew it all along. Sin kills and we must either accept sin or reject it. It is as simple as that.

The second death is called the "second" death because that is exactly what it is. The first death was the death of the body and the second death is the death of the soul and the body that was resurrected for the purpose of judgment.

How can we be sure that the souls of the unredeemed actually die? Scripture teaches it explicitly. It could not be more clearly stated:

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.²⁷

25. John 3:18

26. John 3:19

27. Ezekiel 18:4

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The Second Death

It is death that awaits the unrepentant soul at the end, not eternal torment. Scripture repeatedly uses "death" to describe what ultimately happens to the soul of the unredeemed sinner."²⁸ Redeemed sinners will not be harmed by the second death because Jesus Christ paid their penalty for them²⁹ and their penalty was death.³⁰

Jesus Himself tells us that He saves us from death.³¹ Throughout His entire ministry, Jesus never mentions eternal torment. The bible does not mention eternal torment except in one instance: the punishment of Satan. Sinners who have turned to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sin are spared the second death. Hence, not all men die twice, but all men die at least once.³²

An eternal, conscious, sentient existence is not death. It is eternal life (whether it is spent in hell or not). This is precisely the opposite of death. The doctrine of eternal torment teaches the exact opposite of the words of scripture.

The doctrine of eternal torment is based upon scriptures that do not mention eternal torment but are broad enough to include it.³³ In the entire Bible eternal torment is mentioned *only once* and that is to define the eternal state of Satan.³⁴

The doctrine of eternal torment would have arguable merit if there were any scripture (just one) that actually teaches it, but there is none. Every scripture that describes the punishment of unbelievers teaches that the punishment is death.³⁵

28. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

29. Revelation 2:11 "He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death."

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

31. John 8:51 "Those who keep My word will never see death." See also Hosea 13:14 "I will redeem them from death."

32. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed for men to die once..."

33. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Used to Support Eternal Torment*

34. 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."

35. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

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The greatest advocate of the doctrine of eternal torment is the Catholic Church. The doctrine was instilled in the Catholic church by Augustine who is the most influential theologian in Catholicism.³⁶ Augustine went to significant pains to argue for eternal torment by arguing that physical flesh could be burned and never destroyed.³⁷ The Catholic church ultimately propagated the myth of eternal burning and profited financially from it through the sale of indulgences.

The Catholic Church teaches the vision of hell as truth seen by ten year old Lucia Santos (Sister Lucy of Fatima). Unfortunately many biblically oriented protestant churches have tacitly adopted Sister Lucy's vision.³⁸† But even Sister Lucy does not presume to say that the punishment that she "saw" is eternal. Nor is her vision consistent with Augustine, who taught that living bodies were burned alive, not simply souls.

The line of demarcation between Catholic mythology and scripture is bright and clearly defined. On one side we find the Catholic Apocrypha that has sinners floating in pain and being hung by their tongues.³⁹ On the other side we find the Bible, which is crisp and straightforward, wholly inerrant and filled with a consistency that is clearly divine. The only mention of eternal torment in all of scripture is in Revelation 20:10, which describes the eternal state of the unholy trinity.⁴⁰◇ And it tells us that the eternal torment of Satan does not occur in hell. It occurs in the lake of fire, which is radically different from hell, as discussed later in this book.⁴¹



36. † Catholic Encyclopedia (Robert Appleton Company New York, NY., 1907), s.v. Augustine, "[A]mong theologians he is undeniably the first, and such has been his influence that none of the Fathers, Scholastics, or Reformers has surpassed it." Catholicism is founded upon Augustine."

37. † Augustine, *City of God*, Book XXI entitled "Whether it is Possible for Bodies to Last Forever in Eternal Fire." His answer is a clear "yes."

38. † "[W]e saw, as it were, a vast sea of fire. Plunged in this fire, we saw the demons and the souls [of the damned]. The souls of the damned were like transparent burning embers...they were floating about in that conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames...now they fell back on every side like sparks in huge fires, without weight or equilibrium, amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair... The demons [appeared in the likeness of] frightful and unknown animals..." *Third Memoir, Sister Lucy of Fatima*. Sister Lucy's given name was Lucia Santos. She was a Portuguese nun who died in 2005 who claimed to have seen hell when she was 10 years old during World War 1 (in 1917).

39. See *Apocalypse of Peter* which is part of the Apocrypha

40. See Psalm 82, where the Creator addresses the gods of this world (demons), whom He has created and informs them that in the end they will "die like men." Not even demons will be burned alive forever. That punishment is reserved for Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet because only those three shall have knowingly and voluntarily committed a sufficient amount of evil to justify eternal torment.

41. See Chapter 7, *The Death of Hell*

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Chapter 3

The Righteous Judge

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE ARE THE
FOUNDATION OF YOUR THRONE; STEADFAST
LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS GO BEFORE YOU.

PSALM 89:14

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

REVELATION 20:12

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

IT IS IRRATIONAL AND UNSCRIPTURAL
TO TEACH THAT GOD, WHO IS WHOLLY JUST,
WILL SUBJECT ALL OF THE UNREDEEMED
TO THE SAME PUNISHMENT AS SATAN.

On the following Thursday, the night was clear and the air was crisp and unusually cool as the elders crossed the lawn in front of John's home. The hand of God had cast a billion stars across the sky and Psalm 19 was in the thoughts of all because that night the heavens were singing of the glory of God.

Chairs and cups of hot chocolate sat by the fire awaiting the elders as John escorted them in.

"My friends," said John, "Let us continue our search of the Word of God to see if scripture teaches that the second death is not death at all and whether the unredeemed will be burned alive for the rest of eternity. But rather than studying texts that do not teach of this awful thing called eternal torment, let us instead go directly to the heart of the matter and look that the scripture that does teach it. I speak of Revelation 20:10. That scripture states unequivocally that following the end of the millennium, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be 'tormented day and night forever and ever.'"

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.¹

"Well, John, there you have it." Said the first Elder. "This is the scripture that we missed last week. It is eternal torment plain and simple."

1. Revelation 20:10

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"Certainly!" Said the second Elder, "And when He says eternal torment, He does not mince words. He says it flat out."

"Right," said John. "Assuming that the passage really does mean infinity or eternity. But where is the scripture that tells us about the eternal fate of the unbelievers?"

"What do you mean?" Said the first Elder, "The words are clear and unequivocal and they leave no doubt whatever."

"They leave no doubt as to the fact that Satan will be tormented" John replied, "But that scripture does not refer to eternity and it does not refer to the unredeemed."

"Yes, but the unbelievers will all be thrown into the same unquenchable fire.²" Said the second Elder.

Are you saying that the punishment for anyone who commits a sin will be the same as *Satan*? No unbeliever has ever committed the same crimes as Satan so why should any unbeliever be punished with the same punishment as Satan? This is the *only* scripture in the Bible that mentions torment for *anyone* and it applies only to Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet. And that torment is not necessarily eternal. If Satan's punishment is to be applied to billions of unbelievers, where is the scripture that says so?"

"Why are you so sure that this scripture refers to a limited amount of time or eternity? Asked the First elder.

"Because aiownas ton aionwn (αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων³) means either one."

"Just because it isn't specifically in scripture," said the first Elder, "does not mean that it is not going to happen. There are other scriptures that teach it, although not explicitly."

"So billions of unbelievers are going to be burned alive forever and there is no scripture that explicitly states it? I believe you are admitting that all you have are implications and an empty doctrine."

2. Mark 9:43 "It is better to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire." See Chapter 5

3. See *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, Rev. Alfred Marshall (Zondervan, 1958) s.v. Revelation 20:10, "αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων" and compare with *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago, 1958), s.v. αἰών (either eternity or not) and αἰώνιος (always eternity).

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"We found no specific mention of eternal torment for unbelievers yet" said the second Elder, "But we are going to continue our search."

"And if you find no scripture that teaches eternal torment for the unredeemed, will you still believe it?"

"Yes," said the first Elder.

John continued, "What about all the scriptures that teach death as the eternal state of the unredeemed?"

"There may be one or two out there."

"More than one or two," said John. "There are at least 50."

"50?" Exclaimed the second Elder. "Did you say 50?"

"Yes, 50." Said John. "They are unequivocal scriptures. And they all say that death is the eternal state of the unredeemed."⁴

"You are contradicting the doctrine!" Said the second Elder.

"I know how you feel," said John. "If you contradict an established doctrine, you feel like a heretic. So it really comes down to a choice. Will you continue to accept a doctrine because you feel bad if you don't. Or will you have the courage to look at the plain words of scripture and decide for yourself?"

"But you can't go against the pastor..." replied the second Elder.

"Yes you can. A pastor is just a man and so is a priest. It all depends on who you follow. Will you follow man or will you follow scripture? The doctrine of eternal torment contradicts the 50 scriptures that teach death as the final state."

"What do you mean?"

"Your doctrine says that God will punish everyone with the same punishment as Satan. But scripture says specifically that they will *not* suffer the same punishment. Each person will be judged individually, based on *his own works*."

... shall He *not* render to *every* man according to his works?⁵

4. Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State*

5. Proverbs 24:12

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They were each judged each one according to their works.’⁶

...I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct...⁷

"So if God is a just and loving God, He must judge everyone individually and upon their own works" said the second Elder.

"Every one of them is going to be burned alive for the rest of eternity. That's how much God hates sin" said the first Elder.

"God certainly does hate sin," said John, "but that does not change the fact that God is also just."⁸ Each person who does not trust in Christ will be judged *according to his own life*, not according to someone else's life.⁹ So, how can it be scriptural to say that God will judge each according to his own works and in the same breath say that all of the unredeemed will be punished with the same punishment as Satan?"

"God will do what He will do," said the second Elder.

"Quite true," said John, "but what will He do? Is this something that scripture says He will do or is it something that you just believe He will do? Look at this passage in Psalms:

"Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work."¹⁰

"These verses," said the first Elder, "mean that all the lost are going to be burned alive forever in hell. That is what we have always believed, so I am sure it's true."

6. Revelation 20:13 "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each on according to his works."

7. Ezekiel 18:30

8. Isaiah 45:21 "...*There* is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; *there* is none beside Me."

9. Revelation 20:12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." Revelation 20:13 "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

10. Psalms 62:12.

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“Read the verses again. God judges each person according to what each one did during his life, so how can God condemn billions of unbelievers to be burned alive for the rest of eternity and at the same time say that He will judge each one fairly?”

“They are judged according to what they did and any sin is enough to be condemned to be burned for eternity.” Said the first Elder. “That’s the reason why they all have the same punishment.”

“Then how can each one be judged differently?” Asked John.

“Different judgment; same torture.” Said the first Elder.

“And what about Revelation 20:12?” Said John. “That’s another scripture that says the unrepentant are to be judged according to the ‘things written in the books.’”

“...the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”¹¹

“So they all are judged the same and they are all condemned to the same punishment?” Asked John.

“Yes.”

“Even though it says that *each one* was judged according to *his* works?” Asked John.

“Yes,” said the first Elder, “You don’t understand. It does not matter what those verses say. The sinners are going to be burned alive forever unless they walk forward and come to Jesus. You may be right that there isn’t any particular scripture that says that plainly, but taken together they all mean that. We will find them for you.”

“We are still looking,” said the second Elder.

“All I need is one.” Said John. “Just one.”

“They are all tortured forever in the lake of fire no matter what they did and that is God’s justice.” Said the first Elder.

“So what about the second death of Revelation 21:8?”

“No matter. Because death does not mean death in the Bible.”

11. Revelation 20:12.

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"Why does death not mean death in the Bible?"

"Because if death really meant death they would all just die and not be burned alive forever." Said the first Elder.

"You got that right." Said John. "You have to re-define death in order to have eternal torment. But if they are all going to hell forever, why have any judgment and any books at all? What possible relevance is a judgment based upon the works that are recorded in the books if whatever is recorded in the books makes no difference to the outcome? Why have any book at all?"

"Because you have to have books!" Said the first Elder, who was becoming frustrated. "You have to have books because you have to show why they all go to hell."

"Really!" Said John, "Show who? Is God saving His books in case He is audited? The term 'books' in this scripture refers to the record of what each man did during his life and the very existence of the books is for the stated purpose of judging each person fairly — and therefore judging each person differently."

"They are all guilty! He's going to judge them just like He is going to judge Satan!"

"Judge Satan? I hate to tell you," said John, "There is no judgment for Satan and Satan has no book. God summarily throws Satan into the lake of fire alive and does not allow him to die."

At this point, the second Elder, who had fought in World War II, entered the conversation with vehemence. "I hear that. Satan doesn't need any book. Satan led Germany into World War II through his puppet, Adolph Hitler. He murdered millions and plunged the entire world into war. Satan is total evil and he enjoys it. Can you even imagine the evil that Satan has done over the millenniums? No wonder he is not given a trial!"

"You are certainly right," said John "Satan deserves to be burned alive. He has been knowingly and intentionally ruining lives for centuries. So why does some teenager who rejects Christ and commits one sin before he dies have to suffer the same punishment as Satan? Isn't that just a little bit unfair?"

"Well, I know it seems unfair, but you know it just goes to show how much God hates sin," said the first Elder.

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"So one person steals a shirt and never comes to Christ and another person intentionally murders millions of people because he does not like their religion and starts a war that kills 50 million and they get the same penalty. Is that justice?"

"We have all fallen short of the glory of God,¹²" said the second Elder.

"Your whole argument is based on scriptures that are broad enough to mean either eternal torment or eternal death and you ignore the scriptures that unequivocally teach death as the final state. *Every* scripture in the Bible that speaks specifically of the eternal consequence of sin *always* says it is death.¹³ It is established in no less than 50 scriptures."¹⁴

"Well then," replied the first Elder, "you say yourself that the treatment of each one of the unredeemed will be different, but then you say that they will all just die. That is the same treatment for them all, just like eternal torment is."

"Not at all," said John. "The soul of each of the unredeemed will bear full the weight of his own sins in hell just like the rich man in the Parable of Lazarus,¹⁵ and each will suffer some type of punishment or consequence that is just and right for how each lived his life. There are 1000 years between the second coming of Christ and the final Judgment and in the interim there is a very real hell. But in the end, every one of the unredeemed souls will die in the second death and their death will be eternal. No resurrections, no judgments, just total, eternal death. Scripture does not describe the experience of hell in detail, but based upon the fact that everyone is judged based upon his own life, one can conclude that although it is the same hell, the experience of each one in hell will be different."

"Eternal fire in hell. That is our doctrine," said the first Elder.

"It is indeed your doctrine. And your doctrine says that the boy who steals a \$29.95 shirt will suffer not only as much as Hitler, but as much as Satan himself and with the same breath you say the God who does this is infinitely just."¹⁶

12. Romans 3:23 "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

13. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

14. See Appendix 1

15. Luke 16:19-31

16. Psalm 89:13 "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. Righteousness and

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“God hates sin so much that any one sin is enough to be burned alive forever ...” Said first Elder.

“Then I submit to you, sir, that no amount of groaning and gratuitous sympathies about how reluctant God will be to burn that boy alive for eternity because he stole a shirt or a hundred shirts will ever be able to reconcile that injustice.”

“You are saying that God is unjust!” Exclaimed the first Elder.

“I think not,” Said John, “It is not I who is saying that God punishes all people the same without regard to what they did. I believe that was your argument.”

“Well,” said the first Elder, “maybe the shirt-stealer’s flames won’t be as hot as Satan’s...”¹⁷ †

“I think you are going to have to come up with something better than that,” replied John.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.¹⁸

Their conversation paused. Each one knew that the other took scripture at its word. Their only issue was with what it said. They did not speak for several minutes and they hardly noticed that the firelight disclosed that the condemnation in their faces had turned to kindness. Matthew 7:1 had its inimitable effect that night and they agreed to meet the following week.



justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.” (ESV) Deuteronomy 32:4 “The Rock, His work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.”

17. † Some teachers attempt to accommodate the contradiction of justice by teaching varying degrees of heat for various sinners. This is much like Dante’s *Inferno*, a Middle Ages Italian political fantasy about hell. All will be judged by their own works, but the lake of fire is death to all but the unholy trinity.

18. Psalm 89:14

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Comment on The Righteous Judge

God loves righteousness.¹ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of God's throne.² God is just; He is the embodiment of justice.³

His eternal justice is the brightest star in the endless night of humanity's sin. It is a star that bows to nothing, not even to Christ, who overcame it not by His power but by His death. God cannot deny Himself and if He were to turn a blind eye to the sins of man (any man), the foundation of all that is righteous would crumble. Ultimately, righteousness is inevitable as the dawn.

All justice has been reserved to God alone. We are to have none of it⁴ and all recompense is reserved to Him alone.⁵ The expression of His justice reaches its apex in the final judgment⁶ and His final judgment rests upon the recorded deeds everyone who has ever lived.⁷ Thus, God has recorded and is recording every one of the deeds (bad and good) of every man and woman. Such is the accuracy and righteousness of His judgment!

1. Proverbs 12:18 "In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death." Proverbs 13:6 "Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless." Psalm 33:4,5 "For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is trustworthy. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the LORD'S unfailing love. HCSB

2. Psalm 89:14 "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne"

3. Isaiah 30:18 "For the LORD is a God of justice." Job 34:12 "Surely, God will not act wickedly, And the Almighty will not pervert justice." Deuteronomy 32:4 " For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He." Psalm 9:8 " He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity." Revelation 20:13 " And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds." Colossians 3:25 " For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality." Deuteronomy 10:18 " "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing." Second Chronicles 19:7 " the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality." Ephesians 6:9 " there is no partiality with Him." Proverbs 11:1 "A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight."

4. Matthew 7:1 "Judge not"

5. Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." KJV

6. Revelation 20:12 "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged..."

7. Revelation 20:12 "And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." (excluding Satan, antichrist and the false prophet)

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What violence we do to this truth when we teach that God's justice is truncated by the simplistic and unscriptural belief that He will burn billions alive forever because they fulfilled their inevitable destiny to sin⁸ except for some whom He chooses to rescue.⁹ He therefore, by default, predestines some (most) to suffer the same eternal fate as Satan¹⁰ because of any one sin—and everybody sins.¹¹

God condemns, says eternal torment, but He does not judge. Books are irrelevant and everyone has the same penalty. And the same sincere students of scripture then argue that God who does this is just and righteous. What an impossible theological contradiction that is!

One cannot help but gasp at the chasm of absent truth between eternal torment and God's justice. It is a chasm so deep that most prefer to simply turn the page of the Bible rather than attempting to bridge it with the patchwork of morose justifications offered by the doctrine of eternal torment.

Fortunately, however, it is not necessary to live with such an incomprehensible element of God's justice. All one need do is to look without prejudice at the plain words of scripture to see the imponderable justice and righteousness of the Creator.

The plain words of scripture teach that God is indeed just and that His justice means that He will judge all men individually based upon each man's life and works:

...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.¹²

This coincides with all other scriptures that address the fairness of the Creator and the righteousness of His judgment. He never visits the sins of the fathers upon the sons, but rather considers each one based upon his own merits.

8. Psalm 14:3 "They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." Romans 5:12 "Death spread to all men because all sinned."

9. Ephesians 1:4 "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."

10. See Appendix 1, *The Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines*

11. Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned..."

12. Revelation 20:12

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In Ezekiel:

The person [soul] who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the [his] father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment the [his] son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteousness will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself. **13**†

Also, in Galatians:

But let every man prove his own work... Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. **14**

And in Revelation:

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. **15**

We may therefore expect that those who reject Christ will be treated justly by the Judge of all Creation because He is righteous, just and fair. Those who reject Christ will reap what they sowed, either good or bad, and in the end God will judge them rightly. The great tragedy will

13. Ezekiel 18:20 † Ezekiel 18 recounts how God corrected an inaccurate proverb used by the Israelites (including Moses in his prayer, see Numbers 14:18), which said that sons will bear the sins of their father. God, through the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, flatly rejects the proverb. The sins of the fathers are not passed to their children; their children will bear no sin but their own. In the same vein, it is the knowledge of good and evil that was passed to the progeny of Adam, not his guilt. A man is guilty of only the sins that he commits and sin and spiritual death passed to all men not because they are guilty of Adam's sin but because they "all sinned" (Romans 5:12). See Appendix 7, *The Effect of the Doctrine on other Doctrines*, sub-title Original Sin.

However, when it comes to bowing to a graven image, He will "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" Ex. 20:5. But He will show mercy "unto the thousands of them love me and keep my commandments" Ex. 20:6. It is also true that when Exodus was penned, the Jews had just come from Egypt and there were many more unconverted present. Whereas, in Ezekiel's day most were Jewish. In Ezekiel it was the inaccuracy of a proverb (which was not true); in Exodus it was the hatred of God which was the offense, and hatred of God is passed on to children easily.

14. Galatians 6:4,7 (KJV)

15. Revelation 20:12

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be that they justified their own sin. They could not see—until then—that their sins do indeed demand eternal death, and that when the tray which was laden with salvation was offered to them, they refused.

Hard pass. Hard judgment. But fully just.

Every applicable scripture states that without Christ to pay for man's sin, the sinner must pay for it himself, and that payment, in every instance ends in the second death.¹⁶

With this understanding, the predestination conundrum is resolved because the final end of the unredeemed is no more than divine justice followed by death.

So therefore, God determines when we live and when we die and He judges sin. No surprises there. We all knew that going in. And the fact that God chooses to redeem some and not to redeem others does not detract from the balance of that scenario.

The fact that God is a just and righteous God means that we live in a moral universe and sin has a consequence. If one steals a shirt, there is a consequence for it. If one engineers the murder of millions, there is a consequence for that as well but they are not the same consequences.

The soul is spiritual so it cannot be killed with a bullet. Therefore, one cannot cause a world war and kill millions of people and then escape with a vial of poison or a bullet.¹⁷ In the end all *souls* who sinned will die, just as Ezekiel said.¹⁸† But what precedes that death is God's justice exacted upon every soul that carries unforgiven sin.

This applies to every sin. Any sin is enough to result in the penalty of eternal death. The gift of righteousness requires a soul whose sins have been completely forgiven.¹⁹ And we can acquire a sinless soul in one place and one place alone and that is Jesus Christ:

16. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Teaching Death as Final State of the Unredeemed*

17. Matthew 10:28 "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

18. Ezekiel 18:20 "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (KJV) † This concept invariably refers to the second death and the death of the soul. This scripture has to refer to the second death because it is pointless to warn that sin causes the first death because all men will die the first death (see Hebrews 9:27)

19. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life." Psalm 103:12 "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

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Those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in Life through the One Jesus Christ.²⁰

Although we may see the events of judgment and hell as consecutive, we must understand that these things are outside of time and in that regard they are beyond our understanding. We must understand also that the very fact that God is just requires that He judge justly which means to condemn the sinner. Sin has an inevitable consequence and therefore an unavoidable judgment.

What is unusual and unexpected, however, is that someone would step forward and pay the penalty for all of us—and that some of us would refuse it! It is only because Jesus paid our penalty that God could pardon us and still be perfectly just. It is only through Jesus Christ that God can remain true to eternal justice and at the same time true to eternal love. What is astounding is that so many people reject what Christ did for them—and reject it all the way to the end.

Sin kills²¹ and there is no way around it. And man, not being God, is fallible and he will inevitably sin. And as a result of his sin, he must die. The only way that the Creator could avoid that inevitability is to never have created us in the first place or to send someone to die in our place. He chose the latter.

Of course, there are peripheral arguments, such as God's justice is impugned because not everyone in the world has heard the gospel. The answer to those arguments is simple: God is not limited to the actions of man; and man (from man's perspective) is wholly free to turn or not to turn to Christ. He may receive the gospel directly from Jesus Christ on his deathbed and still reject it or accept it. God is not limited. But notwithstanding any of the arguments relating to His justice, God requires a response from each of us regarding Jesus Christ. What is your response?

When we are thirsty for spiritual life, we come to the cross and we become adopted into His family.²² This invitation is open to all²³ and all can come. But the Master of Time and the Universe cannot deny Himself or lay aside the essence of who He is. So, in the end all those who choose Him have been predestined to do so.

20. Romans 5:17

21. See *Fifteen Centuries of Warnings*, Appendix 4

22. Romans 8:23 " And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

23. Revelation 22:17 "... let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him

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It is as if we are sitting at a sidewalk cafe watching the people pass and then we see Christ. He is clean and attractive and we like what we see. We like His promises and His straight talk. We are fascinated by His vision into a world that we always knew was there but could not adequately perceive. We are drawn out of a desire to know more about life or we simply need to address a spiritual part of ourselves or fill an internal void. So we say, "Ok. I like Him. I will try this out."

This is what is happening from our perspective. But it is not what is really happening.

What is really happening is that it is you who are on the sidewalk walking by and Christ is sitting at the table. You are there with the crowd trying to fit in and wondering why you don't. Or perhaps you are looking for something and you don't really know what it is. You are far from perfect and perhaps a bit disheveled. But He sees you. He puts down his coffee. He points to you. "This one. Yes. I choose this one."

To be that person is everything. And if you are reading this you *are* that person.

Christ became sin for us²⁴ and when we come to Christ we are "in" Christ.²⁵ As such, we receive the benefit of His sacrifice.²⁶ The death due to our soul was died by Him.²⁷ Justice is satisfied and it is our sin that caused his death and justice is satisfied by the death of Christ.²⁸ ♦

take the water of life freely."

24. 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."

25. Ephesians 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

26. Second Timothy 2:11 "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him..."

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

28. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." ♦ This passage in Ezekiel makes it clear that the soul is separate from the body and that it is the soul that dies as a result of sin, not the body. But the concept of the second death was not disclosed until John wrote the Book of Revelation, some 600 years later. And note that the word used here is *soul*, not *souls*, because, as was likewise disclosed in the Book of Revelation, all souls will be judged individually not corporately. As in the first Passover, the blood of the sacrificial lamb was placed on the door posts to prove that the lamb had been slain, and as in the first Passover, judgment of death sees that the sacrificial lamb has been slain and passes over the soul that sinned exactly way the death angel passed over each of the houses who had sacrificed the lamb thirty centuries before.

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The Error and the Cross

The ubiquitous error of eternal torment has wormed its way into the cross itself by denying that Christ paid the penalty that we were called upon to pay. Our ultimate penalty was death and Jesus paid it. But eternal torment would have us believe that Christ did not pay our sin-penalty because our sin-penalty was eternal torment and all Christ did was die. But that doctrine is error and Christ did pay our penalty. He became sin for us. He paid for whatever punishment in hell we would have received before the final judgment and eternal death in the lake of fire. He became *our sin*. He died the death proclaimed in fifteen centuries of scriptural warnings.²⁹

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.³⁰◇

The Bible contains no direct statement that the unredeemed will suffer eternal torment. Certainly, the bible teaches that evil people will suffer in hell, but that suffering is not eternal. That is, the belief in eternal torment is only that: a belief. There is no scripture that actually teaches it. Would it not be astounding if the Bible should concern itself with sin from beginning to end and never once directly say what the penalty for sin is? Or left it in confounding scriptures? But the Bible does directly say what the penalty is and it says it repeatedly.³¹ The penalty for sin is death.

It is for this reason that eternal torment takes the penalty for sin, which is death and attempts to transform it into life in eternal hell.

The Fate of Satan

There is no scripture that says Satan will have a death penalty. There is no warning for Satan that sin will cause his death.³²† No books are opened for him. There is no judgment for either Satan, the antichrist

29. See Appendix 4 - *Fifteen Centuries of Warnings*

30. Second Corinthians 5:21. ◇ If our sin-penalty is eternal death and Christ paid it, then why is He not eternally dead, exactly as we would be without Christ? Because when Christ died He paid for the very sins for which He died. He therefore could not remain eternally dead and the same time satisfy eternal justice. The same justice that required that He die also required that He be resurrected. The death that he died was the same death that the unredeemed die. But it had a different effect. Christ did die—as did all the rest of us. But He was resurrected.

31. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*.

32. † Satan has no soul. We know this because Ezekiel teaches that the soul that sins

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or the false prophet and they do not go to hell. They are summarily cast alive into the lake of fire and burned "forever"^{33†} without ever appearing before any judgment seat and without any books and without ever being held in hell with the unredeemed. They die neither the first death nor the second. They are not permitted to die.

Unredeemed mankind is, however, permitted to die because the soul that sins *must* die.

Satan has no soul, nor does the antichrist or the false prophet. We know this because Ezekiel teaches that the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:4). Satan, the false prophet and the antichrist sin but they do not die. They have no soul. Are they human?^{34†}

The end of the unholy trinity and the end of the unredeemed are two distinctly different endings. They should be neither confused nor merged. One ending is summary condemnation into the lake of fire and eternal torment forever. That is God's judgment for the unholy trinity. The other ending is preceded with centuries of scriptural warnings that sin causes death. It is preceded by the Lamb of God Who pays for the sins of the world and offers us a chance to be included. There is the reading of the scroll of the life of every man and a judgment. And finally there is the punishment. There is simply no scripture that supports the position that the ending called death is really eternal torment in disguise.

Justice falls upon mankind like a cataclysm that cannot be stayed. It begins in Genesis 18:25 where Abraham debates with God about the destruction of Sodom:

That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?³⁵

will die (Ez. 18:4). Satan, the false prophet and the antichrist sin but they do not die, nor are they judged, nor are the subject to the second death. It appears therefore that they have no soul. Given this, we must ask whether they are human.

33. † The passage that deals with the end of Satan uses a phrase to refer to eternal torment as either for eternity or for specific time period. In other words, Satan's fire can be for eternity or for a very long time. See αἰών versus αἰώνιος, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer W., Arndt W. and Gingrich W. (Univ. of Chicago, from Bauer's Fifth Edition, 1958) s.v. αἰών compared to s.v. αἰώνιος.

34. † Revelation 13:18 relates that the beast has a number and "the number is that of a man." If the beast is man, then why would scripture tell us that his number is "that of a man"?

35. Genesis 18:25

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It continues in Psalm 62:12 where the God is Just:

Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.³⁶

And it ends in judgment:

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them, according to their deeds.^{37†}

Scripture is filled with affirmations of God's justice, and repeated statements that His justice requires each person to be judged based upon what he has done. And scripture is wholly devoid of any teaching that the unredeemed will receive eternal torment, the same punishment as Satan.



36. Psalm 62:12

37. Revelation 20:13 † This scripture differentiates between the dead who were in the sea and the dead who were in hell (Hades). It may be argued that the dead who were in "death" are not held in hell prior to the final judgment.

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Chapter 4

Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction

AND THESE SHALL GO AWAY INTO EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT: BUT THE RIGHTEOUS INTO LIFE ETERNAL

MATTHEW 25:46

PUNISHED WITH EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION

SECOND THESSALONIANS 1:9

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

THE WORDS ETERNAL PUNISHMENT MEAN
ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, NOT ETERNAL
PUNISHING

When they met on the following Thursday to continue their discussion about the eternal fate of the unredeemed, John decided to place the two verses most often quoted in support of eternal torment on the discussion table.

"Perhaps," said John, "the most quoted verses for eternal torment are Matthew 25:41-46,¹ and Second Thessalonians 1:9.² The King James translates the Matthew passages as 'everlasting punishment.'^{3†} Let's read them together so we will know exactly what they say:

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

42. for I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink;

43. I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and you did not visit Me.

45. ...to the extent that you did not do it to the least of these, you did not do it to Me.

1. Matthew 25:46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous into everlasting life."

2. Second Thessalonians 1:9 "And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction (death is eternal destruction), away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day and to be marveled at among all who have believed."

3. A more accurate translation would be "eternal punishment."

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46. And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.^{4†}

“These are heavy scriptures,” said John. “Christ tells us that it is a sin to ignore the needs of others, and that the punishment for that sin is an eternal, everlasting, punishment. The King James version translates the word ‘everlasting’ but the root word is ‘eternal.’ The meaning is essentially the same for any translation: a punishment that never ends.^{5†}

“There you have it!” Said the first Elder. “How clearer can it be? eternal torment from the words of Christ Himself. You can’t argue with that!”

"Not quite." Said John. "That's not what He said."

"What do you mean? It's right there in your Bible. It says 'And these will go into everlasting torment.'"

"Well, no." Said John. "It says that these will go into everlasting *punishment*."

"It means the same thing, John."

"Everlasting punishment and everlasting torment are not the same things." Said John.

"John, are we mincing words again?"

"The passage says eternal punishment but it does not say that the punishment is eternal torment."

"Ok. If the eternal punishment is not eternal torment, what else can it possibly be."

"The punishment is eternal death. Every single scripture that directly describes the eternal punishment of the unredeemed says that the punishment is death."

At this point, the first Elder paused.

4. Matthew 25:41-46 † The emphasis of scripture is on those who cannot provide for themselves (see Second Thessalonians 3:10-15) but Christ’s command in these verses is not limited in any respect. He tells us to give to those in need whether they deserve it or not (see Matthew 7:11 "Judge not").

5. † Here the scripture uses the phrase means eternity all the time.

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"You see," said John, "you are presuming that the punishment is eternal torment and because of that presumption that is what you are reading. But that is not what the text says."

The first Elder did not respond.

"If you want to find out just what the Bible says, you will have to stop trying to make it fit your doctrine and instead look at the plain meaning of the words of the scripture."

"You are forgetting about verse 41," said the First elder. "Verse 41 says that they will be sent to everlasting fire that is prepared for the devil and his angels. That is everlasting torment in everlasting fire!"

"It certainly is everlasting fire," said John. "But again it does not say it is everlasting torment."

"So what happens to them in everlasting fire?"

"They die."

"Well then, if they die, what is the point of the fire being everlasting?"

"It's for the devil and his angels, just like the verse says," said John.

"You are mincing words again!"

"These are not my words. These are Christ's words and they are not alone. They are echoed and explained in Revelation, the book that was written by the Apostle John about the end times and the afterlife. The everlasting fire is called the lake of fire and the Devil, the antichrist and the false prophet will be tormented there for eternity. We discussed that passage last week. Remember?"

"I remember," said the second Elder.

"Death means eternal torment!" Said the first Elder. "And the 'second death' is nothing but a nickname for the lake of fire. Nothing actually dies in the second death."

"What a strange nickname." Said John. "Why would they call it the second death if nothing dies in the second death?"

"Nothing dies in the second death. It's just a name. Death in the Bible is not really death."

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"And all of the other references to death—are they just names as well? Like John 3:16 when Christ says 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish.' Did He really mean 'perish?'" Or did He mean eternal torment when He said 'perish?'"

"Death in the Bible does not really mean death..."

"So He did not mean perish, did He. He meant eternal torment. Is that what you are saying?"

"Right."

"So he was saying 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not be burned alive forever?'"

"Yes."

"That is really the only real argument for eternal torment that you have," continued John, "That the words for death in the Bible don't really mean death. Instead, they mean precisely the opposite. They all mean eternal life in hell in spite of what the Greek and Hebrew Lexicons say they mean.^{6†} All 10 of them. They mean conscious existence and physical sensation that last forever. Your doctrine says that death really means life so you can have all of the unredeemed burned alive forever. You have re-defined death. Otherwise you would have no argument."

"Death in the Bible means separation from God."

"That's not in the Bible. 'Separation from God' is a secular phrase." said John. "And there are 10 Greek and Hebrew words for death and you are redefining all of them, both New Testament and Old Testament. Look at Ezekiel 18. You are completely changing the meaning of Ezekiel 18:4.

The word of the Lord came to me saying... 'Behold all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son in Mine. The soul that sins will die.⁷

6. See Chapter 6, *What is Death?* The comment thereto is an expansive treatment of the meaning of "death" in the Bible.

7. Ezekiel 18:4

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"Inerrant scripture tells us that the soul that sins shall die, but you teach that the soul that sins does not die. You teach that the ancient Hebrew word for death does not really mean death? There is only one reason for this. You are protecting the false doctrine of eternal torment at the expense of Truth."

Then the second Elder asked, "If you are correct and the punishment is death like the Bible says, why would the scripture specify that it is an *eternal* punishment rather than saying simply that it is just a punishment? You don't have to say that death is eternal. Because it is. Everybody knows that."

"That's right!" Said the first Elder. "Because you don't have to specify that death is eternal because all death is eternal. There is nothing on-going about death. Eternal torment is the only possible 'eternal' punishment because it is on-going. So, if scripture meant to say that the punishment is death, why would it *eternal* punishment?"

"Scripture specifies that the punishment is eternal because death is far from eternal in scripture," said John. "We can see that from the parable of Lazarus. And scripture tells us that there is a resurrection after the first death.⁸ Some will go into eternal life and some will go into eternal death after they are resurrected.⁹ That is why scripture records nothing for the unredeemed after the second death: no life and no resurrection, no judgment, no hell and no torment: just death."

"You are forgetting about Satan." Said the second Elder, "His torment goes on forever. If the second death is really a death, why doesn't he die in the second death just like the other unbelievers?"

"Look at Revelation 21:8," said John. "Satan is not included. It refers specifically to "persons."¹⁰ The second death does not apply to Satan. It applies only to the unredeemed. Satan is not judged with the unredeemed and He is never part of the second death. There is no first

8. Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power"

9. John 5:29 "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."

10. Revelation 21:8 "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."

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death for him and no second death. He is thrown summarily into the lake of fire without judgment. That's the whole point; *he is not permitted to die.*¹¹ And that same is true for the other two of the unholy trinity."

"But what about Second Thessalonians 1:9?" Asked the second Elder, "That scripture uses the term 'eternal destruction.' And that means destruction that continues on for eternity."¹²

"How could it mean that?" Asked John.

"Well," said the second Elder, "because that's what it says. It is destruction and it is eternal."

"Continually being destroyed forever?" Asked John.

"Of course."

"That is what you see because that is what you expect to see. But that is not what the words say."

"What do you mean?" Asked the second Elder.

"How can something be destroyed but never be destroyed?" Asked John.

"Because eternal destruction means destruction that lasts for eternity." Said the first Elder.

"You are correct," said John. "It is destruction that is never reversed. It is like a ceramic pitcher that is thrown on the ground and smashed into hundreds of pieces. It has been permanently destroyed. But you can smash it only once because after it has been thrown down it is gone for good. It is destroyed forever."

"No." Said the first Elder, "It means a continual destroying that never finishes, like breaking the pitcher over and over again."

John replied, "You are using a different word. Scripture uses the word eternal *destruction* and you are saying eternal *destroying*. That is an entirely different Greek word. Destruction does not mean the same as destroying. Destroying means an ongoing occurrence and the Greek word for destruction is a noun. There are several ways to say eternal de-

11. 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."

12. Second Thessalonians 1:9 "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

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stroying in biblical Greek,¹³ but none of those is used here. The accurate translation of Second Thessalonians 1:9 is 'destruction,' not 'destroying.'^{14†}

Now look again at Isaiah 66:24. The *corpses* of the unredeemed are dead:

As they go forth, they will see the corpses of the men who have rebelled against Me; for their worm will never die, their fire will never be quenched, and they will be a horror to all mankind.”

Killing the soul and destroying the soul are equated in scripture:

... 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 soul and body in hell.¹⁵

"Now," said John, "look at what Christ says in Luke 20."

...for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God...¹⁶

"Christ is saying that the redeemed can't die 'any more.' He uses the term 'any more' to link the first death with the second death. He is saying that the second death is the same as the first death. That is why he uses the phrase 'any more.' He saying that the second death is the same as first death.

"He is not saying they can't die. He is saying they can't die any more. He is saying that their dying has come to an end and they can't die any more. What happened to them before will not happen again. They have been given eternal life. They will die only once, not twice.^{17◇}

13. See Comment on Chapter 4, *Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction*

14. † See the Comment on this chapter.

15. Matthew 10:28

16. Luke 20:36. "οὐδε γάρ ἀπθαιεν ετι"

17. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto men to die once and after this the judgment." ◇ It true that all men must die once. But it is not true that all men must die twice. Revelation 21:8 speaks of the second death because some of those men will have to die twice. What reason did the author have to specify that all men must die *once* rather than that all men must die? The fact of two deaths did not originate in scripture until Revelation was written around 90 AD. Hebrews was written 30 years before, but here made accommodation for the second death. This is the second distinction that is to accommodate the second death.

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Christ is treating both the first death and the second death as actual death. He would not say die 'any more' if the second death was really eternal torment He would say 'neither can they pass into eternal torment.' But He didn't, He said they can't die any more."

"I think we should ask John to teach a Sunday School." Said the second Elder.

"We could never do that," said the first Elder, "Because John does not believe that God is going to burn all the unbelievers alive for the rest of eternity."

"Do you see," asked John "How the terms 'any more' and 'die once' and 'second death' are ignored and seen as wholly irrelevant when you say that death is just another word for eternal life in hell?"

John continued, "And when Jesus says that whoever believes in Him will never die,¹⁸ does He mean that He is going to save our bodies from ever dying? No. He means that we are saved from the second death. Therefore, if there is no actual second death, then why does Hebrews 9:27 say that all men will die 'once?' And why does Christ say that those who are resurrected to life (believers) will not die 'any more?'"

"And why did Jesus say that He saves us from dying? He did not say that whoever believes in Him will never be tormented for eternity. He said that whoever believes in Him will never *die* because it is eternal death that Jesus saves us from, not eternal torment."

There was a long pause.

"So if Jesus Himself said that He saves us from dying," asked John, "why do you contradict Him and teach that He does not save us from dying, but instead saves us from eternal torment?"

There was no reply to this question, but all shook hands and agreed to meet again next week.



18. John 11:26 "...everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

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Comment on Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction

Eternal Punishment - Matthew 25:46 and Eternal Destruction - Second Thessalonians 1:9

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.^{1†}

...These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction...^{2†}

Note that in this scripture Jesus did not see fit to say that unbelievers shall “go away into everlasting torment,” as He might have easily said. Instead, He says that they shall “go away into everlasting punishment.” But he does not say what that punishment is.

Those who argue for eternal torment teach that the punishment is eternal torment and, indeed, often cite this passage as a proof text. But the passage does not say what the punishment is. The passage says only that the punishment is eternal.

When Jesus made this statement, He had already told us that the punishment is death—He had already told us that it is death from which He saves us.

Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.^{3†}

Also, the Old Testament had said that the eternal punishment was death—14 times.⁴ Therefore, the purpose of Matthew 25:46 is not to state what the punishment for sin is because that has already been established, but rather to state that the punishment is eternal.

1. Matthew 25:46 † Usage here means "eternity" and not a lesser period. See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer W., Arndt W. and Gingrich W. (University of Chicago, Second Edition, 1958), s.v. αἰών compare with αἰώνιον

2. Second Thessalonians 1:8,9 (NASV) † Usage here means "eternity" and not a lesser period.

3. John 8:51. † If it is both death and eternal torment from which He saves us, His failure to mention eternal torment is a serious omission. Indeed, in that case, Christ's entire ministry is a serious omission because He *never* mentions eternal torment. Indeed, His comments in Mark 9:44 (Chapter 5) would be the perfect place to teach eternal torment, but He does not do so because eternal torment for the unredeemed does not exist.

4. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed* † The Old Testament writers used 5 different Hebrew words for death in its various forms to make these statements. Eternal torment effectively re-defines each of these Hebrew words to mean "eternal life in hell" rather than "death." The Old Testament,

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It is necessary for scripture to state that the punishment is eternal because not all deaths are eternal. The first death is certainly not eternal. It is followed by a resurrection of both the redeemed⁵ and the unredeemed.⁶ One reason why this passage specifies that the punishment (death) is eternal is to clarify that it will not be followed by a resurrection, and it can refer to either death.

The Greek word that the King James translates as "everlasting" in this passage is αἰώνιον ("aiōnion"). This word means "eternal" or "everlasting" or "without end." It has no other meaning.⁷ The Greek word that the King James translates as "punishment" is κόλασιν ("kolasin"). This word simply means "punishment." So, the phrase means exactly what it says: a punishment that lasts forever.⁸

however, contains no reference to eternal torment or anything similar. The final punishment for sin is death (the second death), no more and no less (Rom. 6:23). The effect of the second death for the unredeemed is eternal because it will not be followed by a resurrection in the same way a resurrection followed the first death (the unredeemed will be resurrected for the purpose of judgment). The effect of the death-penalty on Christ is different from the effect of the death-penalty on the unredeemed because Christ was later resurrected. How then could Christ have paid our eternal death-penalty when His death was not eternal? The punishment for sin is the second (eternal) death, no more and no less. Jesus paid that penalty because He died that death. The difference between Christ's death and the second death of the unredeemed is not a difference between the two deaths; the death of Christ was just as much a death as the death of the unredeemed. The difference is in the *effect* of the death. The effect that the death had on Christ was not the same as the effect that the same death had on the unredeemed because, unlike the unredeemed, Christ is sinless and His death paid for the very sins for which He died. Therefore He, being sinless Himself, could not remain dead. But when the same death-penalty is inflicted upon the unredeemed, it has an eternal effect because the unredeemed are not sinless and their death does not pay their penalty; it *is* their penalty. Therefore, the same death penalty had a different effect when it was applied to the sinless Christ. This distinction shows that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is reliable, ie. that Christ did indeed pay our death-penalty. But the effect was different. The fact that He was resurrected is proof that His payment was sufficient to satisfy divine justice because if it had not been, He would have remained dead. See Appendix 1, The Effect of the Error of Eternal Torment on other doctrines.

5. Revelation 20:4 "... they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

6. Revelation 20:5 "The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years were complete."

7. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. αἰώνιον. See also *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, James H. Moulton and George Milligan (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930), s.v. αἰώνιον. This is only use of αἰώνιον in the context of life after death in the New Testament, the rest is αἰών which can mean either eternity or not.

8. Id. s.v. κόλασιν

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It is important to remember that when we seek to establish proper doctrine, we should be looking to see what the Bible actually says rather than how scripture may be used to support a preferred belief. Therefore when we read Romans 6:23 and discover that the wages of sin is death, we should understand the wages of sin to be death. We must not presume that the that the wage of sin is not death because we would prefer all unbelievers to be tormented forever. We should simply accept the plain words of scripture and not try to change them. And when we open to Ezekiel 18:4 and read that the soul that sins shall die, we should accept it as a clear statement of the final state of the unredeemed soul rather than looking for ways to circumvent it by re-defining the Hebrew words for death. And when we see that the final judgment is called the second death, we should simply accept it rather than arguing that the second death is just a name and nothing really dies in the second death (in order to accommodate the doctrine of eternal torment).

Take the doctrine of the Trinity for example. The doctrine of the Trinity has a foundation in specific scripture because God, Who is One,⁹ is also spoken of throughout scripture as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And each of these is a clearly defined person with different functions. Therefore when we read that if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed,¹⁰ we are justified in understanding "Son" to refer to God the Son, or Jesus Christ. So, there is firm scriptural basis for the doctrine of the Trinity.

But the doctrine of eternal torment of the unredeemed has no such foundation. There is no scripture that says the unredeemed will be tormented for eternity. The only scriptural support for that doctrine is scripture passages that are broad enough to encompass both eternal death and eternal torment.¹¹ So, when we read that the unredeemed will suffer eternal punishment, we are not justified in understanding that the punishment is eternal torment simply because we believe in eternal torment. We must first find at least one scripture that establishes what the eternal punishment is and there are at least 50 scriptures teaching that the punishment is death¹² and none that say that the punishment is eternal torment. It is circular reasoning to rely upon the doctrine to prove the doctrine.

9. Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God; the Lord is One!"

10. John 8:36 "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

11. See Appendix 3, *Scriptures Used to Support Eternal Torment*

12. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

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Eternal Punishing

When we consider the phrase "eternal punishment," the Greek grammar is crucial to the meaning. The phrase means eternal punishment. It does not mean eternal punishing.

There are four ways that the phrase "eternal punishment" in Matthew 25:46 could have been written if the Holy Spirit had wished to convey the meaning of an on-going punishment or "eternal punishing:"

The first way to convey an active, on-going punishment is to use the present tense of the verb "to punish." That tense can convey the concept of an on-going occurrence,^{13†} but the present tense verb was not used here. Instead Christ used the simple noun form "punishment" which does not imply and active, on-going punishing.

The second way to show on-going, punishment would be to use the substantive participle of the verb "to punish," which would be "punishing" or "everlasting punishing." But the participle is not used either.

The third way to show on-going punishment is to use the future tense of the verb "to punish" and simply say it, "they will be continually punished forever." But this is not used either.¹⁴

The fourth and most obvious way would be to use the very clear terminology that was used to describe the eternal fate of Satan, that he will be tormented "day and night for ever and ever."¹⁵ But this is not used either.

Jesus did not use any of these because He did not wish to convey the concept of eternal punishing. Instead He referred to eternal punishment, a single punishment that is forever irreversible. Jesus came to

13. † For instance First John 3:9 uses the present tense to convey continuous action, "Whoever is born of God does not commit sin." The meaning of the present tense of this verse is that "Whoever is born of God does not continually or habitually sin."

14. See *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, James H. Moulton and George Milligan (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930) s.v. κόλασις, p. 352: The Greek word is a noun and means "punishment" not "punishing." See also *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. κόλασιν.

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

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earth for the purpose of saving us the wages of our sins and He tells us plainly that He is saving us from death.¹⁶ He *never* mentions eternal torment.

But from which death does Christ save us? He does not save us from the first death because everyone must die at least once.¹⁷ Christ is referring to the second death, the death that will occur when the unredeemed are thrown into the lake of fire, the death of the resurrected body and soul that is the punishment for sin.¹⁸ He saves us from that death.

Conclusion to Matthew 25:46

Matthew 25:46 does not teach eternal torment because:

1. The words do not say it. They say eternal *punishment*.
2. All of the passages that speak directly to the nature of the punishment state unequivocally that the punishment is death.
3. Jesus Christ says that he comes to save us from death:

Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.¹⁹

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish [die], but have eternal life.²⁰ †

I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever.²¹

-
16. John 11:26 "...everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."
 17. Hebrews 9:27 "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many..."
 18. Revelation 21:8 "The...unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (KJV) See also Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*
 19. John 8:51
 20. John 3:16 † See The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, James H. Moulton and George Milligan (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930) s.v. ἀπόλλυμι , 2 -a, α "of pers. perish, die...Exp. of eternal death...J 3:16."
 21. John 6:51

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And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.²²

And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.²³

4. Others refer to the ministry of Jesus Christ as saving us from death:

The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed is death.²⁴

Death is swallowed up in victory.²⁵

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves²⁶

...our Savior Jesus Christ, *Who* has abolished death²⁷

He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.²⁸

He who turns a sinner from the err of his ways will save a soul from death.²⁹

The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.³⁰

5. In all of the recorded ministry of Jesus Christ, Jesus *never* mentions eternal torment.

22. John 10:28

23. John 11:26

24. First Corinthians 15:26

25. First Corinthians 15:54

26. Second Corinthians 1:9

27. Second Timothy 1:10

28. Hebrews 2:9

29. John 5:20

30. Second Peter 3:9

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Eternal Destruction - Second Thessalonians 1:9

...These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction...³¹

Note that in this passage as well as in the eternal punishment passage, the Holy Spirit also avoids inspiring the words "eternal torment." But instead He inspires the words "eternal destruction." This term does not mean the same thing as eternal torment.

The same Greek grammar discussed above applies to "eternal destruction" because the grammatical form that is used here is the same that is used in Matthew 25:46 to mean punishment rather than punishing. Both "punishment" and "destruction" are noun forms of verbs.

In the same way that the Greek word for "punishment" means "punishment" and not "punishing," the Greek word for destruction means "destruction," not "destroying."

The Greek word that is translated destruction is *ὄλεθρον* ("olethron"). The definitive work for the definition of biblical Greek words defines *ὄλεθρον* as "destruction, ruin or death," and it also translates its meaning as "eternal death."^{32†} It is a one-time occurrence.

There is no instance in scripture where either the verb form or the noun form are used to mean an on-going, open ended continual destroying that never actually destroys. That is simply not the meaning of the word.

In the New Testament:

First Corinthians 5:5	<i>ὄλεθρον</i>
To deliver such a person to Satan for destruction of the flesh	
First Thessalonians 5:3	<i>ὄλεθρον</i>
Whenever they say peace and safety then Sudden destruction comes upon them	

31. Second Thessalonians 1:8,9 (NASV)

32. *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, James H. Moulton and George Milligan (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930) s.v. *ὄλεθρον*. See also *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. *ὄλεθρον* ref. to 1 Tim. 6:9 "eternal death;" s.v. *θανατος*, par. 2, ref. to Revelation "eternal death."

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First Timothy 6:9

But the [ones] resolving to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and injurious lusts which cause men to sink into ruin (ὄλεθρον) and destruction (απολειαν)

Hebrews 11:28

ὄλεθρεύων (verb)

Lest the destroying one should touch the firstborns

First Thessalonians 5:3

ὄλεθρον

Who will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his strength.³³

Nor is the word for destruction ever used to mean torment. Torment is an entirely different word (βασανισθησονται).

The participle form of destroy is used in Hebrews 11:28 where the author of Hebrews refers to "the One destroying the firstborns" at the time of the passover. But there and elsewhere, where the participle is used, the meaning is repeated violent killings, but not an unending destroying.

However, those who advocate the doctrine of eternal torment see this passage as a proof text because when the doctrine is presumed to be true, any reference to death, to punishment or to destruction becomes support for it. It is very much like the theory of evolution. It is seen to be everywhere. But in reality, it is nowhere.³⁴

Old Testament

The doctrine of eternal destruction is not new to the New Testament. It has its roots in the Old Testament and its meaning is no different. Its meaning is the plain meaning of destruction. It never means an on-going, open ended continual destroying of something that is never actually destroyed. It means a destruction that is never reversed.

For instance:

33. All taken from Nestles English Translation (Zonderman 1975)

34. See the Author's *If you Believe in Evolution* at BIBLEBOOKS.CO

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Job 20:6,7

אָבַד

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.³⁵

Psalm 92:7

שָׂמַד

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

The word translated "destroyed" from the Hebrew "...always expresses complete destruction or annihilation..."³⁶ It means to be exterminated.³⁷

The adjective "eternal" modifies the noun "destruction," and that is all it does. It does not change the meaning of destruction to "destroying." It simply tells us that whatever is destroyed (the unredeemed) will remain destroyed. It means permanent destruction. The fact that the unredeemed will be destroyed means that they will be killed in a very unpleasant fashion—but killed nonetheless.

The reason why scripture specifies "destruction" rather than simply "destroyed" is to distinguish the final and permanent destruction from the first death. The first death was not permanent. It was followed by a resurrection. But when the unredeemed are destroyed in the lake of fire, it is permanent—no resurrections.

There is another stark difference between "eternal punishment/eternal destruction" and "eternal torment." That difference is most evident when the original Greek words used to describe the fate of Satan are contrasted with the phrases eternal punishment and eternal destruction.

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

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

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

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The word for the torment of Satan is βασανισθήσονται ("basanisthasontai")³⁸ which means "will be tormented." But scripture uses different words to describe the fate of the unredeemed. The primary word used by scripture to refer to the eternal fate of the unredeemed is simple θάναος ("thanatos") which always means "death," plain and simple.³⁹ Other words are φθείρω ("thero")⁴⁰ meaning to utterly perish, ἀπόλλυμι ("apolumi")⁴¹ which means to perish or ἀποθνήσκω ("apo thnace'ko")⁴² which means to perish and others that mean various forms of actual, classic death.

It is certainly true that in the parable of Lazarus,⁴³ the scripture tells that the rich man was "in torments" in hell. But his torments were in the interim between the first death and the final judgment. He was tormented in hell because people who sin go to hell get tormented prior to the judgment. But hell ends at the final judgment when both hell and its occupants are cast into the lake of fire, which scripture refers to as that second death.⁴⁴

Scripture speaks of two resurrections. One for the just and the other for the unjust.⁴⁵ The scriptures that refer to the resurrection of the just refer to an imperishable body (a body that will never die).⁴⁶ Whereas in the resurrection of damnation scripture does not refer to an imperishable body because the bodies of those resurrected to judgment will die in the second death.

Hence, John 3:16:

38. Revelation 20:10

39. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

40. Second Peter 2:9 "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 ... (KJV)

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

42. John 11:26 " And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

43. See Luke 16:19-31

44. Revelation 20:14 "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."

45. John 5:28,29 "... All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

46. First Corinthians 15:53 "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."

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For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Second Thessalonians 1:9 states that the unredeemed will pay the price of eternal destruction "away from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

The next verse tells us why this statement has been attached to "eternal destruction."

VERSE 9: [They] shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power

VERSE 10: When He shall come to be glorified in His saints...⁴⁷

Thus, Second Thessalonians 1:10 tells us when this happens, "When He shall come" specifies a specific time not an eternity. This verse is saying that when Christ comes back to be glorified, the unredeemed will be punished with everlasting destruction.

The next verse follows perfectly in line with this understanding. In verse 11, Paul urges the Thessalonians to hold fast to the faith "That the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you..."⁴⁸ So you will be there "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints..."⁴⁹

It is Finished

When Christ was on the Cross and He died, He said "It is finished." And it was. It was finished. His death paid for the sins of all of mankind.

How was it over? If Christ paid our punishment, and our punishment was eternal torment for eternity, how was it over if Christ was no longer suffering?

47. Second Thessalonians 1:9,10

48. Second Thessalonians 1:12

49. Second Thessalonians 1:10

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Some people argue that although Christ did not suffer eternal torment, the reason that it was finished was that Christ suffered eternal torment quickly. What does that mean? It means the eternal suffering of Christ was concentrated into the time of his death. This is not scriptural. It is nowhere in the Bible.

Or it was finished because Christ was God and not man. They argue that the sacrifice paid for the infinite suffering of man in hell because it was the sacrifice of God on the Cross and not man. And the value of His suffering was far greater than man's suffering, so much greater than man that the sacrifice of Christ was sufficient. This is not scriptural. It is nowhere in the Bible.

Of course, this position requires "eternal death" be read as "eternal life" to permit the sinners to live or exist forever.

Know you that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.⁵⁰

It is the second death that is relevant here, and that death is followed by nothing in scripture. All of the torment and sadness that follows the second death, the screaming pain, the shrieks of regret. It is all imagination; scripture records *nothing*. Nothing follows the second death.

And there are 10 uses for death and not one of them means anything other than actual death. That is the choice: to live or to die.

Conclusion to Second Thessalonians 1:9

In conclusion, scripture does not use the word 'torment' or 'eternal torment' in either of these passages. Eternal destruction and eternal punishment are different nuances of the second death. They teach that the second death is violent (it is a destruction) and it is permanent (eternal). It is "eternal destruction."

The passages have to specify that the punishment and the destruction are eternal because not all deaths and destructions in the Bible are permanent. There are resurrections of bodies that have simply died and there are resurrections of bodies that have been physically destroyed. The eternal punishment and the eternal destruction, however is not followed by a resurrection. It is permanent for all eternity. It is for this reason that after the second death scripture records absolutely nothing.

50. Romans 6:16. Sin unto death (ἀμαρτίας εις θάνατον)

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Both of these passages use αἰώνιον to indicate eternity. There are two ways to indicate eternity one is (αἰών) which means can mean eternity or a particular time period and the second way is (αἰώνιον) which always means eternity. The author chose the second way in each instance. So the passages are saying eternity with a certainty. But notice that these passages refer to "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46) and "everlasting destruction" (Second Thessalonians 1:9), both of which refer to the punishment or the destruction for an eternity. Therefore they mean a punishment that is forever (eternal death) and a destruction which is forever (eternal death).

The "everlasting punishment" is the closest one comes to eternal torment. Were it not for the 50 scriptures, it would be a half-way proof text.

Whereas, in passages that refer to the torment, not the punishment (eternal death), the choice is different. In Revelation 14:11 the passage says "The smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever." In that passage, the first meaning is chosen. This means the smoke of their torment can be limited. And in Revelation 20:10 where they "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." In that passage as well the first meaning is chosen. This means that the time of their torment can be limited.



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Chapter 5

Their Worm Does Not Die

INTO THE FIRE THAT IS UNQUENCHABLE

MARK 9:43

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

THE WORM THAT DOES NOT DIE IS A QUOTATION FROM ISAIAH REFERRING TO CORPSES, NOT TO SENTIENT PEOPLE BEING TORTURED FOR ETERNITY.

When the three met the following week to continue their discussion, the first Elder spoke first. “Jesus tells us in Mark 9:43 that there is a hell and in hell there is a worm and the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched:

Go into Hell, into the fire which is unquenchable.¹

“Surely, this scripture explicitly teaches eternal torment!” Said the first Elder.

“It teaches exactly what it says,” responded John. “And what it says is that in Gehenna^{2†} 1) the worm of the unredeemed shall not die and 2) the fire is not quenched. Where does this scripture say that the unredeemed will be tormented forever?”

“Why, it says that they will never die and that the fire will never be put out! That seems pretty clear to me,” the first Elder said.

“This scripture does not say that people will never die nor does it say that their souls will never die. It says that their *worm* will never die. Ezekiel 18:4 has already told us that their *soul* will die.

1. Mark 9:43. This is a translation of τό πυρ τό άσβεστον (unquenchable fire). The translation in the King James (“fire that never shall be quenched”) is inexact. Christ repeats these words three times in Mark 9 (verses 44 and 45 are omitted by Nestle).

2. † There are 3 Greek words that are all translated ‘hell’ in the New Testament, but they are not all the same. They are άιδης (“Hades”) which is used in Luke 16:23 to refer to the place of torment; ταρώσας (“Tartarus”), which is used in 2 Peter 2:4 to refer to the place where God cast the wicked angels; and, in verse 44, γένναν (“Gehenna”), which is the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom where the worship of Molech had taken place and which, during New Testament times, was used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem, a place of abhorrence.

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“Well, that is obviously what Mark 9:44 means, even if Ezekiel said differently. The word worm cannot mean real worms. It has to mean sinners. What else could it mean ... come now, John, you are not going to say that it really means worms are you?”

“I am, indeed, my friend, because the Greek word means exactly that: actual worms. There are no other meanings. The word for worms means worms; it does not mean men or sinners.”³

“Worms in hell doesn’t make sense.”

“You are right about that,” said John. “Worms in hell does not make sense. Jesus was quoting from Isaiah:”

And it shall come to pass, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the LORD.

And they shall go forth, and 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.⁴

“In that passage, Isaiah is referring to a specific place, the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom or ‘Gehenna’ and the quotation that you quoted refers to specifically to Gehenna.” Said John.

John continued, “Gehenna was a place of abhorrence because it was the place where the apostate Israelites went to worship the gods of Canaan. Unburied bodies were thrown into Gehenna and it became known as a place of horror.

“For instance, we read in Second Chronicles that there was child sacrifice in the Valley of Hinnom:

Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.”⁵

3. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. σκώληξ defined as “worm.” It does not indicate that worm in ever used to mean man.

4. Isaiah 66:23,24

5. Second Chronicles 28:3. See also Second Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 32:35.

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John continued, “The dead bodies of the enemies of God will lay unburied in Gehenna and be eaten continually by worms. Decay and spontaneous combustion will cause flames on occasion. Their end is a horrible death and their bodies remain unburied. Isaiah paints the picture and Christ quotes him.”

“So it is a picture of hell,” said the second Elder.

“It is a description of what will happen to those who transgress against God. The word ‘worms’ really means worms and the worms are the worms that are eating carcasses of those who transgressed as they lay piled up in Gehenna,” said John.

“But do you admit,” asked the first Elder, “that the fires of hell are never quenched?”⁶

“The fire in the lake of fire,” said John “will burn forever.”

“And you admit that at least some sinners are tormented in hell?”⁷

“Yes.”

“And you admit that unredeemed sinners are thrown into the lake of fire?”⁸

“Yes.”

“Well then,” said the first Elder with satisfaction, “you admit that they are tormented forever. Thank you!”

“I do not admit that,” said John. “Just because the fire burns forever doesn't mean that the people who are thrown into it will burn forever. And you make another error.”

“What is it?”

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 fore ever and ever..”

7. Luke 16:19-31. See Chapter 2, *Parable of Lazarus*

8. Revelation 21:8 “But the...unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (KJV)

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“Both the Greek lexicons and Isaiah make it clear that the worms are actual worms that are literally eating corpses and corpses are dead bodies, so we know that they are dead.”⁹◇ They are not sentient, not suffering, not living souls writhing in pain. They are dead *corpses* eaten by worms. Ugly, to be sure, but quite dead.”

“So, you’re saying that when God throws the sinners into the lake of fire they just, you know, die?” Asked the second Elder.

“Exactly,” said John.

“And that's the second death?”

“Yes. The reason that scripture calls it the 'second death' is because it is the second time that people die.”

“But their bodies will be placed in Gehenna and eaten by worms?”

“Yes. That would be a literal fulfillment of Isaiah 66:23.

“A pile of corpses?”

“A pile of corpses eaten by worms. It is graphically clear statement, or rather an example, of what eventually happens to the enemies of God.” Said John.

“We all agree that there are two deaths in scripture,” continued John. “And we all agree that the first death is the actual death of the body. And we all agree that when the body dies in the first death it really dies. It decomposes and it is dead. Now, the Greek words used to describe the death of the body in the first death and the death in the second death are the same word. Why then would they mean different things?”

It is not reasonable to say that the second death is not really death at all. Where does scripture say that the second death is really eternal torment? And where does scripture say that the wages of sin is not, in fact, death? Nowhere. Scripture describes eternal torment *one time*, when it is describing the fate of Satan, the false prophet and the anti-christ.”

9. ◇ Note the accuracy of scripture. Isaiah says that the worms are eating actual corpses. But how can that be if the bodies were buried and eventually turned to dust? Centuries later we find in Acts 24:15 that the wicked shall be resurrected and given a new body for the judgment. The consumption of corpses by worms precludes eternal torment because the bodies as well as the souls (Ez. 18:4) are dead. They are not sentient, cognizant, effectively living humans being burned alive.

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"These are good questions," said the second Elder.

"There is absolutely no basis to change the meanings of the words and argue that the death of the body in the first death is any different from the death of the soul." John replied.

"So," asked John "If eternal torment is true, what dies in the second death?"

There was a pause in the conversation.

"Nothing," said the first Elder. "Nothing dies in the second death. They are all burned alive for the rest of eternity."

"Then if nothing dies in the second death, why does the Holy Spirit call it 'death?'" Asked John.

"It's a symbolic use of the word. It's a metaphor. It's an isolated use; it's the only use of the word for death that does not mean death..." said the first Elder.

"The word death is not metaphorical," said John, "It means plain death. And there are 50 scriptures that say it."¹⁰

"What are they?" asked the first Elder.

"They all use words like perish, devour, destroyed forever, consumed away, or burned up, but the word used most often is the Greek word "thanatos," which means death plain and simple. And, perhaps more importantly, Christ states unequivocally that He saves us from death—and He *never* mentions eternal torment or eternal hell or eternal burning in eternal flames or anything of the like."

"Here are a few of the scriptures:"¹¹

Psalm 37:20

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

10. Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State*

11. See Appendix 1 for an entire list with comments

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Ezekiel 18:4

“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...”

James 5:20

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

Ezekiel 33:11

“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?”

Hosea 13:14

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death...

Psalms 56:11,13

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

Matthew 10:28

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.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

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John 8:51, 52

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 10:28

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

Romans 6:16

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 6:21

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

Romans 8:13

For if you live according to the flesh you will die...

2 Corinthians 1:9

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...

2 Timothy 1:10

... 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.

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2 Peter 3:9

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

Revelation 21:8

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire ... [the] unbelieving ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

"All that means," said the first Elder, "is that the sin of Adam brought death to the world. The original sin of Adam means that all men are mortal and will eventually die."

"It is certainly true that sin causes death," said John. "But those scriptures talk about death being the ultimate result of sin, not physical death."

"Why not physical death?"

"Because all men are appointed to die even if they didn't sin,"¹² said John. "We all have an appointment with physical death at some time or another whether we sinned or not or whether we have our sins paid for or not."

"No," said the first Elder. "We die physically because Adam ate the forbidden fruit and death spread to all men. That's what that verse means."

The verse says that "Death spread to all men *because all sin*," said the second Elder.

"Right," said the first Elder. Adam's sin spread to all men so all men have to die."

"But that's not what the verse says," replied John. "The verse says that death spread to all men *because all sinned*—not just because Adam sinned. Death spread to all men *because all sinned*."

[J]ust as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...¹³

12. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"

13. Romans 5:12

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"Are you saying" asked the second Elder "that people are responsible for their own sins and not Adam's?"

"Yes."

"Now that's ridiculous," said the first Elder. "Because people die even when they don't sin, like babies who die or young children. They don't sin, but they still die because they inherited Adam's sin nature."

"Certainly, scripture tells us plainly that all men must die," said John "but which death? Remember, there are two deaths. All bodies have to die no matter what age. That is the first death. The first death is for everybody. It's for babies, the unborn, and young children who never sinned and old men that did. Everybody's body has to die no matter at some time."

...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment¹⁴

"So, if a baby does not sin or if a young child does not sin, he will die in the first death but not the second?" Asked the second Elder.

"Right," said John. "God does not throw babies into the Lake of Fire. You have to deserve the lake of fire. That is why scripture tells us that every man is judged according to his works.¹⁵ And babies have no works."

"Wrong." Said the first Elder. "Babies inherited the sin nature and God knows that they will sin. Even if a baby does not sin before it dies, it is going to sin and God knows it, so that baby has to be thrown into hell just like any sinner and tormented for the rest of eternity. God predestines some babies to be burned for eternity for Adam's sin just like just like all of the other sinners. And it does not matter if the baby has actually committed his own sin or not. That just shows how much God hates sin."

"So," said John, "If a baby is aborted, God will resurrect that Child and burn it alive because Adam sinned?"

"Yes," said the first Elder. "That's how much God hates sin. That child was born sin-sick and has to pay the penalty."

"And what about the abortionist?" Asked John. "Will he be tormented eternally as well?"

14. Hebrews 9:27

15. Revelation 20:12 " the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works [deeds]..."

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"Yes. And twice as hot!"

"And if the abortionist comes to Christ, will he go to heaven?"

"Certainly."

"So the abortionist will go to heaven but the baby that he killed will be burned alive forever for a sin that was committed by Adam and Eve? Do you really believe that?"

The first Elder did not answer that question.

The second Elder interjected, "So all these scriptures you quote. The ones that talk about death being the final end to the unredeemed. They are not talking about sin causing the first death. They are talking about sin causing the..."

"Second death," said John. "All bodies have to die in the first death. But the soul does not die with the body and it is sin that kills the soul, not Adam's transgression. That is as plain as day in Ezekiel, Chapter 18."

"Ezekiel 18 speaks to a proverb that was prevalent in Israel. The proverb said that 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' It meant that the children were punished for their fathers' sins. Ezekiel gives three examples of people who sinned and paid for their own sin. The third example is the example of the son who sees his father commit sin but chooses not to sin himself (v. 14). What happens to him?

Such a man will not die for his father's iniquity. He will surely live. As for his father, he will die for his own iniquity... Yet you may ask, 'Why shouldn't the son bear the iniquity of his father?' Since the son has done what is just and right, carefully observing all My statutes, he will surely live. The soul who sins is the one who will die. A son will not bear the iniquity of his father, and a father will not bear the iniquity of his son. The righteousness of the righteous man will fall upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked man will fall upon him.¹⁶

16. Ezekiel 18:17-20

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"The point is, my friend, is that all of the 50 scriptures are talking about the second death, they do not refer to the first death because all of them are referring to death as a result of sin. All men are appointed to die once (sin or no sin), but not twice.¹⁷◇ There is no scripture that says the eternal fate of unbelievers is anything but plain death."



17. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed for men to die once and after this the judgment."◇
 Note the fascinating accuracy of scripture. It is appointed for men to die once, but not necessarily twice. This passage in Hebrews was written long before John wrote the Book of Revelation and referenced the second death for the first time.

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Comment on their Worm Does not Die

The arguments for eternal torment based upon Christ's statement in Mark 9:44¹ (and its related verses in Mark 9) are classic examples of the-ology determining scripture rather than scripture determining theology.

Here are the verses:

Verses 43,44

And if thine hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into [Gehenna] hell,^{2†} into the fire that never shall be quenched.^{3†}

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.^{4†}

Verses 45,46

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell [Gehenna] into the fire that never shall be quenched.

Some proponents of the doctrine of eternal torment argue that the reference to worms refers to eternal worms torturing the resurrected bodies of the unredeemed who will never die. They argue that the unredeemed are tormented forever by fire and eaten by eternal worms. Others argue that the reference to worms refers to people who will never die in the flames of hell.

These arguments are unconvincing because the scriptures in Mark 9 do not teach anything about eternal torment for the following reasons:

1. Mark 9:44 "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." (KJV)
2. † The Greek word used here is γέενναν ("Gehenna"). Gehenna was a physical place outside of Jerusalem where apostate Israelites worshiped Canaanite gods. To those who worshiped the true God, it was a place of death and loathing. In the New Testament the word Gehenna is translated "hell." Another word that is translated hell is αἴδης ("hades"). Both of these words refer to the place of the dead. The distinctions between the two is beyond the scope of this book.
3. † The phrase "that shall never be quenched" is a translation of one word ἀσβεστον ("asbeston"), which means "inextinguishable." This fire is poured into the Lake of Fire which is eternal and shall never be quenched;
4. † This verse is omitted in the oldest manuscripts (Nestle text).

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1. The passages refer to the fire as unquenchable with obvious reference to the lake of fire and there is no doubt that the fire in the lake of fire is unquenchable. But whether the fire is not quenchable is not at issue. The issue is the duration of the torment in the unquenchable fire. Scripture does not say that the unredeemed will be tortured forever in the unquenchable fire. It says that they will die in the second death. Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet will be the only ones tortured for ever in the lake of fire⁵ and it is for the purpose of their torturing that the lake of fire is eternal.

2. Every scripture that refers to the eternal fate of the unredeemed refers to that fate as death.⁶

3. The word “worms” means exactly that: worms. The word is never used to refer to people; so the reference to worms that do not die cannot be a reference to people who do not die.⁷

Christ was not saying that worms are people, nor was He teaching that there are eternal worms in hell. He was quoting from Isaiah:

And they shall go forth, and 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.⁸

Isaiah was stating that those who transgress against God will die (they will become carcasses) but their worm shall not die. That is, the dead bodies of the enemies of God will never decompose. They will be a testament for all time that God judges sin. Their bodies will be eaten by worms forever. The reason why the worms never die is not because they are "immortal" worms but because they have an unlimited supply of food. Isaiah is painting a picture of a horrible and ignominious death, but not eternal torment. Alternatively, the worms may live forever eating carcasses as an eternal testimony to the effect of sin.

The endlessness of this scenario demonstrates that it does not refer to the aftermath of a battle, but to a supernatural monument demonstrating the fate of those who live lives of sin. It is in this picture that we

5. 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."

6. Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as Final State of the Unredeemed*

7. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. σκώληξ: "worm."

8. Isaiah 66:23,24

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see God's expression of how much He hates sin. The picture of billions of the hapless undead writing in a cauldron of liquid fire for the rest of eternity is simply not there.

Gentle reader, this is not the description given by the Creator. Better things than eternal pain follow sad conclusion of sin:

"... and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away... behold, I am making all things new."

The doctrine of eternal torment is a direct contradiction of this verse also because God will make all things new and all mourning, crying and pain will end. How then can billions of the unredeemed be burned alive? They can't.

Surely, there will be a judgment because God is just. Surely there is an eternal consequence for sin just as there is an eternal consequence for righteousness.⁹ For the Christian, the eternal consequence for sin fell upon Christ. For the unbeliever, the eternal consequence for sin falls upon him.

Lucy of Fatima was mistaken. There is no massive cauldron churning millions of non-catholics in liquid fire. There are no eternal screams rising from a furnace of eternal fire. There is only righteous judgment based upon the knowing and intentional sins of each individual person.¹⁰ And in the end each unbeliever will die in the second death, exactly as foretold in the numerous repeated scriptural warnings that sin kills and exactly as most of them expect.



9. See the author's *A Reason for Adversity*

10. The inerrant consistency of scripture is further demonstrated in the passages that teach God's eternal justice. Jeremiah (627/626 BC) corrects the belief that the consequence due to a father for his sin will be borne by his child. Instead "Everyone will die for his own iniquity" (Jer. 31:30). We find exactly the same correction 50 years later in Ezekiel (593-571 BC), "The soul that sins shall die" (Ez. 18:4) and finally 700 years later in Revelation 20:12, "The dead were judged according to the things written in the books according to their deeds" and Revelation 21:8 "the second death."

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Chapter 6

What is Death?

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

JOHN 8:51

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

IN THIS PASSAGE JESUS CHRIST STATES THAT
HE SAVES US FROM DEATH. NOT ETERNAL
TORMENT

When they gathered for the next meeting, it was John who started the inquiry.

“What did Christ mean when He said:”

If a man keep My word, he will never see death.¹

“It means that Christians never die. We just pass on.” Responded the second Elder.

John continued, "There is another scripture that makes it abundantly clear that we all really do die. We talked about it last week. It says 'It is appointed to men but once to die.'² No matter how you try to white-wash it with eternal life, everybody's *body* is going to die. So, what did Christ mean when he said that if a man keeps His word he would never see death?"

There was a long pause, and then the first Elder replied, "It's because when a Christian dies he does not really die because death does not really mean death in the Bible; it means separation from God. He meant that we would never be separated from God. But when the unbeliever dies, he will be separated from God and burned alive forever in hell."

“So,” said John, “When Christ said we would never see death, He was really saying that we would not be separated from God?”

“That’s right,” said the first Elder.

"So when the sinner's body dies, it's not really dead, just separated from God?" Asked John.

"No, the body is actually dead. It's the unbeliever's soul that is separated from God."

1. John 8:51. See also John 11:23-26.

2. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto men once to die ... "

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"So, the body of the unbeliever is not separated from God, it's actually dead?" Asked John again. "Is his soul separated from God just because the body died?"

"Well, no. He was a sinner so when He died he got separated from God."

"He was not separated from God when he sinned and rejected Christ during his lifetime?"

"Well, yes." Said the first Elder. "He was separated from God then too."

"Why then do you say that his death was separation from God?"

"Because death in the Bible means separation from God."

"Can we all agree that when his body died his body actually did die in the sense that it ceased to live?"

"Yes."

"So in the context of the body, just the body, the word death means actual death."

"Right," said the first Elder. "But in the context of his soul death does not mean actual death it means separation from God."

"Ok." Said John. "So, here are two definitions of death. One is where the body dies and the other is where the soul dies?"

"Right. There are two kinds of deaths."

"Just a minute." Said the second elder. "If it were that way, you would have the unbeliever's soul separated from God during life because he was an unbeliever. Right?"

"Right."

"And you would have his sole separated from God as result of his death? Both of them are the same word?"

"Ok, so what is the meaning of that death as in 'second death'?" Asked John.

"That death," said the first Elder, "means eternal torment." The sinner is separated from God when he dies and the second death is when he is burned alive in hell forever."

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"Ok," said John "so we have three definitions for death, 1) the death of the body, which is actual death, 2) the state of the soul after the body dies, and 3) the state of the soul in the lake of fire?"

"Right."

Ok. There's a few things I still don't understand." Said John. "When was the unbeliever ever united with God."

"What do you mean?"

"Well," said John. "He will have to be united with God before he can be separated from God. When was he united with God?"

"We are united with God when we come to Christ," said the first Elder.

"And when someone who is united with God through Christ dies, does that death separate him from God?"

"Of course not!"

"But he's said to be dead." Said the second elder.

"Then, the word for death means separation from God when the unbeliever dies, but it does not mean separation from God when the believer dies?"

"Right"

"So this is the fourth definition of death," said John. "It is the same word but it means different things when it is applied to a believer or an unbeliever. So the unbeliever who dies was never united with God his death means separation from God but if it is the believer his death does not mean separation from God?"

"Right," said the First Elder.

"What about the death of Jesus Christ? What kind of death is that?"

"Jesus paid for our sins so His death means separation from God."

"But He was resurrected on the third day."

"Right. He didn't have to say dead because He paid for the sins of the world."

"And what was that payment?" Asked John.

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"The cross was the payment," said the First Elder.

"So, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on the cross?" Asked John.

"Yes," said the First Elder, "Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on the cross."

"What is the penalty for unforgiven sin?"

"The penalty for unforgiven sin is you get tormented in the flames of hell for the rest of eternity."

"Ok. So did Christ get tormented for the rest of eternity?"

"No. He was resurrected."

"Then," said John, "The His death on the cross did not pay the penalty for our sins."

"Yes, it did," said the First Elder.

"If our penalty is to be tormented in hell forever, how did Christ pay that penalty by dying?"

"It was concentrated."

"What was concentrated?"

"His death. His death was eternal torment concentrated into the three days that He was dead."³

"What dies in the second death?" Asked John.

"Nothing dies in the second death," said the first Elder. "The second death is not really death. They live in the fires of hell forever."

"Then why is it called 'death'?"

"Just a term." Said the first Elder.

"So when Christ said that He saves us from death, did He mean that He saves us from death?"⁴

3. The reader may, should he choose, replace the First Elder with the name of a pastor preaching eternal torment.

4. 1 John 8:51 "If a man keep my saying the shall never see death."

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"Yes, but He meant that He saves us from eternal torment. Death means eternal torment."

"So what did Paul mean when He said that the wages of sin is death? Did he mean that wages of sin is really death?"⁵

"No. He meant that the wages of sin is being burned alive in hell forever."

"And when Ezekiel says that the soul that sins will die. Did he mean that the soul that sins will die?"

"No. He meant that the soul that sins will be separated from God and be burned in hell forever."

And what did Christ mean when He said "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish? Did He mean that whoever believes in Him would not perish?"

"No. He meant that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son whoever believes in Him should not be separated from God and burned in hell for eternity."

"And Christ paid the penalty for our sin but it was concentrated?"

"Right."

And when James said "he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death"⁶ did he mean that turning a sinner from his way will save a soul from death?

"No. That's what he said, but that is not what he meant. He meant that turning a sinner from his way will save a soul from being burned alive forever in hell."

"So actual death has nothing to do with it?"

"Right."

"So the unredeemed never die and the Christians never die and the second death is not death at all?"

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

6. James 5:20 "He which converts the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins."

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"Right. You just have to understand that all those verses that talk about death in the Bible. They don't really mean it. They mean separation from God and being tormented for the rest of eternity."

Then the second Elder asked, "So, not everyone is appointed to die the second death?"

"Right," Said John. "That's the reason it says that all men are appointed to die once, not twice. The second death is reserved for unbelievers.⁷ Only those who have not trusted in Christ will die the second death. It is the second death that Christ was talking about when He said that if we follow His word (trust in Him), we will never see death. He was not saying that Christian bodies would not die nor was He saying that death in the Bible is not really death. He was saying that our soul would never die. And we would never see the second death because the second death is God's eternal punishment for sin and Christ died that death in our place—Christ has already died the second death *for us*."

John continued, "Christ died the death that we would have had to die, the death that would have been the inevitable result of our sin. This is called substitutionary atonement."⁸

"So," said the second Elder, "you are saying that Christ died in our place because the penalty for sin is death. And the reason why He did not suffer eternal torment for us is because eternal death is the penalty, not eternal torment. That's why He *died* for us."

"Precisely." Said John.

"But the soul is immortal," said the second Elder. "And if souls are immortal, they can't die, even in the second death."

"The reason why the second death is called death," said John, "is because things die in it not because things live forever in it. And scripture does not teach that the soul is immortal. Scripture teaches exactly the opposite. It teaches that soul that sins will die."

Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father,
so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that
sins, it shall die.⁹

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

8. See Appendix 7 - Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines.

9. Ezekiel 18:4. This scripture shows that death is the result of sin.

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"And Psalms teaches that we have a soul and that God delivers our soul, not our body, from death, meaning that some souls do die:"

"Thou hast delivered my soul from death..."¹⁰◇

John continued, "In Ezekiel we also find a clear delineation between the physical body and the soul, and how the soul could be saved from death:

... when the wicked *man* turns away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and does that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.¹¹

The first Elder interjected, "All Ezekiel meant was that the sinner would be separated from God in hell for the rest of eternity!"

But John responded, "So מוּח means "separation from God"?¹²"

"What?"

"That's the word the Ezekiel used to say what happens to the soul that sins. You are saying that מוּח does not mean death. It really means separation from God and the Hebrew dictionaries are wrong. Is that what you are saying?"

"Right. The Hebrew dictionaries are wrong if they say that word means real death after the judgment"

"So," asked John "the word death means death unless it refers to the final state of the unredeemed?"

"Right." Said the first Elder.

"Ok, so would it be fair to say that death means death except when it contradicts the doctrine of eternal torment."

"Right." Said the first Elder.

"That is indeed convenient for the doctrine of eternal torment. So, what would Ezekiel say if he wanted to say that the soul really dies?"

"I have no idea." Said the first Elder.

10. Psalm 56:11,13. ◇ This scripture shows that the soul can die or it can live.

11. Ezekiel 18:27

12. See "Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State" on page 105

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"Well, neither do I," said John, "because if the word death never means actual death when it refers to the final state, it would be impossible for him to say that the soul actually dies."

"Right. Because it doesn't." Said the first Elder.

"What about saying that the soul is destroyed?" Asked John.

"That word wouldn't work," said the first Elder, "because the Bible already says that they are destroyed for eternity and that's not death either.¹³ Death and destruction do not mean death and destruction in the Bible. They mean eternal life in hell or eternal existence and pain unless it is a dead body."

John replied, "If Ezekiel wanted to say that the soul that sins will die, he could not have done so because your doctrine says that whenever there is a mention of the eternal state it is never actual death."

"Right," said the first Elder.

John asked, "What if I told you that the first verse of the Book of Ezekiel says that Ezekiel was speaking the Word of God Himself. Would you still say that when Ezekiel said that 'the soul that sins will die,' he did not mean what he says?"

"Right. Death in the Bible does not mean death whenever it refers to the eternal state of the unredeemed no matter Who says it."

And that ended that discussion.



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13. See Comment on Eternal Punishment page 106

Comment on What is Death

This is a comment on the meaning of the word “death” in the Bible. The reader should refer to Appendix 5, a word study of all of the words for death used in the Bible.

What is death? The meaning of the word “death” is crucial, because every relevant scripture teaches that the final end of sin is death, *including* the words of Jesus Christ, whose ministry was to save us from death¹ and “Who tasted death for every man.”² Paul tells us that the wage of sin is death, not eternal torment.³ John teaches the part that the unredeemed will have in the Lake of Fire is “the second death.”⁴ And God, speaking through the mouth of Ezekiel tells is plainly that “the soul that sins shall die.”⁵† In fact, *every* scripture that directly refers to the eternal fate of the unredeemed refers to it as death in one form or another and there are 50 such scriptures.⁶

Therefore, if eternal torment is to have any credibility, death must be redefined because dead bodies have neither consciousness nor sensation and therefore cannot be tortured.

The doctrine of eternal torment does exactly that. It changes the meanings of all the Greek and Hebrew words for death to mean eternal conscious sentient existence—but only if the context is the eternal state of the unredeemed. Everywhere else death means death.

The inscrutable irony of this argument is that this definition is precisely the opposite of death. It is the definition of eternal life, not eternal death. According to eternal torment, God's direct word through the prophet Ezekiel, “The soul that sins will die”⁷ no longer means what it says. It now means the soul that sins will not die but receive eternal life in hell. This theological fiction has evolved into the maxim, “Death in the Bible means separation from God.”

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

2. Hebrews 2:9 “...He [Jesus] tasted death for every man.”

3. Romans 6:3 “The wages of sin is death...”

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

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

6. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State*.

7. Ezekiel 18:4 “The soul that sins shall die”

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The Separation from God Argument

The separation from God argument states that if any word for death is used in the context of the eternal state of the unredeemed, that word changes its meaning from "death" to "separation from God." There is no death in the separation from God. Therefore the separation from God argument tells us that when Jesus Christ said that He saves us from death,^{8†} He did not mean it because He does not really save us from death; He saves us from separation from God.

But the "separation from God" definition of death is not present in Greek and Hebrew lexicons. Nor is it anywhere in Bible. Death means death in Greek and Hebrew dictionaries because they are focused upon the meanings of words, not upon legitimizing doctrines. There are at least 50 scriptures that say that death is ultimate penalty for sin.

The separation from God argument is essential to the doctrine of eternal torment because if death in the Bible means actual death, then the eternal state of the unredeemed would be death rather than eternal torment in the hell. And one cannot torment a dead body. A dead body cannot suffer pain.

From Genesis to Revelation scripture warns us with relentless foreboding that **sin kills**.^{9◇}

Scripture uses 10 different Greek and Hebrew words for death to express these warnings.¹⁰ The doctrine of eternal torment gives every one of these words a new and previously non-existent meaning and then applies this new meaning only where it refers to the eternal state of the

8. John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." ◇ Jesus makes a very fine distinction in this verse. He is saying that those who do obey His word will not see death but those who do not obey His word will see death. The death that they will see is the spiritual death of the sinner as well as the ultimate death of the unredeemed. Knowing God is to know and experience eternal life now, in this life (John 17:3). And knowing God comes from obedience to His commands (John 14:21). If we trust in Christ and continue to sin, we will be saved in the end (Romans 8:38), but we will not know Him in the interim (John 14:21). The carnal Christian lives the same spiritual death in this life that the unbeliever lives but in the end, he is saved.

9. † God provides the opportunity for sin because it is a prerequisite for the moral structure in which man, as an independent agent, may create righteousness by choosing not to sin. Without free choice to sin, the choice not to sin is irrelevant. But when we do have a choice and we make that choice, that choice has eternal consequences. The error of eternal torment strikes not only at the heart of God's character but it obscures the very balance of the moral universe because it imposes the eternal punishment reserved for Satan on all of the unredeemed.

10. See Appendix 5, *Word Study on Death*

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unredeemed. This is a re-definition of ten Greek and Hebrew words for the sole purpose of legitimizing a doctrine of eternal torment and changing the meaning of the scripture in order to do it. It has no direct scriptural support and contradicts more than 50 scriptures that directly teach death as the final result of sin. ¹¹

Of course, there are instances in scripture where the dead are conscious and feel pain; ¹² but that is not because they have not actually died. It is because the reference is to their soul feeling pain. Their body died. The soul does not die with the body.

For instance, in the parable of Lazarus, ¹³ scripture tells us that the rich man died and was buried, ¹⁴ yet when in he is in hell, he is fully cognizant, sentient and conversant. But this does not mean that he has become one of eternal torment's eternally surviving dead bodies. It means that the rich man's soul is still alive. His body was still dead and buried in Israel. All souls survive the death of the body. The survival of the soul after the death of the body is an integral part of scripture's description of the after-life. ¹⁵†

But unredeemed souls eventually do die. We know this because scripture states it clearly. ¹⁶ Indeed the entire Bible is a warning that death is the inevitable result of sin. ¹⁷

The soul survives the death of the body in the first death. It remains in hell until it is judged and then it dies in the second death. See the parable of Lazarus. See also the following:

But the cowardly and unbelieving. . .their part
will be in the lake that burns with fire and brim-
stone, which is the second death. ¹⁸

11. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

12. Luke 16:24

13. See Chapter 2, *Comment on the Parable of Lazarus*

14. Luke 16:22 "...the rich man also died and was buried."

15. See Revelation 20:4 "I saw the thrones, and those seated on them had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony of Jesus" † This passage shows that souls survive the death of the body. Revelation 20:12 "I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne." † This passage shows that the dead are judged. Scripture refers to the soul as the essence of the person. The soul is conscious and sentient. See Luke 16:19-31.

16. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die." See also Appendix 2, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

17. See Appendix 4, *Fifteen Centuries of Warnings*

18. Revelation 21:8 † Their part is the second death. See *The Unbelievers Part in the*

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But the believers will not be harmed by the second death:

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.¹⁹

Sin causes the spiritual death of the sinner²⁰ and we know that Christ saves us from death,²¹ but at the same time, we know that Christ does not save us from the first death because all men must die once.²² Therefore, Christ saves us from the second death.²³

God will resurrect the all of the unredeemed dead for the purpose of judgment²⁴ and the final act regarding the unredeemed is that they will be cast into the lake of fire and that the part that they will have in the lake of fire is the second death.²⁵

Prior the second death, the unredeemed souls reside in hell and are sentient and aware that they are not yet dead. They bear the weight of their own sin and they are emotional. They wail and "gnash their teeth"²⁶ when they discover that what Christ taught is true and their rejection of Him has an eternal consequence. They know that they are enduring the moral effect of their sins. They are living souls when they are in hell pending final judgment.²⁷ When they stand before Him in

Lake of Fire.

19. Revelation 2:11

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

21. John 8:51 " Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

22. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto men to die once and after this comes judgment."

23. Revelation 20:6 " Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

24. John 5:29 "... those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

25. Revelation 21:8 "... their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." See the next section, *The Unbelievers' Part in the Lake of Fire*

26. Matthew 18:12 "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"

27. Matthew 13:42 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun"

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the judgment, they stand complete and whole (a resurrected body) and they are then sentenced. They are plunged into the lake of fire where they die the second death.

The first death is inevitable and it is for everyone.²⁸ The second death is, from the standpoint of humanity, "optional." It is reserved for those who choose not to trust in Christ and the primary consequence of this decision is the eternal death of the soul.²⁹

The Bible uses the various words for death with the same nuances and the same meanings as we do. There are ten different Greek and Hebrew words for death. For instance, Jesus saves us from perishing,³⁰ which is death with a tragic end, or death can take on a spiritual nuance with "dead in trespasses and sins."³¹ This passage shows that it is sin, not death, that separates man from God. Death does not mean separation from God.

There is no doubt as to the meaning and intent of the 50 scriptures that spell out death as the ultimate result of sin.^{32†}

Summary

The re-definition of death into "separation from God" is an effort to bolster eternal torment into a reality. The good faith and sincerity of those who do is certainly beyond question; but they are mistaken. One cannot simply re-define all of the Greek and Hebrew words for death in order to support a doctrine that otherwise has no direct support.

As a result of this theological error we find the term "immortal soul" in common use. This is a direct contradiction of Ezekiel 18:4 that teaches that the soul is not immortal: it dies.³³ This contradiction is perhaps the most institutionalized error since Catholic Church assigned the title of "Father" to its priests in direct disregard for Mathew 23:9.^{34†}

28. Hebrews 9:27 "it is appointed unto man but once to die."

29. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die."

30. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

31. Ephesians 2:1,2 "As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you used to walk when you conformed to the ways of this world and of the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience..."

32. † All of the 14 different Greek and Hebrew words for death are included in Appendix 2, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State*.

33. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die."

34. Matthew 23:9 "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." † This scripture anticipates future misuse of this title.

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It is difficult to conceive of a more convoluted and tragic distortion of Truth than the doctrine of eternal torment. It is a false doctrine that has compromised true doctrines for centuries.³⁵

The Part of the Unredeemed in the Lake of Fire

Revelation 21:8 tells us that the unredeemed will die in the second death after they have been judged.

The...unbelieving...and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death³⁶

In English the phrase "which is the second death"³⁷ is ambiguous because it can refer either to "lake" or to "part." If it refers to "lake," then it means that "second death" is simply another name for the lake of fire ("the lake of fire which is the second death"). But if it refers to "part" then it means that the part that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death ("their part, which is the second death").

The dilemma is cured by looking at the original Greek. Greek avoids the ambiguity by assigning a gender (masculine, feminine or neuter) to nouns like "part" or "lake" and then making the relative pronoun ("which") match the gender of the noun to which it refers. In this passage, the word "which" is rendered as neuter, the word "lake" is feminine and the word "part" is neuter. Therefore, "which is the second death" refers to the neuter "part" and not the feminine "lake" and the passage means that the part that unredeemed sinners will have in the lake of fire is the second death.³⁸†

... their **part** in the **lake** which burns with fire
NEUTER FEMININE
 and brimstone **which** is the second death
NEUTER

35. See Appendix 1, *Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines*

36. Revelation 21:8 (punctuation removed) (KJV)

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

38. See A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Broadman Press, Nashville Tennessee, 1934), p. 712 "In Rev. 21:8... the agreement is regular, but the idea of ὃ may be more inclusive than merely μέρος [part]." † Thus "which is the second death" refers to "their part" but the grammar leaves open the possibility of secondary references as well. For instance, in Revelation 20:14 we find another reference to the lake of fire "And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." The implication is that the lake of fire is synonymous with the second death.

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The Greek word for part is μέρος ("meros") and, much like English, it is also used to mean a "portion" or a "share."³⁹ The passage could therefore be read to say "The portion that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death."

Scripture specifies that the *part* or *portion* that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death because there are two parts in the lake of fire and they are different. One part is the part of the unredeemed will have and the other part is the part that Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet will have.

Satan, Antichrist and false prophet do not participate in the procedure that precedes the sentence of the unredeemed to the lake of fire. Their treatment is entirely different. They are never judged and they are never resurrected to judgment. They are excluded from the second death^{40†} and they never die in either a first death or a second. They are thrown summarily and alive into the lake of fire without judgment and will stay there for the rest of time.⁴¹ They are not permitted to die.

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.⁴²

The unbelievers' part is different:

But for the...unbelieving...their part ... is the second death.⁴³

39. See Matthew 24:51, "[He] shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion [meros] with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" Also see Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Univ. Chicago Press, Fifth Ed. 1958), s.v. μέρος

40. Revelation 21:8 " But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and 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."
† This passage lists those "persons" who will die in the second death and the unholy trinity is not included (see Revelation 20:10). This leaves open the possibility that Antichrist and the false prophet are incarnate demons. See Revelation 13:18 "Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man..." (if the beast has a number of a man, he may not be a man); Revelation 13:11 "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns and spoke like a dragon..." ;is this a man or a beast? Neither of these beings is ever referred to as a man.

41. Or a part of time; see s.v. αἰών verses αἰώνιον

42. Revelation 20:10

43. Revelation 21:8

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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.⁴⁴

And it 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...⁴⁵

And it 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.⁴⁶

And it coincides with the other 50 scriptures that teach death as the ultimate punishment for sin.⁴⁷

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 doctrine of eternal torment re-defines the Hebrew word for death (מוֹת) to mean "separation from God." However, מוֹת does not mean separation from God. It means death. God is speaking through the prophet Ezekiel and we should listen. He is saying that the soul that sins will die. And the context of this scripture makes it clear that the reference is to soul as an actual soul, not a general reference to a person.

And if Christ wanted to tell us that if we keep His words we will never see death, what clearer words could He have used than "those who keep My saying will never see death"?⁴⁸

But the false doctrine of eternal torment changes His words. Even though scripture states that Christ used the garden variety Greek word for death (θανατος "thanatos"), the doctrine of eternal torment alters

44. John 8:51

45. John 3:16

46. Ezekiel 18:4

47. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*.

48. John 8:51

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what Christ said: "Those who keep My saying will never be burned alive in hell for the rest of eternity." This is an *immensely* significant departure from scriptural Truth.

Since none of the scriptures used to support eternal torment ever mention eternal torment,⁴⁹ the entire eternal torment argument rests upon its re-definition of death. That re-definition is nowhere in scripture and nowhere in Greek and Hebrew lexicons.

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The Parable of Lazarus

The parable of Lazarus⁵⁰ repeatedly teaches that a rich man refused to help Lazarus, who was a beggar. Then both Lazarus and the rich man died and were buried. Lazarus was carried to "Abraham's bosom" and the rich man went to hell.⁵¹ † While in hell, the rich man carried on a conversation with Father Abraham.

The doctrine of eternal torment teaches that this conversation shows that death in the Bible is not really death, but instead it is a sentient, cognizant existence in an afterlife.

This argument fails, however, because it was not the dead rich man who was speaking. It was the dead rich man's soul that was speaking because souls do not die with bodies. The rich man's body was dead and buried⁵² but his soul survived and went to hell. Therefore, when scripture tells us that "the rich man also died and was buried"⁵³ it meant exactly that. His body was buried and his soul went to hell.

People in hell are not bodies but bodiless living souls. They can converse, as in the parable of Lazarus; they can wail and regret⁵⁴ thirst and be tormented in flame.⁵⁵ They are sentient and cognizant and kept

49. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Used to Support Eternal Torment*.

50. Luke 16:19-31

51. Luke 16:23 "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." (KJV) † The unredeemed suffer torment in hell in proportion their sins on earth. But after the final judgment, they die in the second death (Revelation 21:8).

52. Luke 16:22 "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried."

53. Luke 16:22

54. Matthew 13:42 "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

55. Luke 16:24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.'"

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in hell until God resurrects their body and reunites the soul with the body for the purpose of judgment.⁵⁶ They are exactly the same as eternal torment describes them. The are effectively alive, but without their body.

Those who have turned to Christ are the same, but they will receive forgiveness of sin will be resurrected to eternal life and those who have not turned to Christ and have not been forgiven will be resurrected to condemnation.⁵⁷ That condemnation occurs in the final judgment⁵⁸ where all of those whose names were not written in the Lamb's Book of Life were cast into the lake of fire⁵⁹ and there they will die an eternal death (the second death).⁶⁰ Both the redeemed and unredeemed have an afterlife, but the unredeemed spend that afterlife in hell. The redeemed spend it in heaven.

Therefore, it was the soul of the rich man that was alive in hell. The parable of Lazarus does not show that death in the Bible is not really death. It shows that the soul survives the death of the body and it is confined to hell until the judgment.

Remember, "death," according to eternal torment, does not exist. Instead there is a permanent separation from God in extreme pain forever. There is no second death. But in truth, there is a second death and something dies in the second death that did not die in the first death: the soul. Death is not this mishmash of undead but it is death pure and simple and that is all that it is.

If therefore the Parable of Lazarus does not teach that death in the Bible is not actual death, where we find that teaching? Nowhere in scripture. The only purpose to redefine death is to accommodate the doctrine of eternal torment.

56. John 5:28 "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. (BSB)

57. John 5:29 "And [the dead] shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

58. Revelation 20:11,12 "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds."

59. Revelation 20:15 "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

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

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Analogy Argument

Another form of the "Separation from God argument" is that because the word for life never means mere existence, then death, being the opposite of life, cannot mean non-existence. Death in the Bible must therefore mean separation from God and an eternal state of "un-dead" (this is the opposite of death).

This argument fails because "death" means neither existence nor non-existence. It means the absence of life. This fact is clearly seen in Isaiah 66:23.

And they shall go forth, and 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.^{61†}

The symmetry of life and death in the scriptures is obvious. Life is being alive and death is not being alive. Those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life⁶² will have eternal life and those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will have eternal death.

The word that scripture uses to mean death is: θάνατος ("thanatos"). And that word is used to describe the death of the body in the first death:

Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God that those who practice such things are deserving of death...⁶³

61. Isaiah 66:23,24 † Note that this verse applies specifically to "carcasses," which are dead bodies. It teaches that the enemies of the Lord will die. It does not teach that the enemies of the Lord will live forever in hell.

62. Revelation 21:27 "Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into [the New Jerusalem] but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

63. Romans 1:32; see also John 8:51, Romans 5:12, 6:23

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And the death of the resurrected body and the soul in the second death:

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.⁶⁴

The Word for Death with a Nuance of Separation

Another basis for the separation argument comes from the Greek word ἀποθνησκω (“apothnaisko”). This word is comprised of two Greek words. The word ἀπο (“apo”), meaning “away from” or “separation”⁶⁵ and the word θνησκω (“thnaceko”) meaning death or dead.^{66†} When placed together, the combined word apothnaceko can mean a “separating death” when used with the dative case:

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.⁶⁷

The meaning of apothnaisko is broad; it can mean ordinary death, spiritual death, loss of eternal life or just the fear of death. One of its nuances is a death that results in a separation. The death of a son is θανατος (“thanatos”), which means conventional, ordinary death but it is also ἀποθνησκω because it is a death that results in the separation of a father and a son. Apothnaisko a death that results in a separation.^{68†}

Eternal torment, however, redefines death altogether. It teaches that when any word for death refers to the eternal state of the unredeemed it no longer means death. It is redefined to mean separation from God, which allows the conclusion that the sinner will never die but spend

64. Revelation 21:8 "second death [θανατος]"

65. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, p. 563, s.v. απο wherein the word is defined as from, away from, and “all verbs expressing the idea of separation.”

66. † This is the word for death that is used in the Parable of Lazarus to refer to both Lazarus and the rich man because its nuance is the separation of the body and the soul. It is appropriate because the parable deals with souls that were separated from bodies by the death of the body. However, it is not the word for death that is used in Revelation 21:8, which the "second death passage." The word used in the "second death" passage is θάνατος (“thanatos”), which means plain death.

67. Galatians 2:19

68. † Another example of this use is found in John 4 where a nobleman came to Christ and asked Him to heal his son. This scripture relates that the boy was about to die (apothnaisko) and be separated from his father.

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eternity in the flames of hell. Hence, in the world of eternal torment there is only one death and that is the first one and the second death is not death at all, although it is the same word.

Scripture does not use ἀποθνήσκω (apothnaisco) to refer to the second death; scripture uses θάνατος (thanatos) for the second death and thanatos means simple classic death, with no implication of separation.⁶⁹ The Holy Spirit chose θάνατος (thanatos) to describe the death in the lake of fire in order to show that the second death is an actual death. It is the eternal and irreversible death of the resurrected body and soul.

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man uses both ἀποθνήσκω (“apothnaisco”) and θάνατος (“thanatos”) but it uses them precisely the opposite from the way the separation-from-God argument would require.

When scripture uses ἀποθνήσκω (apothnaisco - death that separates) to apply to Lazarus, it obviously does not mean that Lazarus was separated from God.⁷⁰ Instead, the word means that Lazarus' soul was separated from his body when the body died. The same word is used to describe the death of the rich man and means the same thing: the rich man's soul was separated from his body. Apothnaisco is the appropriate word to use here because it carries the nuance of death causing the separation of the soul and the body and the context is the life of the soul after death.

If the separation from God argument were valid, then we would have seen θάνατος (thanatos) (ordinary death) used to describe the death of the rich man's body and ἀποθνήσκω (apothnaisco) (death that causes a separation) used to describe the death of the rich man's soul because the soul would be separated from God. But the two words for death are reversed. Apothnaisco is used to describe the rich man's first death and Lazarus' death. And thanatos (ordinary death) is used to describe the rich man's second death (Revelation 21:8).

In John 8:51, Christ is speaking to the Pharisees and He uses θάνατος (thanatos - ordinary death) to say it is thanatos from which Christ saves us. He says "Those who keep my word will never see death [thanatos]."⁷¹† This was a direct confrontation with the Pharisees which

69. Revelation 21:8 "... the second death [thanatos]"

70. Luke 16:22 "Now it came about that the poor man [Lazarus] died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried."

71. John 8:51 † Here Christ is speaking to the Pharisees and relating a spiritual truth

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Christ ends quickly when He asserts his divinity.⁷² It is clear from the text that the people who heard Him understood the word to mean ordinary death.⁷³ Christ was saying that the soul of anyone who keeps His word would not die in the second death, nor would it die in trespasses and sins in this life.

θάνατος (thanatos - ordinary death) is the same word that is used to describe the second death in Revelation 21:8⁷⁴ and it is the same word that means death plain and simple throughout the Bible. There is no reason to change it to mean separation from God.

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"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death..."⁷⁵

"...they shall condemn Him to death..."⁷⁶

"Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death."⁷⁷

"I have found no cause of death in Him..."⁷⁸

"...signifying what death he should die..."⁷⁹

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor power, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor

to them, knowing that they will neither understand nor accept it. Previously, in John 5:24 He was evangelizing and said, "He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death [thanatos] into life." Thus, spiritual death in this life is thanatos and when we are born again, we pass into life *at that time*. Passing from spiritual death to spiritual life is what salvation is; it is the living of Christ's (eternal) life *now*, in this life. See John 17:3 "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

72. John 8:58 "Before Abraham was I am."

73. John 8:52 "The Jews said to Him, 'Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste of death.'"

74. See Appendix 3, *Word Study on Death*

75. Matthew 10:21

76. Matthew 20:18

77. Luke 22:33

78. Luke 23:22

79. John 12:33

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any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."^{80†}

"O, death, where is thy sting?"⁸¹

"No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him."⁸²

"We had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead."⁸³

"...the second death..."⁸⁴

All of the above translations of death are translations of the same Greek word, θάνατος ("thanatos") which means death plain and simple.⁸⁵ The same word is used in "the second death."

There is but one reason why these words are said to change their meaning from "death" to "eternal life in hell" or "separation from God" and that is make room for the doctrine of eternal torment.

The Partition Argument

Revelation 21:8 states that the part that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death.⁸⁶ This passage is antithetical to the doctrine of eternal torment because the concept of a second death does not fit well with eternal torment, even after the doctrine has re-defined death. So the proponents of eternal torment attempt to circumvent it.

80. Romans 8:28,29. † Here scripture teaches that death shall not separate us from Jesus Christ our Lord. But if death means separation, how then can scripture say that it will not separate us because we will all die?

81. First Corinthians 15:55

82. Luke 23:15

83. Second Corinthians 1:9

84. Revelation 21:8

85. *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..."

86. See Subchapter *Unbelievers Part in the Lake of Fire*

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One of the circumventions is to argue that the "part" of the unredeemed in the lake of fire is not the second death, but instead a geographical region of the lake of fire. That is, the unredeemed have their own "part" and that part is a defined physical area in the lake of fire. So Satan will have one area and the unredeemed will have another area.

This is somewhat like a real property description in the county deed records. The argument fails because there is no scriptural basis for geographical divisions in the lake of fire. The argument is made for the sole purpose of circumventing the plain meaning of the words of scripture: that the part the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death.⁸⁷

The Resurrection to Judgment

God will resurrect all of the dead. Some will be resurrected to eternal life and some to a resurrection for eternal judgment.⁸⁸ However, as we read in the parable of Lazarus,⁸⁹ the souls of all the departed continue to exist after the death of the body prior to the judgment. The souls of the redeemed go to heaven and the souls of the unredeemed go to hell.

So, when the bodies of the unredeemed are resurrected for the purpose of judgment, their souls will be reunited with their bodies once more. Scripture does not state what occurs between the resurrection of judgment and the judgment itself. We know only that all of those whose names were not written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire and they will die a second time.⁹⁰ This is the reason why scripture refers to this as the "second death"⁹¹— because they die in the lake of fire after have already died once before on earth.

87. See the preceding section, *The Unbelievers' Part in the Lake of Fire is their Second Death*.

88. John 5:29 "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."

89. See Chapter 1, *Comment on Lazarus and the Second Death*

90. Revelation 20:14,15 "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

91. Revelation 21:8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and 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."

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First Corinthians 15:52-54 teaches that the bodies of the redeemed (the saved) will be resurrected first and that their resurrected bodies are "imperishable" and they will "put on immortality" because they have been given eternal life:

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.'⁹²

The unredeemed are resurrected after the redeemed. Scripture does not say that the unredeemed will have imperishable bodies, nor does it say that the unredeemed will "put on immortality," as it does about the redeemed. The resurrected bodies of the unredeemed are just as perishable as their original bodies because their resurrection is a resurrection to damnation (judgment)⁹³ and not to eternal life.

The imperishable bodies of the redeemed will live forever because they have been given eternal life. However, the perishable bodies of the unredeemed will not live forever; they will perish in the lake of fire. They will die because they do not have eternal life. Only those who have been given eternal life will live forever. Hence, it is theological error to teach that the resurrected bodies of the unredeemed will live forever in hell or anywhere else.

Insufficient Punishment Argument

Some argue that the eternal death of the unredeemed is not a punishment but a release. There are four reasons why this argument fails.

First reason. It is ingenuous to argue—or to believe—that being thrown bodily to one's death in to a lake of fire is a "release." It far from a release. It is an immensely fearful occurrence and will certainly be dreaded by every single one of the unredeemed souls who are confined in hell waiting for it. Death alone is a fearful occurrence, much less death in a lake of fire. Prisoners on death row fight for every minute of

92. First Corinthians 15:52-54

93. John 5:28 "The graves shall hear His voice...And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

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life even if is in prison. One can only imagine what it will be like for the dead in hell to be resurrected and brought into the great white throne room of God Himself—into the magnificent reality of it all—and see the eternal life that could have been theirs—only to be plunged into eternal death in a lake of fire.

Second reason. Eternal death is unquestionably a punishment. Scripture after scripture states and restates that death (eternal death) is not only a punishment but the *ultimate* punishment for sin. Indeed, death is the only final punishment for sin mentioned in the Bible.⁹⁴ The fact that sin causes death is perhaps the most consistently reiterated doctrine in all of scripture.⁹⁵ To name but a few:

Therefore just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned^{96†}

For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.⁹⁷

... sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.⁹⁸

The wages of sin is death.⁹⁹

He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death.¹⁰⁰

The Lord...is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.^{101†}

94. Appendix 1 - *Scriptures Teaching Death as Final State*

95. Appendix 1 - id.

96. Romans 5:12. In this passage we find the core of New Testament theology, which is salvation by grace rather than works. It is death the spread to all men as a result of sin, not eternal torment..

97. Romans 5:17

98. Romans 5:21

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

100. James 5:20 “...let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

101. Second Peter 3:9. † This scripture is not referring to perishing in the first death because we must all perish in the first death. Peter is speaking of the second death.

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... they which commit such things are worthy of death.¹⁰²

The soul that sinneth, it shall die.^{103†}

Therefore, the argument that death is not a punishment is not scriptural. The second death is clearly a punishment.¹⁰⁴

Third reason. Eternal death is not the only punishment for sin. For many, the death in the lake of fire is preceded by a lengthy stay in hell where the unredeemed will bear the weight of their own sins. Depending on the life that was lived, this may include torment,¹⁰⁵ being confined to outer darkness¹⁰⁶ or weeping and gnashing of teeth for the pain of knowing what one will have missed.¹⁰⁷ So there is definitely punishment in hell preceding the final judgment.

But that punishment will be different for each life because each person who has not turned to Christ will be judged by how each lived his life.¹⁰⁸ This punishment is in addition to the eternal death in the lake of fire that follows the final judgment. There is an entire millennium between the second coming of Christ and the final judgment—plenty of time for justice to be done.¹⁰⁹

102. Romans 1:31, 32

103. Ezekiel 18:4. † The context of this verse makes it clear that the use of the word soul here is not a euphemism for a whole person, but rather it refers the soul as distinguished from the body.

104. Matthew 25:46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." † Note the symmetry in this verse: eternal punishment (eternal death) and eternal life.

105. Luke 16:19-31 (The parable of Lazarus)

106. Matthew 25:30 " "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

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

108. Revelation 20:12 "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. . . and Hades [hell] gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds."

109. Revelation 20:5 " ... The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were completed. ...

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Fourth reason. The argument that eternal death is not a sufficient punishment is an argument based upon the subjective human opinion of how much punishment is appropriate. What punishment is sufficient and what punishment is not sufficient is a decision for God alone, not us.

Summation

If scripture had intended to say that the unredeemed would never really die but effectively be burned alive forever, it would never have used the word for ordinary death to say it. It would have said exactly what it said when scripture tells us clearly and precisely what the eternal fate of Satan will be. ¹¹⁰†

And scripture tells us clearly and precisely what the eternal fate of the unredeemed will be. Their resurrected bodies and souls will die¹¹¹ and their dead bodies will rot.¹¹² The only time the soul is tormented is after the first death and *before* the second death. ¹¹³

If God had intended to burn the major part of humanity alive for the rest of eternity as a result of their sin, He would say so clearly—at least once—but He does not. The only mention of eternal torment in all of scripture is in reference to the eternal fate of the unholy trinity in Revelation 20:10—and this reference is for an eternity or less.

What He does do is repeatedly—and clearly—warn us that sin causes death¹¹⁴ and He *never* mentions eternal torment for the unredeemed. Thus, the Creator has shown His deep concern for the inevitable consequence of sin by consistent and repeated warnings that sin causes death.

He is not misleading us.

110. 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 is the only instance where scripture refers to eternal torment.

111. Ezekiel 18:4 "the soul that sins shall die."

112. Isaiah 66:23 (quoted above)

113. Luke 16:23 "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

114. See 50 such scriptures in Appendix 1 "Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State" on page 123

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Ultimately, both sides of the argument must look to the word for death used in Ezekiel 18:4 and the word for death used when the unredeemed stand on the very precipice of the lake of fire in Revelation 21:8. Those words (Hebrew and Greek) both mean ordinary death. Teaching otherwise is to alter scripture.¹¹⁵

These errors do not create harmony. They create disharmony because they compromise truth. The Bible warns against this practice¹¹⁶ because errors of this nature compromise the integrity of scripture and destroy faith. Eternal torment has the God of all justice and all love¹¹⁷ resurrecting the dead for the sole purpose of burning them alive forever. This is the same punishment as given to Satan himself and when it applies to the unredeemed, it is error on its very face.

Unvarnished truth has a way of connecting with man because man is made in the image of God. But Truth loses its potency when it is diluted with false doctrine.

Like the gears of a massive watch, scripture fits with spectacular precision. One scripture may fall in one century and its compliment may be a millennium later—both of which are interlocked and turning with a harmony and Truth that defies time. This masterpiece of interwoven Truth belies the possibility that man has manufactured it. It is inspired by the Creator to the very word. It needs no apology and no apology. And when it addresses the eternal fate of the unredeemed, it speaks with pristine simplicity:

The soul that sins shall die¹¹⁸

The wages of sin is death^{119†}



115. 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."

116. See Appendix 7, *The Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines*.

117. First John 4:8 "God is love"

118. Ezekiel 18:4

119. Romans 6:23 † See Appendix 1 for a list of the other 48 scriptures that say the same thing.

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Chapter 7

The Death of Death and Death of Hell

DEATH AND HELL WERE CAST INTO THE LAKE
OF FIRE

REVELATION 20:14

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

DEATH ITSELF WILL BE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF
FIRE AND THERE IT WILL BE ERADICATED. THE
SAME IS TRUE FOR HELL AND ITS OCCUPANTS.

The elders went to John's house the following week to continue their discussion on the eternal fate of the unredeemed. They expected to continue where they left off, but John had a different question to ask them.

When they had settled in front of the fire with their Bibles, John asked something that they did not expect. "Let me ask you this," said John. "Is hell eternal?"

This question troubled the first Elder, who had already been convinced that John was gravely mistaken about practically everything. "Do you question that too?" He asked. "Are you saying that hell ends? Has God informed you that He will destroy hell?"

"Yes, He did, actually." Said John. "He informed both of us in Revelation 20:14 that He is going to form a world where there will be neither death nor hell and that He will throw both of them into the Lake of Fire"

... Death and Hell were cast into the lake of fire.
This is the second death.¹

"So what?" Asked the first Elder. "That does not say that Hell is not eternal"

"Well," said the second Elder. "It says that it is a second death. But Revelation 20:10 says that Satan will be tormented in hell forever and ever, so hell has to be eternal."

"Revelation 20:10 says that Satan will be tormented forever in the Lake of Fire, not in hell. So, it is the Lake of Fire that is eternal, not hell."

1. Revelation 20:14

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"So what difference does it make whether the unredeemed are tortured forever in the Lake of Fire or in Hell. It's the same thing."

"No," said John. "It is not the same thing at all."

"What difference does it make?" Asked the second Elder.

"It makes a big difference," said John, "First of all there is no mention of anyone dying in hell and there is no mention of the unredeemed being tortured in the lake of fire. No one goes to the lake of fire until after they have been judged. Hell is therefore a 'holding-place' for the unredeemed souls before the final judgment. Hell itself is thrown into the Lake of Fire and that act is referred to as the Second Death in Revelation 20:14. So, hell and the Lake of Fire are two different things."

"Ok. So they merge," said the first Elder.

"Again, not so." Said John, "Because hell itself dies when it is thrown into the Lake of Fire."

"Preposterous!" Said the first Elder. "All your passage means is that hell is thrown into the lake of fire and everybody in it."

"Well, then what about death? Does death die in the Lake of Fire." Asked John.

"What do you mean?" Asked the second Elder.

"Death can't die," said the first Elder. "Death is just, you know, just death."

"Well, no." Said John. "Not according to you anyway. Death is not just death. According to you, death is eternal conscious existence in constant and excruciating pain. Your death is precisely the opposite of ordinary death. Scripture says that death is completely eradicated."

"So, where does it say that?" Asked the second Elder.

"It says so in Revelation 21:4."

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.²

2. Revelation 21:4

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"Well," said the first Elder, "all that means is that there is no more death. It does not say anything about no more hell."

"It means that there is no more death." Said John "And if death is being separated from God and tortured in hell forever, then it means that all of that will stop. It means no more torture because death is eradicated."

"Well no," Said the first Elder. "The death of death is not really the death of death because...I don't know what. It means something different in this verse."

"So when scripture says that there is no more death, it does not mean it?" Said John.

"Right. It can't mean it the way you are saying."

"Perhaps," suggested John, "it is a different kind of death."

"Good thought," said the first Elder. "Death means eternal existence in scripture, so when scripture says that there is no more death and scripture can't contradict itself, it must be talking about another kind of death. Or else you would have one scripture saying that death is eternal existence and another scripture saying that it is not."

"Ok." Said John, "So its another kind of death."

"Right. Nothing dies in the second death and hell never dies like death does. Death does not mean death and even if scripture says that there is no more death it doesn't really mean it because death really means all the sinners being burned alive forever. So its not talking about that kind of death at all. That's how much God hates sin, you know. He's burning them alive."

"So what happens to hell?"

"Right. Hell is eternal and nothing dies in the second death even though scripture calls it death. Second death is just another name for the Lake of Fire."

"Ok." Said John. "So death is just another name for the Lake of Fire and it does not mean actual death. It means eternal torment. And it means another thing for the death of death and another thing for the death of hell."

"Right." Said the first Elder.

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"And did you notice," said John "That none of those definitions mean the plain and simple death as described in Greek and Hebrew lexicons?"

"Right," said the first Elder.

"So that is the fourth definition of death?" Asked John.

"That would be the fifth." Said the second elder.

"Right," said the first Elder. "Death in the Bible means separation from God except for the other three."

"Four." Said the second elder.

"There is another one." Said John. "We are forgetting the other one. The death of Jesus Christ."

"So how is that different?"

"Christ was supposed to be our substitute. That is, He died in our place. So, if He paid our sin-debt, He would have to be tormented for eternity because our sin debt is eternal torment."

"The wages of sin is death," said the second Elder.

"Right," said the first Elder, "The wages of sin is death and death is eternal torment. So the wages of sin is eternal torment. But His death was not eternal torment. All He did was to die on a cross and get resurrected and that was it. So His death was a different kind of death."

"And stayed dead for three days."

"Right."

"Ok. So He did not pay the penalty for sin?"

"Yes. He paid our sin-debt with His death."

"It was concentrated." Said John.

"Right."

"A different kind of death? Ok. So, that makes five?" Asked John.

The second Elder changed the subject. "You mentioned the new heavens and the new earth. What is that?"

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"After the final judgment," said John "God will create a new heavens and a new earth. There is no more hell, and no more pain, no more tears, no more wailing, no more gnashing of teeth and no more death for the redeemed. Here are the scriptures:"

And I say a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away... And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying or pain; the first things have passed away...³

He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But the...unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and 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.⁴

"This imaginary cauldron of millions of sinners burning for the rest of eternity never occurs because they all die in the second death and after that there is no more crying or pain and there will no longer be any death.

That is why the scripture refers to their part in the Lake of Fire as the second *death*. It is a death, a second death. Those people are excluded from the new heavens and the new earth because they are *dead*, not because they are separated from God. There is no more death. So, if death is not death but separation from God in eternal torment and there is no more death, then there is no more eternal torment."

But their dead bodies will continue to exist as a graphic testament that the wages of sin is death. They will become what Isaiah saw: dead bodies eaten by worms:

As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me, declares the Lord, so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, says the Lord. And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled

3. Revelation 21:1,4

4. Revelation 21:8

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against me; the worms that eat them will not die,
the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and
they will be loathsome to all mankind.⁵

"But the lake of fire sill exists," said the second Elder.

"Yes, but notice that Isaiah is referring to the new heavens and the new earth." Said John. "Satan is specifically excluded from the new heavens and the new earth not just because he is Satan but because he is not a man and the new heavens and the new earth are for mankind. Mankind will be God's people."

Behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and
He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His
people, and God Himself shall be among them.
And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes;
and there shall no longer be any death...⁶

"But the antichrist is a man." Said the second Elder. "And he is tormented eternally right along side of Satan."

"I have always presumed him to be a man," said John, "but scripture never says. Revelation 13 says that the Antichrist is a "beast" and refers to the beast as both a system and a being 'with the number of a man.'⁷ Why does scripture say that the antichrist 'has the number of a man' if Antichrist is a man? Scripture is accurate, and here it carefully avoids stating that the beast is a human:

Let him who has understanding calculate the
number of the beast, for the number is that of a
man and his number is six hundred and sixty six.⁸

"Interesting." Said the second Elder. "I expect it would be the same for the false prophet as well."

"Perhaps." Said John. "Hebrews 9:27 says that "it is appointed to men to die once and after that the judgment." But the antichrist and false prophet never die. So, they may not be human. And perhaps the fact that they do not die when placed into the lake of fire is another in-

5. Isaiah 66:22-24

6. Revelation 21:3,4

7. Revelation 13:18 "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty six."

8. Revelation 13:18

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dication that they may not be human because all humans die when cast into the lake of fire. But that is speculation on my part. I don't really know. What I do know is that the unholy trinity, whatever they are, will be tormented for eternity in the lake of fire—alone.

"I have much to ponder," said the second Elder.

"Do you see how well it all fits when the doctrinal error is removed?" Said John. "When Christ said that "Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die,"⁹ He was not referring to delivering us from a state of 'un-dead' where there is no real death. He was saying that we would be delivered from the second death, which is exactly what it says it is: a second *death*.

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies...¹⁰

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

"So, the first death is the death of the body but not the death of the soul because the soul is immortal, unless it dies in the second death," said John. "And the second death is the death of the soul after the judgment. The second death is the Greek word that means ordinary death. So, you see, it's not a different death; its just a *second* death. What a mess we have made of the very well-defined scriptural explanation. We have created a mishmash of no one ever really dying but everyone living forever in either heaven or hell.



9. John 11:26

10. John 11:25

11. Revelation 2:11

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Comment on the Death of Death and the Death of Hell

Before the final judgment, both the souls of the redeemed and the souls of the unredeemed will be resurrected. The first resurrection will be that of the redeemed.¹ The second resurrection will be that of the unredeemed and that resurrection will be for the purpose of judgment^{2†} and it will be followed by the second death. The second death is the penalty that all of the warning scriptures speak of.³ It is the death-penalty for sin.^{4†}

The first resurrection occurs after a 1000 year period.^{5†} The second resurrection occurs sometime after. Therefore, the final judgment will occur after the millennium.

Following the final judgment of the unredeemed both hell and death are cast into the lake of fire.⁶ After death is cast into the lake of fire, it is wholly eradicated. We know this because afterwards it no longer exists.⁷ God removes all death because He is creating new heav-

1. Revelation 20:6 "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.

2. John 5:28 "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." † This passage differentiates between those destined for eternal life and those destined for damnation. It differentiates between the two by referring to how each has lived his life and makes no mention of salvation through Christ. The reason that this passage does not mention Christ is because the resurrections are resurrections of all men, both before and after Christ. Christians are included in the category of those who have done "good" because even though many Christians have not lived a life of good, Christ has atoned for their sins (Romans 5:11 KJV) and they have been made righteous in Christ (Romans 5:19-21)."

3. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death." Also see Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

4. Revelation 21:8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving ... their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." † See Chapter 6, *Comment on What is Death*

5. Revelation 20:5 "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power..." † The second resurrection is referred to as the resurrection to judgment (John 5:28).

6. Revelation 20:14 "... Death and Hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

7. Revelation 21:4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

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ens and a new earth where there is no more death.⁸ Therefore, if death means "Separation for God" or eternal torment, then those who are being tormented must cease to exist - because death no longer exists.

The unholy trinity will be burned forever,⁹ so how can we say that there is no death? Because the unholy trinity never died. It was summarily thrown into the lake of fire and never judged. The word "death" is never applied to the unholy trinity or any of its members. It was never promised death and it never died. Alternatively, if it does die then it will perish along with the remainder.

The prophecy of the death of death was not new in the New Testament. It was an echo of Isaiah's prophecy some 800 years before:

He will destroy death forever. The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from every face and remove His people's disgrace from the whole earth, for the LORD has spoken.^{10†}

Scripture does not say what happens to hell when hell is cast into the lake of fire. Will it be eradicated as death is or will it remain? There is no reason for it to remain because all of the human occupants of hell will have been cast out of hell and into the lake of fire which is the second death¹¹ and the unholy trinity will be in the lake of fire,¹² so hell will be empty. If death is indeed a state of existence where the unredeemed are tortured forever and there is no more death,¹³ then the eternal state of "un-dead" proposed by the doctrine of eternal torment will cease as well.

8. Revelation 21:4

9. Compare αἰών to αἰώνιον. The author uses the first of the two which can mean a segment of time.

10. Isaiah 25:8 (Holman translation) † The doctrine of eternal torment rests upon the belief that the "death" that is the penalty for sin (cf Romans 6:23) is unending conscious pain. This is contradicted by the scripture that teaches that "death" will be wholly eradicated.

11. 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." See also *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (Univ. Chicago Press, Fifth Ed. 1958), s.v. θάνατος ("thanatos) 2b. "eternal death" referencing Romans 6:23 and others.

12. 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."

13. Revelation 21:4 " And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more

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Another reading is that the unredeemed occupants of hell and hell itself are cast into the lake of fire together, but hell remains. If that occurs, then hell would be preserved, but it would remain filled with the corpses of the unredeemed who died in the second death:

All mankind will come to bow down before Me, says the Lord. Then they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, and the fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind. ¹⁴

This concept is implied in Matthew 10:28:

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ¹⁵

This scripture tells us that God is able to kill the soul in hell. But Revelation 21:8 tells us that the part that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death. Both are true. If hell is cast into the lake of fire and all of its occupants die there, then death, hell and the occupants of hell will die and both scriptures will be fulfilled.

With either reading, death is the ultimate end for the unredeemed, not eternal torment. The entire argument for the eternal torment rests upon the belief that "death" does not actually mean death. Instead, the death of the unredeemed is said to mean either separation from God or some other eternal state of existence that will enable the unredeemed to be eternally conscious and able to feel pain forever.

So where is the argument for eternal torment when the eternal state of un-dead no longer exists? The answer is that there is no eternal state of un-dead in the first place. Death is not a state of existence. Death is *the end* of a state of existence; it is the cessation of life and therefore the cessation of conscious existence. The meaning of the word death does not change because it is used in scripture. And simply because the soul survives after the first death and dies in the second death does not change the meaning of "death." Death is death and life after death does not change death. It is simply a question of what dies, whether it is the body or the soul.

pain: for the former things are passed away.

14. Isaiah 66:23

15. Matthew 10:28

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The same concept applies to the unholy trinity because 1) they never die the first death^{16†} and 2) they are not part of the second death.^{17†} Thanatos (θάνατος - ordinary death) is used to describe the eternal state of the unredeemed, but it is never used to describe the eternal state of Satan and the unholy trinity. There is no state of un-dead for the unholy trinity. They are alive in the lake of fire.

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Conclusion

In summation, the souls of the unredeemed in hell are not dead prior to the final judgment because souls survive the death of the body. They are souls whose bodies have died and are just as alive as they ever were. That is the reason that they can experience hell. But that does not mean that they cannot die. It is certainly true that they live after the body dies, but the souls of the unredeemed have not been given eternal life, so they have to die and they die in the second death. That is the reason why the second death is called the second *death*. And that is the reason why every scripture in the Bible (both Old Testament and New Testament) that refers to the consequence of sin calls that consequence "death" in one manner or another.¹⁸

Scripture tells us that there is a first death (θάνατος - thanatos)¹⁹ where the body dies and a second death (θάνατος - thanatos)²⁰ where the soul and resurrected body die (the two words are the same) and scripture tells us that the second death (thanatos) is the consequence of sin.²¹ Christ tells us that it is thanatos from which He saves us.²² He was speaking of the second death, not the first. He therefore saves our souls from thanatos (plain death).

16. † Because they never die, some speculate that they are not human.

17. † Revelation 20:10 specifies that the unholy trinity will be tormented forever in the lake of fire; whereas Revelation 21:8 specifies that the "part" that the unredeemed will have in the lake of fire is the second death.

18. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

19. Hebrews 2:9 "But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely Jesus, because of the suffering of death (thanatos) crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death (thanatos) for everyone."

20. Revelation 2:10 "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death (thanatos);" Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly and unbelieving...their part will be in the lake of fire that burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death."

21. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death [thanatos: plain death]."

22. John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death [thanatos: plain death]." Also see John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies [apothanasko: die by being destroyed]. And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."

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The teaching that God will burn everyone alive for the rest of eternity except for Christians is one of the most effective weapons that Satan ever devised. It contradicts all the scriptures that teach of God's justice; it renders the doctrine of predestination to be irreconcilable with God's character, it eviscerates the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, and impugns the cross itself.²³

Rarely, in the history of the church, has a more pernicious tool ever been so effectively employed.



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23. See Appendix 1, *Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines*

Chapter 8

The Last Meeting

AN INSIGHT

The three met for the last time during the following week.

The first Elder said, "John, you are an annihilationist."

John replied, "No, my friend, I am not. Just as the scripture never uses the words 'eternal torment' with respect to the unredeemed, it likewise never uses the word 'annihilation' to describe what happens to them."

"What are you then?"

"I really don't know. I simply believe that the second death is exactly what scripture says it is: death.

"It is not surprising, you know," John added, "that scripture would call the final end of the unredeemed 'death.'"

"How so?" Asked the first Elder.

"Because the most reiterated doctrine in all of scripture is that sin causes death."

"But its not just doctrine," said the second Elder.

"Sure there are other things in these scriptures besides doctrine," said John "There is history, there is poetry, love, hope, but doctrine is the core. The doctrine must come from the scripture, not vice versa..."

"That's not what I mean," said the second Elder. "You're missing it. We are missing it. I never saw it either, but I see it now. We've missed it. All of us. We just missed it."

"What do you mean?" Asked John. "Doctrine comes from the meaning of the words..."

"Sure it's doctrine," said the second Elder replied. "But that's not the *message*. Don't you see? The real message is not doctrine..."

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“What do you mean?” Asked John. “And see what? Let's look at Revelation ...”

“No,” said the second Elder again. Passion was written in his face. “We've all read it so often we can't see it. We just put it into it little box and argue about it. But that's not what He meant it to be at all.”

“How so?” Asked John

“He never meant it to be a doctrine.” Said the second Elder.

“Ok. Then if it not a doctrine, what is it?” Asked John.”

“It's a *warning!*” said the second Elder, “The whole thing. The whole thing is a *warning*. All those scriptures from Genesis and through Revelation, they say the same thing over and over. Sin kills. Sin kills. Sin kills. It says it over and over for 1400 years. Sin kills.”

The second Elder stopped speaking. They looked at each other.

“You're right,” said John “It is a warning. The whole thing is a warning. We were going to die.”

“An eternal death” said the second Elder.

“We all sinned.” Said the first Elder.

“We were walking dead and never knew it.” Said John. “We were lost except for...”

“Him. Except for Jesus Christ.”

Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.¹



1. John 8:51

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Chapter 9

Summary of the Afterlife

A SUMMARY OF THE DOCTRINE
OF THE SECOND DEATH

Following the death of the unredeemed sinner, his soul goes to hell.¹ Hell is therefore a repository for the unredeemed souls until they are resurrected in preparation for final judgment. When the unredeemed soul is judged, it will be judged according to the record of its life on earth.^{2†} Therefore, the conditions that he encounters in hell depends upon how he lived his life. Each departed soul will bear the weight of its own sins in hell.

All of the unredeemed souls will be united with their bodies for the purpose of the judgment.³ The judgment will take place in the throne room of God Himself. And those who are being judged will stand before the Great White Throne and the One who sits upon it and they will be judged out of the records kept of their lives. They will therefore see the unaltered truth of how they lived and they will see the grandeur of God and what they missed before they are finally condemned.

The inevitable consequence of unforgiven sin is death, so each of the unredeemed will die in the second death in the lake of fire. Since God is just and He judges directly from the record of each life, we can conclude that characteristics of each death and the conditions of their stay in hell will also be based upon the extent of their sins, so each will be different. But in the end, all condemned souls will die eternally in the second death.

Nothing in scripture teaches that the second death is not actual death and the Bible is filled with scriptures that teach that it is.⁴ And since "it is appointed to [all] men to die once"⁵ and there are two

1. Luke 16:19-31

2. Revelation 20:10 "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." † The redeemed will be judged as well, but in a different judgment.

3. John 5:29 "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." (BSB)

4. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

5. Hebrews 9:27

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deaths, it should be clear that all of the unredeemed will die in the second death (the lake of fire). Therefore, they are not tormented for eternity.

In fact, there is no mention of eternal torment anywhere in the Bible except for the eternal fate of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet.

Here are the applicable scriptures:

There is a Body and there is a Soul

There is a body and there is a soul. They both belong to God and they are not the same thing:

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine⁶

There are Two Deaths

There is a first death and everyone must die this death:

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment⁷

There is a second death and this comes after the final judgment of the unredeemed:

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.⁸

But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and 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.⁹

6. Ezekiel 18:4

7. Hebrews 9:27

8. Revelation 2:10

9. Revelation 21:8

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Scripture tells us that there is a first death (θάνατος - thanatos)¹⁰ where the body dies and a second death (θάνατος - thanatos)¹¹ where the soul and resurrected body die (the two words are the same) and scripture tells us that the second death (thanatos) is the consequence of sin.¹²

Both the first death and the second deaths are actual deaths. The same Greek word θανατος (thanatos) is used for both of them and thanatos means ordinary death. The word means death; it does not "separation from God" or "eternal life in hell;" it means "death." Hence, the second death is just as much a death as the first death except there is no resurrection following the second death as there is following the first.¹³ The only difference between the first death and the second death is that the soul of the unbeliever dies in the second death.¹⁴

Souls that Sin Go to Hell

Immediately following the first death (the death of the body), the soul of the unredeemed goes to one of two places, either heaven or hell:

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died,

10. Hebrews 2:9 "But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely Jesus, because of the suffering of death (thanatos) crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death (thanatos) for everyone."

11. Revelation 2:10 "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death (thanatos);" Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly and unbelieving...their part will be in the lake of fire that burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death."

12. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death [thanatos: plain death]."

13. John 5:29 " 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." (BSB)

14. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die" † It is clear that the soul that sins does not die in the first death (See Chapter 2, *Parable of Lazarus*), therefore it must die in the second death.

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and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.¹⁵

Unredeemed souls that have sinned are held in hell until the Judgment. Following the judgment they are cast into the lake of fire where they die. This is the second death (discussed below).

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Souls that Do Not Sin Do Not Go to Hell

Every scripture that refers to the eternal state of the unredeemed states that the eternal state is death and that this death is the result of sin.¹⁶ The soul that sins will die.¹⁷ The unredeemed will be judged and thereafter cast into the lake of fire where they will die and remain dead for eternity. The eternal death that unredeemed sinners will face is called the second death.

But to the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and sexually immoral and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death.^{18†}

The judgment is an actual occurrence where unredeemed sinners will be resurrected for the purpose of being judged.¹⁹ They will stand before the throne of God and they will be judged according to their deeds:

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.²⁰

15. Luke 16:19-23

16. See Appendix 1

17. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die."

18. Revelation 21:8 † Note that the scripture says "unbelieving and abominable, etc.," not

19. John 5:28 "...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."

20. Revelation 20:12

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Man is born totally depraved and destined to sin;²¹ he inherits the sin nature from Adam. The sin nature occurs when imperfect man exercises the knowledge of good and evil (the forbidden fruit) to justify his sin.^{22†}

But some men do not sin, namely infants and young children do not sin and insane men and women do not sin. Hence for these, the man who is unaware of the judgment of God cannot breach it:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death...²³

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.²⁴

God does not throw infants and insane persons into the lake of fire.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power ...²⁵

The Second Death

Following the Great White Throne Judgment, the sentence of death that had been promised throughout scripture²⁶ will be carried out by casting all of those who have been judged into the lake of fire. Their part of the lake of fire is the second death.

21. Romans 5:12 " Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." † Death came to all men because all sinned, not because all were born to sin.

22. Ephesians 2:1 "...you were dead in trespasses and sins." † Although various sins may result in physical death, sin does not cause physical death *per se*. We know this because physical death is the first death and all men, both redeemed and unredeemed, are destined to die. See Hebrews 9:27 "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment..."

23. Romans 1:32

24. John 5:29

25. Revelation 20:6

26. See Appendix 4, *Fifteen Centuries of Warnings* page 138 ; also see Appendix 1 that lists the 50 scriptures that teach death as the consequence of sin.

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But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which [part] is the second death.²⁷

The original Greek structure of this passage clarifies that the phrase "which is the second death" refers to "part," meaning the part that the unredeemed have in the lake of fire is the second death. It does not mean that the lake is named the second death.²⁸

The reason why this passage specifies that "their part" in the lake of fire is the second death is to distinguish their part from Satan's part. Both Satan and the unredeemed will be cast into the lake of fire, but their parts are different. Satan's part will be to be tormented eternally²⁹† whereas the part of the unredeemed is the "second death."³⁰

The entire treatment given to the unholy trinity is different. There is no book, no judgment, no first death and no second death for Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet. They are cast into the lake of fire summarily, they are not permitted to die and are tormented forever.³¹†

A man can kill his own body, but he cannot kill his soul.³² He can escape the effect of his sin only by sincerely turning to Jesus Christ. If he does not, then God will cast his soul into hell and hold it there³³ in conditions appropriate for his deeds in life. At the end of time, he will

27. Revelation 21:8

28. See Chapter 6, *Comment on What is Death*, "Unbelievers Part in the Lake of Fire" for a discussion of the Greek grammar that underlies this passage.

29. Revelation 20:10 "And the devil...was cast into the lake of fire...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

30. Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murders and 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."

31. † Note that there is no reference to "the part" of Satan in the lake of fire as there is with the unredeemed (Revelation 21:8), and there is no reference of a second death for Satan because Satan is not permitted to die. Satan is never judged as the unredeemed humans are judged and the part that Satan will have in the lake of fire is eternal torment, which is described in the same passage (Revelation 20:10).

32. Matthew 10:28 " And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul..."

33. Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Also see The Parable of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31); see also Chapter 2, *The Parable of Lazarus*.

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be judged.³⁴ But the judgment and the stay in hell is fair and appropriate³⁵ according to each particular life.³⁶ Following the judgment, he (his soul and his body that was resurrected for judgment) will die in accordance with every scripture that addresses the eternal state of the unredeemed, eg. "the soul that sins will die."³⁷

Isaiah tells us what happens to the bodies of the of the "enemies of the Lord" following the second death.^{38†}

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me, says the LORD. Then they will go out and look at the corpses of the people who have rebelled against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be extinguished; and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."³⁹

The Creator is memorializing, in the most graphic of terms, the reiterated warnings that fill scripture like beacons: *sin kills*. But except for the Isaiah's tragic memorial, God will make a clean sweep of His creation and create a new heavens and a new earth, a world where there is no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying and no more pain. And, like the Israelites who returned from Babylon and never worshiped idols again, the redeemed will enter a new world and leave sin, death and hell behind.

34. Revelation 20:12 "... and the dead were judged..."

35. Proverbs 24:12 "... shall He not render to every man according to his works?"

36. Revelation 20:12 "...the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

37. Ezekiel 18:4; see also Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*.

38. † The scope of the context of these verses indicate that Isaiah is referring to the corpses of God's enemies that follow the second death. For instance v. 16 "For by fire and by His sword, the LORD will execute judgment on all flesh, and many will be slain by the LORD" and v. 18 "And I, knowing their deeds and thoughts, am coming to gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see My glory"

39. Isaiah 66:22-24

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And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away... and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain...^{40†}

The Unredeemed Will be Judged

Each of the unredeemed will be judged individually according to the deeds that are recorded in the books.

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their deeds...they were judged, every one of them, according to their deeds.⁴¹

Since, all are judged according to their deeds, the resulting punishment for sin will be different for each one. This punishment occurs in hell when each of the unredeemed will bear the weight and the pain of their own sins. But in the end, they will die in the second death.

The Redeemed Will Also Be Judged

The redeemed will be judged before the Judgment Seat of Christ, rather than the Great White Throne of the Father.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.⁴²

40. Revelation 21:1,4 † When death is cast into the lake of fire, it is destroyed and no longer exists ("there shall be no more death"). The same is true for hell. It shall no longer exist. The word for death in this passage is the same as that used to refer to the second death (θανάτος), yet this passage states that there shall be no more death. If death shall cease to exist, then death cannot be an eternally existing state as contemplated by the doctrine of eternal torment. Death in the Bible is exactly what the word means: ordinary death, which is the cessation of all sensation and consciousness.

41. Revelation 20:12,13

42. Second Corinthians 5:10

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Other scriptures indicate that the judgment of the redeemed is more or less a determination of what eternal reward, if any, the redeemed will have. The concept is that the redeemed have a spiritual foundation that is Christ⁴³ and that foundation can be neither altered or removed. This foundation and the presence of the Holy Spirit⁴⁴ is His guarantee of eternal life.

But each one of us builds something on the foundation of Christ. By the choices we make in life we construct a building of righteousness or unrighteousness; the picture set forth in scripture is a building of made with bricks of gold (righteousness) or wood (unrighteousness). We build with Gold or we build with wood; it our choice. In the end, the fire of judgment destroys all but the foundation and the golden bricks.⁴⁵ Thus, the redeemed will live for eternity, but what they take with them depends, in whole or in part, on how they lived their lives.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation [Paul laid the foundation of Christ in each of those who listed to him] and another is building upon it [each of us and each of those who encourage us in Christ builds upon that foundation]... If any man's work which he has built upon it [the foundation] remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire [the "fire" burns up the wood and the straw and leaves the gold]⁴⁶

Rewards of Righteousness

Until then, however, God placed us in a world that is in moral free-fall, a world filled with agony and ecstasy, pain and triumph, love and hate and life and death. He placed us in that world for a *reason*.⁴⁷ He

43. First Corinthians 3:11 "For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

44. Second Corinthians 1:22 "Now it is God who establishes both us and you in Christ. He anointed us, placed His seal on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a pledge of what is to come." (BSB)

45. First Corinthians 3:12,13 "If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, his workmanship will be evident, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will prove the quality of each man's work...." (BSB)

46. First Corinthians 3:10

47. See the author's *A Reason for Adversity*

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has created us as free moral agents who, with every righteous choice we make, yield righteousness like grapes on a vine.⁴⁸ We are His vineyard and He has given us everything we need to yield His fruit—but only through knowing God, through the true knowledge of Christ,⁴⁹ and knowing Christ is derived only through obedience (keeping His commandments).⁵⁰ We are the branches holding His precious fruit and He is the vine. Without Him we can do nothing.⁵¹

We bear the eternal fruit and He supplies us with the spiritual life to do so.⁵²

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.⁵³

Perhaps the most compelling revelation in these passages is the fact that vines do not bear grapes. Only branches bear grapes. And we are the branches. We are fragile pots of clay holding the most precious of contents.⁵⁴ We are the ones that carry the light of Christ into the night of this world. We are His fruit bearers and our fruit shall remain.⁵⁵

Being righteous is immensely important to God and to us. But what is righteousness? Righteousness and forgiveness of sin was the reason for the cross and the death of Christ. Christ is the vine and we are the branches;⁵⁶ and the fruit we bear is the fruit of the Spirit. We were created to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

48. John 15:1,5 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, he takes away and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit."

49. Second Peter 1:3 "Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him Who called us by His own glory and excellence."

50. John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

51. John 15:5 "Apart from Me you can do nothing"

52. John 14:6 "...I am...the life."

53. John 15:2

54. Second Corinthians 4:7 "Let light shine out of darkness...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God...Now we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this surpassingly great power is from God and not from us."

55. John 15:16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain"

56. John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit..."

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But the fruit of the Spirit is love,^{57†} joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...⁵⁸

The fruits of the Spirit are acts of righteousness and internal peace. But righteousness is not just doing these things. It is being these things, being the person who does them because that is who that person is. We create what we love by what we do.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.^{59†}

Our heart is who we really are and our heart is what God sees.⁶⁰

Righteousness is being a righteous person from the heart. We build that person brick by brick, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little⁶¹ for a lifetime. We build who we are by our choices.

But how do we really know who we are and who we are building? Scripture tells us clearly; look to what you value to see your heart.

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.⁶²

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him⁶³

The power to yield the fruits of the Spirit comes from knowing Him. *Everything* of eternal value comes from knowing Him.^{64†} And the building that we are building? We choose the bricks but He lifts them.

57. † In this verse, "love" is ἀγαπέ ("agape") which is God's love. Scripture references three different loves. Agape is described in detail in First Corinthians 13.

58. Galatians 5:22

59. John 3:19 (KJV) † People love darkness *because* their deeds are evil, not vice versa.

60. First Samuel 16:7 "...the Lord looks at the heart."

61. Isaiah 28:10 "precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little"

62. Matthew 6:21

63. Second Peter 1:3

64. Second Peter 1:3 "...His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him..." † Knowing God is not simply knowing about Him, serving him or even doing everything right. Knowing God is an actual and experiential spiritual relationship with Him. Knowing Him is

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Death and Hell Meet the Second Death

After the Great White Throne Judgment, both death and hell will be thrown into the lake of fire:

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.
This is the second death.⁶⁵

Both hell and (presumably) its occupants are cast into the lake of fire together.⁶⁶ Scripture defines this occurrence as the "second death" (θάνατος - thanatos) for a reason. The reason is that it is death, not eternal life in hell or "separation from God" or eternal torment. We know that unredeemed sinners die in the second death because 1) unredeemed sinners are the only human occupants of hell and scripture defines the act of hell being thrown into the lake of fire as the second death, 2) unredeemed sinners are the only group that scripture repeatedly warns of death,⁶⁷ and specifically scripture warns of the death of the soul,⁶⁸ and 3) Revelation 21:8 states categorically that the part that unredeemed sinners will have in the lake of fire is "death" (the second death). Fifty-one other verses testify that it is death.

The scriptural warnings of death being the result of sin cannot refer to the first death because everyone dies the first death,⁶⁹ including the redeemed as well as the unredeemed.

When hell and its occupants are thrown into the lake of fire, they die. They are not annihilated. They die. The result is a hell or lake of fire filled with corpses. This is the literal fulfillment of the final prophecy of Isaiah:

All mankind will come to bow down before Me,
says the Lord. Then they shall go forth and look
on the corpses of the men who have transgressed

to experience eternal life (John 17:3) and to experience His inner peace (John 14:27) that passes all comprehension (Phil. 4:7). God's peace cannot be described in words; it must be experienced to either be understood or believed.

65. Revelation 20:14

66. There is no scripture that says God will cast the unredeemed into the lake of fire one at a time. But Revelation 20:14 clearly states that hell itself will be cast into the lake of fire and that this is the second death. This would apparently include the occupants of hell as well.

67. See Appendix 1

68. Ezekiel 18:4 "...the soul that sins shall die."

69. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto man to die once" † Everyone must die once, but not everyone must die twice.

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against Me. For their worm shall not die, and the fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind.⁷⁰

Note the precision of scripture here. First, Isaiah states that they will be "corpses." They are corpses because they are cast into the lake of fire and they died. Second, Revelation 21:4, when addressing the New Heavens and the New Earth, does not say that there will be no death. It says that "There shall be no more death" (KJV). Scripture makes this distinction because when Isaiah 66:24 is fulfilled there will be innumerable corpses—plenty of death on display—but no more dying.

Eternal torment argues that whenever any word for death is used to refer to the eternal state of the unredeemed, it changes its meaning to "eternal life in hell." This belief is directly contradicted by Revelation 21:4 which says there will be no more death.

The Fate of Satan

The one scripture that does refer clearly to eternal torment is Revelation 21:10 but its reference is to the eternal fate of Satan, the false prophet and the antichrist. Satan is not permitted to die. He is thrown summarily into the lake of fire without dying and without a trial or a judgment.

And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, into which the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.⁷¹

Note the precision of scripture here. After the final judgment, God eradicates death:

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away.⁷²

70. Isaiah 66:23

71. Revelation 20:10

72. Revelation 21:3,4

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At this point, there is no death because unredeemed have already died and Satan will never die. Thus, biblical death has to be actual death (which is the meaning of the word) because if biblical death is not actual death but eternal conscious existence, then the eradication of death would eradicate the eternal conscious existence of the unredeemed.

Jesus Christ

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.⁷³ All are deserving of hell and the death of our soul because "...the soul that sins shall die."⁷⁴ We would be there. We would be in mass of humanity paying with our lives. But for Jesus Christ we would be there.

On the cross, Jesus Christ paid for the sins of the whole world:

He Himself is the propitiation [the sacrifice] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.⁷⁵

And we can receive the benefit of the death of Christ by believing (trusting) in Him:

I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?⁷⁶ † ◇

He who lives and believes in [trusts in] Jesus Christ will live though he dies. This does not mean that he never dies. It means that he will live even though he dies because for the believer, only the body dies; the believer's soul never dies. All must die the first death, because "it is appointed for [all] men to die once."⁷⁷ But only those whose sins remain unforgiven need die twice.⁷⁸ ◇

73. Romans 3:23

74. Ezekiel 18:4 †

75. First John 2:2

76. John 11:26 (KJV) † Note the care with which Jesus reveals this truth. He tells us that whoever *lives* and believes in Him shall never die. Thus no demon can come to the cross, nor can any human soul come to Christ after the first death. His reference to "though he were dead" refers to those who are spiritually dead, which is all of mankind before coming to Christ (Ephesians 2:5). He is speaking of the living dead (we were the living dead before we came to Christ), a concept not mentioned in the old testament but relevant in the new. ◇

77. Hebrews 9:27 NASV ◇

78. † Those who die redeemed in Christ will also be resurrected and receive a resur-

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...[H]ear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.⁷⁹

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power...⁸⁰

All others will die the second death when they are cast into the lake of fire. It is this death, the second death, that is the eternal punishment that Christ spoke of in Matthew 25:46.⁸¹ But, as He said, it is an eternal punishment, not an eternal punishing.⁸² And, as Paul states in First Thessalonians 1:9, this death is an "eternal destruction."⁸³ These words mean an eternal (permanent) destruction in the lake of fire, not an eternal destroying.⁸⁴

In each case, scripture clarifies that the punishment and the destruction are eternal, ie. permanent. The Holy Spirit makes this clarification in both places in order to differentiate the second death from the previous deaths.⁸⁵ ♦ All previous deaths or destructions were followed by a resurrection. The second death is not. The second death is permanent. It is eternal.

There is no scripture in the Bible that says the unredeemed will be tormented eternally. Every scripture in the Bible that refers to the eternal fate of the unredeemed says that they die. There is only one scripture that mentions eternal torment and that scripture refers to the punishment of Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet.⁸⁶

rection body. Jesus called this the resurrection of life (John 5:29)

79. Revelation 21:11

80. Revelation 20:6

81. Matthew 25:46 "...and these will go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous into everlasting life."

82. See Comment of Chapter 4 for a discussion of the Greek as it relates to the different meanings, as in English, of punishment and punishing.

83. First Thessalonians 1:9 "...who shall be punished with an everlasting destruction."

84. See Comment on Chapter 4 for a discussion of the Greek syntax.

85. ♦ Note the accuracy of scripture. The "eternal" designation is made by Christ in approximately 32 AD and made by Paul relating to a different word 20 years later and before the Gospel of Matthew was written.

86. Revelation 20:10

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How Shall We Then Live?

How shall we then live and what shall we do with these precious hours? Shall we bear the fruit of righteousness⁸⁷ or shall we drip them away chasing the world and its baubles like a mouse in a golden running wheel?

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.⁸⁸

Death comes to our bodies. And, make no mistake about it, that death is real. The door will close, our branch will die and our grapes, such as they are, will be harvested. And all the money and all the status, all the pleasure and the pride and all the battles lost and won will come to nothing. Only the grapes will remain, the precious grapes. The righteous acts before the end. The grapes are everything.



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87. Galatians 5:22

88. First John 2:15

Appendix 1

The Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines

One sure sign of doctrinal error is when the Biblical text is altered in order to accommodate a doctrine. This has occurred with the doctrine of eternal torment.

In order for the unredeemed to be tormented for the rest of eternity, they must be 1) conscious, 2) sentient (they have 5 senses) and 3) they must be eternal. In short, they must have eternal existence. They must essentially be alive.

However, the words of Christ and every other scripture in the Bible that directly addresses the fate of the unredeemed states their fate is death. This is precisely the opposite of the people described by the doctrine of eternal torment, who are conscious, communicate and who feel. Death is the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of communication and the cessation of feeling. And, except for the corps (the body), it is also the cessation of existence.

Therefore, to give room for itself, eternal torment has found it necessary to re-define death. Death in Greek and Hebrew no longer means death; it means life: but only when it refers to the second death of the unredeemed. No where else. These re-definitions include "death in the Bible means separation from God" to "The second death means eternal existence in hell."

There is no basis whatever in scripture for these changes other than to accommodate the doctrine of eternal torment. The death in the parable of Lazarus is the death of the body (real death—they were buried in Israel) and the survival the soul, which would die in the second death (Revelation 21:8).

Those who make this error do so in complete good faith. They are presuming the doctrine to be true, and it is their doctrine (not the scriptures) that governs. The result is to create a mythical cauldron of eternal suffering where the dead are not dead at all, but living an eternal life tortured in hell. God does not do this:

And He who sits of the throne said, Behold, I am making *all things* new.¹

1. Revelation 21:5

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This error affects numerous true biblical doctrines. It is contradicted by no less than 50 scriptures, which refer to "death" as the penalty for sin.²

Substitutionary Atonement

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement teaches that Christ took our punishment upon Himself.³ In a spiritual sense, His death was our death because we, who were chosen before the foundation of the world,⁴ were united with Christ when He died.⁵ It is in this way that Christ paid our penalty for us:

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement arises from a progression of several scriptures:

1. The wages of sin is death;⁶
2. Christ, who had no sin, became sin for us;⁷
3. Christ bore ours sins on the cross,⁸ and suffered the consequence of sin that we deserved;⁹

2. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures that Teach Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

3. 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."

4. Ephesians 1:4,5 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. For He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His presence. In love He predestined us for adoption as His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will,..."

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

6. 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.

7. 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"

8. 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."

9. 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."

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4. We were united with Him in the likeness of His death.¹⁰ We were united with Christ when He died on or behalf:

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. ¹¹

5. Christ's death was for us;¹²
6. Through His death, we have been redeemed (bought back) and forgiven.¹³
7. This was accomplished because we were united with Christ in the likeness of His death.¹⁴ ♦ We were crucified with Christ and because we were crucified with Him we live in Him¹⁵ and were raised with Him.¹⁶

10. 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."

11. Romans 6:10,11 † See John 14:23 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."

12. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus ... that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

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

14. 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 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 Corinthians 1:2 (sanctified "in Christ"); 1 Corinthians 15:22 (made alive "in Christ"). We were born again (made spiritually alive) in Christ as a *result* of His death.

15. Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"

16. Colossians 3:1 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on

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8. When Jesus had the sour wine He said "It is finished! And he bowed His head, and gave up His spirit."¹⁷

Christ died in our place and when it was finished, it was finished.¹⁸ He became "sin for us,"¹⁹ and God caused "the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."²⁰ Jesus Christ was therefore our substitute. He died in our place in the same way that the sacrificial lamb in the Old Testament substituted for the sins of the person for whom it was slaughtered. Jesus Christ was the lamb of God.²¹ Who was sacrificed as the lamb was sacrificed. This is called the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

Therefore, when Christ died in our place He died both the first and the second death. The first death was what His disciples saw when His body expired on the cross. The second death is what the Father saw when He suffered the unimaginable pain of the eternal death of someone who had *become sin for us*,²² as He became separated from God.

The first death was the death that all men die. The second death was the death that all of the unredeemed will die because of sin. With that, it was finished. He said so.²³

It was a one time occurrence. He paid for our sins with his death, and He finished his work. Once it was accomplished, it was accomplished and there was nothing further to be done. But this is not the case if eternal torment were the penalty. Eternal torment is never "finished." It is not a one time occurrence. It goes on for the rest of time.

Christ did not pay the penalty of eternal torment for us. Christ did not suffer forever. He finished the work that the Father had for Him to do. That work, that death, paid the penalty for everyone who trusts in Him. And that work also was to end the sin, not perpetuate it. "It is finished." God does not allow a place for sin to reign forever—while tormenting the very people who are committing sin.

things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." NIV Colossians 2:10
"You are risen with Him"

17. John 19:30

18. John 19:30

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

20. Isaiah 53:6

21. John 1:29 "The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

22. 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"

23. John 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said "It is finished!"

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Therefore, if the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is true, then the endless pain of eternal torment cannot be true. Conversely, if the doctrine of eternal torment is correct, then our penalty was never paid by Christ.

Those who teach eternal torment may well acknowledge that Christ's death took away the sin of the world,²⁴ because they believe in what Christ has done for them. But, since the Crucifixion did not pay the penalty of eternal torment, the doctrine leaves us with the question of how we were redeemed in Christ.

Sometimes Pastors teach that Christ did pay the penalty but it was "concentrated" or simply that His death somehow paid the penalty even though it would have required an additional miracle that was not mentioned in scripture.

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement teaches that Christ did pay the penalty for our sin because death is the penalty for sin as repeatedly stated in scripture.²⁵ And Christ died for us.

What does Christ Himself say that He saves us from us from? Does He say that he saves us from eternal torment or does He say he saves us from death? In His entire ministry, Christ *never mentions* eternal torment, but He tells us plainly, repeatedly, that He saves us from death:

Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep My saying He shall never see death.²⁶

Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die²⁷

Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.²⁸

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.²⁹

The translation of perish is ruin, destroy, perish, die. Eternal torment does not mean that. Eternal torment requires life. It is conscious,

24. John 1:29 "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (KJV)

25. See *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*, Appendix 2

26. John 8:51 (KJV)

27. John 11:26

28. Luke 13:3

29. John 3:16

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awareness and feeling and no sleep forever. That is what eternal torment means . That is not was perish means. It is not what death means. It is not what die means. It is exactly the opposite of perish, of death. It is awareness of one's fate. Death is unawareness of one's fate.

Eternal torment cannot circumvent those statements by Jesus Christ. So it re-defines death to mean eternal torment. Death means death. It has the same meaning outside of scripture as it does inside of scripture.³⁰ It can mean the cessation of the life of our body (first death) or the cessation of the life of our body and our spirit (second death), but it never means tormented — especially for the rest of time.

This means tormented forever: βασανισθήσονται αιώνας των αιώνων³¹ ("they will be tormented...unto the ages of the ages."). This means the first death: θανατος³² (natural death). This means the second death: θανατος³³ (natural death). Note that the word for death is the same in the first and the second death and notice how "they will be tormented" is vastly different. Now notice "unto the ages of the ages." It is not always eternity; αιώνιος (ayeoneos) means always eternity, αιώνας (ayeonos) means to the ages of the ages or a segment of time.



Predestination

The adulteration of the doctrine of predestination by the false doctrine of eternal torment is catastrophic. It turns our Creator, who *is* love,³⁴ into an unjust, malevolent god who will resurrect the unredeemed dead for the sole purpose of burning them alive for the rest of time.

Some advocates of the doctrine teach that God engages in the very conduct that scripture condemns as the most horrible sin that Israel ever committed,³⁵ which was the sin was the burning children alive.³⁶ These

30. See the *Parable of Lazarus*, Chapter 2, which discusses these issues thoroughly.

31. Revelation 12:10

32. Revelation 13:3 "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death"

33. Revelation 21:8 "which is the second death."

34. First John 4:8 "God is love"

35. Deuteronomy 12:31 "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods."

36. Ezekiel 16:21 "That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them"

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proponents teach that God will resurrect infants for the sole purpose of burning them alive in hell because He had not predestined them to salvation and justice demands that they suffer eternal torment not because of their own sin but because of *Adam's* sin.³⁷ When a logical progression of theological reasoning carries one to such an impossible conclusion, one should reconsider and (perhaps for the first time) read the plain words of scripture.

Predestination is a clearly stated biblical doctrine³⁸ but eternal torment places it on horns of an impossible dilemma. The irreconcilable conflict between predestination and eternal torment causes most Christians to either reject predestination altogether or to simply turn the page in the Bible and ignore the problem.

The Conflict

The conflict begins when scripture teaches that God creates mankind and renders his sin to be inevitable. God then predestines some to be saved and some not. According to eternal torment those who are not predestined to salvation are predestined by default to be burned alive forever.

Here are the scriptures:

1. God causes or permits all of humanity to inherit the sin nature of Adam.

Death spread to all men because all men because all sinned.³⁹

2. The sin nature of Adam causes all men to be made sinners.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners⁴⁰

3. Sin is inevitable.

For all have sinned.⁴¹

4. The consequence of sin is death.

The wages of sin is death.⁴²

37. See the sub-chapter, *Original Sin*

38. Ephesians 1:5 "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (KJV)

39. Romans 5:12

40. Romans 5:19

41. Romans 3:23

42. Romans 6:23

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5. Death, according to eternal torment is not actually death, it is eternal, conscious, sentient existence (eternal life) in the flames of hell forever.
6. God predestines some to go to heaven rather than hell:

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself..."⁴³

Therefore, if the doctrine of eternal torment is true, then God, Who is just and Who is Love,⁴⁴ has, by default, predestined some people to live for eternity in screaming pain and they could never have come to Christ.

The purveyors of eternal torment are quick to argue that the doctrine is simply a statement of how much God hates sin and has to punish it. But that explanation is powerless to address the fact that it was God who created those same sinners and created them exactly the way they are, permitted them to obtain a sin nature, and made their sin to be inevitable and then condemn them to eternal fire because they do what they have been created to do. Predestination, by the sheer power of divine fiat, demands that God save some but burn the rest.

It is difficult to conceive of a more unjust scenario than this. It is only through the miraculous experience of salvation that any reasonable person could ever believe that a God who does that could ever be called just. And indeed, many who have experienced His presence and love through Jesus Christ find it impossible to understand how He could actually do it. If the reader is one of those, take heart. He doesn't. Nor does He throw babies into lakes of fire.

The Resolution

Now let us consider what the outcome would be if the words of scripture mean what the Greek and Hebrew Lexicons say they mean. Let us presume that all of the 14 different Greek and Hebrew words for death do not mean "separation from God" but instead really do mean actual death. And let us presume that the 50 verses that teach death as the ultimate consequence for sin really do mean what they say.⁴⁵

43. Ephesians 1:4,5

44. First John 4:8 "...God is love [agape]"

45. See *Appendix 2 - Scriptures Teaching Death as Final State*

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And let us presume that Jesus Christ meant what He said when He said that if we live and believe in Him, we will never *die*:

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.⁴⁶

And let us presume that Ezekiel is correct when he reports that God Himself has stated:

The soul who sins will die.⁴⁷

When we read these scriptures for their plain meaning (using the dictionary definitions of death), the doctrine of predestination fits perfectly with the concept of eternal justice.

There are three simple facts that form the basis for justice even in the mind of the strongest skeptic. And these same three facts fit scripture with perfect symmetry. They are:

1. We are born.
2. We live and we are free to live as best we can; and
3. We die and God, if there is a God, determines when we die.

It is evident to anyone that God gives life and He takes it away. This is nothing new to any of us. This is humanity.

But when he takes life away, what happens to sin? Does it go away as well? No. If God exists (and he does), then He must punish sin. Man will suffer death (the consequence of his sin)—or Jesus Christ will.

That is the reason why the Bible speaks of two deaths. The first death and the second. The first is a consequence of mortality—everybody dies, sin or no sin. The second death is the consequence of sin.

This is neither new nor is it unacceptable. And this is exactly what happens when the error of eternal torment is removed from the scriptural narrative. We are born, we die and God judges sin and determines when we die. Some will pay dearly for their sin; other will pay little. But in the end all of the unbelievers will die. God has reserved salvation for some, some who will trust in Jesus Christ. Salvation is simply another gift given by God to some.

46. John 11:25, 26

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

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It is error to teach, as eternal torment teaches, that we are born, we never die, God judges sin and burns us alive forever, if we do believe in Jesus Christ.

The Creator is kind, patient, self-sacrificial and just.⁴⁸ He is a physician who spiritually heals⁴⁹† all those who permit Him to do so.⁵⁰ He creates man and determines when man will die. But in the midst of it all, He reaches into the mass of humanity and touches some. And with that touch He bestows eternal life.

Why should He not do that *at His pleasure*? He has created the world and all that is in it. He has given all men the gift of life. He warns us repeatedly that if we sin we will die and then gives us 50 or 100 years to do as we will.

Indeed, those who do not turn to Christ for healing are those who loved darkness rather than light.⁵¹ They will die in the end,⁵² exactly as repeatedly warned in scripture. And exactly as most of them expect.

The Lover of your soul cares little for your words, or your efforts or your money or your dreams. It is your sincerity and your surrender that moves Him because sincerity is honesty and surrender to Him is the way that we express love to Him. He is love⁵³ and our surrender is His love language.

Predestination is nothing more than God reserving His right to determine when we live and when we die and exempting some for His own reasons. To believe in eternal torment and to somehow justify it, is like going to dinner and receiving the best of the best food and not eating any of it.



48. Ephesians 1:5 "He predestined us...according to the kind intention of His will." (NASV).

49. John 3:14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes [trusts] may in Him have eternal life." † Here, Jesus tells us that salvation through Him is like the serpent in the wilderness. In order to be saved, all that was necessary was to look. It could not be any easier.

50. Revelation 22:17 "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

51. John 3:19 " And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

52. Ezekiel 18:4 "...the soul who sins will die." NASV

53. First John 4:8 "God is love"

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Original Sin

If there is a fulcrum of New Testament theology, it is Romans 5:12, the doctrine of original sin:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.⁵⁴

The doctrine of eternal torment alters this scripture because it teaches that the words of Romans 5:12 do not mean what they say. It teaches that when it refers to death, it means eternal life in eternal hell or "separation from God." However, hell is not eternal and death has nothing to do with separating men from God.

The sin of Adam brought the second death to mankind, not the first. We know this because all bodies die, even if they have been redeemed by Jesus Christ⁵⁵ or even if they are too young to commit a sin. If all bodies eventually die, then the first death is simply an inevitability and has nothing to do with our sin or Adam's sin.

Therefore, sin does not (necessarily) cause physical death. It causes spiritual death.⁵⁶ Thus, when Adam and Eve sinned by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they died spiritually (the same day) because they both sinned. Adam and Eve did not lose their physical lives because they ate the fruit. They were destined to die unless they had also eaten from the tree of life that was also in the garden, which God had taken steps to protect from them.⁵⁷

Doubtless, Adam and Eve did not fully understand the profound change that occurred in them when they acquired the knowledge of good and evil. But they utilized that knowledge immediately. The first thing they did was to cover their bodies⁵⁸ and the second thing they did was to cover their guilt and shift the blame:

54. Romans 5:12

55. Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto all men to die once..."

56. Ephesians 2:1 "You were dead in your trespasses and sins."

57. Genesis 3:22, 24 "Behold, the man has become like of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat and live forever ... so, He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned in every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life."

58. Genesis 3:7 "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."

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Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.

And He said, “Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”

And the man said “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate.”

Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”⁵⁹

What is happening here? Adam is justifying himself by shifting the blame to Eve and to God, and Eve is justifying herself by shifting the blame to the serpent. This is the sin of judgment.⁶⁰ Adam is judging (condemning) both God and Eve and Eve is shifting her blame to the Serpent.

“It was that woman!” Said Adam. “That woman that You gave me; she gave me the fruit!” In his scenario, if God had not given the woman to Adam, Adam would not have eaten the fruit. Adam makes this argument even though he was fully aware of what happened between Eve and the serpent (he was right beside Eve when the serpent tempted her).⁶¹ Adam is utilizing the knowledge of good and evil to justify himself to the extent possible and shift the blame to Eve and to his Creator.

59 . Genesis 3:11-13

60. Matthew 7:1 "Judge not"

61. Genesis 3:6 “She gave also to her husband with her”

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Eve does the same thing. She dodges God's question and shifts her blame to the serpent, "*It was the serpent who deceived me*".^{62†} "The devil made me do it!" Not much has changed since the garden.⁶³

With the knowledge of good and evil, man became able to justify his own sin and therefore continue to commit it. When sin is justified, repentance is not necessary and a savior is not required. The fruit did this. And they ate the fruit.

Adam and Eve did not lose eternal life because of their disobedience. They never had eternal life. They were ejected from the garden *before* they ate from the tree of life. Indeed, God ejected Adam and Eve from the garden for the express purpose of preventing them from eating from the tree of life and living forever.

Now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever, therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden...⁶⁴

In order to underscore the immense importance of preventing sinners from living forever in sin, God stationed angels around to prevent them from returning and eating from the tree of life.

So He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.⁶⁵

62. † It was the woman whom Satan approached, not the man because deception was the weakness of the woman. Eve tells us this herself in Genesis 2:13, "The serpent deceived me." Satan first challenged God's word by asking the woman, "Has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" But memory and reason are not the weaknesses of the woman. She is not deceived by Satan's misquotation. So, Satan switches tactics and raises a question about God's motive. He attacks God's motive because he knows that the first thing that the woman looks to when she looks for truth is motive. Satan argues that God's motive is selfish, so His command should be ignored. He says that God knows "in the day you eat [the fruit] your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (v.5). Satan is telling her that God's motive is to keep her ill informed. Eve saw that God's command did exactly that; it prevented her from knowing good and evil. She could not understand why she should be denied this knowledge. She therefore substituted her own wisdom for God's and ate the fruit. The fall of Adam was far simpler. Adam's weakness was not deception. Adam's weakness was the woman (Gen. 3:17). Her influence over him was greater than God's command, so he takes the fruit from her and eats it without hesitation. Much, if not all, of the conflict of married life lies here.

63. See the Author's *Return of Love*

64. Genesis 3:22,23

65. Genesis 3:24

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The view that eating the fruit of the tree caused spiritual death rather than physical death is opposite to Calvinist theology and Catholicism because those doctrines teach that it was physical death, not the spiritual death, that was caused by the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This position renders the issue of the fruit itself to be essentially irrelevant.

This theology teaches that it was the disobedience that is the fulcrum of Genesis 3, not the fact that the fruit was from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is error. What the fruit was and what effect that it had on Adam and Eve (and us) is absolutely crucial.

Because Calvinism holds that it was physical death that was caused by the fruit, it also holds that man would have lived forever if he had never eaten the fruit. The fruit itself becomes irrelevant and the tree of life in the garden becomes irrelevant because Adam and Eve were going to live forever anyway if they had not eaten the forbidden fruit. We object to this view.

Another reason why we know that the death that occurred from eating the fruit is spiritual death is because the death that resulted from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to occur on the same day that they ate the fruit.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.⁶⁶

If the death referenced here was physical death then Adam and Eve would have died on the day that they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But they did not. They did not die physically on the same day. They were alive and sinned on that day and were expelled from the garden on the same day. And Adam did not die until 930 years later.⁶⁷ One can hardly argue that God meant that the day that he should eat the fruit he would physically die.

Therefore, God's warning that they would die on the same day they ate the fruit could not refer to physical death. It has to refer to the spiritual death that results from sin. And indeed, exactly as promised, after Adam and Eve ate the fruit they sinned on the same day and were

66. Genesis 2:16,17

67. Genesis 5:5 "So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years and then he died."

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expelled from the Garden. Sin kills spiritually in this life⁶⁸ and thereafter it kills physically and eternally in the second death.

In support of the Calvinist view, some argue that the use of the Hebrew "day"⁶⁹ (singular) can mean an undefined period of time, so although Adam's death occurred 930 years after he ate the fruit, his physical death occurred on the same "day" that he ate it, as in "the day of Adam."

This view is not supported by the text. For instance, by far the primary use of the singular (Hebrew) yohm (day) is to refer to a 24 hour day. The exceptions are rare, such as the "day of the Lord"⁷⁰ which is an unspecified period, but not 930 years. Other than the doctrine of eternal torment, there is nothing to indicate that the term does not mean a single daylight/dark cycle. Another use of the word yohm is simply "when."

Additionally, In Genesis 2:17, yohm is preceded by the Hebrew preposition meaning "in."⁷¹ So the text does not refer to "the day of Adam" it refers to the particular day *in which* Adam ate the fruit. Accordingly, Young's *Literal Translation of the Bible* translates the phrase as follows:

[A]nd of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou dost not eat of it, for in the day of thine eating of it—dying thou does die.⁷²

Also see the comment made in *Commentary on the Old Testament*. It states that the meaning of the phrase is "as soon as he [Adam] ate thereof, he would surely die."⁷³ So, the reference to death in God's command not to eat the fruit cannot refer to physical death because Adam and Eve did not die physically on the day that they ate the fruit. But they did die spiritually on that same day.

68. See Appendix 4, *Fifteen Centuries of Warnings that Sin Causes Eternal Death*; Ephesians 2:1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" KJV

69. יוֹם pronounced "yohm."

70. Isaiah 2:12 "For the Lord of Hosts will have a day of reckoning" Isaiah 13:6 "Wail for the day of the Lord is near." See also Ezekiel 13:9 "stand in the battle on the day of the Lord." See also Jeremiah 46:10 "that day belongs to the Lord God of Hosts."

71. בּ pronounced "buh"

72. *The Old and New Covenants Translated According to the Letter and Idioms of the Original Languages* (Pickering & Inglis, London) Genesis 2:17

73. *Commentary on the Old Testament*, C.E. Kieil and F. Delitzsch (Eerdman's Publishing, Grand Rapids Michigan), vol. 1 at page 85.

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Adam and Eve knew God and had a relationship with God. They would walk together in the garden. But when Adam fell he was expelled from the Garden and so were all his children. We can never experience that relationship that Adam had with God, because it is impossible to turn back the clock and return to the garden.

Sin came to the human race when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because when imperfect man acquired the knowledge of good and evil he could justify his sin. And that is exactly what they did. Sin came to humanity *through* Adam, not *from* Adam. Sin has resulted in spiritual death during life⁷⁴ *because all sin*⁷⁵ not only because Adam sinned. There is no vicarious sin.

Therefore, we inherited the sin *nature* from Adam, not the guilt for Adam's sin. In order for a person to become deserving of the penalty of sin, he must first commit his own sin.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.⁷⁶

Sin is inevitable⁷⁷ † but it must be actually committed before it is sin. It does not cause death until it has been committed.

Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.⁷⁸

The doctrine of "imputed sin" is the belief that everyone that does not turn to Christ will be eternally tormented in hell even if they commit no sin (such as infants) because Adam's sin is imputed to them. That is, they are somehow guilty of Adam's sin and must pay the consequences even if they have committed no sin of their own.

74. Ephesians 2:1 "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" NKJ

75. Romans 5:12 " Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all mankind, because all sinned"

76. Romans 5:12

77. Romans 3:23 "... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" † Note that the converse of this verse is that we fall short of the glory of God because we sin. We do not fall short of the glory of God because Adam sinned.

78. James 1:16 "Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

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All of Ezekiel 18 is dedicated to the refutation of imputed, vicarious sin.^{79†}

As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what was not good among his people, behold, he will die for his iniquity. Yet you say 'Why should the son not bear the punishment of the father's iniquity?' When the son had practiced justice and righteousness, and has observed all My statutes and done them, he shall surely live.⁸⁰

The souls of the unredeemed will die spiritually in this life because of the sins that they committed.⁸¹ They do not die because Adam committed sin. Adam's sin is not imputed to them any more than anyone else's sin can be imputed to someone who did not commit it.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.⁸²

God is just and imputed sin is far from just.⁸³ The only instance of imputed sin in the history of creation is when Jesus Christ became sin for us.^{84◇}

79. Ezekiel 18:20, "The person [the soul] who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself." † This is called justice. The Eternal Judge is just. He will judge everyone based upon their own deeds and not the deeds of anyone else, unless that someone else is Christ. Revelation 20:12 "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." It is for this reason that infants are not punished for Adam's sin. They are born with a sin nature but the sin nature must be exercised before they will face the second death. God does not resurrect infants and cast them into the lake of fire because Adam sinned. Deuteronomy 5:9,10 does not refer to imputed guilt. It refers to iniquity of fathers being visited upon children.

80. Ezekiel 18:18-20

81. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die."

82. Romans 5:12

83. See Chapter 3, *Righteous Judge*

84. Second Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." ◇ See the discussion of Deuteronomy 5:9,10 surpa.

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Eternal justice demands that each person be individually judged for his own sins.

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.⁸⁵

The doctrine of imputed sin lends itself to impossible conclusions. For instance those who preach the doctrine believe that infants are just as guilty of Adam's sin as Adam was. They believe that God will resurrect infants who died at birth and burn them alive in hell for the rest of eternity because they inherited the guilt of Adam and Eve. And if the infant dies at the hand of an abortionist and the abortionist later repents, it is the *infant* who is thrown into the lake of fire, not the abortionist.

That is absurd. God does not throw infants into fires.⁸⁶ It is not difficult to see how a theology that is so grossly abhorrent and inconsistent can become a fountain of error and comfortably coexist with the doctrine of eternal torment. The workarounds provided by the eternal torment people are equally absurd.

Eternal torment in concert with the doctrine of imputed sin alters the doctrine of original sin because it denies that it is spiritual death that spread to all men. It teaches that "death" in Romans 5:12 is not really death at all but "separation from God" or "eternal life in hell."

The doctrines of eternal torment and imputed sin *alter* Romans 5:12 to mean:

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and eternal torment through sin, and so eternal torment spread to all men, because Adam sinned.

This error not only alters the meaning of Romans 5:12 by re-defining the word for death, but it also alters the meaning of spiritual death during this life. Spiritual *death* means exactly that. It does not mean that we are separated from God nor does it mean that we are sin-sick. It means that we are spiritually *dead*:

85. Revelation 20:11,12

86. First John 4:8 "...God is love."

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And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.^{87†}

Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep My saying he shall never see death.⁸⁸

Certainly being spiritually dead in sin in this life results in separation from God, but it is a separation *because* of spiritual death; death itself does not mean separation.⁸⁹ These are two entirely different concepts. Spiritual death means spiritual death; it does not mean "separation from God" or "eternal life in hell."



Salvation

Paul tells us that the wages of sin is death.⁹⁰ And Jesus tells us that He saves us from death rather than eternal torment.

Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.⁹¹

The proponents of eternal torment argue that the death that Christ was speaking of is really eternal life in hell. But if Christ had intended to say that if any man who kept His words would not be eternally tormented, He would have used the Greek word βασανισθήσονται⁹² ("basanisthasontai"), which means "will be tormented." But He did not. He used the word θανατος ("thanatos"), which means ordinary death. The same is true for Paul when he said "the wages of sin is death."⁹³ And the same for John when he writes about the second death and calls it θανατος (thanatos).⁹⁴ Why would Jesus Christ and Paul and John write θανατος if it they really meant βασανισθήσονται?

87. Ephesians 2:1; see also Colossians 2:13

88. John 8:51

89. See Chapter 6, *Comment on What is Death*, subchapter *Nuance of Separation Argument*

90. Romans 6:23

91. John 8:51

92. Revelation 20:10 "They [Satan, the false prophet and the Antichrist] will be tormented"

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

94. Revelation 21:8 "The cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and 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 [ὁ δεύτερος θανατος]."

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One cannot, with integrity, alter the very core of the New Testament and teach that:

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not be eternally separated from God and burned alive forever.

Yet that is exactly what this pernicious doctrine does. It alters the meaning of salvation itself by changing the words of Jesus Christ when He tells us plainly what He saves us from:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish [die], but have everlasting life."^{95†}

Note the symmetry of the verse: The final end is either eternal life or eternal death, not eternal life in heaven or hell.

Eternal life is given only to those who trust in Jesus Christ. And those who refuse Christ, do not have eternal life. They are exactly as Adam and Eve were when they were expelled from the garden before they could eat from the tree of life.⁹⁶

Scripture tells us plainly that sinners are worthy of death, and it makes no mention of eternal torment:

Although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them."⁹⁷

The fascinating accuracy of scripture is revealed in two apparently conflicting scriptures that speak to this issue. The author of Hebrews (Hebrews 9:27 states that "...it is appointed unto man [all of mankind] once to die and after that the judgment." (KJV). But Revelation 21:8 says that the unredeemed will suffer a second death following the final judgment. Hebrews tells us that all men will die once but Revelation refers to men dying twice. How can these scriptures be reconciled?

95. John 3:16 † Note that the contrast is between life and death—as it is throughout scripture—not between life and live in eternal torment.

96. Genesis 3:22, 23 "Now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever, therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden..."

97. Romans 1:32

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The word that is translated “appointed” in Hebrews 9:27, means “put away” or “stored up for.”⁹⁸ Hebrews 9:27 explicitly states that it is appointed for men to die *once*. Only *one* death has been put away (appointed or “stored up for”) all men.⁹⁹ The *second* death, however, has *not* been appointed to all men; the second death has been appointed only to those who do not turn to Christ and must therefore pay the wage of sin themselves.¹⁰⁰

Thus, Hebrews 9:27 and Revelation 21:8 are in harmony. Both the redeemed and the unredeemed will die the first death because it is appointed unto all men to die once. And both the redeemed and the unredeemed will be resurrected and judged.

The resurrected body of the redeemed is both immortal and incorruptible.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”¹⁰¹

But not so for the unredeemed. They are simply resurrected to judgment.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.¹⁰²

The resurrected body and soul of the unredeemed die in the second death. They do not live forever in hell because they have not been given eternal life, whereas the redeemed do have eternal life.



98. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, s.v. ἀπόκειμαι

99. Hebrews 9:27 "And inasmuch as it is appointed for me to die once and after this the judgment."

100. Revelation 21:8

101. First Corinthians 15:53, 54

102. John 5:28,29

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The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Paul teaches that our faith is in vain if Christ was not resurrected from the dead.

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain¹⁰³

And again:

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins...For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."¹⁰⁴

We, the redeemed, were chosen to be in Christ before the foundation of the world,¹⁰⁵ but all of us sinned¹⁰⁶ and we became deserving of eternal death because of that sin.¹⁰⁷ We were *dead* in our sins¹⁰⁸ and on our way to the second death.¹⁰⁹ But Christ died for our sins.¹¹⁰ Our penalty for sin was death,¹¹¹ and Christ paid it. He "[tasted] death for every man."¹¹² He "died for us."¹¹³ Christ completely died and in doing so paid the penalty for sin.¹¹⁴

Since it was Christ's death that paid for our sins, why is the resurrection so important? What relation does the resurrection have to the forgiveness of sin?

-
- 103. First Corinthians 15:14
 - 104. First Corinthians 15:16,17,22
 - 105. Ephesians 1:4 "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"
 - 106. Romans 3:23 " For all have sinned..."
 - 107. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die..."
 - 108. Ephesians 2:1 "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins." (NASV)
 - 109. Revelation 21:8 "...which is the second death."
 - 110. First Corinthians 15:3 "Christ died for our sins" KJV
 - 111. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death."
 - 112. Hebrews 2:9
 - 113. Romans 5:8
 - 114. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins will die."

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Jesus was sinless Himself¹¹⁵ † but He became sin for us.¹¹⁶ And His resurrection was important because it demonstrates that His death was successful in paying our sin-debt.

He was the perfect sacrifice, the spotless lamb of God¹¹⁷ Who paid for the sins of the entire world with His death.¹¹⁸

His death paid the penalty for the very sins for which He died (our sins), so death could not hold Him—the first death or the second. He was resurrected and received a new body.¹¹⁹ And when He was resurrected, we were resurrected with Him because we were "in Christ" when he was resurrected.¹²⁰

We were in Christ when He died

"... 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."¹²¹

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him... even so, consider

115. † Jesus Christ never committed any sin. He was the spotless lamb of God that took away the sin of the world (John 1:29). It is because He was sinless that His death was sufficient to satisfy divine justice. However, as the Lamb of God, Christ took on our sin and became sin for us. See 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." It was our sin, not His that took His life and it was His sinlessness that canceled the debt.

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

117. First Peter 1:19 "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life you inherited from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or spot"

118. First John 2:2 "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

119. John 20:17 "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my father;" John 20:26 "then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in their midst."

120. Colossians 3:1 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." NIV Colossians 2:10 "You are risen with Him"

121. Romans 6:5-11

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yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **122**†

And we were in Christ when He was resurrected.

If ye then be risen in Christ, seek those things which are above... **123**†

When Christ died in our place He died both the first and the second death. The first death was the mortal death that all of mankind must die **124** but it is the second death was the payment for sin. **125** Therefore, Christ died the second death for us as well as the first.

But if eternal torment in hell is our penalty (and not death), then what use is there of our being in Christ when He died? Christ did not suffer eternal torment. Christ died. And if actual death is not the penalty for sin, that penalty remains unpaid. It was not a "concentrated" dose of eternal torment so He could pay the penalty at one time.

The death and resurrection of Christ and the doctrine of eternal torment share no common ground. The only explanation for both of them is Christ's punishment was "concentrated." He paid our penalty but He paid only 3 days. His penalty was "concentrated." Concentrated punishment is not in scripture.

If death in the Bible means "separation from God" then Christ never actually died. He was only separated from the Father. But if He never actually died, how could He be resurrected from the dead? And if Christ was not resurrected then our faith is in vain. **126** And if he never died, how was our penalty paid?

122. Romans 6:10,11 † See John 14:23 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."

123. Colossians 3:1 † We were in Christ before the foundation of the world. See Ephesians 1:4 ("He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world") and we

124. Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (KJV)

125. Revelation 21:8 "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 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." (KJV)

126. First Corinthians 15:12-14 "But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is worthless, and so is your faith." (BSB)

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Old Testament Sacrificial System

The primary error of eternal torment of the Old Testament becomes more visible when the death of Christ is seen in the context of sacrificial system of the Old Testament (system of the sacrifice of animals). This system was established in order to graphically and repeatedly illustrate that the consequence of sin is death, hence the repeated references to "blood."

Exodus 13 underscores this when God declares that every first born male belongs to Him and must be redeemed by a lamb that was slain. This is called redemption. Redemption is a transaction with collateral; the collateral in this instance was the first born male lamb. Redemption occurs when the debt is paid and the collateral is returned.

And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt brake his neck; and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. ¹²⁷

But when the sacrifice was made, the first born returned in "ownership" and the redemption was complete. This includes the redemption of a male heir. ¹²⁸

We see the concept of redemption again in the New Testament except the redemption in the New Testament is the redemption of mankind and Jesus Christ was the payment. His death was the price ¹²⁹ for buying mankind back from the inevitable death that awaits every sinner.

It was Christ's blood (His death) that paid the penalty and purchased the redeemed back from the inevitable penalty of eternal death.

“Worthy are You to take the scroll and open its seals, because You were slain, and by Your blood You purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹³⁰†

127. Exodus 13:13

128. Exodus 13:13 "and every first-born of man among your sons you shall redeem"

129. John 1:29 "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" † Shows that nothing but the death of Jesus Christ could purchase the redeemed from sin.

130. Revelation 5:9 BSB

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And when it was finished He said, "It is finished!"¹³¹ Jesus had finished His work. There was nothing more to do. He paid the horrible price and is now seated at the right hand of God.¹³²

For 1500 years, through the sacrificial system and scripture, the Creator repeatedly instilled in the most graphic of terms the warning that sin kills. Sin results in death.¹³³

Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find mention of torment in the sacrificial system. If the system had been intended to teach eternal torment as the consequence of sin the animals would have been tortured. But they were not. They were killed.

[Jesus] has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.¹³⁴

The cross was the culmination of the Old Testament. It was the end to which fifteen centuries of sacrifices had pointed. And for all of those years the cup of passover represented the blood (the death) of Jesus Christ.¹³⁵† We are redeemed by the death of the Lamb of God.

By Your blood You purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.¹³⁶

...the precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.¹³⁷

The doctrine of eternal torment contradicts the core lesson of the entire Old Testament sacrificial system and belies the fact that Christ paid our penalty for sin on the cross, because it teaches that it is not death that is the penalty for sin but torment forever in hell. If the core of the Bible is how God deals with the sin of man, then the doctrine of eternal torment contradicts the core teaching of the Bible.



131. John 19:30 "Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

132. Colossians 3:1 "Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

133. See *Fifteen Centuries of Warnings*, Appendix 5

134. Hebrews 7:27 ESV

135. Luke 22:20 "And in the same way, He too the cup after they had eaten, saying "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant [the new testament] in My blood."† The New Testament rests upon the blood (the death) of Jesus Christ.

136. Revelation 5:9 BSB

137. First Peter 1:19 "

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Evangelism

Some argue that in order to effectively evangelize, we must tell people that God is going to burn them in the flames of hell unless they come to Jesus. But precisely the opposite is true: it is *simple Truth* that brings people to Christ, not threats.

Let us consider two scenarios representing the evangelization of someone who asks the “saved from what” question.

In this age, few people are acquainted with scripture. But most people recognize that if there is a God, He probably does judge people and punish sin in one way or another. But that may well be all that they accept.

First Scenario: The Doctrine of Eternal Torment

“Hey there. Let me give you a little pamphlet that talks about Christ.”

“OK. What does it say?”

“It tells you how to be saved.”

“Saved? Saved from what?”

“Saved from hell.”

At this point, the issue is no longer salvation, but the existence of hell. So before any progress can be made, the person must either accept the concept of sinners being burned in hell forever or the evangelist must circumvent the issue. If the evangelist tells the whole erroneous doctrine, the result will probably not be salvation but rejection.

“Why should I worry about hell? My best friends are there! Ha!”

“Hell is a horrible place. Anybody who goes to hell will be burned for eternity.”

“So, why is God going to send me to hell and burn me for eternity? I have lived a good life. I work hard. I pay my taxes. I don’t steal. I don’t cheat on my wife. Why would this God of yours send me to hell and burn me for eternity?”

“Because God judges sin and any sin that you have committed, any sin at all, is bad enough to get you tormented for eternity. That is how much God hates sin.”

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"So God's going to torment me forever for any sin that I committed?"

"Yes."

"OK, when I was a kid, some friends and I went in the back door of a movie theater without paying. Is that enough to get me burned alive forever?"

"Yes."

"Is that what the Bible says?"

"Yes."

"And God's going to roast everybody except you Christians?"

"Yes..."

"Thanks. I will be sure to read your little pamphlet...or maybe you should keep it to give to someone else."

Second Scenario: The Doctrine of the Second Death

"Hey there. Let me give you a little pamphlet that talks about Christ."

"OK. What does it say?"

"It tells you how to be saved."

"Saved? Saved from what?"

"Saved from death."

At this point, the issue immediately becomes salvation, because the person already understands and accepts the reality of death. Although the concept of being saved from death is not entirely credible, it is certainly open for discussion.

"Are you telling me I don't have to die?"

"No. Your body has to die, but your soul does not have to die.

"Well, I can buy it that we are all going to die someday and there is probably a God somewhere and He probably judges sin and I may have a soul. But are you telling me that I can avoid, you know, judgment?"

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“Yes, I am. Christ died in your place. If you trust in what Christ did, your sins will be forgiven and you won't have to pay for them. And instead of death, He will give you eternal life—and you can experience it.”

“What do I have to do to get this?”

“You don't have to do *anything*. It is a free gift.”

“So I don't lose anything by trying?”

“No, but you lose everything by not trying.”

“Thanks. Maybe I will read your little pamphlet...”



Reassurance for the Dying

Of all of the beneficial effects of Christian doctrine on life in general, *the* most important is eternal life, and eternal life is the center of attention for the dying Christian. Eternal life at the end of life is where the reality of our faith directly confronts the reality of impending death. It is at this point when credible Christian doctrine is immensely important and it is at this point that the doctrine of eternal torment deprives many Christians of the comfort that God has given them.

The doctrine of eternal torment obscures the fact that there are two deaths and supplants it with the belief that says no one ever really dies. When someone is confronted with his own imminent death, it is less than comforting to say, "Don't worry about death because death is not really death; it is separation from God and that is not going to happen to you." That statement is probably not credible to someone on their death-bed.

It is far more reassuring to follow the words of scripture and say that there are two deaths. The first is the death of the body and the second is the death of the soul. Your body is going to die but your soul (the real "you") will die will live on and later you will be resurrected and be given a new body.¹³⁸

Without the understanding that there is an actual second death, Christ's statement that "Everyone who lives and believes in Me shall

138. Luke 16:19-31. *The Parable of Lazarus*. The body of Lazarus died and was buried. His soul did not die with his body; it went to heaven.

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never die"¹³⁹ appears to refer to the first death, which is the only real death that the doctrine of eternal torment allows.

Telling a grieving family to have faith because "death in the Bible is not really death but separation from God" so the loved one is not "really dead" will elicit reverential nods, but the silence of the coffin is far more eloquent.

Without the full truth, the reading of Christ's words sow doubt in the minds of many as to the reliability of scripture. But when Christ's words are quoted in the context of Truth, they are life-changing. How can the truth of John 11:26 be told without bringing in the second death?

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die¹⁴⁰

Why not say that the deceased lived a good life and his body died just like all of our bodies will die. The hope of the deceased, however, does not lie in the hope that his body would not die. The hope of the deceased lies in the fact that there are two deaths. But the deceased will die only the first one because Jesus Christ has already died the second one for him. The deceased will later be resurrected and given an immortal body. Our great hope is not that our body will never die, but that our soul will never die. "It is appointed unto all men to die once"¹⁴¹ says the Book of Hebrews, but it is not appointed unto all men to die twice.

Scripture does not teach that Christians just "pass away" and never really die; scripture teaches that Christian bodies really do die just like non-Christian bodies. Christian souls, however, never die because Jesus Christ has already died the death that was due them.¹⁴² They have been forgiven¹⁴³ and because they are forgiven, they have escaped the second death, which is the sentence of eternal death imposed in Ezekiel 18:4 and elsewhere.¹⁴⁴ They escape eternal death because they have been given eternal life.¹⁴⁵

139. John 11:26 "He who believes in Me shall never die."

140. John 11:26

141. Hebrews 9:27

142. See *Substitutionary Atonement*

143. Ephesians 1:7 " [Christ] in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

144. See Appendix 2, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

145. John 6:47 "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

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Scripture is an overlay that matches perfectly with observable reality. It produces a marvelous consistency, a clarity and a deep faith. But when the overlay is altered, it does not match the paradigm below it and it causes confusion and misdirection. Like the little foxes eating Solomon's vineyard, the refusals to simply read the text as it is written eat away at faith and postpone the scriptures that have been obscured by the doctrine of eternal torment until it is too late. But when the scriptural overlay is untouched, scripture falls into lock-step with observable truth and peace that passes human understanding comes out of nowhere.¹⁴⁶



Conclusion

What a mess eternal torment makes of Scriptural Truth.

Eternal torment teaches that Christ's death was sufficient to save us but it was insufficient to pay the penalty for what we did. It was insufficient to pay the penalty that was ours to pay. We were falling into an eternity of pain; all Christ did was to die. What about the remaining unpaid centuries of pain? Christ did not pay for them. Do we really have a Bible that says, "Just believe it because I said it?" No.

We were in Christ when He died and when He was resurrected, but if His death did not pay the penalty for our sin, why were we there? According to eternal torment, scriptures like "The wages of sin is death,"¹⁴⁷ or "The soul that sins shall die"¹⁴⁸ or the scriptures found in Isaiah 53 that teach that the "Chastening for our well-being fell upon Him"¹⁴⁹ are not accurate because death in the Bible does not mean death, but "separation from God?" And the "Chastening of our well-being fell upon him" this is a true statement, but we have to understand that it was concentrated.

And Christ Himself? What did Christ mean when He said that "everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die"?¹⁵⁰ And if Christ

146. John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

147. Romans 6:23 "the wages of sin is death."

148. Ezekiel 18:4 "the soul that sins will die"

149. Isaiah 53:5 "He was pierced for our offenses, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; The punishment for our well-being was laid upon Him, And by His wounds we are healed."

150. John 11:26 "Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you

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did not pay our penalty for sin with His death, why was it necessary for Him to become sin for us?¹⁵¹ And why was it necessary for us to be in Christ when He died¹⁵² and why was it necessary for us to be in Christ when He was resurrected?¹⁵³

Christ died in our place. He became sin for us,¹⁵⁴ and God caused "the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."¹⁵⁵ Jesus Christ said He paid the penalty for our sin and that penalty was death. He died instead of us in the same way that the sacrificial lamb in the Old Testament substituted for the sins of the person for whom it was slaughtered. Jesus Christ was that sacrificial lamb; he was the lamb of God.¹⁵⁶

And what happened to the 50 or so scriptures that teach that death is the penalty for sin?¹⁵⁷ What do they mean? Do they mean that death in the Bible is really eternal torment? What about Christ's death? Was this death not a real death?

If death was not our penalty. And If Jesus Christ did not pay it, then what happens to our penalty for sin? According to eternal torment our penalty will *never* be paid.

The doctrine of eternal torment turns the doctrine of predestination¹⁵⁸ on its head and has God, who is love,¹⁵⁹ condemning people to eternal life in the flames of hell *by default* when all He really does is to determine when each of us is born and when we die.

believe this?"

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

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

153. Colossians 3:1 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." NIV Colossians 2:10 "You are risen with Him"

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

155. Isaiah 53:6

156. John 1:29 "The next day he [John the Baptist]saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

157. See Appendix 2.

158. Ephesians 1:4,5 "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself..."

159. First John 4:8

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This pernicious doctrine of eternal torment originated in and has been propagated by the Catholic Church in part for the purpose of profiting from the sales of indulgences. And still does! The Catholic indulgence is still for sale. It is defined as the exercise of the authority of the Pope to mitigate the punishment of someone for sins, but only under "certain prescribed conditions."¹⁶⁰† One of the certain prescribed conditions is the transfer of sufficient cash to induce His Holiness to provide the grieving family member with a printed guarantee that limits torture to time served and contains a picture of the Pope. Escape from purgatory for a fee. Eternal hell, eternal torment and purgatory are essential for those transactions to occur. Therefore they cannot be abandoned.

After the final judgment, scripture tells us that "There will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."¹⁶¹ How then, at the same time, can billions of unredeemed humans (the majority of all mankind) be subjected to the most excruciating pain possible for the rest of eternity? They cannot.

And if death is really separation from God or eternal life in hell, how can it continue for eternity when there is no more death? It cannot.

There will no longer be any death¹⁶²

Our Creator is not the diabolical creature that the doctrine of eternal torment makes Him out to be. Instead, He is exactly what scripture says He is: He is love and He is just. And the wage of sin is exactly as advertised: death.

One cannot help but wonder whether Satan, who is a consummate liar,¹⁶³ had anything to do with the tangle of contradictions that is the doctrine of eternal torment. Eternal torment contradicts the concept

160. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part 2, Sec. 2, Chap. 2, Art. 4, Par. X (Indulgences). "A remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and all of the saints." † Why there is Catholic punishment due to sins that have been forgiven?

161. Revelation 21:4

162. Revelation 21:4 † Eternal torment makes death out to be a state of being. It is not. Death is a one time thing that occurs once and stops. Then after a resurrection, wice and then stops.

163. John 8:44 "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

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of eternal justice, stains the very fabric of the cross itself and turns our loving God into a monster who destines some to eternal pain and gives them no choice in the matter. It belies the fact that Christ was our substitute, that his Death paid our penalty¹⁶⁴ and that He suffered the consequence of sin that we deserved.¹⁶⁵

The doctrine is error.

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164. 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."

165. 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."

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Appendix 2

Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

EVERY PASSAGE THAT DIRECTLY REFERS TO THE ETERNAL STATE OF THE UNREDEEMED REFERS TO THAT STATE AS "DEATH" IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER. THERE ARE FIFTY SUCH PASSAGES.

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 at least 50 of these scriptures and they are listed here.

These 50 scriptures cannot be warning us about the first death (the death of the body) because it is destined to all mankind to die the first death. "It is appointed unto all men to die once,"¹ says the author of Hebrews, but it is not appointed unto all to die twice. Only the unredeemed, those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life² will escape the lake of fire, which is the second death.³

The first death cannot be avoided by avoiding sin or by obtaining forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Our body will die whether we trust in Christ or not.

Jesus saves us from the second death, not the first:

Everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.⁴◇

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

2. Revelation 20:15 "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire"

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

4. John 11:26 ◇ Why did Christ specify that *everyone* who *lives* and *believes* will be eligible? Because salvation is open only to those who are no longer "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) and those who are born again ("You must be born again," John 3:7). Here we see a light in the darkness of this world, a light that is spiritual, not physical, a light that can be seen only through eyes that grasp the reality of spiritual things ("Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," John 3:3). The implication of this statement is staggering: *everything* that has any lasting significance is spiritual, because everything else is destroyed (Revelation 21, 20:11, 2 Peter 3:13).

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Once sin has been committed, death is inevitable, “The soul that sins it shall die.”⁵ † It is only a question of who dies. The sinner or Christ.

All of scriptures listed here refer to the second death, which is the death of the soul as described in Ezekiel 18. They contain all of the Greek and Hebrew words for death. Eternal torment demands that each one of them be redefined to mean precisely the opposite of what they mean: not death, but life in hell.

The pastor-teacher who teaches that death does not mean death but life in hell is the one who takes away from the words of the Book of Revelation and will, unless he repents, do so at his peril.

If anyone takes away from the words of this book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and the holy city, which are written in this book.⁶

None of the scriptures mention eternal torment. There is no scripture that says the wages of sin is eternal torment. The wages of sin is always death.

There is only one mention of eternal torment in the entire Bible and that is with reference to the eternal fate of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet.⁷ They, only they, shall suffer eternal torment. And they do so after summarily being thrown into the lake of fire—without books to see what they have done, without mercy and without a judgment. If eternal torment were true, it would mean that all the unredeemed suffer the same penalty as Satan.

If eternal torment were true, then we would have to have different meanings for 10 Hebrew and Greek words. But we don't. Eternal torment is not found in the definition of any of them.

Here they are:

5. 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.

6. Revelation 21:19

7. Revelation 20:10

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Old Testament

Genesis 2:17

מֹות

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.⁸

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 and as a result of this spiritual death, their union with their Creator was breached and they were expelled from the garden.

The only way for any human who is cognizant of right and wrong to avoid the second death is to trust in Christ,⁹ Who became sin for us¹⁰ and died the second death for us.¹¹ Salvation is accomplished by being born again.¹²

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. When they consumed it, it became part of their DNA. 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.

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

9. 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.”

10. 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.”

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

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

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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 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. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was both a blessing and a curse.

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.¹³

Psalms 1:6 אבד

For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.¹⁴

The way of the ungodly is to perish, not to suffer eternally.

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, ruination, destruction, annihilation, vanishing.¹⁵

13. 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."

14. Id.

15. Id.

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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 down¹⁶ or, “the destruction of the life of an individual.”¹⁷ It does not mean the destroying of the body for eternity.

Psalm 56:11,13 מוח

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 for death in this passage (“maveth”) means second death.¹⁸ Both the text and the context show that the death referred to in this passage refers to the death of the soul. That is, God has delivered my soul from death despite what man can do 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.¹⁹

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

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

18. 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.”

19. Deuteronomy 30:19

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Psalm 92:7**שָׂמַד**

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.²⁰ The word "...always expresses complete destruction or annihilation..."²¹ 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.²² Here again is eternal destruction. Passages such as this one leave no question whatever that the ultimate fate of the wicked is total and permanent destruction.

This concept is diametrically opposed to the concept of continued sentient existence forever. When the ungodly sprang up as the green herb and the workers of evil flourished, it came to pass that they were absolutely destroyed. "The ungodly succumb to a peremptory, decisive judgment of destruction."²³

Psalm 94:23**צָמַח**

The Lord God will destroy them

The King James translates this word as "cut of." The word means to "put an end to, cut off, destroy."²⁴ It does not mean eternal torment.

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

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

22. See Chapter 4 - *Eternal Punishment, Eternal Destruction*

23. See Translation and comment by C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1975), vol. 5, page 65, s.v. Psalm XCII.

24. Harris, Archer and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody Press, Chicago), s.v. **צָמַח**, vol. 2 p. 770. The noun form is a "very strong word for destruction" (cf. Job 23:17). "It describes the intense desire to obliterate completely" (cf. Ps. 143:12). Id. at page 770.

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Psalm 116:8**מוֹחַ**

For thou hast delivered my soul from death²⁵...

The psalmist encountered the fear of death and refers to life after death in "sheol" (hell) (v. 3). In the Old Testament all souls, both righteous and unrighteous, went to sheol after their bodies died. The treatment of the righteous souls in sheol, however, was not at all unpleasant. But the treatment of the unrighteous souls was very unpleasant (see Luke 16:19 et seq. Parable of Lazarus). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ descended into hell and led the righteous souls out of hell (Ephesians 4:8) leaving the unrighteous to remain in a very unpleasant hell.

The psalmist praises God because God has delivered his soul from death. God did not deliver his soul from the first death because all bodies die in the first death (Hebrews 9:27). Instead, God has redeemed his soul from the second death, which is eternal death that follows the judgment of the unredeemed (Revelation 21:8). It is for this reason that the passage refers to God delivering his *soul* from death, not his body. All bodies die but, as this psalm teaches, not all souls die.◇

The term death (**מוֹחַ**) means ordinary death. It does not mean eternal life in hell. Thus the same Hebrew word (**מוֹחַ**) refers to 1) the death of the bodies of the righteous in the first death and 2) the death of the souls of the unrighteous in the second death:

1) Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.²⁶

2) For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.²⁷

Therefore the term "death" does not mean eternal life for believers and eternal hell for unbelievers. The word "death" always means death, plain and simple. The difference between the eternal state of the unredeemed and the eternal state of the redeemed is not in different deaths, but is the fact that there are two deaths. Everyone dies the first death, but not everyone dies the second death.

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

26. Psalm 116:15

27. Psalm 116:8

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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.²⁸

Proverbs 19:9 אבד

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, or both.²⁹ But it never means eternal torment. In this passage, It could mean "ruined" with respect to the effect of lying has on the reputation of the liar. Or it could refer to the second death as a punishment for being a liar. Its meaning is clarified in the New Testament in Revelation 21:8, which is careful to specify that *all* liars shall have their part in the lake of fire:

...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.³⁰

Note the consistency in scripture. There are 900 years between these two verses and yet they could be in the same chapter or the same psalm. The second death is not mentioned in the Old Testament.◇

Isaiah 1:28 כלה

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

28. *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..."

29. *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

30. Revelation 21:8

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The word that is translated consumed means to be spent, at an end³¹ or to perish.³² The word does not mean eternal torment.³³

Another translation:

... and those who forsake Jehovah will perish.

The word that is translated consumed or perish means exactly that: consume or perish. Torment is a different word entirely. The Old Testament does not contain a word which is translated "torment," "tormented," "tormentors" or "torments."³⁴

Ezekiel 3:18

מֹוֹחַ

When I shall say to the wicked, "You shall surely die"; and you do not warn them or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he my live, that man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand

Here God imposes this upon Ezekiel, warning him that it is his responsibility to correct the errant. The word means death.

Ezekiel 18:4

מֹוֹחַ

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.³⁵

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.³⁶

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

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

33. 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.

34. *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Strong, James (Thomas Nelson, 2010), s.v. torment, tormented.

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

36. Deuteronomy 5:9 "I, the Lord you God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniqui-

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God first establishes His authority by stating that the soul of the father and the soul of the son belong to Him. This fact also establishes that souls do exist and that they are not the same thing as bodies. This differentiation is present throughout Ezekiel 18 and the Old Testament and New Testament.

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.³⁷ 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.

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)”³⁸

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, never eternal torment.

ty of the fathers on the children and of the third and fourth generations of those who hate me." Iniquity does not mean guilt. It is the influence of the fathers of the children.

37. Id.

38. (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.

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Ezekiel 33:11 מוּחַ

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?³⁹

This passage uses two words for death. The first is the common word for death, מוּחַ ("mavis") and the second is מוּחַ ("mavis" with different vowel markings).⁴⁰

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.⁴¹ 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 מוּחַ

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...⁴²

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.

39. 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. מוּחַ defined as "death, death by violence, state of death." or "to die of natural or other causes, die as a penalty."

40. See *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, James Strong (Thomas Nelson, 2010), Old Testament Numbers 4194 and 4191.

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

42. 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. מוּחַ defined as "death, death by violence, state of death." or "to die of natural or other causes, die as a penalty."

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Obadiah 16

Because just as you drank on my holy mountain, all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow, and become as if they never existed. But on mount Zion there will be those who escape...

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 if they never existed." This is the opposite of eternal torment that teaches continued existence.

New Testament

Eternal Torment. We find the term nowhere in the New Testament or in the Old. Although it is not found, we do find the concept in one instance in scripture. That is when God says that he will cast Satan into the lake of fire, and there he shall

He shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.⁴³

This is the only example of the term being used. The Holy Spirit spells it out.⁴⁴ No mistakes.

There are other examples of eternal torment. They are Mark 3:28,29:

Verily I say to you I say to you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness but is in danger of eternal damnation.⁴⁵

Even here, note that he is in danger of eternal damnation. Note that this is damnation not eternal torment.⁴⁶ See also Jude 7:

43. Revelation 20:10

44. There are two terms for "eternal." One is αἰών and the other is αἰώνιος. The first means a very long time or sometimes eternity. The second means eternity whenever it is used. In this instance the first is used. See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (Second Edition, 1958) s.v. αἰών

45. Mark 3:28,29

46. See Chapter 4, *Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction*.

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Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.⁴⁷

They were completely destroyed. Such is the legacy of eternal fire.

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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. The unquenchableness of the fire simply means a fire that cannot be extinguished. The fact that it can't be extinguished cannot affect the effect of the fire on the people in it. They will be “burned up;” not tormented eternally. Satan is tormented eternally; they are burned up.

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 3:10⁴⁸ denoting complete destruction. Neither the Greek word nor the English translation of it connotes eternal burning but instead means destruction by burning. This word should be distinguished from καυσις which refers to a burning for a purpose other than total destruction, eg. a cauterization.⁴⁹

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[COMMENT ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT PAGE 56](#)

Matthew 7:13

ἀπόλλυμι

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.

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47. Jude 7

48. 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.”

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

Here the scripture states again that sin leads to destruction, not eternal torment.

[WORD STUDY: ἀπόλλυμι \(“apolumi”\) PAGE 198](#)

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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. There is no verse that teaches this in the New Testament.

This scripture refers to Him who is able to kill souls in hell. It does not say that He does kill souls in hell. Accordingly, Revelation states that hell is cast into the lake of fire, "which is the second death."⁵⁰ The souls who inhabit hell are eventually judged and cast into the lake of fire,⁵¹ which is the second death for them⁵² and eternal destruction as well.⁵³ Thus the second death is the death of the resurrected body⁵⁴ 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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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.

50. Revelation 20:14

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

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

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

54. Revelation 20:13,15 "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every one of them according to their deeds...And if anyone's name was not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

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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."

WORD STUDY: κατακαίω (“katakaiō”) PAGE 195

Matthew 22:7

ἀπόλλυμι

When the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.

In this verse Christ gives us the parable of the king who had arranged a marriage for his son and sent his servants to give his invitation to his guests. Some of the guests gave polite refusals, but some of the guests treated the king's servants spitefully and killed them. The king was furious and sent his army and destroyed the murders and burned their city ["destroy" as used here means a violent death]. The parable is a picture of what was to happen to Christ.

Christ was God's Son who was sent to the Jews to bring them to the Creator's banqueting hall for the marriage supper of the Lamb of God (Christ). See Revelation 19:7. But Christ's own people had Him crucified. This parable tells what will happen to those who reject Christ and refuse the invitation of eternal life. They will be killed (destroyed). Again we see death as the penalty for sin, not eternal torment. If the penalty for refusing Christ's forgiveness of sin were eternal torment, then the murderers would have been imprisoned and tortured, but they were not. The penalty was death. If the penalty for the refusal of salvation had been eternal torment, Christ would not have told us that the penalty for refusing Him is death.

In this chapter we find two instances demonstrating the divine authorship of scripture. Matthew was written in approximately 5-10 years before the Book of Revelation, yet the marriage supper of the Lamb was not described until John wrote the Book of Revelation. Jesus knew about the marriage supper of the Lamb when He first gave the parable some 50 years before the Book of Matthew and 60 years before the Book of Revelation.

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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" (κἄν). 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

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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.⁵⁵

WORD STUDY: ἀποθνησκω ("apothnaceko") PAGE 196

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 (dying). It is perishing from which Christ saves us, not eternal torment. The word used here implies death by destruction.

WORD STUDY: ἀπόλλυμι ("apolumi") PAGE 198

John 6:50, 51 ἀποθνησκω

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.

WORD STUDY: ἀποθνησκω ("apothnaceko") PAGE 196

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.

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

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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.⁵⁶ 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).

WORD STUDY: θάνατος (“thanatos”) PAGE 192

John 10:28 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."⁵⁷

WORD STUDY: ἀπόλλυμι (“apolumi”) PAGE 198

John 11:26 ἀποθνησκω

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.⁵⁸ He is teaching that the soul (the real person) of anyone who believes in Him will be spared the second death.⁵⁹ Why? Because He

56. Id.

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

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

59. Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy is the first resurrection: on such the second

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gives them eternal life.⁶⁰ Those to whom He does not give eternal life are already spiritually dead⁶¹ 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).

WORD STUDY: ἀποθνήσκω (“apothnaceko”) PAGE 196

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.

WORD STUDY: θάνατος (“thanatos”) PAGE 192

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.

WORD STUDY: θάνατος (“thanatos”) PAGE 192

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*:

APPENDIX 7 PAGE 226

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.

death hath no power...”

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

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

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

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)

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.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)

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.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)

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.⁶² If this word does not mean death then God has misled us.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)

62. 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”

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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.

WORD STUDY: ἀποθνήσκω (“apothnaceko”) PAGE 196

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.'

O, death where is thy sting? O grave, were is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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.⁶³ The resurrected body of the unredeemed will

63. 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

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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."⁶⁴ 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—because they die. They do not live forever in eternal torment; they die. It is for this 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."

WORD STUDY: θάνατος ("thanatos") PAGE 192

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.

WORD STUDY: θάνατος ("thanatos") PAGE 192

deeds to a resurrection of life, and those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment..."

64. Revelation 21:8

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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.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)

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 already 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.⁶⁵ 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 numerous 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 it but only in Revelation 20:10 and that is to describe the final, eternal state of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)

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.

65. 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."

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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.⁶⁶

WORD STUDY: ἀπόλλυμι (“apolumi”) PAGE 198

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.⁶⁷ In doing so, He became sin for us and in doing so made us righteous.⁶⁸ Originally the death penalty was ours⁶⁹ 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, but some men refuse to accept it. Therefore the love of the Truth is offered to every man,⁷⁰ and this Truth is Jesus Christ.⁷¹ Thus, one has only to receive the Truth in order to have it.

WORD STUDY: θάνατος (“thanatos”) PAGE 192

See APPENDIX 7
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66. 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.”

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

68. 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.”

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

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

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

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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.

WORD STUDY: θάνατος (“thanatos”) PAGE 192

Hebrews 9:27

ἀποθάνειν

And as it is reserved to men once to die, and after this judgment

It is reserved for all men to die once, not twice. But there is a second death that is reserved for some men, not all men. That is the second death. Those who have trusted in Christ will be spared 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”?

WORD STUDY: θάνατος (“thanatos”) PAGE 192

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 “destruc-

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tion.” He then states that this is the reward of unrighteousness. Again, the reward for unrighteousness is perishing or destruction, not eternal torment.

WORD STUDY: φθείρω (“phthero”) PAGE 197

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.⁷²

WORD STUDY: ἀπόλλυμι (“apolumi”) PAGE 198

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. This passage uses thanatos three time.

WORD STUDY: θάνατος (“thanatos”) PAGE 192

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

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

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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: θάνατος ("Thanatos").

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \("thanatos"\) PAGE 192](#)

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.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \("thanatos"\) PAGE 192](#)

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.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \("thanatos"\) PAGE 192](#)

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.

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 it ceases to exist. Revelation 20:14 tells us that hell was cast into the lake of fire and that the lake of fire is the second death. It is therefore presumed that Hell therefore will suffer the second death also. There is no further mention of hell after hell is thrown in to the

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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.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)

[COMMENT ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT PAGE 56](#)

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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. But it is noted that Satan, however, is not included in this passage, because he has a different part. His part is not death. His part is eternal torment.⁷³ 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).

Revelation 21:8 makes "which is the second death" modify "their part." This is accomplished by making the pronoun “which” (ὅ) refer 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 the masculine/neuter pronoun ὅ. 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,⁷⁴ not eternal torment.

[WORD STUDY: θάνατος \(“thanatos”\) PAGE 192](#)



73. 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.”

74. 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*”

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Appendix 3

Scriptures Used to Support Eternal Torment

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

ONLY ONE SCRIPTURE IN THE BIBLE MENTIONS ETERNAL TORMENT AND THAT IS TO DESCRIBE THE FATE OF SATAN, THE ANTICHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET. NO SCRIPTURE IN THE BIBLE MENTIONS ETERNAL TORMENT IN REFERENCE TO THE UNREDEEMED.

The following scriptures are used to support the doctrine of eternal torment for unbelievers. However, the words “eternal torment” are used only once in scripture and then to describe the eternal fate of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet.

The words are never used to describe the eternal fate of the unredeemed. There is no scripture that says the unredeemed will suffer eternal torment. All scriptural support for the doctrine is based upon scriptures that are broad enough to mean either eternal death or eternal torment, and there are 50 scriptures teaching that death is the eternal fate of the unredeemed. All of the arguments for eternal torment of the unredeemed are based upon scriptures that do not mention eternal torment.

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.¹ It is certainly true that the soul that sins will be condemned to hell, but in the end the soul that sins shall die² because the wages of sin is death³ and when that soul is cast into the lake of fire, scripture refers to it as the “second death.”⁴

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."

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Psalm 86:12,13 does not mention eternal torment and therefore does not teach it.

Those who teach eternal torment argue that this passage means that the unredeemed will never really die, but be burned forever in an everlasting punishment. But this is grammatically incorrect: word does not mean punishing; the word means punishment.⁵

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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). Keil and Delitzsch (Eerdmans Publishing, 1975 reprint, vol. 7, p. 109) see the burning as a total consumption of both the idol and the idolater,

"[T]he 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 complements 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).

None shall quench them means none shall put them out. It does not mean they will but forever.

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

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

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 13:49-50

So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In this verse there is no statement as to how long the wicked shall be confined.

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."¹

1. 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."

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Matthew 25:46

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

The scripture does not say what the punishment is. Many presume that the punishment is eternal torment, but this verse does not mention eternal torment. 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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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 people or 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 (corpses) 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. 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 having them eaten by worms forever because they never came to Christ. Not even Satan is eaten by worms.

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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.² Their final end in the lake of fire is death.

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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*,³ not eternal torment. Scripture repeatedly warns of this second death from Genesis through Revelation. None of these scriptures indicate that this "death" is actually eternal torment:

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

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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.

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

3. 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."

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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.

This passage does not mean "everlasting destruction," it means "eternal destruction" and the word "destruction" means a one-time occurrence, a "death."

The alternative Greek grammatical constructions are examined in:

[COMMENT ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT PAGE 56](#)

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.⁴ 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.

The reference is to cities, not to people.

4. 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.

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Jude 13

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

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-worshipers 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

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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.

COMMENT ON SMOKE RISING FOREVER PAGE 18

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 is cited by The Catholic Encyclopedia as scripture that explicitly teaches eternal torment. But it 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 also 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 fate 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.

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Fifteen Centuries of Warnings

SIN CAUSES ETERNAL DEATH

1400 BC

Genesis 2:17

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.

967 BC

Psalms 33:18,19

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death...

593 BC

Ezekiel 18:4

“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...

593 BC

Ezekiel 33:11

“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?”

30 AD

John 8:51, 52

Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.

45 AD

James 5:20

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

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55 AD Romans 1:32
Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God that those who practice such things are deserving of death...

55 AD Romans 6:16
...sin leading to death...

55 AD Romans 6:21
What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

55 AD Romans 6:23, 24
For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life.

55 AD 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

55 AD Romans 6:16
Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

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

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

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90 AD Revelation 2:11

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.

90 AD Revelation 20:14,15
Revelation 21:8

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 ... [the] unbelieving ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.



Where does Christ teach that He saves us from eternal torment? Nowhere. Where does Christ mention eternal torment? Nowhere. Where does any scripture use the words eternal torment to describe the fate of anyone except Satan and the unholy trinity? Nowhere. Where does scripture teach that Jesus Christ saves us from anything other than death? Nowhere. Where does scripture teach that the wages of sin is death and that Christ saves us from the wages of sin? Everywhere.



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Appendix 5

Word Study on Death**SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT**

THE GREEK AND HEBREW WORDS FOR DEATH MEAN ACTUAL DEATH; THEY DO NOT MEAN SEPARATION FROM GOD AND THEY DO NOT MEAN ETERNAL TORMENT.

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The meanings of the Greek words for death are the heart of the question of eternal torment because every scripture from Genesis to Revelation in every single instance with no exception states that death is the ultimate consequence of sin. There are at least 50 such scriptures.¹ The death to which all of these scriptures point is the "second death"² that follows the final judgment. If the souls and the bodies of the unredeemed that have been resurrected for judgment³ die in the second death (following the judgment), then there can be no eternal torment of the unredeemed because they will all be dead. Those who advocate the doctrine of eternal torment argue seek to circumvent those scriptures by proposing that whenever the Bible refers to death as the eternal state of the unredeemed, that death is not actually death. Instead, it is eternal life in an eternal hell. Exactly the opposite of death.

It is certainly true that there are several scriptures that reference the eternal state and are broad enough to include eternal torment.⁴ But none of those scriptures (nor any other scripture), states that final state of the unredeemed is eternal torment. The most important of those scriptures are addressed in the this book. All relevant scriptures are included in the appendices. Scriptures that are used to support eternal torment are in Appendix 2.

There is simply no clearer way to convey that sin causes death than to say it repeatedly in 50 inerrant and wholly consistent Greek and Hebrew scripture for fifteen centuries.^{5†}

1. See Appendix 1

2. Revelation 21:8 "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."

3. 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."

4. See Appendix 2

5. See Appendix 4 † This reiterated truth is then challenged by citing passages such as Matthew 25:46 (eternal punishment) and never considering Romans 6:23 (the

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If it is for this reason that those theologians who argue for the doctrine of eternal torment attempt to re-define death whenever the word (Greek or Hebrew) for death refers to the eternal state of the unredeemed. According to the doctrine, there is no available word for ordinary death when referring to the eternal state of the unredeemed: the doctrine of eternal torment re-defines every such use in the New and Old Testaments. It is therefore impossible for scripture to say that actual, ordinary death is the final punishment for sin.

The re-definition of death that is commonly used is "separation from God." That is, whenever the Bible speaks of death as the final and eternal punishment for sin, it does not really mean death; it means separation from God. This circumvention broadens the word "death" sufficiently so that "death" becomes eternal conscious sentient existence in hell, which is effectively eternal life in hell. This re-definition is precisely the opposite of the meanings of all of the Greek and Hebrew words for death.

These are the words:

מָוָה to die

אָדָב to perish

נָחַץ to destroy

שָׁמַד to succumb, destroy

צָמַח to put and end to, cut off, destroy

כָּלָה to consume to perish

וְהָיוּ כְּלוֹא הָיוּ to become as if they never existed

κατακαίω to burn up

ἀπόλλυμι destruction

κατασφάξατε to slay

ἀποθνήσκω to die

θανάτος natural death (most often used)

ἀποθάνειν to die

φθίρω utterly perish

wages of sin is death). Death is what the eternal punishment is (see *Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich*, s.v. θανάτος, par. 2: the word means eternal death). The same is true for eternal destruction. The words mean eternal destruction, not eternal destroying.

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Scripture uses seven Hebrew words and seven Greek words to describe the eternal state of the unredeemed and each of these words means either death or a form of death or destruction. The doctrine of eternal torment redefines every one of these words.

Greek and Hebrew have other words that mean separation. For instance, scripture uses two Greek words for separation: ἀφοράω ("aph-orao")⁶ and χωρέω⁷ ("choreo"). These are common words that are used in well known scriptures such as Romans 8:35 "...who shall separate us from the love of Christ..." or Luke 6:22 ("Blessed are ye, when shall hate you, and when they shall separate you...and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake"). These are the words that the Holy Spirit would have chosen to express the concept of separation from God, but these words are never used in the context of either death or the eternal state of the unredeemed.

The Holy Spirit is not so lacking in wit that He could not inspire John to choose ἀφοράω (aphorao - separation) rather than θάνατος (thanatos - ordinary death) to tell what happens to the unredeemed in the lake of fire.⁸ Nor was Jesus mistaken when He tells us that he saves us from death (and never mentions eternal torment).⁹ Jesus could just as well have said that if a man kept His sayings he would be separated from God for eternity, but He did not. Jesus said that if any man kept His saying, he would never see death. When Jesus made that statement, He was referring to the second death and the word that He used is θάνατος (thanatos), which means ordinary death. His statement is consistent with the previous fifteen centuries of inspired and repeated inerrant scripture that issues the following warning to all of mankind: sin causes thanatos (death). It is death from which Christ saves us, not eternal life in hell. Christ did not save mankind from being undead for eternity; that is the opposite of death.

If the Holy Spirit had intended to use this word to define something in the afterlife that we did not know it is only instance of it in scripture.

6. Used in Matthew 25:32, Luke 6:22, Acts 13:2, Second Corinthians 6:17 and Jude 19.

7. Used in Romans 8:35 ("who shall separate us from the love of Christ"), Romans 8:39 and Hebrews 7:26

8. Revelation 21:8

9. John 8:51 "Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

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The Definitions of Greek Words for Death

The definitions as set forth the *Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon*¹⁰ are included in the paragraph that follows each of the following Greek words. Comments by the author follow thereafter.

θάνατος (“thanatos”) Thanatos is the Greek word that is most used to describe the final state of the unredeemed.¹¹ People in the first century died just as we do and their deaths were no different from ours. Their word for death means exactly the same as our word for death and it is used in the same way that we use it. It means death in all forms such as natural death, death by killing, death as a penalty and death as a metaphor used to describe the effects of sin in this life (spiritual death).¹² The word is never used to mean torture or torment in any form. The word for torture or torment is a different word. Therefore, the numerous scriptures that use this word for death do not mean torment in any form.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, s.v. θάνατος defines it as follows:

In scripture, the word "thanatos" is used to refer to:

- Natural death;

But when Jesus heard it; He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God...¹³

Jesus had spoken of his death [the death of Lazarus], but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep¹⁴◇

10. Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (University of Chicago Press, Second Ed. 1958). This is the definitive Greek-English Lexicon (dictionary).

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

12. Romans 6:13 "Was then that which is good made death unto me..."

13. John 11:4

14. John 11:13 ◇ Note the accuracy of scripture. At this point Jesus had analogized natural death to sleep on two separate occasions. He was making a point. The first death is very much like a sleep from which one awakes. Some awake to Christ and others to the final judgment (Rev. 20:12 "I say the dead, great and small, standing before the throne...")

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Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.¹⁵

Nearly dead with illness¹⁶

- Death as a penalty;
- Death of Christ;
- Death as a divine punishment (eternal death);

For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.¹⁷

The when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.¹⁸

...O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?¹⁹

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.²⁰

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?²¹

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.²²

15. Philippians 1:20

16. Luke 22:33

17. Romans 7:9,10. See also the same word used in verse 13.

18. James 1:15

19. Romans 7:24

20. Romans 1:32 Note that this verse specifically teaches that death is the judgment of God against sin.

21. Romans 6:16 Note that the contrast here is sin unto death or obedience to righteousness. There is no mention here or anywhere of eternal torment being either the judgment of God or the wages of sin.

22. Romans 6:21 Note that this scripture teaches specifically that the end of sin is

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For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life.²³

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...²⁴

...and unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.²⁵

- To save someone from death;
- Death by illness;
- Spiritual death: containing two sub-categories which are a. spiritual death and b. eternal death.
- Eternal death.

...the second death.²⁶

...although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they no only do the same but also give hearty approval to those who do them.²⁷

...you are slaves to the one you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness²⁸

Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are not ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.²⁹

death.

23. Romans 6:23 Again Paul teaches that the result of sin is death.

24. Second Timothy 1:10 Again the contrast is between eternal life and eternal death.

25. Revelation 21:8

26. Revelation 21:8

27. Romans 1:32

28. Romans 6:16

29. Romans 6:21

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For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.^{30 †}

There is no scriptural or grammatical basis to define any Greek word for death to mean separation. Certainly, when the body dies, death causes the soul to be separated from the body because the body is no longer alive. But death is still death and the body is still dead. Thanatos, the Greek word for simple death, means the same thing as its English translation. It means death and nothing more.

κατακαίω (“katakaio”) This word is used in scripture to refer to destruction or death by fire.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, s.v. κατακαίω p. 411, defines κατακαίω as “burn down, burn up, consume by fire.”

The word is always used to convey the concept of destruction by fire. It is never used in conjunction with torment. It refers to the manner in which something is destroyed or killed. Most importantly, it is never used to refer to something that is continually burned but never burned up. See "Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction"

“Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them [consume them with fire] ...”³¹

“Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all ...”³²

“For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.”³³

30. Romans 6:23 † Here Paul speaks of the death that is the consequence of sin. The alternative to that (eternal) death is eternal life. Reading this passage to mean that the ultimate consequence of sin is eternal life in hell rather than actual death requires a massive alteration of the accepted and historical meaning of "death." Is the entire Bible so inept that it teaches eternal torment as the eternal fate of the unredeemed but never says so? No. The Bible is far from inept. It is those who use it to propagate their own theology who are inept.

31. Matthew 13:30

32. Acts 19:19

33. Hebrews 13:11

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“... the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”³⁴

“... and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”³⁵

ἀποθνήσκω (“apothnaceko”). This word is comprised of two Greek words. The word ἀπο (“apo”) and the word θνήσκω (“thnaceco”). The word “apo” carries the meaning of “to separate” and “thnaceco” means death or dead. Hence apothnaceco carries the nuance of death causing a separation. This can refer to spiritual death in the sense of separating us from a relationship with God. This separation can occur during life as the result of sin. Apothnaceco does not mean a different type of death; it simply means death that causes a separation. Hence the word is used for spiritual death during this life that separates the sinner from God.

Christ uses apothnaceko to refer to death with a nuance of separation when referring to a death that includes spiritual death. Spiritual death is a separation from God because before we are saved we are spiritually dead.³⁶ But when it comes to the final end of the unredeemed in Revelation 21:8, He uses thanatos, the word for death, plain and simple

But apothnaceko does not mean separation from God. It means death with an implication of a separation as a result. The death of the body does not ever separate the unredeemed from God because the unredeemed are already separated from God³⁷ and the death of the body does not separate the redeemed from God because nothing can separate the redeemed from God.³⁸ Death has nothing to do with separating anyone from God. It is sin separates the unredeemed from God and death has nothing to do with it.

34. Second Peter 3:10

35. Revelation 8:7

36. Colossians 2:13 "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses..."

37. John 3:7 "...you must be born again." John 14:23 "...If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." First John 5:12 " He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (NASV)

38. Romans 8:38 "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, s.v. ἀποθνήσκω gives the following meanings:

1. Die a natural death:

Ye shall die in your sins³⁹

2. Spiritual death (during life) that results from sin:

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.⁴⁰

3. Eternal death:

This is the bread of heaven 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...⁴¹

And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.⁴²

4. To die with Christ:

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.⁴³

5. To be about to die, to face death, be mortal; to be dead.

φθείρω (“phthero”). When this word is used for death, it means a death with a nuance of shame. However, this word is never used to mean torture or eternal destroying.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, s.v. φθείρω gives these meanings:

1. To ruin financially; so seduce
2. To corrupt by erroneous teaching or immorality
3. To punish by destroying (not unending destroying)

39. John 8:21

40. Romans 8:13

41. John 6:50,51

42. John 11:26

43. Romans 8:13

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If any man shall defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.⁴⁴

ἀπόλλυμι (“apolumi”) This word is used to mean simple destruction. It is never used to mean a never ending destroying that never actually destroys. See Chapter 4 - *Comment on Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction*. The word also means to ruin in the sense of destroying a reputation or loss of all assets, bankrupt.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, s.v. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (University of Chicago Press), 2d Ed. 1958, s.v. ἀπόλλυμι defines it as follows:

1. Ruin, destroy generally:

“Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him.”⁴⁵

“And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him.”

“... He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen ...”⁴⁶

“... The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, after ward destroyed them that believed not ...”⁴⁷

“... destroy the wisdom of the wise ...”⁴⁸

“... he shall in no wise lose his reward.”⁴⁹

44. First Corinthians 3:17

45. Matthew 12:14

46. Matthew 21:41

47. Jude 5

48. First Corinthians 1:19

49. Matthew 10:42

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2. Be destroyed, ruined, as in perish or die. The word means to die with ignominy or violence.⁵⁰ It is used in Matthew 5:29,⁵¹ Matthew 18:14,⁵² Luke 13:33,⁵³ Luke 21:18,⁵⁴ 2 Peter 3:9.⁵⁵ And it is found in the very center of Christian theology in John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not **perish** but have everlasting life.”⁵⁶

“... all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”⁵⁷

“... And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.”⁵⁸

John 3:16 tells us that we are saved from perishing; it does not say that we are saved from eternal torment. The word ἀπόλλυμι (“perish”) carries the nuance of an unpleasant death. It is the perfect word describe the death that one would die by being thrown into a lake of fire.

The word is used to describe what Herod intended to do to the Christ child: kill him;⁵⁹ it is used to describe what would happen to the disciples if they drown: they perish, they die,⁶⁰ and it means death with ignominy as in the parable of the prodigal son.⁶¹ It is very similar in English. If one were to say, “He perished at sea!” It certainly means that

50. See The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, James H. Moulton and George Milligan (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930) s.v. ἀπόλλυμι, p. 95: ruin, destroy, kill, put to death, eternal death, perish, die.

51. Matthew 5:29 “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should **perish**, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

52. Matthew 18:14 “Even so it is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little one should **perish**.”

53. Luke 13:33 “...for it cannot be that a prophet **perish** out of Jerusalem.”

54. Luke 21:18 “But there shall not a hair of your head **perish**.”

55. Second Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should **perish**.”

56. John 3:16.

57. Matthew 26:52

58. John 10:28

59. Matthew 2:13 “... Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him.”

60. Matthew 8:25 “And His disciples came to *him* and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us; we **perish**.” This occurred when they were in a boat in a storm.

61. Luke 15:17 “...I **perish** with hunger.”

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he died at sea, but it does not mean that he died peacefully in his cabin. The same word means the same thing in John 3:16: Jesus does not save us from a peaceful death, He saves us from perishing in the lake of fire, which scripture refers to in Revelation 21:8 as the "second death."

John 3:16 teaches that all those who trust in Christ will be delivered from perishing. But perishing when? Our bodies are not delivered from perishing in the first death, because we will all perish in the first death, Christians included. Scripture tells us that it is appointed unto man to die *once*.⁶² So from what death does Christ deliver us? Christ delivers us from the second death, not the first. It is for this reason that Hebrews 9:27 specifies that all men are appointed to die *once*, not twice. Only those who do not turn to Christ will die twice. Thus, the meaning of the second death is exactly that: death.

The same Truth is expressed in John 8:51. Christ teaches that those who keep His word will never see death.⁶³ The word used in that verse is the plain, simple word for death: thanatos. Christ was not saying that the body of everyone who kept His word would never die. He was saying that no one who kept His word would see the *second* death. It is the second *death* that we avoid when we keep the words of Christ, not eternal torment.

Scripture explicitly teaches that the (unredeemed) soul that sins will die.⁶⁴ But the doctrine of eternal torment teaches that the unredeemed will never die. Therefore, the doctrine of eternal torment is precisely the opposite of scripture. The doctrine is an error.

Scripture has a word for torture or torment. That word is βασανίζω (basanitzo - torment). This is the word that scripture uses with the word "eternal," meaning "eternal torment." But those words and that phrase are used only once in scripture and then is to describe the eternal fate of Satan, the anti-Christ and the false prophet.⁶⁵

62. Hebrews 9:27 "And it is appointed unto men once to die (apotheco), but after this the judgment."

63. John 8:51 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

64. Ezekiel 18:4 "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."

65. Revelation 20:10 "... the devil ... shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." This word is used in 11 other verses in the New Testament, which are: Mt. 8:6 "... my servant lieth at home ... grievously tormented." Mt. 8:29 "... art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Mt. 14:24 "But the ship was now in the midst of the sea ... tossed [tormented] with waves." Mk. 5:7 "... I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." Mk. 6:48 "And He saw then toiling [distressed] in rowing..." Luke 8:28 "I beseech thee, torment me not!" 2 Pet. 2:8 "vexed [tormented]

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The word βασανίζω (basanitzo) never means death because by its very nature it cannot mean death—it can never mean death because once the tortured victim dies, he can no longer be tormented.^{66†}

All of the uses of this word in the New Testament are as follows. The word is never used to refer to the eternal fate of all of the unredeemed and the word is never used to refer to eternal torment except that of Satan:

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And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?⁶⁷

... I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.⁶⁸

... the devil ... shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.⁶⁹

... What have I to do with thee thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.⁷⁰

... And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick, grievously tormented.⁷¹

...but that they should be tormented five months and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion...⁷²

his righteous soul with *their* unlawful deeds." Rev. 9:5 "... they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion ..." Rev. 11:10 "... these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." Rev. 12:2 "... travail- ing [distressed] in birth." Rev. 14:9,10 "If any man worship the beast ... he shall be tormented ..."

66. Luke 16:19-31 † Hell is described as a place of torment (βασανίζω) in Luke 16:28. But the words used in Luke 16:24 and 24 to describe the suffering of the rich man are both forms of ὀδυνάω (odunao), which means mental, physical or spiritual pain (see Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, s.v. ὀδυνάω), not torture.

67. Matthew 8:29 (This passage relates Jesus' encounter with the Gergesenes)

68. Mk. 5:7 (demons responding to Christ)

69. Revelation 20:10 (eternal torture of Satan)

70. Luke 8:28 (demon responds to Christ)

71. Matthew 8:6

72. Revelation 9:5 (one of judgments in the great tribulation)

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...because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.⁷³

...if any man worship the beast and his image, and receives his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wrath of God... and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb...⁷⁴

...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 forever and ever.⁷⁵

In the end, God destroys death, and hell⁷⁶ and destroys the unredeemed⁷⁷ by throwing all three of them into the lake of fire in order to begin the new heavens and new earth.⁷⁸ Scripture states that death itself will die and no longer exist.⁷⁹

Scripture does not characterize what the death of hell and the death of the unredeemed will mean other than just death. But if the meaning is the same, then, like death itself, hell and the unredeemed will no longer exist. Further, it is clear that death, hell and the unredeemed are destroyed forever because the term used to describe what happens to the unredeemed is “death” (Rev. 20:14 and Rev. 21:8) and

-
- 73. Revelation 11:10 (referring to the two witnesses at Jerusalem)
 - 74. Revelation 14:9,10 (referring to the torture of those who worship the beast in the great tribulation)
 - 75. Revelation 20:10 (referring to the eternal torment of Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet)
 - 76. Revelation 20:14, 21:4 “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death ... And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death ... for the former things are passed away.”
 - 77. Revelation 21:8 “... unbelieving ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
 - 78. Revelation 21:1 “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...”
 - 79. Revelation 21:4 “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

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scripture refers to this death as an “everlasting destruction,”⁸⁰ that is, the destruction that is permanent and for all time and no longer subject to resurrection or judgment.⁸¹

Warnings of the consequence of sin permeate the scriptures from beginning to end. And every one of them is the same: death. They are warnings of both spiritual death in this life and the final, second death which is an eternal death. None of them, not one, warns of eternal torment.

The only way to validate the argument for eternal torment is to take words that do not mean eternal torment such as, death, eternal destruction or eternal punishment⁸² and change their meanings. But the meaning of the word for death in Romans 6:23, which is θάνατος (thanatos - ordinary death)⁸³ does not change simply because the proponents of eternal torment wish it to. Nor does same word change meaning when it is used again in Revelation 21:8 (second death).⁸⁴

As the protagonist in our story states:

“Seems to me,” said John, “that if God intended to say that everybody but us would be burned alive for eternity, He would have said so at least once.”

If the reader is a pastor or a teacher of scripture who is teaching this doctrinal error, it would behoove him to look carefully at these scriptures because he is held to a higher standard.⁸⁵

Annihilationism

The doctrine of annihilationism teaches that when the unredeemed are cast into the lake of fire and die the second death they are annihilated. Scripture does not use the word annihilation to refer to what happens in the lake of fire. It uses the word death and Isaiah 66:23 refers to the continued existence of the corpses of the enemies of the Lord.⁸⁶

80. Second Thessalonians 1:9 “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction...”

81. See Chapter 4 - *Comment on Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction*

82. See Chapter 4 - *Comment on Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction*

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

84. Revelation 21:8 "...the second death."

85. James 3:1 " Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." (NASV)

86. Isaiah 66:24 "Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men who

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Scripture makes no reference to the annihilation of the remains of the dead souls and bodies of the unredeemed. Thus scripture teaches death as the final end of the unredeemed, not annihilation. But for the unredeemed the effect is the same. They are eternally dead:

θάνατος, οὐ, ὁ (Hom. +; inscr., pap. LXX; Ep. Arist. 233; Philo, Joseph., Test. 12 Patr.) death.

1. lit.—**a.** natural death...

b. eternal death...In Rv this (final) death is called the second death.⁸⁷ †



have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched; and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

87. Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (University of Chicago Press, Second Ed. 1958). s.v. θάνατος. † Nowhere in this definition, or in others, do we find "separation from God" or "eternal life in hell."

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Appendix 6

Summary of Argument

A SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT AGAINST
THE ETERNAL TORMENT OF THE UNREDEEMED

The doctrine of eternal torment is discredited with two fundamental fallacies: the absence of any substantive scripture to support it and its re-definition of death.

The most evident fallacy of the doctrine is that there is no scripture to support it. The scriptures cited to support the doctrine do not mention eternal torment and there is no substantive reference to eternal torment anywhere in scripture, except for the single reference to the eternal fate of Satan and the unholy trinity.¹

The absence of any direct support for the doctrine renders it incapable of clarifying the intended meanings of passages that are broad enough to support either eternal torment or eternal death. And all of the passages cited to support the doctrine can be read either way. And if you say "Well then, I will read it to mean eternal torment." If you say that then you contradict all of the scriptures that refer to "death," this includes the Old Testament as well as the New. And there are 14 of them, that is, 14 words used to mean "death." And there are in excess of 50 uses of those words for "death" - with each one referring to the eternal state of the unbeliever after death.²

Since there is no scripture that directly supports the doctrine, there is no basis to conclude that the punishment mentioned in Matthew 25:46 ("eternal punishment") is eternal torment rather than eternal death. *All* of the scriptures that directly refer to the eternal state of the unredeemed say that the eternal state is death and they never mention eternal torment.³ ♦ Therefore, to read "eternal punishment" to mean eternal torment is wholly conclusory.

1. 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."

2. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

3. See Appendix 1. ♦ Every unredeemed person will be judged and cast into the lake of fire and there die an eternal death (the second death). Matthew 25:46 states that the punishment for sin (the second death) is an eternal punishment. However, in the remaining fifty scriptures that warn mankind that sin kills (Appendix 1), not one of them specifies that the punishment (the second death) is, in fact, eternal. The reason for this is that there is one death for the punishment for sin that was not eternal. That was the death of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ was not eternal because Christ was resurrected. Thus, the cross was preceded by fifteen centuries of

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The second most evident fallacy is that the doctrine rests upon a re-definition of the word for death. This re-definition of death is required because the doctrine cannot contradict 50 scriptures (or even one scripture). The re-definition gives us a "death" which is opposite to the definitions found in Greek Lexicons. It defines death as eternal sentient existence which is, in effect, eternal life in hell—quite the opposite of death. And this definition is made effective *only* where the word refers to the eternal state of the unredeemed. Everywhere else the word means actual death. This is an arbitrary meaning applied only when necessary to support the doctrine of eternal torment. And to have any impact, it must be applied to all 14 words and to all 50 instances. The doctrine of Eternal Torment is massive.⁴

In the universe of eternal torment, there is no death in the afterlife. Everyone lives forever in either heaven or hell and nothing dies in the second death. This is the familiar doctrine of the eternal soul and it is directly contrary to the scripture that teaches that the soul who sins shall 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.⁵

Where does scripture say that the unredeemed soul will not die exactly as Ezekiel 18:4 teaches? Nowhere, except in eternal torment's re-definition of death.

In Romans 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 Paul expounds at length upon sin and salvation. His exposition reaches its crescendo in his famous lament where he states that he could wish himself accursed from Christ if only his brethren in the flesh (the Jews) could be saved.⁶

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.⁷

warnings that sin kills and all of them were composed to exclude the resurrection. Matthew 25:46, however, is the words of Christ referring to those who ignore the poor and dying. Why was Christ resurrected? Christ was resurrected because He is sinless and when He died His death paid for the very sins for which he was sacrificed. Death, therefore, could not hold Him and eternal justice demanded that He be resurrected. His resurrection was therefore proof that His sacrifice was effective.

4. See Appendix 7, *Effect of the Doctrine*

5. Ezekiel 18:4

6. Romans 9:3 “ For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

7. Romans 10:1

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But saved from what? Saved from the effect of sin, to be sure, but what is the effect of sin?

In these six chapters, Paul repeatedly emphasizes that the effect of sin is death. He uses the word "death" 20 times and never uses the term torment or eternal torment.

...as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.⁸

Thus, death passed upon all men. Why? Because "all have sinned" and the wage of sin is death.

The wages of sin is death⁹

That is the reason why Christ's death saves us. He paid our death-penalty by his death. He saved men from eternal death, not eternal torment and he tells us plainly:

Verily verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.¹⁰

In this passage, Christ was not speaking of the physical death of the body because all men must die at least once.¹¹ There are two deaths and the cross did not save us from the first death. The cross saved us from the second death.

He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.¹²

In the ministry of Jesus, there is no reference to eternal torment. In all of the Bible there is no reference to eternal torment being the punishment for sin. In all of scripture there is only one reference to eternal torment and that is to describe the eternal fate of Satan, antichrist and the false prophet. That passage is wholly unrelated to the eternal fate of the unredeemed.

Christ tells us that He gives us eternal life and He promises that we shall never *perish* (die).

8. Romans 5:12

9. Romans 6:23

10. John 8:51

11. Hebrews 9:27 " And as it is appointed unto men once to die..."

12. Revelation 2:11

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I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.¹³

What is the relevance of the promise of eternal life if there is no death and all of mankind will live eternally in either in heaven or hell? And note, the words are the same. "Thanatos" is used in both instances. In one instance "But for the cowardly and unbelieving...their part in the lake of that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death"¹⁴ and in another (all the others) "the wages of sin is death."¹⁵

Eternal torment teaches that the relevant issue is not whether one has eternal life but rather where one will spend it. But Christ is not irrelevant nor does He make irrelevant promises. He promises eternal life rather than *perishing* in the second death. If the doctrine of eternal torment were true, then the promise of Jesus Christ would not be to save us from death, but a promise to save us from eternal torment word. But, as previously stated, Jesus never mentions eternal torment.

Romans 6:5 teaches that we were united¹⁶ with Him in the likeness of His death.¹⁷ †◇ That is, we were united with Christ in His death. We were effectively with Christ when He died. His death was effectively our death that paid our penalty for sin.¹⁸ It is because we are "in Christ" that we have no condemnation.¹⁹ Our sins were paid for not only because His death was sufficient to pay for them but because in a spiritual sense we were in Christ when He died and His death was our death. The wage of our sin (death) was paid by Jesus Christ. We don't owe it any more. It has been paid in full. And the cost was Christ's death. The entire structure of salvation is "Christ's death for our death." We were

13. John 10:28

14. Revelation 21:8

15. Romans 6:23

16. See See Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (University of Chicago Press, Fifth Ed. 1958) s.v. συμφέρω "bring together" for "profit" or to "be profitable" or, in the noun form "profit."

17. Romans 6:5 "...we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death..." † This statement is as close as scripture can get to Christ's death being our death without saying that we hung on the cross beside Him. ◇ Note scripture does not say that we were "in Christ" when He died. Because of our sin, we could not be "in Christ" until He had paid the price of our sin with His death.

18. See Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (University of Chicago Press, Fifth Ed. 1958) s.v. ὁμοίωμα, "= in the same death that He died."

19. Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

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united with Him in the likeness of His *death*²⁰ not in the likeness of His eternal torment—there was no eternal torment for Christ and there will be none for any of the unredeemed. Christ died our *death* for us. This is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

If eternal torment is true, then Christ doesn't save anyone from death; He saves us from eternal torment and the doctrine of substitutionary atonement would be error. Therefore, those who hold to eternal torment must offer some explanation as to how Christ could say that He saves us from death when, in fact, He does not. That explanation is, as previously mentioned, the argument that the words for death (all the words for death in both the Old and New Testaments) do not really mean death at all, but eternal sentient existence in hell—but only where necessary to support the doctrine of eternal torment.

In its attempt to bolster itself, eternal torment points to the parable of Lazarus.²¹ In this parable, there is a poor man named Lazarus and there is a rich man who ignored Lazarus. Both Lazarus and the rich man died and both of them continued to exist after death. Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom but the rich man was in hell. This scripture is supposed to demonstrate that death is not really what we normally understand it to be because both the rich man and Lazarus continued in a conscious, sentient existence after they died.

It is certainly true that Lazarus and the rich man continued to have conscious sentient existence after they died, but not because the word for death does not mean death. Lazarus and the rich man continued to exist after death because their physical bodies died an actual death²² but their souls did not. The souls of Lazarus and the rich man continued to live because scripture tells us that there are two deaths. The body dies in the first death²³ and the unredeemed soul dies in the second death.^{24†}

20. Romans 6:5

21. Luke 16:19-31

22. Luke 16:22 "One day the beggar died . . . And the rich man also died and was buried" (BSB)

23. Hebrews 9:27 "...it is appointed for men to die once..." NASV

24. Ezekiel 18:4 "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." NASV Also see Revelation 21:8 "... their part will be in the lake that burn with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." † The phrase "which is the second death" refers to "part," not "lake" meaning that the part of the unredeemed in the lake of fire is the second death. See "Comment on What is Death" on page 207

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So it is not a question of what death is. It is a question of what has died. Death is death and the word for death does not take on a different meaning simply because it is used to describe the death of a soul.²⁵

Death in biblical times was exactly the same as it is now: total cessation of life and end physical sensation and physical consciousness. Whatever dies is dead and stays dead unless resurrected. When the body dies in the first death, it is dead. When the soul of the one who rejects Christ dies in the second death, it is just as dead as the physical body was in the first death. The same Greek word (Thanatos - θανατος) is used for both and that word means plain and simple death. Hence, the final end of the unredeemed, is death, the second death. Not eternal torment.

The argument for eternal torment is circular and self-bolstering. For instance:

We know that 'eternal punishment' is a reference to eternal torment because eternal torment is a valid doctrine and it tells us that the unredeemed will be tormented forever. Therefore, eternal punishment could have no other meaning. And we know that the doctrine of eternal torment is valid because the phrase 'eternal punishment' describes it.

The argument is circular; it is based up eternal torment being a valid doctrine when it is not. In order to qualify as a valid scriptural doctrine the doctrine must have some clear basis in scripture. Eternal torment does not. The only definitive scriptural statement that we find to define the eternal state of the unredeemed is "death" for which there are more than 50 scriptures.²⁶ One cannot, by pure fiat of doctrine, knowingly redefine them all and then take the position that he has not violated Revelation 22:19.²⁷

The objective student of scripture who still believes that eternal torment is a valid doctrine in spite of an absence of scriptural support should review Appendix 7, which discusses the numerous ways that eternal torment corrupts other (valid) doctrines.

25. Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul that sins shall die"

26. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

27. Revelation 22:19 "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

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In the end, we may all discover that this pernicious doctrine stands directly at the side of the doctrine of salvation by works as the most successful corruption of inerrant scripture that has ever existed.



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Appendix 7

Comparison of Arguments

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST ETERNAL TORMENT.

	Scripture	Eternal Torment	Response	
CONTENTS	<p>Revelation 21:8 The...unbelievers... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.</p>	<p>Although this scripture does not say that the unredeemed will be tormented eternally, the scripture means that they will be because they are cast into the lake of fire. We know that everyone who is cast into the lake of fire will be tormented eternally because Satan will be tormented eternally in the lake of fire.</p>	<p>Neither Revelation 21:8, nor any other scripture teaches eternal torment for the unredeemed. Rather than eternal torment, 21:8 describes the final end of the unredeemed as death (the second death). This scripture coincides with all the other scriptures that address the final end of the unredeemed. See Appendix 1</p> <p>Revelation 21:8 is careful to state that their "part" in the lake of fire is the "second death." This is necessary in order to distinguish their part (second death) from Satan's part (eternal torment).¹</p>	APPENDICES
An Unlikely Conversation Comment			<p>1. See Comment on Chapter 6, <i>Unbelievers' Part in the Lake of Fire</i>.</p>	Effect of the Doctrine on Other Doctrines Substitutionary Atonement Predestination Original Sin Salvation Resurrection of Christ Evangelism Reassurance for Dying Conclusion
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Separation from God Part of the Unredeemed Parable of Lazarus Analogy Argument Nuance of Separation Partition Argument Resurrection to Judgment Insufficient Punishment Conclusion	<p>Revelation 2:11 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.</p>	<p>Although this scripture refers to a second death, the second death is not a death but separation from God and/or eternal torment. So when the unredeemed die for the second time in the second death, they do not actually die, instead they are separated from God and live on in a conscious existence where they can feel pain as they are tormented forever.</p>	<p>Death means death. There is no basis in reason or in scripture to transform death into separation from God or into eternal torment. This re-definition and the resulting doctrine of eternal torment has a significant impact on other (true) doctrines and is not contained in Greek or Hebrew Lexicons. See Ch. 6, <i>Comment on What is Death</i> and App. 7 <i>The Effect of the Doctrine on other Doctrines</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of Arguments
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Conclusion There is Body and Soul There are Two Deaths Souls that Sin Souls that Do Not Sin Second Death Unredeemed are Judged Redeemed are Judged Rewards of Righteousness Death of Hell Fate of Satan Jesus Christ How Shall we Then Live	<p>Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power ...</p>	<p>In this scripture also, second death does not mean death; it means eternal torment and/or separation. "Second death" means eternal torment.</p>	<p>Again, the Greek word is death and it means death. See Ch. 6, <i>Comment on What is Death</i>.</p>	

Scripture

Eternal Torment

Response

**Luke 16:19:-31
Parable of Lazarus**

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores...

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried;

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments... And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

But Abraham said... there is a great gulf fixed so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot...

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him [Lazarus] to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them...

Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets...and he said but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

The parable of Lazarus shows that when Lazarus and the rich man died they were not really dead because after their bodies were buried, the rich man was in hell and Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom.

So death in the Bible does not mean death as we know it. It means separation from God.

This parable shows that the soul never dies. Therefore, when it is cast into the lake of fire it will never die and be tormented forever.

The parable also shows that the wicked will be tormented for eternity after they die because the rich man was being tormented.

The bodies of Lazarus and the rich man died a natural death and were buried. Their souls survived and were in hades.

Death causes the separation of the body and the soul, but death is still death. The soul does not die until the second death which occurs after it has been finally judged. The soul survives after the death of the body because souls do not die with bodies, not because death is not really death.

This scripture shows that the rich man who would not give Lazarus the crumbs from his table went to hell and was in torment. But it does not speak of the duration of that torment.

Other scriptures show that the soul and the body of the unredeemed will be reunited for the purpose of the final judgment.¹ Following the judgment, the unredeemed soul will be cast in to the lake of fire and its part in the lake will be the "second death."²

We know that the second death is the death of the unredeemed soul because the lord says, "Behold all souls are Mine; as the sole of the father so also the sole of the son is mine; the sole that sinneth, it shall die."³ Scripture repeatedly warns that sin causes death⁴ and Jesus Christ tells us that He saves us from death (the second death), "If any man keep My saying, he shall never see death."⁵ There is no mention of eternal torment, except once and then for Satan, the anti-christ and the false prophet.

1. John 5:29 " and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

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

3. Ezekiel 18:4

4. See Appendix 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State of the Unredeemed*

5. John 8:51

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Scripture

Eternal Torment

Response

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 also; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Satan will be tormented for eternity in the lake of fire and the unredeemed are thrown into it as well. Therefore the unredeemed will have the same punishment as Satan. It is true that the unredeemed will be judged according to their works, but no matter what their works were, they are bad enough to deserve to be tormented for eternity.

The unredeemed will not be punished the same as Satan, because they have not done what Satan has done. The unredeemed will be judged fairly on their own works.¹

"Books were opened and another was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged from the things which were written the books, according to their deeds." Rev. 20:12

1. See Ch. 6 *Comment on What is Death* and Ch. 4 *Comment on Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction*

Second Corinthians 1:9

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...

It is true that Paul said that we had a sentence of death, but he did not mean death as we commonly know it. He meant that we had a sentence of being separated from God and tormented forever.

This scripture teaches that we had a sentence of death, not a sentence of eternal torment. This scripture refers to the second death, the death of the soul. It is saying that Christ has delivered our souls from the second death. The same concept is stated in Revelation 20:6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

Romans 6:23

Wages of sin is death.

Paul said that the wages of sin is death, but the word death doesn't mean actual death. What he was really saying is that the wages of sin is eternal torment. The scripture does not mean what it says. It means that the wages of sin is eternal conscious existence in pain for eternity.

The scripture means what it says. The wages of sin is death. None of the 14 different Hebrew and Greek words for death used in all 50 scriptures that say the final state of the unredeemed is death mean anything except actual death. When the unredeemed are cast into the lake of fire they die for the second time. That is the reason that scripture calls it the second *death*. It is not a different death; it is a *second* death.

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Scripture

Eternal Torment

Response

Second Timothy 1:10
 Jesus Christ, Who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

John 11:26
 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

It is true that Christ says He has abolished death, but He does not mean it. He means that He has abolished separation from God.

The unredeemed die in the second death, which is the lake of fire, but that death is not death; it is separation from God and/or eternal torment. Therefore when Christ says that He has abolished death, He means exactly the opposite. What He abolished was eternal life (in hell) for those who trust in Him.

Christ does not save us from death, but from eternal torment.

We know that the soul that sins shall die,¹ and we know from the parable of Lazarus that the unredeemed soul does not die with the body.² We know that it will later be cast into the lake of fire and that this is called the second death.³ And we know from Second Timothy 1:10 that Christ saves us from death. The only death that He could save us from is the second death. Thus, Christ saves us from the second death. If the soul does not die in the second death, why is it called the second death?

The argument that Christ does not save us from death but eternal torment instead has no basis in scripture. Christ never mentions eternal torment.⁴

1. Ezekiel 18⁴ "Behold all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

2. Luke 16:19-31

3. Revelation 21:8 "...unbelieving... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death

4. See *Comment on What is Death?* (Ch. 6)

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Scripture

Hebrews 2:9

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.

Eternal Torment

This means that Christ's death was sufficient to deliver us from eternal torment. He died a death for us, but our penalty was not death. Our penalty was eternal torment. Christ did not suffer eternal torment. [This cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of substitutionary atonement].

Response

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement teaches that Christ took our punishment on Himself as our substitute.

The doctrine arises from a progression of scriptures: The wages of sin is death;¹ Christ became sin for us,² and died in our place.³ It is only because He paid the penalty for our sins that we have been redeemed and forgiven.⁴ Because our sins have been forgiven, we no longer have to pay the wage of sin, which is death.⁵ Jesus Christ died His death in place of our death.

The final end of the unredeemed is death (not eternal torment) and death is the penalty that Christ paid. Therefore Jesus Christ did pay our penalty for us. He was our substitute.⁶

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

2. 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."

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

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

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

6. See Appendix 7.

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Scripture

John 8:51
 Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death.

Eternal Torment

Death in the Bible does not mean death; it means separation from God. This scripture means that Jesus Christ saves us from separation from God and eternal life in hell.

The second death is not a death but separation of man from God and/or eternal torment. God casts the resurrected sinner into the lake of fire. When this occurs, the soul is separated from God and remains alive and eternally tormented.

This occurs because the soul is eternal ("the eternal soul") and cannot die and it is confined to the lake of fire. We know from the parable of Lazarus that the soul continues to exist after death; we know that it is eternal and we know that it is tormented in the lake of fire. Hence, we know that it is eternally tormented.

Response

The argument for eternal torment from John 8:51 rests upon the belief that death means separation from God and that the soul is eternal. These beliefs are unscriptural for the following reasons:

The separation argument. The argument that death means separation in the Bible arises primarily from the parable of Lazarus, because this parable shows that the soul survives death. However, the parable of Lazarus does not teach that death is not true death. It simply teaches that the soul does not die with the body in the first death.¹ The soul dies in the second death.

The eternal soul argument. The soul is not eternal. It dies. We know it dies because scripture tells us that it dies² unless it has been given eternal life through Jesus Christ. We also know it dies because scripture repeatedly warns that sin causes death.³ We know from Lazarus and the parable that it does not die in the first death; it dies in the second death.⁴ That is the reason why scripture refers to the second death as the second *death*. The second death is not a different death; it is a second *death*. The first death was the death of the body but not the soul. The second death is the death of the soul.

1. See discussion of the parable of Lazarus, *supra*.

2. Ezekiel 18:4 "Behold all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." See Appendix 1

3. See Appendix 4

4. Revelation 20:14 "This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." See Revelation 20:6, 2:11

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Scripture

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.

Eternal Torment

Their worm shall not die and the fire is not quenched means that souls that are being eaten by worms that never die and are in flames forever. Or, in the alternative, the term "worms" is a euphemism for the unredeemed meaning that the unredeemed do not die and their fire is not quenched.

The fact that the fire is not quenched means that the fire is eternal and the souls being tortured there never die.

Response

This scripture, like *all* the others, never states the duration of the penalty.

Christ uses the word "Gehenna," which He analogizes to hell. Gehenna was an area outside of Jerusalem where ancient pagans sacrificed children to idols. Accordingly, the term became a euphemism for horror, fire and death.

The passage is a quote from Isaiah 66:24, where Isaiah states that it shall come to pass that after the new heavens and new earth men "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 picture painted by both Isaiah and Jesus is a collection of the smoldering carcasses of evil people continually being eaten by worms. These carcasses have been preserved as a lesson for all who wish to see them.

Thus, the passage refers to *carcasses* not conscious human souls. And the word "worms" means exactly that: worms. It never means people. Alternatively, the passage refers to hell¹ where the first are not quenched. But ultimately the end is death, because sin causes death. The passage does not mention eternal torment.

1. Cf. Parable of Lazarus, See Comment on Ch. 5, *Their Worm Does not Die*.

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Scripture

Eternal Torment

Response

Jude 7
Sodom...set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Since the fire is eternal, the punishment must also be eternal.

The fact that the fire in the lake of fire is eternal is a given, but this scripture says nothing of the duration of the punishment. Simply because the unredeemed are thrown into the lake of fire does not mean that they will be punished with Satan's punishment any more than prisoners thrown in the same prison will have the same sentence. Indeed scripture teaches that the unredeemed will be punished differently from Satan because they will be judged on their own works, not Satan's.¹ Scripture warns that the wages of sin is death, not eternal torment.

1. Revelation 20:12 "...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Psalms 116:8
In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid of what man can do to me...for Thou hast delivered my soul from death.

This passage does not mean that God has delivered his soul from death. It means that God has delivered his soul from eternal torment.

The passage means exactly what it says, that God has delivered his soul from death. Those who advocate eternal torment for all of the unredeemed teach that whenever one of 14 Hebrew or Greek words for death is applied to the eternal state then it no longer means death. This is inaccurate.¹

1. See Ch. 6, *Comment on What is Death*.

Isaiah 1:2
They that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

This passage means that they that forsake the lord will be eternally tormented

This means that those who forsake the Lord will be consumed (perish by fire) in the lake of fire. One cannot be consumed by fire yet never be fully consumed. Another translation is "Those who forsake Jehovah will perish."¹

1. Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1975) vol. 7 pg. 107

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Scripture

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Second Peter 3:9

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

Revelation 14:9-11

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark on his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wrath of God ... and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...

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.

Matthew 7:13

Enter ye at the straight gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction.

Eternal Torment

John 3:16 says that Christ saves us from perishing, but it does not mean because perishing doesn't mean perishing.

Second Peter 3:9 actually means that the Lord is not willing that any should be burned alive forever."

This scripture refers to the eternal state of all unbelievers. The fact that there is smoke caused by their torment and that smoke ascends forever means that they will be tormented forever.

This passage does not mean that the wicked shall ever be actually destroyed. It means that the wicked shall be placed into a state of eternal destroying and conscious pain forever.

Response

These two scriptures say that we are saved from perishing and it means exactly what it says. Eternal torment is precisely the opposite of perishing. To perish means to die a violent death. To be tormented eternally means that one does not die, but instead continues to consciously exist and feel pain for eternity. Jesus Christ saves us from perishing forever and gives us eternal life instead.

- 1) This scripture is limited by its own terms to those who worship the beast in the end times. So it cannot refer to all unbelievers.
- 2) The context is the wrath of God as described by the third angel in Revelation: a condition on earth during the tribulation with physical fire and brimstone. It does not refer to the eternal state
- 3) The reference to smoke rising is a reference to distance rather than time and
- 4) there is no reference to the duration of any torment. Reference to "no rest day or night" means no rest day or night, not no rest for eternity.¹

1. See Ch. 1, *An Unlikely Conversation*

Broad is the way that leads to destruction. This passage does not refer to eternal destroying. It refers to destruction, a one time occurrence. "Eternal destroying" calls for an entirely different Greek grammatical structure.¹

1. See Ch. 4 *Comment on Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction* for a discussion of the Greek grammar meaning destruction, not destroying.

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Scripture

Obadiah 16

They shall be as though they had not been. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance.

Second Thessalonians

1:9

These shall be punished with everlasting destruction...

Matthew 25:46

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

See also, Psalm 52:1

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.

Eternal Torment

Although this phrase does use a Hebrew word for death, it means the same thing as the death of the soul in the second death, which is not actually death but instead a continued conscious existence and the ability to feel actual pain forever. Therefore, although the phrase states that the wicked shall be as though they had not been, it does not mean that. "As though they had not been means that they will be tormented forever."

This passage says that the unredeemed will be continually destroyed forever. That is simply another way of expressing eternal torment.

This passage says that the unredeemed will be everlastingly punished. That punishment is eternal torment.

Their worm does not die means that the people are being tortured for eternity.

Response

In the end, the soul of the wicked shall die and shall be as if it had not been. The words of scripture mean exactly what they say.¹

1. See App. 1, *Scriptures Teaching Death as the Final State*.

Scripture uses the noun form for destruction, not the participle. The word means a one-time destruction, not a continual destroying.¹

Matthew 25:46 does not say what the everlasting punishment is but there are numerous other scriptures teaching that the everlasting punishment is death, eg. Appendix 1. Also, the word "punishment" is the noun form, not the participle, so it does not mean an everlasting punishing. Scripture refers to this punishment as everlasting because there is no reprieve from it. It is eternal death with no more resurrections.²

1. See Ch. 4 *Comment on Eternal Punishment and Eternal Destruction* for a discussion of the Greek grammar meaning destruction, not destroying.

2. See *Comment on Ch. 4, Eternal Punishment*.

There is no grammatical or semantic basis to conclude that "worms" means anything but "worms." This passage teaches that the enemies of the Lord will ultimately become corpses eaten by worms. Thus, the enemies of the Lord will die.

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Conclusion

The arguments for eternal torment are insubstantial. They are based upon conclusions as to the meaning of equivocal scriptures when those scriptures may mean either eternal death or eternal torment. For instance, one may argue that the phrase "eternal punishment" proves eternal torment but it says nothing about what the punishment is. The argument that this scripture is a proof text for eternal torment is conclusory because the argument is nothing more than a conclusion that the punishment is eternal torment. The punishment is not eternal torment but eternal death.

If there were any scripture that says the unredeemed will be tormented eternally, then there would be a basis for that conclusion, but there is no such scripture. The arguments pointing to "eternal destruction" and "their worm does not die" and "the smoke ascends forever and ever" are equally conclusory because none of these scriptures mention eternal torment.

On the other side of the argument, however, there is a wealth of scriptures that are not conclusory, scriptures (at least 50 of them) that teach the ultimate punishment for sin is death, not eternal torment. Rather than attempting to show that these scriptures mean something other than what they plainly say, we should accept them and use them to establish an accurate doctrine.

Those who advocate eternal torment attempt to overcome a host of contrary scriptures by the simple fiat of re-defining the Hebrew and Greek words for death, whenever the use of those words offend the doctrine of eternal torment.

Such is the power of established belief. Many claim to base their doctrine on scripture, but there is no scripture. Like the Darwinists, they have a preconceived belief and they discover support for it wherever they look, whether support is actually there or not.

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Appendix 8

Knowing God

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

A CONVERSATION WITH A SKEPTIC

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If God is really there, why can't we see Him? Why doesn't He speak? Why does He not make Himself known?

Have you ever wondered how some people can really believe in God?

If you want to understand it, then here is a conversation:

A Conversation

SKEPTIC: If there is a God, where is He? Why doesn't He make Himself known?

SCRIPTURE: He does. But not to everyone.

SKEPTIC: Why should I believe that?

SCRIPTURE: You don't have to.

SKEPTIC: Ha! You are right about that. So, what good is it?

SCRIPTURE: Because you can know God.

SKEPTIC: So, if I believe hard enough, God will make Himself known to me. Right?

SCRIPTURE: No. It is not a matter of working, of believing hard enough—because the only faith you need is enough to try.

SKEPTIC: Try what?

SCRIPTURE: Try knowing God.

SKEPTIC: And if I don't want to know God?

SCRIPTURE: Then don't. Go your way. Live the way you are living and change nothing.

SKEPTIC: And if I want to know God, what do I do.

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SCRIPTURE: There are two steps. The first step is to get your sins forgiven because sin has a consequence.

SKEPTIC: What consequence?

SCRIPTURE: The consequence is like an emptiness inside that you can never shake off. For others it feels like you are looking for something but you don't know what it is. For most is the understanding that you must find "something" in order to be really at peace and content. It is knowing that you are incomplete. This is referred to as being spiritually "dead."

SKEPTIC: Ok, just suppose I did commit a sin (but I didn't) and suppose I have spiritual death. How do I get out of it?

SCRIPTURE: The first step is to get your sins forgiven by trusting in Jesus Christ.

SKEPTIC: Wait a minute. You just said that sin has a consequence. What happened to that consequence?

SCRIPTURE: Well, the consequence of sin has to be paid no matter what. And that consequence is not only spiritual death but also eternal death.

SKEPTIC: So its worse that just feeling this void inside?

SCRIPTURE: Yes. Much worse.

SKEPTIC: You are not making sense. You are saying that the consequence is death and the consequence must be paid. So, how can I get sins forgiven if I'm dead?

SCRIPTURE: You are dead. You just don't know it. But you can get your sins forgiven because someone else paid for them.

SKEPTIC: Someone took the consequence for me? Someone died for me?

SCRIPTURE: Yes.

SKEPTIC: And who would that be?

SCRIPTURE: That would be Jesus Christ. He purchased your forgiveness by dying in your place and offers you the gift of forgiveness.

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SKEPTIC: Well then, if Jesus Christ is dead, how do I know that He really paid for my sins?

SCRIPTURE: Because He was resurrected.

SKEPTIC: Ha! Now that's convenient. He died but then came alive again. So He didn't really die after all!

SCRIPTURE: He really did die and He really was resurrected.

SKEPTIC: Look. I respect your religion and I know you really believe it and I don't want to spoil it for you. But you are just not making sense. If he really paid for my sin and he really died and death really is the consequence of sin, why was He resurrected?

SCRIPTURE: Because His death paid the penalty for sin.

SKEPTIC: That still does not tell me why He was resurrected.

SCRIPTURE: Yes it does. You see, He was resurrected because His death paid the penalty for the very sins for which He died. Once that penalty was paid, there was neither a basis nor a reason for Him to remain dead.

SKEPTIC: So death is not permanent.

SCRIPTURE: Right. Death is not permanent.

SKEPTIC: I thought you said that one of the consequences of sin was eternal death. Sounds pretty permanent to me.

SCRIPTURE: I was referring to the second death, not the first. There are two deaths. The first death is the death of your body - everyone experiences this. The second death is the death of your soul. When your soul dies, you are permanently dead.

SKEPTIC: So how do I ensure that my soul will not die?

SCRIPTURE: You accept the gift of forgiveness. That step is free of charge because it is a gift that has already been purchased for you. All you do is accept it.

SKEPTIC: Sounds too easy.

SCRIPTURE: It has to be easy.

SKEPTIC: Why?

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SCRIPTURE: Because the wage of sin is death, if you were to pay the consequence of your sin, you would be dead. So, if your sins were not totally paid for, you would eventually be judged and suffer the second death and be permanently dead.

SKEPTIC: So once I commit sin, there is no way I can get out of the death of my soul except through Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE: Yes and it's a free gift.

SKEPTIC: So why doesn't Jesus Christ require something of me before giving me this gift? Why is it free?

SCRIPTURE: It's free because it costs a life. You would be dead if you paid for it; and there is nothing that you could pay even if you wanted to.¹ The gift is invaluable. There is nothing that you can do to earn it for yourself. He purchased the gift and it is His to give away. And He is quite clear about it. He is giving it away.²

SKEPTIC: Ok. Suppose I want to avoid the second death. How do I accept this gift?

SCRIPTURE: You accept this gift by doing nothing more than trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sins (past, present and future). Some people do that by praying a prayer in their own words telling God that they are trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sin. Some people walk forward in church when the preacher calls. That is all you have to do to acquire forgiveness for all sin. There is nothing physical that you have to do because this is, of course, all spiritual. Your soul is spiritual and your soul is what is being saved, not your body. All bodies must die, but not all souls.³

SKEPTIC: So that's all there is to it?

1. Ephesians 2:8,9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

2. Revelation 22:16, 17 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come, and the one who desires the water of life drink freely."

3. Hebrews 9:27 "People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" † Everyone has to die once (the body) and then face the judgment. But everyone does not have to die twice (the soul).

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SCRIPTURE: That's all there is to it to be saved from the second death. That's all you have to do to live forever. But that is not all there is to it for knowing God in the here and now. Knowing God is not a free gift. You have to turn away from sin in order to know God.

SKEPTIC: Why? If I am really forgiven, then what else is there?

SCRIPTURE: Jesus Christ died for you. He died to pay for your sins and secure forgiveness for you for free. But the price of your forgiveness was extremely heavy. It cost Him His life. If you accept what He paid and then and continue to commit the same sins that He died for, He will not make Himself known to you. And you may not be saved if there is no real repentance of sin.

Therefore, you must sincerely yield your will to His before He will make Himself known to you. Christ tells us clearly:

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.⁴

SKEPTIC: So Jesus Christ will make Himself known to me?

SCRIPTURE: Yes.

SKEPTIC: So what about all the "believe in God" stuff that I have always heard about? I mean, how can I believe in God if I don't believe in God?

SCRIPTURE: The only faith you need is enough to try. But God knows your heart, so you must be sincere when you try.

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.⁵

SKEPTIC: Well, suppose I just don't believe in God.

SCRIPTURE: Initial belief is not the key. Sincerity is the key. All the faith you need is enough to sincerely try.

SKEPTIC: Are you saying that I can try it without believing in God?

4. John 14:21

5. Jeremiah 29:13

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SCRIPTURE: In effect, yes. Because God does not require you to believe in something that you have neither experienced nor perceived. All He requires is enough belief to sincerely trust in Christ and yield your will to His. That is enough.

SKEPTIC: I always thought it was a matter of believing hard enough and then, after a while, you talk yourself into God really being there.

SCRIPTURE: Really? How can you believe in a God who has never made Himself known to you?

SKEPTIC: You can't. Or, at least, I can't. So this knowing God business. It's new isn't it. I mean no church? Are you kidding? You just go to God *yourself*? How long has *that* been going on?

SCRIPTURE: Around 2000 years.

SKEPTIC: So how come this is the first time I have heard of it?

SCRIPTURE: Because not everyone who tells you about religion knows God. And not knowing God does not prevent them from assuming positions of authority in a church and profiting from a ministry.

He who has My commandments and keeps them,
he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall
be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and
will disclose Myself to him.⁶

SKEPTIC: How will I know that God has made Himself known to me?

SCRIPTURE: When the Creator makes Himself known to you there is no doubt. It will be the most wonderful thing that you have ever experienced—and it never stops.

SKEPTIC: So it's after I know Him that I really believe, right?

SCRIPTURE: Right because once you come to know Him, you actually *know*. You don't just believe. Belief is largely what other people perceive; but you *know Him*. And when you know Him, you experience the eternal life that He gives you.

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6. John 14:21

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.⁷

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.⁸

SKEPTIC: All this is new to me and quite frankly, I think it's all hogwash.

SCRIPTURE: Many people feel that way at first.

SKEPTIC: Well, perhaps "hogwash" is a little harsh. Let me rephrase it. Let's just say that I have "intellectual reservations."

SCRIPTURE: *Everybody* has intellectual reservations before they trust in Christ. Of course they do! Because they can't know that it is all true until *after* they trust in Christ. So if you try and it turns out to be hogwash, then you've lost nothing. But if you don't try and it's not hogwash, then you've lost everything.

So tell me, where are your intellectual reservations when you have nothing to lose and everything to gain? Is there some invisible judge out there who will tell everyone that you are intellectually inferior because you tried? Get real my friend; *that's* hogwash.

SKEPTIC: Well...

SCRIPTURE: So, stop talking and just *do* it. Go somewhere alone and tell God that you sincerely place your trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of all sin and then totally surrender to His will and watch what happens.

God Himself personally makes Himself known to you:

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.⁹

You will experience the eternal life of Jesus Christ right now, in this life:

7. John 17:3

8. Romans 8:16

9. John 14:21

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And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.¹⁰

Everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.¹¹

It will feel like you have been born a second time:

Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.¹²

It is a spiritual thing and you will step into a new life:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.¹³

You will experience a profound internal peace:

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds¹⁴

You will know that in the end, God is just. He will right all wrongs:

For the Lord loves justice; He will not forsake his saints.¹⁵

The dead were judged.¹⁶

But you will never be judged for the sins that you have committed because you will be completely forgiven. Your sins were paid for by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. And His resurrection is proof that His sacrifice was effective.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses¹⁷

-
10. John 17:3
 11. John 11:26
 12. John 3:3
 13. Second Corinthians 5:17
 14. Philippians 4:7
 15. Psalm 37:28
 16. Revelation 20:12
 17. Isaiah 43:24

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I am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins. ¹⁸

I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. ¹⁹

Your fears will subside and dissipate:

Do not fear for I am with you. Do not anxiously look about you for I am your God. I will strengthen you; surely I will help you; surely I will uphold you with My right hand. ²⁰

And you will love like you have never loved before because God loves you.

We love because He first loved us. ²¹

Love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God ²²

You will love because you will know God and God is love. ²³



18. Ephesians 1:7 I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

19. Jeremiah 31:34

20. Isaiah 41:10

21. First John 4:19

22. First John 4:7

23. First John 4:8 "God is love"

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