

Hell – The Destruction of the Wicked

- Purpose:** The purpose of hell is to eradicate sin, not perpetuate it.
- Focus:** “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)
- Introduction** What pictures do get in your mind when I say the word *hell*? The word *Hell* is translated 31 times in the KJV from the Hebrew word *Sheol*, which means grave, and 11 times from the Greek word *Hades*, which means the same thing (Acts 2:31). 12 times it is translated from the word *Gehenna*, which means “the valley of Hinnom”, a burning dumpster outside Jerusalem. This is used as a figure of the final punishment of the wicked. Why, where and when is hell?
- Let’s start with the why. First we need to establish a fundamental truth about the character of God...*
- Ezek 33:11** Does God take pleasure in the punishment of the wicked? (**2 Pet 3:9**)
What is then the purpose of hell?
- Matt 25:31-34, 41, 46** Who are the fires of hell prepared for? Is the original purpose of hell to torture sinners? God loves the sinner, but hates the sin (Heb 1:9). The purpose of hell is to destroy sin forever. IE: Trapped monkeys
When are the wicked punished? Before or after the Second Coming?
- Let us look at another text that makes this clear...*
- 2 Pet 3:7** Are the fires of hell burning today? When will hell take place? (see also **John 12:48**) Where will hell take place? (see also **Prov 11:31**)
- Let us discover the more exact timing of hell fire...*
- Rev 20:7-9, 13-15** When are the wicked cast into the lake of fire? What will the fires do to the wicked? What is the lake of fire (hell) called? What are the wicked judged according to? Will hell be fair? IE: Steal gum vs. mass murder.
Will God’s hatred for sin make Him eternalize it?
- But didn’t the Bible say that they will be punished with everlasting fire? Let’s see what that mean?*
- Jude 1:7** What kind of fire were Sodom and Gomorrah punished with? Is Sodom and Gomorrah burning today? Eternal fire = a fire having eternal consequences.
What did happen to Sodom and Gomorrah?
- 2 Pet 2:6** What will happen to the wicked according to the Bible?
The Bible teaches everlasting punishment, not everlasting punishing.
- But doesn’t the Bible teach that the fires of hell are unquenchable?*
- Matt 3:11-12** This is true too. But we need to let the Bible explain itself.
Let’s look at another example when unquenchable fire is mentioned...
- Jer 17:27** Did the unquenchable fires in the gates of Jerusalem ever go out? (**Neh 2:3**)
What does the Bible say concerning the fate of the wicked...
- Ps 37:9-10, 20, 36** Will there be a time when the wicked are no more, vanished?
Obadiah makes it very clear as to their fate...
- Oba 1:16** What will be the sinners’ final end? (**Heb 10:26-27**)
Let’s also look at a text in the last book of the Old Testament...
- Mal 4:1, 3** What will the fires of hell eventually turn the sinners into? Satan = root.
In fact, Satan himself will eventually be destroyed...
- Ezek 28:16-19** What will the devil be turned into? Why then would humans receive a worse punishment?
- Even the most famous text in the Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death, not eternal torment...*
- John 3:16** What will happen to those who do not believe in Jesus? (**Rom 6:23**)
- Appeal** Is it clear to you, from what we have studied, that the purpose of hell is to eradicate sin, not perpetuate it? Jesus died the second death in your place so that you can spend eternity with Him. Is there anything that would keep you from joyfully giving your heart to Him right now?

APPENDIX – Difficult texts

Rev 20:10 a) Hell will take place on earth (v.9), and the old earth will be recreated to a new earth (21:1, 2 Pet 3:10) b) Only the fate of the devil, the beast and the false prophet is here described. And Satan will be destroyed one day (Ezek 28:18-19, Heb 2:14) c) The Bible sometimes uses human expressions not always absolute terms. We have examples in the Bible where the word "forever" clearly refers to a limited time (**Jonah 2:1, 7, 1 Sam 1:22, 28**, Exod 21:6) We have good reason for believing Rev 20:10 is another of those examples.

Rev 14:11 Compare Isaiah 34:10. The fire will turn everything into a waste. The smoke rises forever, not eternal torment.

Mark 9:44-48 Quote from Isaiah 66:24 where the worms eat the corpses of men. Picture of the valley of Hinnom. Doesn't prove immortality of the human soul, if anything, the immortality of the worms.