

Prov. 18:3, 5: When wickedness comes, contempt comes also, & with dishonor comes disgrace . . . ⁵ It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the righteous of justice.

Intro: 1 Ki. 10:1-9: Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices & very much gold & precious stones. & when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. & Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. & when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, & the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, & his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more breath in her. & she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words & of your wisdom, ⁷ but I did not believe the reports until I came & my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom & prosperity surpass the report that I heard. ⁸ Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you & hear your wisdom! ⁹ Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you & set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice & righteousness."

God will punish all wickedness, partiality, & injustice, so, in Christ, pursue righteousness.

1. God Hates Wickedness

Prov. 18:3: When wickedness comes, contempt comes also, & with dishonor comes disgrace.

a. Wickedness (the wicked man) is shameful in this life: Derek Kidner calls this Proverb sin's traveling companions & points out the verse uses 3 different words for shame giving triple emphasis: contempt, dishonor, & disgrace. [Michigan Football Coach this week]

John Kitchen: Wickedness keeps miserable company! . . . Do these three terms . . . really refer to what befalls the "wicked man," or do they (or, at least, some of them) refer to what comes to those who come into contact with him or dare relate to him? In this latter understanding, the first line would mean that, when a wicked man comes your way, contempt for you comes along with him & soon, dishonor & reproach follow. Even if all three terms are taken as descriptive of what comes to the "wicked man," it is not difficult to see how they also come to the one who associates with him. In the end, the debate may be moot. It seems best to view these three derisions as that which befalls the "wicked man." In that case the point is that a life of sin inevitably is the choice to destroy your life . . . the terms . . . may indicate some kind of progression into degradation.

b. Wickedness (the wicked man) is shameful in hell forever: Kidner also points out that shame is one of sins first & last fruits:

- **Gen. 3:7:** Then the eyes of both were opened, & they knew that they were naked. & they sewed fig leaves together & made themselves loincloths.

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

c. Hell is forever: Josh Barzon Against Annihilationism:

Problem #1 – The Bible Speaks Clearly of Eternal Punishment, Not Extinction

Scripture uses explicit language that directly contradicts Annihilationism: **Matt. 25:46:** These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

- **Rev. 14:11:** The smoke of their torment goes up forever & ever, & they have no rest, day or night
- **Rev. 20:10:** The devil, beast, & false prophet are tormented forever & ever.
- **Mark 9:48:** Where their worm does not die & the fire is not quenched.

Problem #2 – The Hermeneutical (how you interpret) Problem with Annihilationism

Annihilationists often emphasize “destroy,” “perish,” “consume” & downplay clear texts about “torment,” “no rest,” “forever”. They frequently appeal to 2 Thess. 1:9 (“eternal destruction”) as if it means the wicked cease to exist. But the Greek word “olethros” refers to ruin, not nonexistence.

- Scripture also uses “destruction” metaphorically for: the lost sheep of Israel (not annihilated), ruined wineskins (still present), lost money (still exists), destroyed cities (still standing in ruins)
- A ruined thing still exists; its condition is what is destroyed. The “destruction” is eternal in its outcome, not in the moment of its act. Reading “destroy” as “cease to exist” breaks the Bible’s own usage & creates a hermeneutical inconsistency.

Problem #3 – The Case Study of the Rich Man and Lazarus

Jesus’ account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) is one of the clearest narrative arguments against annihilationism. The rich man is fully conscious after death, aware of his surroundings, able to feel torment, remember his life, reason, & speak. Nothing in the passage suggests fading away, soul-sleep, or eventual extinction. [Intermediate state? Thrown in lake of fire!]

Problem #4 - The Philosophical and Ontological Problems with Annihilationism

Annihilationists often assumes that immortality is conditional & that humans are not naturally immortal, so God must sustain the wicked eternally if they are to continue existing. But this contradicts core biblical anthropology: Humans are made in God’s image and created for ongoing existence (**Ecccl. 3:11:** He has put eternity into man's heart)

- Souls exist after death in conscious awareness (Luke 16:19–31; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 6:9–10).

Problem #5 - The Gravity of Sin and God’s Holiness

Annihilationism often assumes punishment must be proportionate in a way that finite beings cannot incur infinite punishment. But Biblically: The severity of the crime is measured by the dignity of the One offended. That’s why any sin is infinite in seriousness. It is against an infinitely holy God. A finite creature can commit an offense of infinite weight if the offended party is infinite.

Problem #6 - The Resurrection Problem

Scripture teaches that both believers & unbelievers are raised bodily:

- **John 5:28-29:** Resurrection of life & resurrection of judgment
- **Acts 24:15:** resurrection of both the just & unjust
- What is the point of a bodily resurrection for the wicked if they are immediately snuffed out
[Many annihilationists/conditional immortality proponents don’t believe sinners are immediately

snuffed out]? The entire point of resurrection is embodied existence. A physical resurrection followed by instantaneous extinction does not align with biblical resurrection theology.

Problem #7 - The Cross Itself Testifies Against Annihilationism

If the punishment for sin is annihilation, then: Jesus should have been annihilated. The cross becomes a non-parallel substitution. The atonement collapses. But Christ suffered the wrath of God, not annihilation. Substitutionary atonement assumes the punishment due to sinners is conscious suffering, not nonexistence. Annihilationism breaks penal substitution.

- **Greg Beale (Commentary on Rev. 14):** If Jesus suffered the penalty of sin, & if that penalty is annihilation & not eternal suffering, then would not Jesus have been annihilated & thus gone out of existence at the cross? & if this logic be accepted, it involves a Christological heresy: How could the second person of the Trinity have gone out of existence at any point?

Problem #8 - Church History: A Consensus Against Annihilationism

From the early church onward, the doctrine of eternal conscious punishment is nearly unanimous: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Augustine, Aquinas, Reformers (Luther, Calvin), Puritans, Confessions (Apostles', Nicene, Westminster, 1689 LBC, New Hampshire Confession)

- **NHC:** Of The World To Come: We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, & raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, & the righteous to endless joy; & that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

- The only outliers were unorthodox fringe sects, & even groups like the Seventh-day Adventists only adopted annihilationism in modern times. The burden of proof rests overwhelmingly on the innovators of Annihilationism, not the continuous witness of the church.

Christians who hold to the ECT view of hell (hell lasts a whole lot more longer - for eternity) believe God is owed a whole lot more justice because our sin is a whole lot more wicked, God is a whole lot more holy, Christ's cross is a whole lot more sacrificial, His resurrection is a whole lot more victorious, and the redemption of sinners is a whole lot more amazing and brings a whole lot more joy and gives God a whole lot more glory. Like infinitely more!

d. Jesus saves the wicked: Jesus was counted as the wicked one on that cross, though He knew no wickedness! Jesus bore the contempt of man & the wrath, curse, & judgment of God! Jesus was dishonored & disgraced on that cross so that we might be saved! **[Do you know you're wicked?]**

- **Ps. 69:19-20:** You know my reproach, & my shame & my dishonor; my foes are all known to you. Reproaches have broken my heart

- **Matt. 27:39-44:** those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ & saying, "You who would destroy the temple & rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes & elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, & we will believe in him." ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ & the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

God will punish all wickedness, partiality, & injustice, so, in Christ, pursue righteousness.

2. God Hates Partiality

Prov. 18:5: It is not good to be partial to the wicked

This Proverb is similar to: **Prov. 17:15:** He who justifies the wicked & he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.

There is a slightly different nuance (slight difference in meaning): don't be partial to the wicked.

Partiality: Literally "lifting of the face" – so lifting up the face of the wicked & declaring them innocent.

- **Prov. 18:5:** Acceptance of the face of the wicked is not good, To turn aside the righteous in judgment.

- **Ps. 3:3:** But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, & the lifter of my head.

Jas. 2:1-9: My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ² For if a man wearing a gold ring & fine clothing comes into your assembly, & a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³ & if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves & become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith & heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, & the ones who drag you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? ⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin & are convicted by the law as transgressors.

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3. God Hates Injustice

Prov. 18:5: It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the righteous of justice.

When judges are partial to the wicked – innocent, righteous people are deprived of justice! When judges continuously give light sentences to criminals & let them out over & over & over again - & then those criminals kill people – God hates this! This is unrighteous!

- **Prov. 12:10:** the mercy of the wicked is cruel.

- **Prov. 18:5 (KJV):** It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

- **Prov. 18:5 (YLT):** Acceptance of the face of the wicked is not good, To turn aside the righteous in judgment.

John Kitchen: But the story does not end there, for, if the person is genuinely guilty, as this proverb supposes, then the injustice is seen not just in showing favor to the individual, but in a slighting of the rights of the one who was wronged. The second line addresses the other edge of

the sword of injustice. The problem is that, in his leniency toward the guilty, the judge also moves “to thrust aside the righteous” in his judgment. The word for “to thrust aside” vividly pictures the gentle hand of the judge lifting the guilt-heavy face of the culpable, while forcefully using the other to push aside the innocent victim & his rights under the law. A society is only as stable as its judicial system. Any society’s judicial system is only as just as the individual judges who make it up. How weighty a responsibility is laid upon their shoulders! Even a well-intentioned compassion toward the guilty inevitably cuts the other way, depriving the victims of the rights they should expect under the law.

- **Lev. 19:15:** You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.

- **Deut. 1:17:** You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small & the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's.

- **Jn. 7:24:** Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

Looking unto Jesus: Jesus was treated with the most heinous wickedness ever when sinners condemned Him & crucified Him on that cross! They used the utmost partiality to condemn Him! He was the perfectly righteous one deprived of justice like no other! His crucifixion was the greatest injustice & evil ever committed by mankind! Yet on that cross, Jesus was counted all of your wickedness. He was counted all of your partiality. He was counted all of your injustice so that you might be saved! And God raised Him up! What sinners meant for evil, God meant for good!

- **Rom. 3:25-26:** whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just & the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- **Ralph Erskine:** In the Garden, when Christ, being in an agony, sweat great drops of blood – under the pressure of avenging justice – every drop of blood was an ocean of mercy. & while He was pressed in the wine-press of God's wrath, mercy was expressed. No mercy to Christ; for, God spared not His own Son, even when He cried, “Mercy!, Mercy!; God's mercy!,” saying, “Father, if it be Thy will, remove this cup from Me.” No! No mercy was shown to Him, otherwise no mercy would have been shown to us; Justice must have its due from Him, that mercy might vent towards us; & so here Mercy & Truth meet together.

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Christ Jesus Took All Your Disgrace
So Justice Won – No Partial Face
All Your Days His Mercies Chase
You Down Each Day To Give You Grace
Because He Died – Was Shown No Grace
Marred, Bruised, And Beaten – Spit On Face
God’s Wrath And Curse Did Crush, Debase

So Marred Beyond A Human Face
But Then He Rose To Death Displace
Now, In Him, New Life Embrace
For All Your Sins He Did Erase
So You Will Run A Righteous Race
No Partial Sins Or Wicked Trace
All Because Christ Took Your Place!