

Appendix Two: *Uses of Olam, Aiōn, and Aiōnios*

Aiōnios is translated “the world began” in: Romans 16:25; II Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2, and it is translated “for ever” in Philemon 15.

Aiōn is used 128 times in the New Testament. In the King James Version it is translated “ever” 71 times, “world” 38 times, “never” six times (when it occurs with it occurs with *ou me*, not; *eis*, into; and *ho* or *hē*, this), “evermore” four times, “world began,” three times, “ages” twice, “beginning of the world” twice, “eternal” twice, and “course” once. Thayer translates it “for ever, an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity, the worlds, universe, period of time, age.”

Aiōn is translated “ever” in: Matthew 6:13; 21:19; Mark 11:14; Luke 1:33, 55; John 6:51,58; 8:35²; 12:34; 14:16; Romans 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; II Corinthians 9:9; Galatians 1:5²; Philippians 4:20²; I Timothy 1:17²; 4:18²; Hebrews 1:8²; 5:6; 6:20; 7:17,21,24; 13:8,21²; I Peter 1:23,25; 4:11²; 5:11²; II Peter 2:17; 3:18; I John 2:17; II John. 2; Jude 13,25; Revelation 1:6²; 4:9²,10²; 5:13², 14²; 7:12²; 10:6²; 11:15²; 14:11²; 15:7²; 19:3²; 20:10²; 22:5².

Aiōn is translated “world” in: Matthew 12:32; 13:22,39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20; Mark 4:19; 10:30; Luke 16:8; 18:30; 20:34,35; Romans 12:2; I Corinthians 1:20 (1st use); 2:6²,7,8; 3:18; 10:11; II Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; I Timothy 6:17; II Timothy 4:10; Titus 2:12; Hebrews 1:2; 6:5; 9:26 (2nd use); 11:3.

Aiōn is translated “never” in: Mark 3:John 4:14; 8:51,52; 10:28; 11:26; 13:8. *Aiōn* is translated “evermore” in: II Corinthians 11:31; Hebrews 7:28; Revelation 1:18². *Aiōn* is translated “world began” in Luke 1:70, John 9:32, and Acts 3:21. *Aiōn* is translated “ages” in Ephesians 2:7 and Colossians 1:26. *Aiōn* is translated “beginning of the world” in Acts 15:18 and Ephesians 3:9. *Aiōn* is translated “eternal” in Ephesians 3:11. *Aiōn* is translated “course” in Ephesians 2:2 and end in Ephesians 3:21.

Note: “²” indicates that the word occurs twice in that verse and “1st” or “2nd” indicates which occurrence of the word in the verse is the one intended.

Is Hell a Place of Eternal Torment for the Wicked?

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Appendix II: *Uses of Olam, Aion, and Aionios*

Olam is translated “evermore” in: II Samuel 22:51; I Chronicles 17:14; Psalms 18:50; 37:27; 86:12; 89:28,52; 92:8; 106:31; 113:2; 115:18; 121:8; 133:3; Ezekiel 37:26,28.

Olam is translated “never” in: Judges 2:1; II Samuel 12:10; Psalms 15:5; 30:6; 55:22; 119:93; Proverbs 10:30; Isaiah 14:20; 25:2; 63:19; Ezekiel 26:21; Joel 2:26,27, and “time” in: Leviticus 25:32; Joshua 24:2; Ecclesiastes 1:10; Isaiah 42:14; Jeremiah 2:20; Ezekiel 26:20.

Olam is translated “ancient” in: Proverbs 22:28; Isaiah 44:7; Jeremiah 5:15; 18:15; Ezekiel 36:2, “world” in: Psalms 73:12; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 45:17; 64:4. *Olam* is translated “always” in: Genesis 6:3; I Chronicles 16:15; Jeremiah 20:17, “always” in: Job 7:16; Psalms 119:112, and “long” in Psalms 143:3 and Ecclesiastes 12:5. *Olam* is translated “more” in: Ezekiel 27:36; 28:19.

Olam is translated “never” when it occurs with the negative particle *al* in Psalms 31:1 and 71:1. It is translated “ancient times” in Psalms 77:5 and “at any time” in Leviticus 25:32. *Olam* is translated “beginning of the world” in Isaiah 64:4 and “continuance” in Isaiah 64:5. It is translated “eternal” in Isaiah 60:15, “lasting” in: Deuteronomy 33:15, and “long time” in Isaiah 42:14.

Aiōnios is used 71 times in the New Testament. In the King James Version it is translated “eternal” 42 times, “everlasting” 25 times, “(since) the world began” three times (when it occurs with *chronos*, time), and “for ever” once. Liddell and Scott translates it “lasting for an age,” “everlasting,” and “eternal.” It comes from the root word *aiōn*.

Aiōnios is translated “eternal” in: Matthew 19:16; 25:46; Mark 3:29; 10:17,30; Luke 10:25; 18:18; John 3:15; 4:36; 5:39; 6:54,68; 10:28; 12:25; 17:2,3; Acts 13:48; Romans 2:7; 5:21; 6:23; II Corinthians 4:17,18; 5:1; I Timothy 6:12,19; II Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Hebrews 5:9; 6:2; 9:12,14,15; I Peter 5:10; I John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11,13,20; Jude 7,21.

Aiōnios is translated “everlasting” in: Matthew 18:8; 19:29; 25:41; 25:46; Luke 16:9; 18:30; John 3:16,36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:27,40,47; 12:50; Acts 13:46; Romans 6:22; 16:26; Galatians 6:8; II Thessalonians 1:9; 2:16; I Timothy 1:16; 6:16; Hebrews 13:20; II Peter 1:11; Revelation 14:6.

Appendix II: *Uses of Olam, Aion, and Aionios*

16:29,31; 17:7; 23:14,21,31,41; 24:3; 25:46; Numbers 10:8; 15:15; 18:8,11,19²,23; 19:10; Deuteronomy 5:29; 12:28; 13:16; 15:17; 23:3,6; 28:46; 29:29; 32:40; Joshua 4:7; 8:28; 14:9; I Samuel 1:22; 2:30; 3:13,14; 13:13; 20:15,23,42; 27:12; II Samuel 3:28; 7:13,16², 24,25,26,29²; I Kings 1:31; 2:33²,45; 8:13; 9:3,5; 10:9; II Kings 5:27; 21:7; I Chronicles 15:2; 16:34,36²,41; 17:12,14,22,23,24,27²; 22:10; 23:13²,25; 28:4,7,8; 29:10,18; II Chronicles 2:4; 5:13; 6:2; 7:3,6,16; 9:8; 13:5; 20:7,21; 30:8; 33:4; Ezra 3:11; 9:12²; Nehemiah 2:3; 9:5²; 13:1; Job 41:4; Psalms 5:11; 9:5,7; 10:16; 12:7; 21:4; 28:9; 29:10; 30:12; 33:11; 37:18,28; 41:12; 44:8; 45:2,6,17; 48:8,14; 49:8,11; 52:8,9; 61:4,7; 66:7; 72:17,19; 73:26; 75:9; 77:7; 78:69; 79:13; 81:15; 85:5 89:1,2,4,36,37; 102:12; 103:9; 104:5,31; 105:8; 106:1; 107:1; 110:4; 111:5,8,9; 112:6; 117:2; 118:1,2,3,4,29; 119:44,89,98, 111,152,160; 125:1,2; 131:3; 135:13; 136 (at the end of every verse); 138:8; 145:1,2,21; 146:6,10; 148:6; Proverbs 27:24; Ecclesiastes 1:4;2:16; 3:14; 9:6; Isaiah 9:7; 30:8; 32:14,17; 34:10,17; 40:8; 47:7; 51:6,8; 57:16; 59:21; 60:21; Jeremiah 3:5,12; 7:7²; 17:4; 17:25; 25:5²; 31:40; 33:11; 35:6; 49:33; 51:26,62; Lamentations 3:31; 5:19; Ezekiel 37:25²; 43:7,9; Daniel 12:3,7; Hosea 2:19; Joel 2:2; 3:20; Obadiah 10; Jonah 2:6; Micah 2:9; 4:5,7; Zechariah 1:5; Malachi 1:4.

Olam is translated “everlasting” in: Genesis 9:16; 17:7,8,13,19; 21:33; 48:4; 49:26; Exodus 40:15; Leviticus 16:34; 24:8; Numbers 25:13; Deuteronomy 33:27; II Samuel 23:5; I Chronicles 16:17; Psalms 24:7,9; 41:13²; 90:2²; 93:2; 100:5; 103:17²; 105:10; 106: 48²; 112:6; 119:142,144; 139:24; 145:13; Proverbs 8:23; 10:25; Isaiah 24:5; 26:4; 33:14; 35:10; 40:28; 45:17; 51:11; 54:8; 55:3,13; 56:5; 60:19,20; 61:7,8; 63:12,16; Jeremiah 10:10; 20:11; 23:40; 31:3; 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26; Daniel 9:24; 12:2²; Micah 5:2; Habakkuk 3:6 (2nd use)

Olam is translated “old” in: Genesis 6:4; Deuteronomy 32:7; I Samuel 27:8; Job 22:15; Psalms 25:6; 119:52; Proverbs 23:10; Ecclesiastes 1:10; Isaiah 46:9; 51:9; 57:11; 58:12; 61:4; 63:9,11; Jeremiah 6:16; Lamentations 3:6; Ezekiel 25:15; 26:20; Amos 9:11; Micah 7:14; Malachi 3:4.

Olam is translated “perpetual” in: Genesis 9:12; Exodus 29:9; 31:16; Leviticus 3:17; 24:9; 25:34; Numbers 19:21; Psalms 78:66; Jeremiah 5:22; 18:16; 23:40; 25:9,12; 49:13; 50:5; 51:39,57; Ezekiel 35:5,9; 46:14; Habakkuk 3:6; and Zephaniah 2:9.

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Part I – The Thesis

Chapter 1

The Wicked Shall Perish

And Be No More

Chapter 2

Just What Does

Everlasting Mean?

Appendix II *Uses of Olam, Aion, and Aionios*

Olam is used 439 times in the Old Testament. In the King James Version *olam* is translated “ever” 272 times, “everlasting” 63 times, “old” 22 times, “perpetual” 22 times, “evermore” 15 times, “never” 13 times, “time” six times, “ancient” five times, “world” four times, “always” three times, “alway” twice, “long” twice, “more” twice, “never” twice (when it occurs with the negative particle *al*), “ancient times” once, “at any time” once, “beginning of the world” once, “continuance” once, “eternal” once, “lasting” once, and “old time” once.

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament says:

“Though *olam* is used more than three hundred times to indicate indefinite continuance into the very distant future, the meaning of the word is not confined to the future. There are at least twenty instances, where it clearly refers to the past. Such usages, generally point to something that seems long ago, but rarely if ever refer to a limitless past.... None of these past references has in it the idea of endlessness or limitlessness.... *Olam* can express by itself the whole range of meanings.... It assumes the meaning ‘unlimited, incalculable, continuance, eternity.’ The LXX generally translates *olam* by *aiān*, which has essentially the same range of meaning. That neither the Hebrew nor the Greek word in itself contains the idea of endlessness is shown both by the fact that they sometimes refer to events or conditions that occurred at a definite point in the past, and also by the fact that sometimes it is thought desirable to repeat the word, not merely saying, ‘forever,’ but ‘forever and ever.’ Both words came to be used to refer to a long age or period, an idea that is sometimes expressed in English by ‘world.’”

Olam is translated “ever” in: Genesis 3:22;13:15; Exodus 3:15; 12:14,17,24; 14:13; 15:18; 19:9; 21:6; 27:21; 28:43; 29:28; 30:21; 31:17; 32:13; Leviticus 6:18,22; 7:34,36; 10:9,15,

Appendix One: Words Translated "Hell" in the KJV

It is translated "hell" in Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14, and "grave" in I Corinthians 15:55.

Gehenna - A Greek word translated "hell" in all twelve of its uses. It refers to a literal place, the valley of Hinnon, also called the valley of the son(s) of Hinnon. It was used as a burning dump southwest of Jerusalem. Because it was a literal dump where the "fire never ceased," it is used figuratively to represent the lake of fire in the Book of Revelation.¹ Its fire will be consuming and unquenched until all the combustible material has been destroyed.

In the Old Testament it is called "*ge-hinnon*." It was once called "*Topheth*" which is derived from an Aramaic word meaning "fireplace." Pagan kings practiced human sacrifice by fire in this valley. (See II Kings 23:10; II Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:2-6; 32:35.) It was often a place of execution; a place where dead carcasses and the filth of the city was taken. Fires were continuously burning there to control the smell and gruesome site. The site was extremely loathsome to Judeans and was one of the most appalling representations known at the time of Christ. This is probably why it came to be associated with disgust and destruction by fire.

"*Gehenna*" is found in Matthew 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

Tartaroō is used only once (II Peter 2:4) and is translated "cast down to hell." This verb represents what God did to confine the evil spirits that corrupted the earth before the flood. They are imprisoned and bound and limited so that they could not cause further harm to mankind. They are not free to move about, but are restricted until the judgments and the lake of fire, where they will be destroyed.

¹ It is quite possible that the location of the lake of fire in the future judgment will be in the Valley of Hinnon outside of Jerusalem.

Chapter 1

The Wicked Shall Perish and Be No More

The concept of hell elicits, for some people, images of a bottomless abyss of fire, full of devil spirits of ghastly shape, inflicting the most intense torments for those who have engendered the wrath of God.² This horrendous picture may also include cursing fiends and men and women writhing in eternal despair and torment. This concept of hell as a place of everlasting torment and punishment is not Biblical. It is a fantasy developed and promoted by the devil, the god of this world. People's acceptance of this lie has distorted any clear picture they would have of a loving heavenly Father.

People have used phrases like "the lake of fire," "everlasting fire," "the fire that shall never be quenched," and "tormented day and night for ever and ever" to conjure up vivid images that obscure the simple truth that God, our loving heavenly Father, is light and in Him is no darkness at all. The idea of eternal torment and suffering never originated with God or His Word. It is the fabrication of the Prince of Darkness facilitated by the wrong dividing of the Word of Truth.³

The immeasurable, limitless love of God prompted the giving of His son. He wants to share the ages with those He so loves.

² Dante's *Inferno* presents one such picture.

³ For more information on the pagan origin of the doctrine of eternal torment see: *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment*, Thomas B. Thayer, 1871. Available online at <http://www.godstruthfortoday.org/Library/thayer/DoctrineOfEternalPunishment000.htm>.

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.

Our loving heavenly Father has made provision for mankind through the accomplished work of His son. God is very clear. There are two options available to man: he can have everlasting life or he can perish. No one needs to perish; everlasting life is available to everyone.

God wants everyone to choose life instead of death.¹ His promise is sure, and He desires that no one perish. They must just accept the provision He has made through His son.

II Peter 3:9:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The future for those who do not accept God's loving provision is not to burn forever in eternal torment in hell, but to perish. The wicked will perish and be no more. They shall cease to exist, and their destruction will be complete.

Psalms 37:9,10,20,28,38:

For evildoers shall be cut off but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*; yea, thou shalt diligently consider this place, and it *shall not be*.

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.

For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

Appendix I

Words Translated "Hell" in the KJV

Sheol - A Hebrew word translated "grave" 31 times, "hell" 31 times, and "pit" three times. It refers to "gravedom," the current place or abode of the dead, where there is no consciousness. This is the "place" or "condition" in which all the dead (just and unjust) remain until they are resurrected.

It is translated "hell" in: Deuteronomy 32:22; II Samuel 22:6; Job 11:8; 26:6; Psalms 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 55:15; 86:13; 116:3; 139:8; Proverbs 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11,24; 23:14; 27:20; Isaiah 5:14; 14:9,15; 28:15,18; 57:9; Ezekiel 31:16,17; 32:21,27; Amos 9:2; Jonah 2:2; Habakkuk 2:5.

It is translated "grave" in: Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29,31; I Samuel 2:6; I Kings 2:6,9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 21:13; 24:19; Psalms 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14(twice),15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Proverbs 1:12; 30:16; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Song of Solomon 8:6; Isaiah 14:11; 38:10,18; Ezekiel 31:15; Hosea 13:14 (twice).

It is translated "Pit" in: Numbers 16:30,33; Job 17:16.

Hadēs - A Greek word translated "hell" ten times and "grave" once. It corresponds to the Hebrew *sheol*, and it refers to "gravedom," the current place or abode of the dead, where there is no consciousness. This is the "place" or "condition" in which all the dead (just and unjust) remain until they are resurrected. "*Hadēs*," and the corresponding *sheol*, will be terminated when thrown into the "lake of fire."

¹ Deuteronomy 30:15-20

that sins shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4,20). “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23). This punishment of sin, comprises not only the first death which all the ungodly experience as a result of Adam’s sin, but also what the Bible calls the second death (Revelation 20:14; 21:8), which is the final, irreversible death experienced by the ungodly. The ultimate wages of sin is not eternal torment, but permanent death.

Death in the Bible is the cessation of life. Were it not for the fact of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:18) the death that every human being experiences would be the termination of their existence. It is the resurrection that turns death from being the final end of life into being a temporary sleep. But there is no resurrection from the second death, because those who experience it are consumed in what the Bible calls “the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14). That is the ultimate destruction.

The Language of Destruction in the Bible

Another compelling reason for believing in the complete destruction of the ungodly in the lake of fire is the rich vocabulary and imagery used throughout the Old and New Testaments. There are over 25 nouns and verbs used in the Old Testament to describe the final destruction of the wicked.¹ We read a few of the many, noting language like: “they will die,” “they shall be cut off,” “they will be no more,” “they will perish,” “like smoke they vanish away,” “they shall be altogether destroyed,” “they shall be consumed,” “they shall be devoured,” and “they shall be burned up.” We also saw imagery of sinners burning like chaff with no one to quench the consuming fire.

With the exception of the scriptures noted in Chapters 3-5, the record of scripture is clear: The end of the ungodly is judgment and death in the lake of fire.

¹ Basil F. C. Atkinson, *Life and Immortality. An Examination of the Nature and Meaning of Life and Death as They Are Revealed in the Scriptures* (Taunton, England, n. d.), pp. 85-86.

When people do not properly understand death, they cannot accurately conceive of hell.² Death is the natural end of earthly human existence. It is not merely an instantaneous occurrence when one expires, but a continuing state.³ The words *hadēs* (Greek) and *sheol* (Hebrew) are translated interchangeably, “hell,” “grave,” and “pit.” However, they are never used of a place of everlasting torment. They refer to the continuing state of the dead, for which the term “gravedom” has been coined. Gravedom (the kingdom of all those in the grave, the dead) is a place where there is no consciousness, no remembrance, and no awareness of time.⁴

Release from the continuing state of death comes with the return of Christ.⁵ The return of Christ spans a period of time.⁶ The events of these end times include: 1) Christ coming for his saints, 2) the events of the Book of Revelation with Christ coming with his saints, 3) the first and second resurrections of the just and unjust respectively, and 4) the end when death is destroyed and all things are subdued to God.

People do not go immediately to “heaven” or “hell” after they die. Jesus was very clear in his teaching, when people die they remain in the grave until they are resurrected. Jesus Christ spoke of two resurrections, and he was aware of the differences in the first and second resurrections.⁷

John 5:28 and 29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

² The four words translated “hell” in the King James Version of the Bible are: “*sheol*,” “*hadēs*,” “*gehenna*,” and “*tartarō*.” See Appendix One for their uses.

³ Psalms 13:3; John 6: 40; 11:11-14; Acts 2:29-34; 13:35-37; I Corinthians 15:20-23; II Timothy 4: 6-8

⁴ For a more complete handling of this subject see *Are the Dead Alive Now*, Victor Paul Wierwille, American Christian Press, 1982, Chapter One, “Are the Dead Alive Now?”

⁵ I Thessalonians 4:16,17 and I Corinthians 15:12-24

⁶ For a further explanation of the return of Christ see: *Are the Dead Alive Now*, Victor Paul Wierwille, American Christian Press, 1982, Chapter Two, “When Shall the Dead Be Made Alive?”

⁷ See also Acts 24:15.

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.

By the time of the second resurrection, everyone who has ever lived will be alive. The just will continue to live forever with God,¹ but the unjust will not.² The resurrection of the unjust is only temporary for they shall meet a second and final death. The just, “he that overcometh,” will not be affected by the second death.

Revelation 2:11:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The first resurrection is the resurrection of the just. Those who are resurrected at that time, the just ones, will live forever and not be subject to the second death.

Revelation 20:5,6:

But the rest of the dead [the unjust who were not in the first resurrection] 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, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The rest of the dead are part of the second resurrection, when the unjust are temporarily made alive. They are judged, and those whose names are not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire and consumed of the second death.

¹ John 3:16

² Revelation 21:15

Chapter 6 *Conclusion*

There are three major reasons for concluding that the unjust are not tormented forever in the fires of hell, but are destroyed in the lake of fire. They are:

First, a loving and just God would not torture and torment forever.

Second, the punishment of sin is death.

Third, the clear, biblical language of the destruction of the wicked.

The Nature of a Loving and Just God Precludes Eternal Torment

The very thought of a God who deliberately tortures sinners throughout eternity, is totally incompatible with the Biblical revelation of God as a loving heavenly Father. Can God love sinners so much as to send His only begotten son to save them, and then turn around and punish them so severely as to subject them to unending, cruel torture and torment? Eternal torment would impose a punishment out of proportion to the sin committed and thus violate the infinite justice of God.¹ A belief in eternal torment would only inspire more Inquisitions to imprison, torture, and eventually burn at the stake so-called “heretics” in an attempt to save them from the “eternal torment of hell-fire.”

The Punishment of Sin is Death

The final destruction of the ungodly is supported in both Testaments. The final punishment of sin is death: “The soul

the just from the unjust. The just are alive with no option or possibility of ever dying again, and the unjust are dead with no option or possibility of ever living again. That's the eternal redemption of the just and the eternal punishment of the unjust.

The teaching of eternal torment must be rejected because it claims that the lost will continue living forever, which is contrary to what the Word says other places.² It must also be rejected because it perpetuates and immortalizes sin, suffering, sorrow, and pain. How can these things continue when God promised that these things will no longer exist?³

The popular belief that hell is a place of eternal torment is the doctrine of the devil and not of God. It is against the teachings of Scripture, properly understood. It is merely an extension of the first lie of Satan to Eve in the Garden of Eden: "Ye shall not surely die."⁴ Satan's great lie—that when you die you are not really dead, but you keep on living forever either in heaven or in hell—is still being perpetuated.

This single lie is the foundation for so much wrong teaching. Purgatory, indulgences, prayers to dead saints, communication with the dead (i.e., spiritualism), and eternal torment for the wicked in hellfire all come from this unholy breeding ground. It's time to reject the false teaching and enjoy the comfort of the accuracy and integrity of God's Word.⁵

¹ Romans 2:2; John 5:30

² I John 5:12: He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Ezekiel 18:4,20: The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

³ Revelation 21:4: 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.

⁴ Genesis 3:4

⁵ I Thessalonians 4:18

Revelation 20:14,15:

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.⁶

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:7,8:

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.

What happens in the second death? Life is terminated again. There is no consciousness, and there is no hope of resurrection. Therefore these people will no longer exist. Remember Psalm 37 said of the wicked, that "they shall not be." This is similar to what awaits the adversary. When describing the annihilation of our adversary, the devil, in the lake of fire, the prophet Ezekiel says "and never shalt thou be any more."⁷ This final annihilation of the adversary is what will happen to the unjust also when they are cast into the lake of fire.

⁶ In the sentence, "This is the second death." One thing is said to be or to represent another. This kind of construction is the figure of speech, metaphor. As in any other metaphor (e.g., I Corinthians 11:24: "...Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you...." Isaiah 40:6: "...all flesh is grass....") the predicate nominative (what comes after the verb "to be") must always be understood literally. The first representative entity (that which precedes the verb "to be") *represents* a second *literal* entity (that which follows the verb "to be"). Unless this was so, it would be impossible to discern the point of the comparison by representation. "This," the lake of fire, represents a literal concept, the second death. "The lake of fire" represents death, literally. The lake of fire is a figurative representation that those who are cast therein will literally die a second time. Not only will the devil literally die, but the beast, those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, and death itself will die and be no more.

⁷ Ezekiel 28:19

Isaiah speaks of this second death of the ungodly of which there is no hope of resurrection or reward.

Isaiah 26:14:

They are dead, they shall not live; *they are* deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

Solomon also speaks of the termination of the name and reputation of the wicked.

Proverbs 10:7:

The memory of the just *is* blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

The second death will terminate life forever for those for whom the justice of God demands it. They will not be consciously tormented and suffer forever. They will simply be no more. The memory of them shall perish, and they will no longer cause hurt to God's people.

Jeremiah speaks not of conscious torment and suffering but rather of perpetual sleep with no hope of awaking.¹

Jeremiah 51:57:

And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise *men*, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name *is* the Lord of hosts.

Paul also describes the perpetuity of the second death and the oblivion of the wicked as destruction and separation from the presence of God.

II Thessalonians 1:9:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction [ruin, death] from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

¹ Death is referred to as sleep in: Deuteronomy 31:16, II Samuel 7:12; I Kings 1:21; 2:10; 11:43; 14:20,31; John 11:11-14, Acts 13:36; I Corinthians 11:30; 15:20,51; I Thessalonians 4:14, and many other places.

We know this from the many clear verses that indicate that the "lake of fire" is a figurative representation of "death."² "Death" is the end of existence, and the "second death" is used to speak of ultimate destruction from which there is no resurrection.

As we have already seen, the lake of fire was prepared for the destruction of the devil and his angels.³ The wages of sin is death, and Lucifer's rebellion will be rewarded with his extermination. Ezekiel 28:19 says of the adversary that "never shall thou be anymore." Job 21:30 says the "wicked are reserved to the day of destruction." Matthew 7:13 also talks of destruction.

Revelation 20:11-15:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

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 torment described does not last for ever, but the destruction does. After the second death the only group of people remaining are those whose names were found written in the book of life. These are those who have eternal life. As John 3:16 stated, those who were to perish, perished, and those who have eternal life are enjoying it. The second death separates

² Revelations 20:14,15. See also footnote #10.

³ Matthew 25:41; Hebrews 2:14

tion 12:2, and the mental torment of Lot in II Peter 2:8. The description of torment is not contradictory to other passages like Luke 12:42-48.

However, the phrase “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever” seems to indicate the torment going on endlessly. However, as we have seen before *aion* means age, and from the context we see that the smoke will rise as long as the fire burns.

The destruction of Edom in the Old Testament was described with smoke rising forever.

Isaiah 34:10:

It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

As we saw with the everlasting fire of Sodom and Gomorrah, this description emphasizes the certain and inexorable judgment of God. The smoke will last relatively as long as the fire does.

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 [*basanizō*] day and night for ever [*aiōn*] and ever [*aiōn*].”

This language in Revelation continues to be very figurative. It does say that the torment in the lake of fire will go on “forever and ever.” As we have seen before the meaning of “forever and ever” must be determined by the context. The many clear verses on the subject aid us in determining what this verse actually means. *Aiōn* means age and refers to a remote or extended or uninterrupted period of time determined by the context. Sometimes the context determines that *aiōn* should be translated “forever,” and sometimes the time should be limited to a specific age or period of time. Here as in other places *aiōn* refers to a limited time period.

With the second death the truths of Ecclesiastes 9:5 and 6 will be established.

Ecclesiastes 9:5,6:

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun.

After the second death there is no hope of resurrection and reward. After the second death not only will the faculty of memory be forgotten, but the actual memory of their existence will be blotted out.¹ They will cause no more hurt and pain to God’s elect for all these former things will be done away. God’s justice will be executed so thoroughly that “he that overcometh” will be fully satisfied and no longer troubled by the memory and consciousness of the hurt and pain the unjust inflicted upon God’s people.

Revelation 21:4,5:

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.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

If the second resurrection is only temporary and those resurrected arise only to suffer a second death, what is its purpose? The justice of God demands that the ungodly pay the price for how they have treated God and His people. They will be judged and held accountable for how they have responded to the Word and will of God.² Some will receive “many stripes” and some will receive “few stripes,” but be assured, the judg-

¹ Isaiah 26:14; 65:17; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalms 146:4.

² Matthew 11:21-24

Chapter One: *The Wicked Shall Perish and Be No More*

ment of God will be thorough and accurate.¹ It is true that the wicked are to suffer at the Judgment Day. However, they will not be tormented and suffer eternally. Rather, they will arise to suffer shame and contempt. They will be recompensed for their deeds, and the just will be completely satisfied with this justice from God.

Matthew 13:30, 40-42, 49,50:

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

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

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Yes, they will suffer,² but it will not last forever. They will be consumed of the fire and shall be no more. They will not burn forever and ever. They will be destroyed in the second death. It is not the first death that one needs to be concerned with.³ It is the second death that will terminate existence forever.

Matthew 10:28:

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not

¹ Luke 12:42-48 - There will be differing degrees of punishment as also noted in Matthew 11:24 and Mark 12:40.

² Proverbs 11:21; Matthew 8:12; 13:50; Luke 13:28; Revelation 6:9-11; 16:8-11.

³ Hebrews 9:27 Since we never know when the first one is coming people need to accept God's provision **NOW** so that they may escape the second.

Chapter 5 *Tormented Forever and Ever*

The last two sections of scripture often misunderstood are found in Revelation.

Revelation 14:9-11:

And a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If anyone worships the beast and his image and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented [*basanizō*] with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment [*basanizō*] ascendeth up for ever [*aiōn*] and ever [*aiōn*]; and they have no rest day nor night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

These texts describe the nature of the punishment as “torment.” The word used in these texts is the Greek word *basanizō*. Although it can be used of testing metals by the use of a touchstone, it is usually used of “struggle” or “distress.” Thayer states, *basanizō* means “to vex with grievous pains (of body or mind), to torment.” Likewise, Arndt and Gingrich say that *basanizō* means “to torture, torment,” and may apply to either physical or mental vexation.

When we examine the uses of *basanizō* throughout the New Testament, we see that distress, pain, and misery are described. There is palsy in Matthew 8:6, child birth in Revela-

able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Natural men are not to be terrified of those who are only able to kill one's body. Rather, they should be concerned about the terrifying result of the destruction of the entire, natural, unsaved man of body and soul in the lake of fire, for there is no resurrection from the second death. Hell is a place of destruction of both soul and body, not eternal torment.¹

Daniel describes the unjust waking to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:2:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [reproach; disgrace] *and* everlasting contempt [aversion; abhorrence].

Yes, those that are cast into the lake of fire will suffer a second death. They will be repaid. The righteous will be fully satisfied with the retribution inflicted on the unjust. The second resurrection is only temporary. These ungodly rise to appear before the great white throne judgment and receive a judicially administered sentence of death. They rise to shame and rejection and are subjected to differences in the duration and intensity of suffering as justice may demand. After which they suffer the second death and their existence is obliterated from the presence of the Lord. They perish and are no more.

The fallacy of consciousness in death spawns the distorted ideas of mankind:

1. "Crossing the bar" and going immediately to heaven or hell after the first death.
2. Spending eternity in "glory" or "eternal hellfire" after the second death.

Properly understanding that there is no consciousness in death eliminates the confusion around these two fallacies.

¹ Matthew 7:13,14

Since there is no consciousness in death,¹ there is no sense of time for those who have already died and are awaiting the gathering together and the resurrections. However, after the resurrections, those that endure a “second death” will be destroyed in the lake of fire. After the second death there will be no consciousness. They will be destroyed. Their memory shall perish, and they will never again have any portion in the kingdom of God.²

the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is also recorded in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 52:12,13

Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire:

Like the “everlasting fire” that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the “unquenched fire” that destroyed Jerusalem is not still burning today. The point Jesus was making is that the fire that will destroy the wicked in the future, like the fire that destroyed Jerusalem will not be quenched until it has accomplished its destruction. Unquenchable fire cannot be *put out*, but it does *go out* when everything is burned up.

Jeremiah 4:4:

Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings.

God's fury will burn like a fire that is not extinguished until it totally consumes the combustible material.

The sentence, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Does not mean that there are worms with eternal life or fires that shall never cease. Rather, it is an allusion to what was happening in the Valley of Hinnon in Jesus' day, an overstatement to express the nature of divine judgment. The judgments of God are certain and inexorable. There is nothing that can hinder or interfere with the declared judgment of God that will be executed at the harvest at the end of the world.

¹ Psalms 6:5; 94:17; 115:17; Ecclesiastes 9:5,6,10; Isaiah 38:17-19

² Job 4:9; Psalms 104:35; Isaiah 1:28

Chapter Four: *Unquenched Fire*

perbole. It's an overstatement, an exaggeration, to make a point. Jesus is not encouraging people to maim themselves. He is encouraging them to commit themselves and discipline themselves to do what is right.

Mark 9:49,50:

For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Salt is indicative of commitment and integrity. Jesus is encouraging them to not lose or dilute their commitment.

Having established that this is a figurative section, we still need to handle the idea of “unquenchable fire.”

Matthew 3:12:

Whose 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.

Luke 3:17:

Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather his wheat into the garner; but the chaff he will burn up with fire unquenchable.

Unquenchable means that no one will put it out. It does not mean it will not go out. A fire may be put out before everything combusts, but an unquenchable fire cannot be put out until combustion is complete. These two verses again refer to the *kind* of fire God will use to destroy the wicked. No one will be able to extinguish it before it *burns up* the wicked completely. “Unquenchable fire” is indicative of the unchangeable judgment of God that will be completely carried out.

Jeremiah prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem with unquenched fire.

Jeremiah 17:27:

But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering at

Chapter 2

Just What Does Everlasting Mean?

One of the major causes of trouble when working this subject of “hell” is not understanding the meaning of the words “*olam*” and “*aiōnios*.”¹ These words are both translated “eternal,” “everlasting,” and “for ever,” but they are not always properly understood in their contexts. The context in which they are found determine the length of the “age” to which they refer.

Jesus, when describing the second part of his *parousia*² which includes the resurrection of the just and unjust, states:

Matthew 25:31-34, and 41:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting [*aiōnios*] fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.¹

¹ See Appendix II for a complete listing of the uses of *aiōnios* and *olam*.

² *Are The Dead Alive Now*, page 17.

Jesus also warned about this “everlasting fire” in Matthew 18:8.

Matthew 18:8:

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting [*aiōnios*] fire.

The phrase “everlasting fire” is used to promote the idea of everlasting torment and suffering. However, this phrase is a mistranslation of the Greek words *pur aiōnios*. It occurs three times in the New Testament and is translated “everlasting fire” in Matthew 18:18 and Matthew 25:41 and “eternal fire” in Jude 10. *Aiōnios* is an adjective derived from the noun *aiōn*. *Aiōn* means age, an uninterrupted duration of time, and *aiōnios* means lasting during the age or age-lasting.² The implication that the fire never ceases is not true.

Jude 7:

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, 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 [*aiōnios*] fire.

Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of “eternal fire.” Yet, should we travel to the Middle East and find their location we would not find ruins that remain on fire today. The fire that destroyed these cities has long ago been extinguished. There is no contradiction, just a mistranslation of *aiōnios*.

¹ In Matthew 13:36-43,49,50 Jesus interprets the parable of the tares. He describes “hell” or the “lake of fire” as occurring at the end of the world. Hell, the lake of fire, is not some place that people go when they die. II Peter 2:9 and II Timothy 4:1 also note that the judgment and punishment of the wicked will occur at the end of the world. The wicked do not go to punishment at death (John 5:28,29; Matthew 25:31,41; Revelation 20:7-9, 13-15; Matthew 8:29; Jude 6; II Peter 2: 4). It is reserved until the end of this age.

² *Young’s Analytical Concordance*, see “everlasting,” both *olam* and *aiōnios* are defined as “age-lasting.” See also Liddell-Scott Greek Lexicon.

Chapter 4 *Unquenched Fire*

Another difficult text is Mark 9:43-46.

Mark 9:43-46:

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, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

It should be obvious to the reader that these verses are figurative. The very form of these verses magnify their figurative aspect. The sentence, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”³ is repeated three times with similar examples preceding it, each time. These three verses are a hy

³ These two terms, worms (Maggots live on the corpses before hatching into flies.) and fire, are representative of what happens at the city dump where the fire never ceases. It is an allusion to what happens at the valley of Hinnon which is used symbolically to represent what is going to happen at the judgments of the end times.

He employed a popular pharisaical story to teach an important lesson to the Pharisees. He was God's only begotten son who would be raised from the dead, and they needed to give heed to his words instead of deriding his teaching. Not one jot or tittle would in any wise pass away. According to their beliefs, they, like the rich man, would only have this life to decide. They needed to believe now that he was, whom he said he was; they would not get another opportunity after death. Since the details of the story contradict the other clear teaching no one should assume that Jesus supported the details of the parable itself.

The fire was not "eternal" or "everlasting." The fire lasted for the duration of the *aiōn*, age. The fires burned for the length of time that combustible materials remained to be burned. The term *aiōnios* is used to mean that it endures the entire age or period of time, which the context specifies. It will not stop during the period of time specified. The context refers to the length of time it would take for the fire to run its course and completely burn the combustible material. It would not be quenched until Sodom and Gomorrah were completely and utterly destroyed.

The fire burned, uninterrupted, until everything therein was consumed. The duration of the physical fire was limited, but the effects still endure. "Sodom and Gomorrah... are set forth for an example, *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*" II Peter 2:6 echoes this, saying, those two cities were turned "into ashes... making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." Accordingly an "eternal" fire does not necessarily burn forever and ever, but rather it burns uninterrupted until everything is consumed. "Into ashes" indicates that the fire was not interrupted; everything was consumed. The results or effects of the fire may last much longer, however.

Isaiah 33:14:

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting [*olam*] burnings?

Isaiah prophesies of "everlasting burnings," but he says it proceeds from a "devouring fire."¹ That is certainly not what those who preach eternal torment teach. Besides calling it a devouring fire, he also notes that, "no one shall dwell with everlasting burnings." No one could possibly endure forever the burnings of which he spoke.

¹ Hebrews 12:29 declares "Our God is a consuming fire." This was demonstrated in part on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:17) and will happen on a much greater scale in the judgments of the end time (Psalms 50:3; 21:9).

Jeremiah 5:14:

Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

How long does a fire of wood burn? It can burn until all the wood is consumed. When there is nothing left to burn the fire will cease, naturally.

Malachi 4:1,3:

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branches....

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the Lord of hosts.

Again, the phrase “they shall be ashes” indicates complete combustion. Psalms also states that they shall “go up in smoke.”

Psalms 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.

Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says, “Only in the light of the context can it be said whether *aiōn* means ‘eternity’ in the strict sense or simply ‘remote’ or ‘extended’ or ‘uninterrupted time.’” In Matthew 18:8, Matthew 25:41, and Jude 7 a better translation would be “uninterrupted” or “age-lasting” fire.

These fires will not burn forever and ever. They will be “age-lasting” and uninterrupted until it consumes all that is to be burnt. However, the results of the fire, second death, will be forever and ever. The destruction and separation from God that results from the fire will be permanent and unchangeable.

The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

When Christ addressed this parable to the Pharisees, he was using one of their own well-known stories about the future to make a specific point.¹ They believed in a pagan view of the afterlife. He was warning them using their current belief system.² Although they justified themselves, God knew their hearts and unless they received Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom of God, they would be in a worse condition than Lazarus was in their story. The one great point of the parable was that it is in this life only that we determine our future destiny. No second chance exists for the human race in a future life to repent and change.

Regarding parables Bullinger notes:

“A parable is a continued simile—an illustration by which one set of circumstances is likened to another.... This likeness is generally only in some special point.... It is not to be concluded that the likeness may be pressed in all points, or extended to all particulars. For example, a lion is used as a resemblance of Christ, on account of his strength and prowess. The Devil is likened to “a lion” because of his violence and cruelty. Christ is compared to a thief, on account of his coming, being unexpected; not on account of dishonesty.

The resemblance is to be sought for in the scope of the context, and in the one great truth which is presented, and the one important lesson which is taught: and not in all the minute details with which these things happen to be associated.”³

¹ *Josephus’ Discourses to the Greeks Concerning Hades* [pp. 637, 638]

² Paul in Acts 17:22-28 quoted Athenian poets when speaking to the Athenians.

³ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Bullinger, E.W., Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1968, pages 751, 752.

And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

And he said, Nay, father Abraham: 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.

Many use the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 to support the doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked noting that the rich man was tormented in flames. However, this account is actually a parable, not an account of real events.¹ If this were literal teaching about the future life, then all the details of the account would need to be accepted as true. Then, those lost in hell would be visible to the redeemed in heaven (verse 26), and the two groups would be able to communicate back and forth across the gulf separating them. What would eternal life be like if the just had to view this horrendous torture forever and converse with those in such a state.

Let's read a few verses before the account to check the context.

Luke 16:14-18:

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

And he [Jesus] said unto them [the Pharisees], Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

¹ The Greek manuscript, Bezae Cantabrigiensis, include the words translated, "And he said another parable..." at the beginning of Luke 16:19.

Another example of "everlasting" being used to mean "throughout the duration of the age" and not "without end" is found in reference to the Mosaic covenant.²

Leviticus 24:8:

Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting [*olam*] covenant.

In Leviticus 24:8 the Mosaic covenant is called "everlasting," yet Jeremiah 31:31-33 speaks of it coming to an end.

Jeremiah 31:31-33:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The Mosaic covenant was not "without end" but endured "those days." It would last throughout the age and would end. "After those days" a new covenant would replace it. The context.

² Other examples are found in Genesis 13:15 and 17:8 where Canaan was said to be an everlasting possession of Israel. History records many years from 70 A.D. to at least the middle of the twentieth century where this was not the case. Exodus 21:5,6 declares that a Hebrew slave was to serve his master "for ever." The time period the context refers to is until his death. Exodus 40:15 and Numbers 25:13 also declare the Aaronic priesthood as an everlasting priesthood, but it terminated when the first covenant did. Deuteronomy 23:3 specifically notes that *olam*, "for ever" was ten generations. In Philemon 15 Paul requests that Philemon receive Onesimus back "for ever." In II Timothy 4:10 "world" is *aiōn* and refers to the present age, not for ever.

Chapter Two: *Just What Does Everlasting Mean?*

text in Jeremiah 31 specifies the length of time and qualifies the use of “everlasting” in Leviticus 24.

Sometimes a one-time action is relatively brief while the results or effects of that action endures a longer period of time. Returning to Jesus’ description of the second part of his *parousia*, in Matthew 25, verse 46 states:

Matthew 25:46:

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment:
but the righteous unto life eternal.

Here the eternal punishment of the unjust is set in contrast to the eternal life of the just. These two alternatives must agree with what we read in John 3:16. The “punishment” is to “perish.” “Punishment” is the Greek work *kalasis* which comes from the verb *kolazō* meaning “to cut or prune.” Jesus said that the wicked, as pruned branches, would be cast into the fire.¹ This echoes the Psalmist’s declaration that the wicked “should be cut off” and “shall not be.”

Please note that it doesn’t say “everlasting punishing.” It says “everlasting punishment.” The punishing doesn’t last forever, it is over in a relatively short period of time, but the effects of the punishment last for ever.²

Psalm 37:9,10,38:

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon
the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*; yea,
thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*.

But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the
end of the wicked shall be cut off.

They are “cut-off” or “pruned” and cast into the lake of fire. The actual pruning is short-lived, as is the fire, but the results of the pruning lasts forever.

¹ John 15:6

² Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death not eternal torment. The punishment of the second death will be eternal because there will be no resurrection from it (Revelation 21:8). See also Ezekiel 18:4,20 and James 5:20.

Chapter 3 *The Rich Man and Lazarus*

Luke 16 contains an account that often causes trouble when working this subject.³

Luke 16:19:31:

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 car-
ried 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
seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on
me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his fin-
ger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in
this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-
time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus
evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tor-
mented.

³ This parable is also handled in *Are the Dead Alive Now*, Victor Paul Wierwille, American Christian Press, 1982, Chapter Seven, “*Lazarus in Abraham’s Bosom*” pages 49-53.

Part II – Misunderstood Scriptures

Chapter 3

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Chapter 4

Unquenched Fire

Chapter 5

Tormented Forever and Ever

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Chapter Two: *Just What Does Everlasting Mean?*

Similarly, Mark 3:29 talks of eternal damnation.

Mark 3:29:

But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.

“Damnation” is the Greek word *krisis* and means a “separating.” It refers to a judicial sentence of condemnation and separation. Again, the judicial act is short-lived, but its results last forever.

Hebrews 6:2 refers to eternal judgment.

Hebrews 6:2:

Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

The word judgment here is the Greek word *krima*. It is related to *krisis* and refers to a sentence of a judge. Again, the pronouncement and execution of the sentence is short-lived; the results of the judgment continue forever. Hebrews similarly speaks of eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:12:

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

“Eternal redemption” does not mean that Jesus will continue the act of redemption forever and ever. Our redemption has been accomplished by the finished work of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 9:12 says, “having obtained,” in the past tense.) However the effects of his accomplished works will last eternally for those who are born-again of God’s spirit. It is called “eternal redemption” because the effects or results of the redemption are eternal.

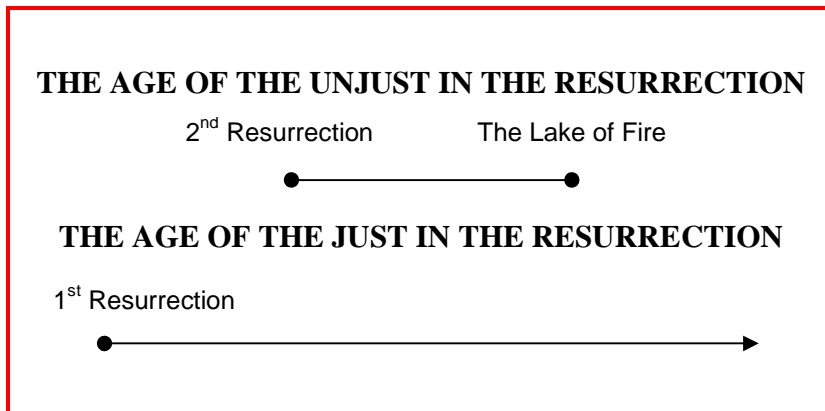
One more verse that opposes the everlasting life of the just to that which awaits the unjust is in Daniel.

Daniel 12:2:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

This verse like, Matthew 25:46, Mark 3:29, and Hebrews 6:2, indicates that the contempt or aversion or abhorrence will be permanent. The word “contempt” or “abhorrence” means “to turn aside” or “to keep away from.” The unjust will be separated from the just. They will be turned aside from or kept away from the righteous. The righteous will receive everlasting life, and the unrighteous will perish. Their sense of contempt or aversion will perish with them in the “lake of fire.”

The “age” or the “world” of the just will have no end, but the “age” or “world” of the unjust will have an end. The following geometric representation may be helpful:



Yes, there are a few figurative sections of scriptures, which when isolated and misunderstood, may suggest endless torture and punishment for the unconverted sinner. We will deal with them one by one in Part II. However, the majority of scriptures, which address the final disposition of the unsaved, clearly identifies the two options. The age of the just will have no end, and the age of the unjust will have a definite end in the

lake of fire. The just will enjoy life without end while the unjust will die,¹ perish,² be cut off,³ be consumed,⁴ be burned up,⁵ be destroyed,⁶ and shall be no more.⁷

¹ Ezekiel 18:4

² John 3:16; 10:28; Psalms 1:4-6; II Peter 3:9

³ Psalm 34:16; 37:28

⁴ Psalm 37:20; Isaiah 1:28

⁵ Psalm 97:3; Isaiah 1:31

⁶ Psalm 145:20; Isaiah 1:28; Matthew 7:13,14

⁷ Psalm 37:10