

**Matt 25:41, 46:** Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil & his angels . . ." <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

**Intro:** We've been studying Jesus' last Words that He teaches His disciples right before He dies. Jesus' last Words were about heaven & hell. Hell is real; Hell is God's Hell & God's punishment; Hell is unimaginable suffering; Hell lasts forever (it's everlasting); & Jesus alone saves from Hell. Flee to Christ! The shadow of the cross!

**Edward Donnelly:** There are more references in the Bible to the wrath of God than to the love of God. The O. T. is full in every book of our LORD's fierce judgment on His enemies – foreshadowings of Hell. Our Lord Jesus Christ had far more to say about Hell than He did about Heaven. That surprises some people. But it's true. One scholar says that there are approximately 1,870 verses in the N. T. which record Words of Christ. 13% of these deal with judgment & Hell. For an 8th of what He says, He speaks of judgment & Hell – more than any other topic . . . If God has chosen, in His wisdom, to provide us in His Holy Word with so much information about Hell, is it not patently obvious that it is something which is hugely important? **[Love is also in all these references!]**

### **1. Hell Is Real**

Jesus Christ spoke of Hell more than everyone else in the Bible combined!

### **2. Hell Is God's Hell And God's Punishment**

**Hell is God's Hell:** Sometimes I hear people talk about Hell as if it is the devil's realm & the devil runs Hell & the devil is punishing people in Hell. This is totally wrong! (God's Punishment; Destruction; Banishment). **GOSPEL!**

### **3. Hell Is Unimaginable Suffering**

Hell is the total withdrawal of God's love, mercy, & grace! But it's also the total pouring out of God's hatred, wrath, anger, & fury! And God is right to be angry! It is a just, righteous, good, holy anger!

- Fiery furnace; outer darkness; weeping & gnashing of teeth; torment; anguish; unquenchable fire; death; cutting in pieces; perishing; destruction; pain; suffering; loneliness; total separation from God in His love, mercy, & grace!

### **4. Hell Lasts Forever (It Is Everlasting)**

**Matt 25:46:** And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

**a. Answering annihilationism or conditional immortality:** Recently, the doctrine of Hell as eternal conscious torment has been questioned (John Stott, John Wenham, Edward Fudge, 1989-Philip Hughes resigned from WTS). They believe in annihilationism or conditional immortality.

**Robert Peterson:** 1) First is an argument based on the Bible's use of fire imagery to describe hell: We are told that fire consumes what is thrown into it, and so it will be for the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8)—it will burn up the wicked so that they no longer exist. [Luke 16 – there's a burning that doesn't annihilate!]

2) Second is an argument based on texts that speak of the lost perishing or being destroyed: Ex: perishing (Jn 3:16) & suffering "eternal destruction" (2 Thess 1:8). [Ruin (wine-skins), waste (ointment), lost (coin)!]

3) Third is an argument based on the meaning of the word eternal: In hell passages, it is claimed, eternal means only pertaining to "the age to come" & not "everlasting."

- **D. A. Carson:** Matthew uses the adjective "aionios" only for what is eternal.

- **Matthew 25:46:** And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

**Hermon Bavinck:** That the punishment in this place of outer darkness is eternal is not something one can doubt on the basis of Scripture. It is indeed true that the adjective "aiōnios", very often refers to a period of time that is beyond human calculation but certainly not endless or everlasting. In the New Testament it is also used frequently to describe the entire world dispensation that passed until the appearance of Christ, the period in which the counsel of God was announced by the prophets but not fully revealed (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2). But in the New Testament the word "aiōnios" functions especially to describe the imperishable

nature — a nature not subject to any corruption or decay — of the salvific benefits gained by Christ, and is very often linked with the word "life" — the eternal life that Christ imparts to everyone who believes. It has its beginning here on earth but will only be fully revealed in the future. It essentially belongs to the age to come, is indestructible (John 11:25-26), and is called "eternal," like the building from God (2 Cor. 5:1), salvation (Heb. 5:9), redemption (9:12), the inheritance (9:15), the glory (2 Tim. 2:10), and the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11), just as God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are also called "eternal" (Rom. 16:26; Heb. 9:14; 13:8; etc.). Over against this it is stated that the punishment of the wicked will consist in eternal fire (Matt. 18:8; 25:41; Jude 7), eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46), eternal destruction (2 Thess. 1:9), and eternal judgment (Mark 3:29). Like eternal life, so by this description also eternal punishment is presented as belonging to the coming age in which a change of state is no longer possible. Scripture nowhere with a single word indicates or even leaves open the possibility that the state that begins there can still come to an end. And positively it says that the fire there is unquenchable (Matt. 3:12), that the worm does not die (Mark 9:48), that the smoke of torment goes up forever (Rev. 14:11) and continues day and night for all eternity (20:10), and that as eternal pain it contrasts with the eternal life of the righteous (Matt. 25:46). Unbiased exegesis will not find anything here other than eternal, never-ending punishment.

4) What about **Jude 1:7?**: just as Sodom & Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality & pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

The eternal fire here is Hell! The fires that destroyed the cities of Sodom & Gomorrah are a picture, a type, an example of what those sinners are enduring right now in Hell forever! (S & G is used over 20 times in the Bible as an example of God's judgment: **Luke 17:28-30**: Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot – they were eating & drinking, buying & selling, planting & building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire & sulfur rained from heaven & destroyed them all - so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed).  
- Jude 1:7 is saying God sent these wicked, immoral, proud, godless sinners to Hell forever!

**Commentator:** According to the Jewish scholar, Philo, & other ancient writings in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, smoke was still rising from the site of Sodom & Gomorrah in the first century A. D. (see Philo, *On Abraham* 141; Philo, *Life of Moses*, 2.56; *Wisdom of Solomon* 10:7), & this was taken as a physical symbol of eternal divine judgment.

5) What annihilationists teach about the chronology of judgment is no where to be found in the Bible: The Bible nowhere teaches a chronology of judgment for the wicked that consists of death, punishment, & then extinction!

**D. A. Carson quoting Kendall Harmon:** For Fudge, God's final sentence begins with banishment, continues with a period of conscious suffering, & ends with destruction. In fact, not a single New Testament passage teaches exactly this sequence. Instead, some texts speak of personal exclusion, some of punishment, & others of destruction, & these images need to be understood as giving us hints as the same [end times judgment] reality.

6) Non-existence is not a punishment: Was I being punished before I was born? Before 1976, was I being punished? Was I being punished in from 1900 to 1976? We look forward to the loss of consciousness in sleep!  
- **Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:30; Rev 6:16:** calling to the mountains & rocks, "Fall on us & hide us from the face of Him Who is seated on the throne, & from the wrath of the Lamb . . ."

**b. God's people have historically always believed that Hell is eternal conscious torment: Richard Bauckham:** Until the nineteenth century almost all Christian theologians taught the reality of eternal torment in hell. Here & there, outside the theological mainstream, were some who believed that the wicked would be finally annihilated . . . Eternal punishment was firmly asserted in official creeds & confessions of the churches. It must have seemed as indispensable a part of the universal Christian belief as the doctrines of the Trinity & the incarnation.

**O.T.: Daniel Block:** Although it is obvious that the physical body decomposed after death, the deceased continued to exist as "living corpses" in Sheol. Although rhetorically persons could refer to death as the end of existence, any tendency toward contemporary theories of annihilationism, either for the wicked or the righteous, would have been rejected

- **Alfred Edersheim:** (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*): But, since the Schools of Shammai & Hillel represented the theological teaching in the time of Christ & His Apostles, it follows, that the doctrine of Eternal Punishment was that held in the days of our Lord . . . The doctrine of the Eternity of Punishments seems to have been held by the Synagogue throughout the whole first century of our era.

Jesus not only did NOT correct this view – He affirmed it & raised the bar of it, showing its horror more clearly!

**c. Some Biblical texts that teach Hell is eternal conscious torment: 1) Matthew 25:46:** And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

**2) Daniel 12:2:** many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, & some to shame and everlasting contempt.

**3) Rev 14:9-11:** he [worshippers of the beast] also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, & he will be tormented with fire & sulfur in the presence of the holy angels & in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever & ever, & they have no rest, day or night . . . .

- **Tom Schreiner:** The smoke of their torment never ends (Rev. 19:3; cf. also Isa. 34:10). Some take this smoke to mean they are annihilated, ceasing to exist, but this contradicts both the experience of torment in verse 10 and the very next line in verse 11, where John says they have no rest day or night. In other words, their experience of torment continues perpetually. Such a portrait of the final judgment fits Matthew 25:46, where the righteous enjoy “eternal life” but the wicked face “eternal punishment” (cf. also Matt. 25:41).

- **G. K. Beale:** Indeed, 14:10-11 & 20:15 demonstrate that unbelieving individuals also suffer the eternal torment of fire . . . The reality of an unending suffering of Satan, the beast, & the false prophet in 20:10 is borne out by observing that the phrase “unto the ages of the ages” elsewhere in the book refers to the eternal reign of God, the eternal power & glory of God, the eternal life of God or of Christ, & the eternal reign of the saints. In particular, the use of the same expression to connote explicitly an unending reign for the saints in 22:5 must mean that the very same [time-related] phrase in 20:10, only about one chapter earlier, refers to an unending period.

**4) John 5:28-29:** an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

**Tom Schreiner:** Both the righteous & wicked are raised from the dead & the former are rewarded & the latter punished. [It's] most natural again to say that the righteous are raised from the dead to live forever, but unlikely that the wicked are raised from the dead and then annihilated.

**5) Mark 9:47-48:** if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, <sup>48</sup> 'where their worm does not die & the fire is not quenched.'

**On Luke 16 & the intermediate state: Sinclair Ferguson:** the New Testament sees complete harmony between the intermediate state & the final state in terms of the experience of God which men & women have.

- **2 Corinthians 5:8:** we would rather be away from the body & at home with the Lord.

- **Philippians 1:23:** My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

- **Luke 23:43:** he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

**6) Luke 16:19-31:** There was a rich man who was clothed in purple & fine linen & who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came & licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> The poor man died & was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died & was buried, <sup>23</sup> & in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes & saw Abraham far off & Lazarus at his side. <sup>24</sup> & he called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy

on me, & send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water & cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.”  
<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, “Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, & Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, & you are in anguish. <sup>26</sup> & besides all this, between us & you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, & none may cross from there to us.” <sup>27</sup> And he said, “Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house - <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers - so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” <sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, “They have Moses & the Prophets; let them hear them.” <sup>30</sup> And he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” <sup>31</sup> He said to him, “If they do not hear Moses & the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.”

- **Rev 20:13-15:** Death & **Hades** gave up the dead who were in them, & they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death & **Hades** were thrown into the **lake of fire**. This is the **second death**, the **lake of fire**. & if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the **lake of fire**.  
- **Rev 21:8:** as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the **lake that burns with fire & sulfur**, which is the **second death**.  
- **Rev 20:10:** the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the **lake of fire** & sulfur where the beast & the false prophet were, & **they will be tormented day & night forever & ever**.

**7) 2 Thess 1:7-9:** when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God & on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord & from the glory of his might

**Doug Moo:** Our conclusion is that Paul teaches that God will visit eternal punishment on people who do not respond to God's grace revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**d. What is at stake?:** Denying the eternal punishment of hell is an absolute desecration of the infinity of God, the holiness of God, the justice of God, the love of God, the horrific evil of sin, and the glory of the cross and the mercy & the grace of God!

**Herman Bavinck:** Critics of eternal punishment not only fail to do justice to the doom-worthiness of sin, the righteousness of divine justice; they also infringe on the greatness of God's love and the salvation that is in Christ. If the object had not been salvation from eternal destruction, the price of the blood of God's own Son would have been much too high. The heaven that He won for us by His atoning death presupposes a hell from which He delivered us. The eternal life He imparted to us presupposes an eternal death from which He saved us. The grace and good pleasure of God in which He makes us participants forever presupposes a wrath into which we would otherwise have had to be plunged forever.

### **5. Jesus Alone Saves From Hell**

- **John 14:6:** I am the way, & the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- **Acts 4:12:** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

- **1 Thess 1:9-10:** you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> & to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

**a. Fear of Hell alone won't get you into heaven:** You must trust in Christ! And if you trust in Christ, then you will treasure Him above all! So we want not mainly a fear of Hell, but a fascination with Christ!

- Not mainly a fear of Hell, but a fleeing to Christ! Not mainly a dread of Hell, but a desire for Christ!

- Not mainly being terrified of Hell, but a treasuring of Christ! Not mainly panicking about Hell, but a preoccupation with Christ!

- **Dane Ortlund:** There's a word for heaven without Jesus: hell.

- **John Piper:** The critical question for our generation – & for every generation – is this: If you could have heaven, with no sickness, & with all the friends you ever had on earth, & all the food you ever liked, & all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, & all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted, & no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven, if Christ were not there?

**b. Applications of the doctrine Hell & eternal punishment:**

1) Take extreme measures to put sin to death in your life: **Jesus (Sermon on the Mount); 1 Cor 9:24-27:** Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body & keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. [Sin-serious: Lot's wife; Nadab/Abihu; Uzzah; A & S; Adam]

2) Never seek vengeance: **Rom 12:19-21:** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

3) Make your calling & election sure: **2 Pet 1:10:** be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure; **2 Cor 13:5:** Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith; **Matt 7:21:** Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven . . . .

4) Warn people about hell & tell them about Jesus!

- **Thomas Brooks:** Oh, but this word Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! This word Everlasting! Everlasting! Everlasting! This word Forever! Forever! Forever! will even break the hearts of the damned in ten thousand pieces . . . Impenitent sinners in hell shall have end without end, death without death, night without day, mourning without mirth, sorrow without solace, & bondage without liberty. The damned shall live as long in hell as God himself shall live in heaven.

**Dane Ortlund:** No one spoke about hell more than Jesus . . . because he, more than anyone, saw the true frightfulness of it . . . Jesus endured hell in the place of all those who wind up in heaven.

Jesus suffered the hell of hells for us! Unrepentant sinners will suffer Jesus' cross (God's infinite wrath) in hell, so our hell cannot be annihilation because it's the infinite wrath of God. Jesus suffered our hell (God's infinite wrath) on that cross, so our hell cannot be annihilation, because it's the infinite wrath of God. One reason to totally reject annihilationism is that unrepentant sinners will suffer Jesus' cross in hell and Jesus suffered our hell on that cross, and these sufferings are not annihilation but the infinite wrath of God!

If you want to rightly understand the cross, look at what sinners suffer in hell. And if you want to rightly understand hell, look at what Jesus suffered on that cross. There, Jesus suffered the hell of hells!

Unrepentant Sinners Will Suffer Jesus' Cross In Hell: Apart from the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the LORD Jesus Christ and placing our faith in Him alone by grace alone through faith alone, we would suffer in hell what Jesus suffered on the cross. This is what we would suffer in hell forever:

We would be stricken by God for all eternity!

We would be smitten by God for all eternity!

We would be pierced through with the sword of God's wrath for all eternity!

We would be crushed by God for all eternity!

We would be cursed by God and made a curse by God for all eternity!

We would be the propitiation of God's anger forever, bearing and satisfying the anger and fury of God for all eternity!

We would drink the cup of God's infinite anger down to the dregs for all eternity!

We would be forsaken by God for all eternity!

We would be cut off by God for all eternity!  
We would be cast out of the covenantal, loving, gracious, and merciful presence of God for all eternity!  
God would be angry with us for all eternity!  
God would turn His face away from us for all eternity!  
We would be damned by God for all eternity!  
We would not be spared any of God's infinite fire and fury for all of eternity!  
And there would never be any hope or any relief or any life forever!

But Jesus Suffered Our Hell On That Cross! Jesus, Who knew no sin, was made sin on that cross, and God His Father punished Him with all the hell that we deserve because of our sins! Jesus suffered our hell on that cross. Jesus suffered this on the cross for us and for the glory of God:

Jesus was cast into outer darkness where there was much weeping and crying in pain!  
Jesus had both His body and His soul destroyed by the fires of God's holy wrath!  
Jesus was cast into the fiery furnace of God's anger!  
Jesus was forsaken and separated from His Father!  
Jesus endured much anguish and torment and was shown no mercy!  
Jesus endured the unquenchable fire where the worm does not die and the flames are never extinguished!  
Jesus perished and died and lost His life!  
Jesus was condemned!  
Jesus endured more than eternal punishment for all those who would ever turn and trust in Him!  
Jesus had God's vengeance inflicted on Him!  
Jesus suffered the punishment of eternal fire!  
Jesus died the second death!  
Jesus was thrown into the blazing furnace!  
Jesus was cut into pieces!  
Jesus was cursed and cast into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!  
Jesus was locked in the chains of darkness and judged by Almighty God!  
Jesus suffered the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might  
Jesus faced more than eternal conscious torment because He fully and finally satisfied God's justice while He was on that cross!  
The wrath of God remained on Jesus!  
Jesus was thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur forever and ever!  
The smoke of Jesus' torment went up longer than forever and ever, and He had no rest day or night!  
And He did all of that for hell deserving sinners – like you and like me – so that we might never, ever face such a horrific judgment! Hallelujah! What a Savior!

And God raised Him up from the dead! And Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty with all power and with all authority in heaven and on earth! He rules and reigns for us now! He intercedes for us now! And He shall come again to judge the living and the dead!

Christ Jesus Is The King Of Hell  
He'll Punish All Who There Shall Dwell  
Where Unimaginable Sufferings Swell  
In Darkest Fires Will Sinners Yell  
And Scream In Pain Unparallel  
It Never Ends, All Hopes Expel  
Eternal Conscious Torments Tell  
The Justice Of The Holy Well  
Oh Please! Oh Please! I Must Compel  
Please Turn From Sin And Don't Rebel

But Trust In Christ Who Took Our Hell  
For On That Cross He'd Scream And Yell  
And Bore God's Wrath Unparallel  
Though In Perfection He'd Excel  
God Raised Him From All Death And Hell  
So Flee To Christ And With Him Dwell  
Where Joys Forevermore Shall Swell  
And All Your Friends Go Warn And Tell  
Of Christ Alone Who Saves From Hell!