



LOWER DECKS: THE **HELL** CONTROVERSY

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HELL; HADES; SHEOL; TARTARUS; GEHENNA--

In "Romeo And Juliet," William Shakespeare penned the famous words, "That which we call a rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet..."

I submit, respectfully for your approval and as a preamble to this dissertation the following adaptation: "That which we call **hell**, by any other name, would still smell of brimstone..."

THE DARK DIMENSION:

Hell is a place of fire and brimstone, brimstone being burning sulphur and hydrogen sulfide, a mixture of constituents which produce one of the most noxious of all chemical combinations— H_2SO_4 —if only for the sake of this description—not a nice place; and fire and heat are *required* to create the requisite brimstone to which we refer...

In an episode of "Star Trek: Voyager," Seven of Nine (the half human/half Borg construct) discovers clues which seem to implicate the Captain in a murder. Through careful analysis and a bringing together of the available facts, she crafts a scenario which is truly damning (to utilize the tenor of this document); it is so compelling that, when reviewed, Janeway even begins to believe that it is possible that she did it—even though she knows she did not.

Through the careful construction of disparate factoids, Seven was able to create a plausible enough circumstance to bring Janeway to trial; there is only one problem—in point of fact, Janeway did not do the crime which she seems to have committed!

The episode is called "Conspiracy Theory," and demonstrates how an artificial fact can be created through the bringing together of random elements. This process is called *fusion*.

Recently, we went to war with Iraq on the grounds that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. When we arrived, to all intents and purposes, no weapons were found.

Make no mistake about it: Saddam was going to build "dirty" nuclear weapons—which could be detonated in or above American cities—for the purpose of destroying property, killing citizens, and disrupting all electromagnetic and circuit-board -based systems; computers.

If he had done this, it would account for a trillion dollars in property damage, 20 – 30 million lives lost, and the disruption of the computer systems in a major city like New York. This could destabilize the economy and cause the slow and ineffective coordination and response of the military establishment.

And he knew it. So did George Bush.

But could he tell Americans how close we were to a nuclear-based holocaust? No: it would be better to take the heat that the cabinet is taking for the good of the many.

Back to the fact that no weapons were found: they were disassembled, and when they are, they are simply the *components* which can go into bombs—or many other things, for that matter. Ergo, no weapons were found—even though they to all intents and purposes were sitting right there.

This is called *fission*—the breaking up of an element so that the component parts can be posited as to NOT be the original quantity. This type of false witness is insidious—and effective.

Therefore, on to the purpose of this paper:

Opponents of fundamental bible belief say that there is no literal **hell**—that there is no place like this mentioned in the Bible.

These apostates, purveyors of false Biblical veracity, religious “scholars,” and others who put agendas and other activities above the best needs of the faith, would have you to believe that Christ Himself was referring to a place which does not exist.

This is blasphemy, but they do not seem to mind.

They are practicing the same curious procedure that Hussein did: fission.

In other words, they feel that if they never put together all the facts about **Hell** into one place—and simply refer to them causally and without referention—that they do not testify of one solid fusionable fact. Hiding in the shadows of this misrepresentation, they say that **Hell** is not mentioned.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Is the problem because it is referred to in different ways: Gehenna, for example?

Is the problem that when someone in the Bible says they want to be relieved of the torment of the flames in the place of confinement they are in, it is not **Hell** because he did not specifically give the name and Zip Code?

These apostates would have you believe that there is no **Hell** because there is no “direct” mention—a fact about which much debate could be mounted. It remains outside of the purview of understanding of PARRC Research how one can profess to be a minister of the faith and blithely reject the most basic of doctrines and credos; it does, however, happen almost editorially in churches, on TV, and the radio.

We believe that Jesus Christ, our Master, would not refer to a place which does not exist. Since we call ourselves Christians, we are constrained to believe as He believed—and He believed in **Hell**, having secured the keys to Death, **Hell**, and the Grave for our sakes.

Also, the Bible does testify of **Hell**—enough so that if the misuse of fission here is removed, and all of the statements are lined up in one place, one should have more than a compelling view of the truth.

Can you afford to bet your eternal soul on the misguided scholarship and clandestine plans of men and women who are obviously pursuing agendas that bear no resemblance to true faith?

I say thee “nay!”

Better be sure...

Here is the evidence for **Hell**, first from a compilation of documents from internet ministries:

*“The doctrine of eternal punishment is probably the most unpopular, hated and feared teaching in the entire Bible. The thought of people burning in **hell** for eternity is most repugnant to the human mind. “It is a doctrine which the natural heart revolts from and struggles against, and to which it submits only under stress of authority. The church believes the doctrine because it must believe it, or renounce faith in the Bible, and give up all the hopes founded upon its promises*

*Yet in spite of the terrifying nature of the doctrine, and in spite of the fact that people find the idea of everlasting torment revolting, the strongest support of the doctrine comes from the lips of Jesus Christ. Think of it: the most terrifying imagery and detailed descriptions of **hell** are found in the discourses of the Redeemer! Jesus continually warned men and women of the danger of going to **hell**. Jesus Christ, who foretold that He would come again to judge the entire human race, spoke more about **hell** and its terrors than the prophets and apostles combined. To ignore and disregard the clear teaching of Jesus is to deny Christ.*

*Before the day of judgment, which will occur at the end of human history, those who die who do not believe in Jesus Christ will immediately go to **hell**. The soul is separated from the body at death and cast into **hell**. This fact is clearly illustrated in the account of the rich man and Lazarus: “The rich man...died, and was buried; and in **hell** he [lifted] up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” (Lk. 16:22-23 KJV). On the final day of human history, everyone who ever lived and died will be resurrected and judged by Jesus Christ. “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who 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, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).*

*Before the last judgment, the souls of those who died without Christ suffer in **hell** without their physical bodies. Their physical bodies are rotting in the earth. “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19). Immediately before the final judgment both soul and body are reunited during the resurrection of the dead. “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (Jn. 5:28-29). Then both body and soul “shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, His saints, and all His holy angels, into **hell**, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.”*

*Some theologians and commentators believe that “the lake of fire” into which unbelievers, Satan and his demons are dumped after the final judgment is a different and worse place than **hell**. Those who hold this position view **hell** (hades) as a prison or holding pit for the wicked until the resurrection; then after the final judgment the wicked go to the lake of fire. Others teach that the wicked will be in the same place before and after the resurrection, that place being **hell**. Before the resurrection the damned suffer without the physical body and after the resurrection both body and soul suffer torment together. Both views are in total agreement that **hell** is a literal place created by God for the devil and his angels. All orthodox, Bible believing theologians and commentators agree that those who do not believe in Jesus Christ will suffer everlasting, eternal torment. Therefore the imagery, terms and descriptions given to us by Jesus Christ, the prophets, and the apostles regarding God’s retribution against the wicked, apply equally to both views.*

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT:

In modern society violent criminals are kept in prison because they are a danger and menace to society. Those who are in prison are unfit to live with law-abiding citizens. **Hell** was created by God for those who are unfit to dwell in His presence. "God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to **hell** and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). "The angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). **Hell** is an eternal prison of darkness for the angels who rebelled against God. It serves to separate the wicked from God, His people, and the holy angels. **Hell** is a pit of darkness for those who reject Jesus Christ and His gospel. "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (Jn. 3:36). Those who try to enter heaven on the basis of their own works-righteousness, rather than Christ's perfect righteousness, will go to **hell** (Mt. 22:11-14).

What kind of prison is **hell**? **Hell** is called the "bottomless pit" (literally in Greek, "the pit of the abyss"). "And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace" (Rev. 9:2). **Hell** is a "pit of darkness." The picture of **hell** that the Bible presents is not a clean, modern prison but rather a dark, subterranean dungeon. The word translated pit in the language of the New Testament [*phrear*] was also used to describe a well or cistern. The Bible presents **hell** as an immeasurably deep pit, very large on the bottom and possibly narrow at the top like a cistern. The book of Jude indicates that, at least for fallen angels, there may be individual holding pits in **hell** for isolation (v. 6). The prophet Isaiah reveals that the pit of **hell** may have side compartments: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to **hell**, to the sides of the pit" (Isa. 14:15 KJV).

The designation "bottomless pit" may be more than just an indication of **hell**'s immense size, it may also point to the utter despair of those who are trapped in it. Who can escape that which is bottomless? Imagine the total despair the sinner will experience who is separated from God and His saints forever. Imagine the dread of sinking unendingly into the outer darkness. Oh what despair—without hope, going down, down into the darkness, forever!

THE PUNISHMENT OF SENSE:

In **hell** the wicked suffer the punishment of sense. Those who are not saved by Jesus Christ will suffer eternal torment. "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, '...I am tormented in this flame'" (Lk. 16:23-24). The Greek word for torment (*basanos*) often described hideous instruments of torture used in extracting information from prisoners. The word also depicted the severe pain caused by disease. When used of the torments of **hell** it is descriptive of the grievous pains of both body and soul in **hell**. "The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two [lit., torture or severely scourge him] and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 24:50-51).

The Bible sets before us many differing aspects of the torments in **hell** as a warning. The torments of **hell** help us to understand how much God hates sin. These torments also help us to understand just how precious is the saving, cleansing blood of Jesus Christ: "You [Christians] were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Oh what dreadful torments await those who die without Christ!

ETERNAL DESTRUCTION:

Hell is a place of eternal destruction. "The Lord Jesus [shall be] revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Th. 1:7-9). Of those people who "set their minds on earthly things," who therefore are "the enemies of the cross of Christ," God warns that their "end is destruction" (Phil. 3:18-19). Unbelievers are "vessels of wrath made for destruction" (Rom. 9:22).

TOPHET:

This eternal destruction is illustrated in many ways. One of the most terrifying is the designation Tophet or Gehenna. Tophet was a small valley south to southwest of Jerusalem which belonged to the sons of Hinnom. Tophet and Gehenna came to be designations of **hell** because of the terrible things which occurred there.

The wicked, unbelieving Jews of old would come to Tophet to sacrifice their children to the god Molech (Jer. 7:31). [4] At Tophet the idolatrous Jews placed a large, bronze statue of Molech, shaped like a man with outstretched arms and hands. A fire would be built within the statue. When the statue was red hot, the idol-worshippers would place their baby sons and daughters onto the outstretched, red-hot arms and hands. Their little infants would die the most painful, excruciating death imaginable: their skin would be seared off their bodies, their flesh would be roasted; they were burned alive.

The screams, cries and screeches of their own children's agony was unbearable, even to these wicked, debauched parents. Therefore, drums were played to drown out the hideous screams of the tortured infants. Hence Tophet, in the Hebrew, signifies the beating of drums. Therefore Tophet is a perfect symbol of **hell** where "God takes His rebellious children, casts them into the fire, [and] puts them into the arms of destruction" forever away from Christ and His saving blood. Will there be drums to drown out your screams when you sink into the flames of **hell**—you who reject Christ and His gospel?

Tophet became associated with judgment and slaughter in Judah's history. The armies of Babylon would come and slay so many people of Judah that there would be too many bodies to bury. Thousands upon thousands of bodies would lie in the open fields to be consumed by birds and animals. Tophet would be filled with the bloated, rotting bodies of rebellious Judah. "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away" (Jer. 7:32-33). The historical Tophet and the gruesome events that occurred there are a foretaste of the destruction and torment of **hell**. God Almighty's proclamation of damnation against unbelieving, rebellious Judah will echo forth from the lips of Jesus Christ against all those who reject the gospel. "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh" (Isa. 66:24).

By the time of the birth of Jesus Christ, Tophet (or Gehenna) had become a garbage dump for Jerusalem. Gehenna was also used to dispose of the dead bodies of criminals. Fires burned continuously to consume the garbage. The garbage and dead bodies were also consumed by worms (maggots). In the same way, **hell** is the ash heap—the garbage dump—of all human history.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ and repent of their sins go to heaven or paradise (Jn. 3:18; 6:35, 40; Lk. 23:43; 24:47). But those who refuse to repent and submit to Jesus Christ become eternal garbage. Without Christ's cleansing blood, sinners are polluted and unclean before God. Because of your sins, you are like a rotting corpse awaiting the fire of God. Jesus used the imagery of Gehenna to warn you to repent: "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to **hell**, into the fire that shall never be quenched; where 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into **hell**, into the fire that shall never be quenched; where 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into **hell** fire; where 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt" (Mk. 9:43-49).

EVERLASTING FIRE:

Hell is a place of eternal fire, a place where the fire is not quenched. "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 13:40-42).

It is well known that those who die by burning to death suffer tremendous pain. Burning to death is a terrifying and excruciating experience. Throughout history, death by burning was reserved for only the most wicked of criminals. Yet the fire in **hell** is much worse than earthly fire. Earthly fire consumes the flesh of its victims. When the nerve endings are consumed, the pain ceases. But for those in **hell**, the pain will not cease, because the fire of **hell** does not consume. Rather than being consumed by it they are preserved to burn and suffer and be tormented on and on, forever and ever. "They are to be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever" (Rev. 14:10).

The flames of **hell** have the ability to torment the souls of men while their physical bodies are still in the grave before the resurrection. They also have the ability to torment the fallen spirit beings: Satan and his demons. Therefore the fire in **hell** is probably not a literal, earthly fire, for an earthly fire would not torment spiritual creatures. The fire of **hell**, whatever

its nature, is much worse than an earthly fire. The fires on earth will someday burn out. The flaming sun and all the stars of the universe will someday spend their fuel. But the flames in **hell** will continue. "They will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). There will be no rest from the torment of the flame, because it burns "day and night forever and ever."

OUTER DARKNESS:

Hell is the place of outer darkness. "Cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 25:30). Outer darkness is a just punishment for those who hate the light. "And this is the condemnation, that the light [Jesus Christ] has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed" (Jn. 3:19-20).

Those who continue in sin and do not submit to Christ are the children of darkness (1 Th. 5:5). They are full of darkness and they dwell in darkness because they do not obey God's Word (Ps. 107:10-11; cf. Mt. 6:3). The wicked walk in darkness (Ps. 82:5); therefore, they shall be "familiar with the terrors of thick darkness" in the pit of **hell** (Job 24:17).

Imagine a darkness so dark and so thick that "it may be felt" (cf. Ex. 10:21). **Hell** is utter darkness. The Bible says it is "black darkness" (Jude 13). The wicked suffer torment in the flames of **hell**, yet they do so in total, black, terrifying darkness. "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness, in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 22:13). In the outer darkness you will be alone with your thoughts. You will have eternity to dwell upon a life wasted serving your own foolish lusts and vanities rather than Jesus Christ. In the outer darkness "there is no light of comfort, no light of hope, no light of joy," no light of peace, no light of friendship and no fellowship with Jesus Christ who "is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (Jn. 1:5). "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs [unbelievers] and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie" (Rev. 22:14-15).

THE PUNISHMENT OF LOSS:

One aspect of the torment of **hell** is the punishment of loss. There is eternal separation from God—the fountain of all blessings—and the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Those in **hell** are forever separated from perfect love and perfect light. Nothing that a human being can or will experience can compare to being in the presence of Jesus Christ in all His glory. The glorified saints in heaven shall look upon the One who suffered, died and rose for them. They shall dwell forever in His unsurpassable love. They shall cast their crowns of glory at His feet and worship Him (Rev. 4:10).

The wicked do not love or delight in Christ; therefore they may not fully comprehend what they are missing by being cast away from God's presence. Yet one thing is clear: when unbelievers see Christians going into paradise, and themselves going into perdition, they will be filled with the torment of loss. They will suffer great sorrow, envy and anger when they see Christians exalted and themselves thrust out: "But He [Jesus Christ] will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out" (Lk. 13:27-28). Those very people that you considered to be fools, religious fanatics and unscientific morons will be vindicated and exalted before your eyes. "For the Scripture says, 'whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame'" (Rom. 10:11).

Hell will also involve the loss of all the blessings that you once had upon the earth. Do you have a beautiful or handsome face? Do you have a well-toned body? When you die, your face and body will rot and be consumed by worms. After the resurrection and final judgment, your body will be cast into **hell**. When you walked upon the earth, people admired your beauty, but in **hell** you will weep and gnash your teeth because you used your body as an instrument of sin and lust rather than as an instrument of righteousness. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

Do you have many possessions? Do you have a beautiful house and a fine car? What good will your possessions be to you when you die? "When he dies he will carry nothing away; His body will not descend after him" (Ps. 49:17). You will miss your house, car and various pleasantries as you sit and weep in the flame. "Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits" (Jas. 1:9-11).

Are you popular? Are you an accomplished business person, musician, poet, actor or artist? Your accomplishments and popularity will not help you when you die. God is not impressed by fame or popularity. God is not impressed by the charity of fornicating rock stars and adulterous movie stars. God will only accept those who believe in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (Jn. 10:9). You will not be popular in **hell**. There will be no adoring crowds for you in **hell**. You will dwell in darkness, alone. You will have no friends, no companions, no family and no hope.

Are you a family person? Is your life centered around your family? Do you love and adore your children? If you do not believe in Jesus Christ and obey His Word, then you will die and go to **hell** and never see your loved ones ever again. You will be tormented day and night, knowing that your children will go to **hell** because you did not teach them about Christ; because you refused to take them to a Bible-believing church. Or you will suffer eternal pains of conscience because you indoctrinated your children in a false religion. "Then he [the rich man in **hell**] said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets [i.e. the Bible]; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead'" (Lk. 16:27-31). Those who care about their families will long to go back to the earth to warn their loved ones to embrace Jesus Christ before it is too late. But they cannot go back. They are imprisoned in the pit forever.

Is your philosophy of life to have as much fun as possible before you die? Do you love entertainment? Do you love to go out on the town? Do you love to travel and go to fancy restaurants? Are you a "lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God" (2 Tim. 3:4), "whose god is [your] belly" (Phil. 3:19)? You will suffer the torment of the punishment of loss. **Hell** is not for picnics, dinner parties and fun and games, but for torment. There will be no pleasures for you in **hell**: no vacations, no walks on the beach, no nights on the town, no picnics, no swimming pools, no water skiing, no concerts, no plays, no sporting events, no television, no sunsets, no flowers, no cruises to the Caribbean. But instead, **hell** will give you fire, darkness, torment, and weeping and gnashing of teeth. "And when He [Jesus] had called the people to Him, with His disciples also, He said to them, 'Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels'" (Mk. 8:34-38).

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT:

The most terrifying aspect of the torment in **hell** is that it never ends. It goes on forever and ever. The words used by Christ and the apostles to describe the duration of the suffering in **hell** clearly, unambiguously and unequivocally teach that the punishment in **hell** is eternal, unending and everlasting.

Jesus Christ describes the suffering in **hell** as: "everlasting punishment" (Mt. 25:46); "everlasting fire" (Mt. 18:8); "the fire that will never be quenched" (Mk. 9:45); "the worm that never dies" (Mk. 9:46). The apostles totally agree with Christ when they describe **hell** as: "a flaming fire" (2 Th. 1:8); "everlasting chains" (Jude 6); "eternal fire" (Jude 7); "the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13); "the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever" (Rev. 14:11; 19:3); "the lake of fire and brimstone, in which the devil, the beast, and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

If Jesus Christ and the apostles had intended to teach that **hell** is temporary, or that **hell** somehow represents the annihilation of the body and soul, then they no doubt would have used different images. Jesus Christ is God and cannot lie. The apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit when they wrote the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16); therefore, the Bible is infallible and without error in everything it teaches—even those doctrines that you don't like. If you reject Jesus Christ's warnings regarding the eternal torment of unbelievers in **hell**, then you will go to **hell** for calling the sinless Son of God a liar.

The noted American preacher Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) gave this warning regarding the everlasting nature of **hell**'s torments: "Imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, or a great furnace, where your pain would be much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body was to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, and all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace! And how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you! And after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing it would be to you to think that you had to endure the other fourteen! But what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours! And how much greater would be the effect, if you knew you must endure it for a whole year; and how vastly greater still, if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years! Oh then, how would your hearts sink, if you knew that you must bear it forever and ever!"

*That there would be no end! That after millions of millions of ages, your torment would be no nearer to an end, and that you never, never should be delivered! But your torment in **hell** will be immensely greater than this illustration represents."*

*Jesus Christ not only clearly taught that the torment of **hell** would never end, but also presupposed eternal punishment in many of His other teachings. Speaking of Judas Iscariot, Jesus said, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Mt. 26:24). If **hell** or the lake of fire represented annihilation, then Jesus could not have made such a statement. Why? Because annihilation, from the standpoint of the one being annihilated, would be the same as never being born. Annihilation means the total destruction of both body and soul. It means the total cessation of existence. If you no longer exist then for you whether or not you existed and lived a life sometime in the past is irrelevant. The nothingness of never being born and the nothingness of being annihilated are both the same. Christ is saying that it would have been better to have never been created or born (to have never even existed), than to be created, and sin and then spend eternity suffering torment.*

*Jesus taught that there will be different degrees of punishment in **hell**. Those people who know God's will and do not obey it will receive "many stripes," but those people who are without God's Word and disobey ignorantly "shall be beaten with few" (Lk. 12:47-48). Jesus taught that the people who lived in the cities where He preached and did many miracles would receive greater judgment than those living in cities where no mighty works were done (e.g., Tyre, Sidon, and even Sodom—cf. Mt. 11:20-24). In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that some sins are deserving of greater judgment than others (Mt. 5:21-22). The Bible clearly teaches that everyone will receive the punishment that they deserve. Adolf Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot will receive far greater punishment than the unbelieving, drunken, fornicating plumber. "The dead were judged everyone of them according to their deeds" (Rev. 20:13). The fact that there are various degrees of punishment in **hell** proves that annihilation will not occur. If everyone was annihilated, their punishment would be the same.*

*The Bible says that those in **hell** will "have no rest day or night, and the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever" (Rev. 14:11). People in **hell** never rest; they suffer day and night. But annihilation is a state of rest. Those who do not exist do not suffer at all. Why do some people commit suicide? Because they mistakenly believe that death will bring them rest from life's pain, troubles and torments. But they are wrong. They shall have no rest. Rest and peace can only be obtained through faith in Jesus Christ, not by a bullet, needle or overdose of pills.*

*Some people believe that it would be unfair for God to send people to **hell** forever for a finite number of sins committed while alive on earth. But these people fail to understand the true nature of the human heart apart from God's saving grace. The unbeliever's hatred of God, hatred of man, wicked thoughts and unbridled lust will go to **hell** with him. Because his enmity toward God never ceases and because his sinning never ceases, his punishment cannot cease. "All their lusts and corruptions go to **hell** with them [and] heightens the torment of **hell**.... It is but a mad notion to say [that] they do not sin in **hell**, which is its native soil. Sins and lusts, in their full rage, will be a very considerable ingredient in the torment of the damned. We see now, that contrary passions in the breast of a man and contrary lusts, like jarring elements, make a great storm there; how much more dreadful work, when all lusts are turned loose."*

RETRIBUTION:

***Hell** is a place of divine retribution, not a place of rehabilitation. When God chastises a Christian, He does it for the Christian's sanctification (moral improvement) and benefit (Heb. 11:6-7). But punishment in **hell** is pure retribution against breakers of God's law. Christians are "in Christ" and adopted into God's own family (Gal. 4:5, Eph. 1:5). The retribution that the Christian deserves for his sins was placed upon Jesus Christ on the cross (cf. Rom. 5:8-10). Jesus Christ received the full penalty, retribution and wrath against sin in His own body for those who believe in Him. Christians stay out of **hell** and go to heaven solely because of what Jesus Christ has done for them. "A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.... Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Gal. 2:16, 3:13). If you do not believe in Jesus Christ, then the cup of God's wrath is poured out on you eternally in **hell**, rather than upon Jesus Christ on the cross.*

If you die without believing in Christ, then your fate will be eternally sealed, because belief in Christ and the gospel must occur on earth before you die (Lk. 16:19-31; Jude 7, 13; 2 Pet. 2:4, 9). When you die apart from Christ, your guilt remains forever. "Suffering that is penal can never come to an end, because guilt is the reason for its infliction, and guilt once incurred never ceases to be. The lapse of time does not convert guilt into innocence.... The reason for retribution today is a reason forever.... But when, as the Supreme Judge, He [Jesus Christ] punishes rebellious and guilty subjects of His government, He causes an endless suffering. In this case, 'their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched' (Mk. 9:48).... Damnation means absolute and everlasting damnation. All suffering in the next life, therefore, of which the sufficient and justifying reason is guilt, must continue as long as the reason continues; and the reason is everlasting. If it

be righteous today, in God's retributive justice, to smite the transgressor because he violated the law yesterday, it is righteous to do the same thing tomorrow, and the next day, and so on ad infinitum; because the state of the case ad infinitum remains unaltered. The guilt incurred yesterday is a standing and endless fact. What, therefore guilt legitimizes this instant, it legitimizes every instant, and forever."

JUSTICE:

The eternal aspect of **hell** reflects God's justice, honor and majesty. Every sin is ultimately directed against God. Every sin is a direct challenge to God's nature and authority. Every time you sin you are saying, "I will be my own god. I will determine for myself what is right and what is wrong. I refuse to submit to Jesus Christ and His Word." God, who is infinitely holy and pure, has an infinite hatred of sin. God must glorify His justice by eternally punishing the wicked. Sinners spit and cast contempt upon God's honor and majesty. On the day of judgment and throughout eternity God will glorify and exalt Himself by the eternal destruction of the ungodly. "The vindictive justice of God will appear strict, exact, awful, and terrible, and therefore glorious." To sin against an infinite God merits eternal punishment.

WRATH:

Hell expresses God's wrath against sin. God created you and gave you life. Everything on earth is a gift from God: the air you breathe, the water you drink, your food, clothing, flowers, beauty, and so on. The most amazing thing that God has done is to send His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to dwell among filthy sinners. Although Jesus was sinless, perfect, kind and compassionate, He was treated like a dog. He was humiliated, tortured and crucified. God in Christ did all this to save undeserving, ungrateful sinners. "God demonstrates His own love toward us [believers], in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:8-9).

God has every right to be angry with those who are unthankful, who attribute God's wonderful universe to chance evolution. But it is the rejection of God's dear Son, Jesus Christ, that most kindles the fire of God's indignation. Woe unto you if you reject God's offer of forgiveness through the blood of Christ! Everyone who tramples the Son of God under foot as worthless, as a myth or fantasy, shall receive the full cup of God's wrath. "The wrath of God burns against them. Their damnation does not slumber. The pit is prepared. The fire is made ready. The furnace is now hot ready to receive them. The flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.... Oh sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in **hell**."

God has nothing but contempt, hatred and indignation for sinners who count the vanities and lusts of life as more important than Jesus Christ. "'Now I will rise,' says the LORD; 'Now I will be exalted, now I will lift Myself up. You shall conceive chaff, you shall bring forth stubble; your breath, as fire, shall devour you. And the people shall be like the burnings of lime; like thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire....' The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?'" (Isa. 33:10-14).

God's anger against you increases every day that you live without Christ. Your sins multiply day after day. Every sin is recorded by God. God's wrath against you continues to grow. You do not know when God's patience and forbearance will run out. You do not know when you will be cut down and cast into the oven. "You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with You. The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man" (Ps. 5:4-6). When God's patience runs out, you will be exposed to the fierceness of His unmitigated wrath. "I will tread them in Mine anger, and will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment" (Isa. 63:3). You will want to hide from the fury of the Lord. You will say "to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!'" (Rev. 6:16)—but you will not escape.

Jesus Christ, whose life and blood you counted as unimportant, will crush you in the winepress of God's fierce wrath. "Now out of His [Christ's] mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15). Jesus Christ, who at His first coming came to die for sinners, will at His second coming pay back His enemies. "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord" (2 Th. 1:7-9).

SALVATION:

*God has revealed to you the terrifying nature of **hell** in order that you will turn to Jesus Christ. God's wrath is great, but it is not greater than God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. God has provided only one way to escape eternal torment and obtain eternal life. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (Jn. 14:6).*

If you believe in Jesus Christ and what He accomplished in His life, death and resurrection, then you will have eternal life. Only Christ's blood has the power to wash away sin. Christ experienced the full brunt of God's curse and wrath against sin on the cross in His own body so that those who believe in Him will not have to experience that wrath. Christ lived a sinless life to provide the perfect righteousness to enter heaven.

*Jesus Christ's mission on earth was twofold. First, He had to live a perfect, sinless life. You and I are both sinners; we have failed to obey God's law. But Jesus Christ in His human nature was born without sin. He lived His whole life in perfect obedience to God's law. If you believe in Jesus Christ, His perfect obedience is imputed or credited to you. You are a sinner and deserve to go to **hell**, but if you trust in Christ you will be clothed with His perfect righteousness. On the day of judgment, when God looks upon all those who believe in Jesus Christ, He will see perfect obedience, perfect righteousness. It is solely on account of Christ's merits—His objective righteousness—that Christians gain entrance into heaven. Your supposed good deeds contribute nothing to your salvation.*

Second, Jesus Christ had to die a bloody, sacrificial death for His people (the elect). Because of your sins you are guilty before God; the wrath of God rests upon you. You are an enemy of God and alienated from Him. You are in bondage to Satan, sin and death. But if you believe in Christ, your sin and guilt are placed upon Him on the cross. God's righteous wrath and indignation against your sin are appeased and set aside, because Christ bore the full penalty for your sin in your stead. The enmity and alienation from God that you caused by your rebellion against Him are fully absolved by Christ's death. If you believe in Jesus, you and God are no longer enemies but friends.

Christ restores our friendship and fellowship with God; He reconciles us to God. "For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:7-10).

Only the incarnate Son of God could provide the sinless, sacrificial death needed for sin's removal. And only the perfect, sinless life of Christ can provide the imputed righteousness needed so that God could be both just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus Christ. God did not overlook sin; He dealt with it head-on in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, victorious over sin, Satan and death. If you believe in Him, His victory becomes your victory. "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.... Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed" (Rom. 10:9, 11).

YOUR OBLIGATION:

*If you have placed your trust in Jesus Christ, as He is revealed in the Scriptures, then you are completely justified before God and clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness. Although a person contributes nothing to his salvation, true believers show their love and gratitude toward Christ by obeying His revealed will. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14:15). True saving faith always issues forth unto a life of obedience (Mt. 7:16-20; Heb. 3:12-19; 4:2, 6; Jas. 2:14-20, 26; 1 Jn. 1:5-10); therefore, you should obey God by being baptized and becoming a member of Christ's church. It is absolutely vital to your spiritual growth that you use the means of grace: prayer, the Word and the sacraments in the public worship of God. Attend a church that obeys the Bible as God's inspired and infallible Word—a church that adheres not only to the early, historical creeds of the church (such as the Apostles Creed), but also to the confessions that arose out of the Protestant Reformation (such as the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession of Faith). Why? Because the Reformation (especially the Scottish Reformation) produced the most biblical churches on earth since the days of the apostles. Becoming a regular part of Christ's church is mandatory for the believer: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). Remember, Jesus warned you of the wrath to come and the eternal punishment of **hell** so that you would turn to Him. Believe in Christ now, before it is too late. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2)."*

HELL IN BIBLICAL HISTORY:

The Old Testament: In the Old Testament Sheol denotes the abode of the dead; conscious souls face a shadowy existence in this "land of oblivion" (Job 10:21; Psalm 88:12; Eccl 9:10; Isa 14:10). Since death is not a natural occurrence but issues from the fall, the Old Testament confidently awaits God's demonstration of his lordship over Sheol by raising the righteous to life (Gen. 2-3; Psalm 16:10; 49:15; Isa 25:8; Hosea 13:14). While God's kingship also has implications for the wicked, here the Old Testament is more reserved. The Old Testament infrequently suggests a bodily resurrection for the wicked (Dan 12:2), a final judgment and retribution for evil deeds (Psalm 21:10; 140:10; Mal 4:1-2). Nevertheless, the contemptible and horrible destiny of the wicked, irretrievably isolated from the righteous, is clear (Psalm 9:17; 34:15-16).

The Intertestamental Period: The intertestamental literature constructed divergent scenarios for the wicked dead, including annihilation (4 Ezra 7:61; 2 Apoc Bar 82:3ff.; 1 Enoch 48:9; 99:12; 1QS iv. 11-14) and endless torment (Jub 36:11; 1 Enoch 27:1-3; 103:8; T Gad 7:5). Sheol frequently became an interim location for the dead, distinguished from the place of final punishment (1 Enoch 18:9-16; 51:1). This final punishment was usually located in a valley south of Jerusalem, known in Hebrew as Gen Hinnom or the Valley of Hinnom (2 Apoc Bar 59:10; 4 Ezra 7:36), and in Greek as gehenna [gevenna] (2 Esdr 2:29). This valley had a long history as a place of infamy. Notorious for the child sacrifices offered to Molech during the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chron 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31-34; 19:6), this valley was further desecrated when Josiah used it as Jerusalem's refuse dump (2 Kings 23:10) and it was prophesied as the place of God's future fiery judgment (Isa 30:33; 66:24; Jer 7:31-32). While some intertestamental writings equate hell with the "lake of fire" in this "accursed valley" of Hinnom (1 Enoch 90:26, 27; 54:1, 2), others use it to denote a place in the underworld (Sib Or 4:1184-86).

In addition, the respective scenarios for the wicked, whether annihilation or eternal torment, shaped images of God's judgment. For instance, at times fire consumes the wicked (1 Enoch 99:12); in other texts fire and worms torment their victim to a useless existence (Judith 16:17).

The New Testament: In the New Testament hell is where the reprobate exist after the resurrection from Hades and the final judgment. In this lake of fire God punishes the wicked, along with Satan and his henchmen (Matt 25:41), bringing an end to evil's free ways.

Gehenna [gevenna] is the standard term for hell in the New Testament. Related phrases include "punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7), "lake of fire" (Rev 19:29; 20:14-15), and "judgment." English versions occasionally translate hades [a&/dh] (esp. Luke 16:23) and tartaroo [tartaroww] (2 Pe 2:4) as hell. However, these terms appear to denote the intermediate state, not the final destiny of the wicked.

Jesus says more about hell than any other biblical figure. His warnings of the eschatological judgment are liberally colored with the imagery of hell (Matt 5:22; 7:19; 8:12; par. Luke 13:28-30; Matt 10:15, 28; 11:22, 24; 18:8-9; par. Mark 9:43-49; Luke 17:26-29; John 15:6). He portrays this future judgment through pictures of Sodom's destruction (Luke 17:29-30): fire, burning sulfur, and a fiery furnace (Gen 19:24-25). These images of God's judgment were well established in the Old Testament and

intertestamental literature. Important portrayals of **hell** are also present in Jesus' parables, including the tares (Matt 13:40-42), the net (Matt 13:50); the great supper (Matt 22:13), the good servant and the wicked servant (Matt 24:51; par. Luke 12:46-47), the talents (Matt 25:30), and the last judgment (Matt 25:46). Here "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 13:50; 24:51; 25:30) and "darkness" (Matt 22:13; 25:30) are key descriptive phrases.

The New Testament conception of **hell** does not exceed Jesus' description. The following headings outline its essential features.

1. *Sinners will occupy **hell**. While God created us for a loving relation with himself, at the fall humankind rebelled.* God's judgment falls on all sinners, unless they have faith in Jesus. After the provisional state of Hades and the final judgment, God's wrath culminates in **hell**. According to the New Testament, the objects of God's wrath range from the pious hypocrites (Matt 23:33) and those failing to help the poor (Matt 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31) to the vile and murderers (Rev 21:8).

Some argue that only an explicit repudiation of Jesus attracts God's eternal wrath, referencing Lu 12:8-9. However, Jesus says "the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). In other words, he came offering grace to a world that was "condemned already" (John 3:17-18).

Since **hell** is not a natural fixture of creation but results from the fall and is destiny of the wicked, the New Testament occasionally personifies **hell** as the demonic forces behind sin. The sinful tongue is itself aroused and "set on fire by **hell**" (James 3:6). Similarly, Jesus labels the Pharisees "sons of **hell**," identifying the root of their hypocrisy (Matt 23:15).

2. ***Hell** exists for the requital and retribution of evil deeds.* **Hell** is the place of God's final judgment. Here God, our King and Supreme Judge, finally rectifies wrongs through his retributive wrath. Here the damned will be paid back for the harm they have done (Matt 16:27; Luke 12:47-48; 2 Peter 2:13; Jude 15 Rev 14:9-11). Wrath is not the natural consequence of evil choices in a moral universe or the sinner's misconstrual of God's love. Rather, as Paul's use of *orge* shows, wrath is an emotion or feeling in the Godhead, and thus God's personal action (Rom 1:18-32). By extrinsically imposing penal conditions on the sinner, God rectifies wrongs and reestablishes his righteous rule (Matt 25:31-46; Rom 12:19; 1 Cor 15:24-25; 2 Col 5:10).

3. ***Hell** is a final place of bondage and isolation from the righteous.* After the resurrection and the final judgment, the wicked and even Hades are thrown into **hell**. The New Testament describes **hell** as a place: a furnace (Matt 13:42,50), a lake of fire (Rev 19:20; 20:14-15; 21:8), and a prison (Rev 20:7). The wicked are imprisoned here so they cannot harm God's people (Matt 5:25-26; 13:42, 50; 18:34; Jude 6 Rev 20:14-15).

While the parable of Lazarus and the rich man occurs in Hades, the intermediate state, and not Gehenna, it does foreshadow the latter. Jesus says an unbridgeable spatial chasm separates these two so no one can "cross over from there" (Luke 16:26). John's vision in Revelation 21 of the new city on a high mountain confirms this separation between the blessed and the damned after the day of judgment. Consequently, Scripture provides no warrant for those speculative images of the righteous

rejoicing in the torture of the damned. The prophecy in Isaiah 66:24, which has been so used, does not refer to this eschatological event, for the resurrection of the body has not occurred.

4. *Sinners suffer penalties in hell.* Jesus repeatedly accentuates **hell**'s dreadfulness and horror: "if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out... It is better ... to enter life with one eye than to ... be thrown into the fire of **hell**" (Matt 18:9). While Scripture remains reticent on the specific torments for the impenitent, certain dimensions are clear.

At the final judgment, God will declare, "I don't know you... Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire" (Matt 25:12,41). The wicked in **hell** are excluded from God's loving presence and the "life" for which humans were originally created (John 5:29). The damned are "thrown outside, into the darkness" (Matt 8:12; 22:13). Consequently this "second death" (Rev 21:8) is a useless and ruined existence (Matt 25:30; Luke 9:25; John 3:16-18; 2 Thess 1:9; 2 Peter 2:12; Jude 12; Rev 21:8). Sin has thoroughly effaced every virtue. The reprobate have become obstinate in their rebellion against God, like "unreasoning animals" (Jude 10,13; 2 Peter 2:12-22). Consequently, the doors of **hell** can be locked from the inside, as C. S. Lewis observes.

In **hell**, the damned receive their due for "things done while in the body" (2 Col 5:10; 2 Peter 2:13; Jude 15 Rev 14:9-11). The "undying worm" has often been interpreted as the soul's internal torment, coveting and grieving what has been lost (Mark 9:48). This regret is compounded since the reprobate are not penitent but locked into their rebellion. But the grave's worms and darkness are also common images of a contemptible fate. Scripture suggests that there are degrees of punishment in **hell**. The one "who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows." More severe is the punishment due to the disobedient who were "entrusted with much" (Mark 12:40; Luke 12:48).

Annihilationsim and the Extent of Hell. The extent of **hell** has occasioned much debate in recent scholarship. There are three major points of contention.

Some *annihilationists* have argued that the biblical imagery of a consuming fire, destruction, and perishing implies the cessation of life (Stott). However, Jesus' pictures of **hell** are not literal descriptions but metaphors. They are mutually exclusive, if taken literally, for the fires of **hell** conflict with its "utter darkness." In the intertestamental literature the metaphorical image of a fire could suggest annihilation or everlasting punishment, showing the inconclusiveness of this argument.

Some annihilationists have argued that when the Greek adjective for eternal, *aionios* [aijwvniɔ], is used with nouns of action, it refers to an occurrence with eternal results, not an eternal process (Fudge). "Eternal punishment," it is argued, denotes a punishment that occurs once with eternal results. However, counterfactuals dispute this argument. The eternal sin (Mark 3:29), for example, is not just one sin, but an action that irretrievably debilitates so one only sins. Similarly, everlasting salvation (*aionios* [aijwvniɔ] *soteria* [swθriva]) does not refer solely to Christ's work long ago, and thus preclude his sustaining and preserving presence. For Scripture describes believers, even in the age to come, as existing "in Christ" (Rom 8:1; Eph 1:13; Col 2:6-7; 2 Tim 2:10). So *aionios soteria* [aijwvniɔ"swθriva]

refers to Christ's eternal (aionios [aijwvnió]) salvation of the blessed, an action that is everlasting as well as final.

In Matthew 25:46 Jesus differentiates the two futures of eternal life and eternal punishment, using the same adjective for each, aionios [aijwvnió]. In Jesus' mind, it appears, the extent of each future is identical. If the existence of the righteous is endless, so also is the existence of the wicked. Other statements suggest the same conclusion. Jesus teaches that "whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36). As long as God's wrath abides on them, the damned must exist. Jesus' picture of hell as a place where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48) indicates that this manifestation of God's wrath is unending. Other passages in the New Testament reiterate Jesus' dreadful warning, by describing hell as "everlasting torment." Even annihilationists admit the difficulty of such texts for their position.

Objections to Hell: Hell is a dreadful reality. Just as Christ wept over Jerusalem, believers are similarly troubled and anguished by this destiny of the lost. Some have raised serious challenges to the reality of hell.

One perennial difficulty concerns the relationship between God's love and holiness: How could a loving God reject forever the creature he loves? This question assumes that the creature is the highest intrinsic good, even for God. But the highest good for the God of Scripture is not humanity. Humanity was created for God, and cannot be defined in terms of itself; we exist to glorify God (Psalm 73:24-26; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 10:31; Col 1:16). That is why Jesus insists it is idolatrous to enlist God as humanity's servant (Luke 17:7-10). Certainly God loves the creature; creation itself reflects God's free love. But since God's love is complete in himself, even before creation, the creature cannot be presumed as his one and only end. Nor can the character of God's love be decided a priori, but only by revelation. Consequently, Jesus' warning of the wrath to come (Matt 25:31,41,46) must be accepted as an inherent possibility of God's love.

Some acknowledge retribution, but question why the wicked are eternally kept in existence to suffer. At issue is the punishment due sin. Since pride conceals the sinner's true debt to God the Judge, again this question should be answered by examining Christ's priestly work of propitiation. At the cross God in Christ became our substitute to bear the punishment for our sins, so as "to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26; cf. 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24). The God-man propitiated our sin. This fact, that God the Judge, the "Lord of glory" himself (1 Cor 2:8), accepted the punishment due us, suggests that the penalty for sin against the Infinite is infinite.

Questions will remain. But believers personally know God's love in Jesus Christ. And their response to a lost world will parallel that of their Lord, who humbled himself to our condition, suffered, and died for the wicked.

THE BIBLE'S PERSPECTIVE REGARDING HELL:

There are two texts of Scripture that suggest to me that Hell involves everlasting punishment. [Matthew 25:46](#) sums up the judgment on the "sheep and goats" with the words. "And these will go away into

eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." The same word *aionion* (eternal) is used to describe the punishment of the wicked and the blessing of the righteous. Whatever we say about the duration of "eternal" life for believers must be said about "eternal" punishment for unbelievers. Since "life" for believers is everlasting ([John 10:28](#)), so must be the punishment for unbelievers.

In a second text, [Revelation 20:10](#), John describes those in the "lake of fire" being "tormented day and night forever and ever." The expression *day and night* is used in Revelation to express the concept of "forever." The lake of fire is described in [Revelation 19:20](#) as a place that "burns with brimstone." In the saddest verse in the Bible, John declares that anyone whose name is not written in the book of life is "thrown into the lake of fire" ([Revelation 20:15](#)).

1. Fire is used in plain literal descriptive language in the following statements of **hell**:
 1. Set on fire the foundations of mountains in the lowest sheol (Deuteronomy 32:22).
 2. Neither shall their fire be quenched (Isaiah 66:22-24; Mark 9:43-49)
 3. Unquenchable fire (Matthew 3:10, 12).
 4. **Hell** fire (Matthew 5:22; 18:9 Mark 9:43-49).
 5. Cast into the fire (Matthew 7:19)
 6. Furnace of fire (Matthew 13:40-50).
 7. Cast into everlasting fire (Matthew 18:8; 25:41, 46).
 8. Fire that never shall be quenched (Mark 9:43-49; Luke 3:17).
 9. The vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 6-7).
 10. Tormented with fire and brimstone (Revelation 14:9-11).
 11. Lake of fire burning with brimstone (Revelation 19:20; 21:8).
 12. Lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 19:20; 20:14-15).
2. That punishment of **hell** is not eternal

If language means anything the torments of **hell** are proved to be eternal in the following:

1. Danger of eternal damnation (Mark 3:29).
2. Eternal Judgment (Hebrews 6:2).
3. Vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7).
4. Shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29).
5. Everlasting fire (Matthew 18:8; 25:41)
6. Everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46).
7. Everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9).
8. Everlasting chains (Jude 6-7).
9. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever (Revelation 14:9-11).
10. Tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

*[I ACTUALLY HEARD AN APOSTATE ON A NATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAM TESTIFY TO THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO MENTION OF **HELL** IN THE HEBREW BIBLE: IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO BEGIN WITH THE PLETHORA OF SCRIPTURES THAT NEGATE THIS BLASPHEMOUS COMMENT:]*

DIRECT QUOTES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT REGARDING HELL:

1. Deuteronomy 32:22
For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest **hell**, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.
Deuteronomy 32:21-23 (in Context) Deuteronomy 32 (Whole Chapter)
2. 2 Samuel 22:6
The sorrows of **hell** compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;
2 Samuel 22:5-7 (in Context) 2 Samuel 22 (Whole Chapter)
3. Job 11:8
It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than **hell**; what canst thou know?
Job 11:7-9 (in Context) Job 11 (Whole Chapter)
4. Job 26:6
Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.
Job 26:5-7 (in Context) Job 26 (Whole Chapter)
5. Psalm 9:17
The wicked shall be turned into **hell**, and all the nations that forget God.
Psalm 9:16-18 (in Context) Psalm 9 (Whole Chapter)
6. Psalm 16:10
For thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell**; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
Psalm 16:9-11 (in Context) Psalm 16 (Whole Chapter)
7. Psalm 18:5
The sorrows of **hell** compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.
Psalm 18:4-6 (in Context) Psalm 18 (Whole Chapter)
8. Psalm 55:15
Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into **hell**: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.
Psalm 55:14-16 (in Context) Psalm 55 (Whole Chapter)
9. Psalm 86:13
For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest **hell**.
Psalm 86:12-14 (in Context) Psalm 86 (Whole Chapter)
10. Psalm 116:3
The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of **hell** gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
Psalm 116:2-4 (in Context) Psalm 116 (Whole Chapter)
11. Psalm 139:8
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in **hell**, behold, thou art there.
Psalm 139:7-9 (in Context) Psalm 139 (Whole Chapter)
12. Proverbs 5:5
Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on **hell**.
Proverbs 5:4-6 (in Context) Proverbs 5 (Whole Chapter)

13. Proverbs 7:27
Her house is the way to **hell**, going down to the chambers of death.
Proverbs 7:26-28 (in Context) Proverbs 7 (Whole Chapter)
14. Proverbs 9:18
But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of **hell**.
Proverbs 9:17-19 (in Context) Proverbs 9 (Whole Chapter)
15. Proverbs 15:11
Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?
Proverbs 15:10-12 (in Context) Proverbs 15 (Whole Chapter)
16. Proverbs 15:24
The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from **hell** beneath.
Proverbs 15:23-25 (in Context) Proverbs 15 (Whole Chapter)
17. Proverbs 23:14
Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from **hell**.
Proverbs 23:13-15 (in Context) Proverbs 23 (Whole Chapter)
18. Proverbs 27:20
Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.
Proverbs 27:19-21 (in Context) Proverbs 27 (Whole Chapter)
19. Isaiah 5:14
Therefore **hell** hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.
Isaiah 5:13-15 (in Context) Isaiah 5 (Whole Chapter)
20. Isaiah 14:9
Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
Isaiah 14:8-10 (in Context) Isaiah 14 (Whole Chapter)
21. Isaiah 14:15
Yet thou shalt be brought down to **hell**, to the sides of the pit.
Isaiah 14:14-16 (in Context) Isaiah 14 (Whole Chapter)
22. Isaiah 28:15
Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with **hell** are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:
Isaiah 28:14-16 (in Context) Isaiah 28 (Whole Chapter)
23. Isaiah 28:18
And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with **hell** shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.
Isaiah 28:17-19 (in Context) Isaiah 28 (Whole Chapter)
24. Isaiah 57:9
And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy

messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto **hell**.

Isaiah 57:8-10 (in Context) Isaiah 57 (Whole Chapter)

25. Ezekiel 31:16

I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to **hell** with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

Ezekiel 31:15-17 (in Context) Ezekiel 31 (Whole Chapter)

26. Ezekiel 31:17

They also went down into **hell** with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.

Ezekiel 31:16-18 (in Context) Ezekiel 31 (Whole Chapter)

27. Ezekiel 32:21

The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of **hell** with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

Ezekiel 32:20-22 (in Context) Ezekiel 32 (Whole Chapter)

28. Ezekiel 32:27

And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to **hell** with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

Ezekiel 32:26-28 (in Context) Ezekiel 32 (Whole Chapter)

29. Amos 9:2

Though they dig into **hell**, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:

Amos 9:1-3 (in Context) Amos 9 (Whole Chapter)

30. Jonah 2:2

And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of **hell** cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

Jonah 2:1-3 (in Context) Jonah 2 (Whole Chapter)

31. Habakkuk 2:5

Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as **hell**, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

Habakkuk 2:4-6 (in Context) Habakkuk 2 (Whole Chapter)

NOW, THE NEW TESTAMENT:

32. Matthew 5:22

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council:

but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of **hell** fire.

Matthew 5:21-23 (in Context) Matthew 5 (Whole Chapter)

33. Matthew 5:29

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell**.

Matthew 5:28-30 (in Context) Matthew 5 (Whole Chapter)

34. Matthew 5:30

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell**.

Matthew 5:29-31 (in Context) Matthew 5 (Whole Chapter)

35. Matthew 10:28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in **hell**.

Matthew 10:27-29 (in Context) Matthew 10 (Whole Chapter)

36. Matthew 11:23

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to **hell**: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Matthew 11:22-24 (in Context) Matthew 11 (Whole Chapter)

37. Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of **hell** shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:17-19 (in Context) Matthew 16 (Whole Chapter)

38. Matthew 18:9

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into **hell** fire.

Matthew 18:8-10 (in Context) Matthew 18 (Whole Chapter)

39. Matthew 23:15

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of **hell** than yourselves.

Matthew 23:14-16 (in Context) Matthew 23 (Whole Chapter)

40. Matthew 23:33

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of **hell**?

Matthew 23:32-34 (in Context) Matthew 23 (Whole Chapter)

41. Mark 9:43

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:

Mark 9:42-44 (in Context) Mark 9 (Whole Chapter)

42. Mark 9:45

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 never shall be quenched:

Mark 9:44-46 (in Context) Mark 9 (Whole Chapter)

43. Luke 10:15
And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to **hell**.
Luke 10:14-16 (in Context) Luke 10 (Whole Chapter)
44. Luke 12:5
But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into **hell**; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.
Luke 12:4-6 (in Context) Luke 12 (Whole Chapter)
45. Luke 16:23
And in **hell** he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
Luke 16:22-24 (in Context) Luke 16 (Whole Chapter)
46. Acts 2:27
Because thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell**, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
Acts 2:26-28 (in Context) Acts 2 (Whole Chapter)
47. Acts 2:31
He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in **hell**, neither his flesh did see corruption.
Acts 2:30-32 (in Context) Acts 2 (Whole Chapter)
48. James 3:6
And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of **hell**.
James 3:5-7 (in Context) James 3 (Whole Chapter)
49. 2 Peter 2:4
For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to **hell**, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;
2 Peter 2:3-5 (in Context) 2 Peter 2 (Whole Chapter)
50. Revelation 1:18
I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of **hell** and of death.
Revelation 1:17-19 (in Context) Revelation 1 (Whole Chapter)
51. Revelation 6:8
And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and **Hell** followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.
Revelation 6:7-9 (in Context) Revelation 6 (Whole Chapter)
52. Revelation 20:13
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.
Revelation 20:12-14 (in Context) Revelation 20 (Whole Chapter)
53. Revelation 20:14
And death and **hell** were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
Revelation 20:13-15 (in Context) Revelation 20 (Whole Chapter)

[It is the opinion of Theoheurism—and not the express opinion of PARRC Research—that forever and everlasting are time functions; eternal is that without time. Therefore, when hell is cast into the lake of fire (the black hole in the center of the Milky Way Galaxy, filled with a plasma-like substance burning at 20 million degrees Fahrenheit), it is destroyed along with all creation—and the creatures of God’s glorification that go into eternity with Him go without those souls in Hell that are destroyed.

In this way, the “annihilation” proponents are harmonized with the “everlasting sufferer” proponents in that both things occur in order...]

BEWARE: JESUS HAD THESE WORDS FOR US—WORDS SO SERIOUS REGARDING THIS SUBJECT THAT IT IS HARD TO FATHOM:

“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 never shall 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.” (Mark 9:43-48)

[Remember what Theoheurism just said: the plasma in the “lake of fire/black hole burns at 20 million degrees Fahrenheit; therefore, hell is “destroyed,” and not “quenched;” in order for something to be quenched, it must be exposed to environment which contains material of lesser temperature—not higher; therefore, hell is destroyed, but not quenched! The Bible is perfect again!]

“How will you escape the damnation of Hell?” (Matt. 23:33)

HEARD ENOUGH?

Better be sure....

ONE LAST THOUGHT FROM THEOHEURISM:

It is the opinion of the Research Division—but not the official position of PARRC Research—that it is most probable that hell is subject to time.

Words like “forever,” “everlasting,” and such are still bound by the dictates of time; the only word which implies that which is both outside of time—or after/before time begins or ends—is the word “eternal.”

God is the Eternal Father; He is outside, before, and after time—and the abode He has ultimately created for us is as well. The Bible testifies that a period or epoch is coming when “time shall be no more.”

This is a tremendous statement of physical science: no time implies no more beginning, ending, movement, or occupation of space. In other words, everything on this side of the “Big Bang” either goes back to where it was, or is removed in some reverse Genesis effect.

The place where we will live eternally is unbound by space and time; all other things and places in this universe will be removed away.

Including Hell.

In one final, magnanimous movement of Almighty Grace, God ends the torment of Hell which lasts forever, or everlastingly—but still gives the mercy of ending when the eternal replaces all things.

Then the biggest regret of all those in Hell will be the fact that they will be eternally removed from God and His existence.

A fate which is too terrible to contemplate.

Think on it!

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