



HELL: ETERNAL TORMENT OR SECOND DEATH?

By George Lujack

There are two prevailing Scripture-based beliefs concerning the everlasting destiny of condemned sinners: eternal torment in hellfire or the second death. This article will examine both possibilities and argue that condemned sinners will ultimately cease to exist and die a second death. Additionally, Satan, the beast, and the false prophet will spend eternity in hell prison.

The theological belief in hell as a fiery place of eternal torment, where unrepentant sinners will be judged to burn in a lake of fire and flames forever, comes primarily from a parable that Yeshua (Jesus) told.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

LUKE 16:19-31:

“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 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, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

“Then he 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; 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.’”

parable:

A simple *story* used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Yeshua (Jesus) in the Gospels [1].

MATTHEW 13:10-11:

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He [Yeshua (Jesus)] answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given...”

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus should not be viewed as a literal account, but as a fable told to illustrate a spiritual lesson. Yeshua (Jesus) was asked why He spoke in parables by His disciples and He replied that it was to withhold the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from the multitudes (Matthew 13:2-11). God has revealed the mysteries of Gospel to the first-fruits of His kingdom and He will later on reveal His truths to all humanity (John 16:25).

The lesson that Yeshua (Jesus) imparted from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was that if people would not listen to Moses and the prophets, to obey the law and repent, then they would likewise not listen to one (Himself) even if He were to rise from the dead.

Yeshua (Jesus) said that He did not come to destroy the law, but came to fulfill the prophets (Matthew 5:17). Those who turn away from hearing the law, even their prayers are an abomination (Proverbs 28:9).

Yeshua (Jesus) illustrates in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus that He didn't come to Earth to persuade the world through absolute proof to believe in Him by rising from the dead. Evidence of God already exists through Moses and the prophets and we should listen to them, repent, and keep the law.

The following reasons are why the parable of the rich man and Lazarus should not be accepted as a literal account:

1. Yeshua (Jesus) stated, "No one has ascended to heaven" (John 3:13). Abraham is in the grave awaiting the resurrection, as are all men (John 11:24).
2. Abraham is not a giant kangaroo with a pouch to hold the righteous dead near his chest. When righteous people die they do not get carried away by storks (angels) and then get dropped off in Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22).
3. If the rich man were flesh and blood, constantly being burned and regenerated so as to be burned and tormented eternally, then a drop of water on the tip of Lazarus' finger brought to the rich man's tongue wouldn't do anything to relieve his torment from the flames (Luke 16:24).
4. In the very parable itself, Abraham says, "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us" (Luke 16:26). There is a great gulf that exists between the living and the dead. We cannot communicate with the dead. There is also no communication between those in God's kingdom and those condemned to hell. Believers in God's kingdom will not be communicating with people condemned to hell.

MARK 9:43-48:

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.'

Many have misunderstood Mark 9:43-48 to mean that people who are cast into hell will be kept alive; that worms will constantly feed off their flesh and they will be tortured eternally with fire that will not burn out. Yeshua (Jesus) is once again speaking in descriptive figurative parabolic language in Mark 9, referring to Scripture prophesy of Isaiah 66.

ISAIAH 66:22-24:

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says YHWH (the Lord).

“So shall your descendants and name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, all flesh shall come and worship before Me,” says YHWH (the Lord). 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.”

Those cast into hell will be corpses, dead bodies, not eternally tormented sinners kept alive for worms to eat and for fire to burn in everlasting torment. The reason the worms will not die is because after the worms (maggots) consume all the flesh of the decomposing corpses, they will transform into flies and fly away. The flames of hell can be kept burning by God, who has lit countless stars throughout the universe that burn without quenching.

SOULS ARE NOT ETERNAL; THEY CAN BE DESTROYED AND DIE

destroy:

Put an end to the existence of (something) by damaging or attacking it [2].

death:

The action or fact of dying or being killed; the end of the life of a person or organism [3].

GENESIS 2:16-17:

And YHWH (the Lord) God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely DIE.”

Satan’s original lie, that we really don’t die when we die, continues to be believed by the multitudes to this day. People generally believe that the soul does not die, but instead goes to straight to heaven, or that the soul will be judged to hell and live in eternal torment there. Death is the cessation of life, not the instantaneous continuation of it in soul-spirit form.

PROVERBS 19:16:

He who keeps the commandment KEEPS HIS SOUL; but he who is careless of his ways shall DIE.

EZEKIEL 18:4,20:

The SOUL who sins shall DIE.

CONDEMNED UNREPENTANT SINNERS WILL BE DESTROYED, CAST INTO HELL, AND DIE; HELL IS A PLACE OF DEATH

PSALM 55:15:

Let DEATH seize them; let them go down alive into HELL.

PROVERBS 5:3-5:

For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to DEATH; her steps lay hold of HELL.

PROVERBS 7:27:

Her house is the way to HELL, descending to the chambers of DEATH.

PROVERBS 9:18:

But he does not know that the DEAD are there, that her guests are in the depths of HELL.

PROVERBS 15:9-11:

The way of the wicked is an abomination to YHWH (the Lord), but He loves him who follows righteousness. Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, and he who hates correction will DIE. HELL and DESTRUCTION are before YHWH (the Lord).

PROVERBS 15:24:

The way of LIFE winds upwards for the wise, that he may turn away from HELL below.

ISAIAH 14:9:

HELL from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming. It stirs up the DEAD for you.

MATTHEW 10:28:

And do not fear those who KILL the body but cannot KILL the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL.

LUKE 12:5:

“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, AFTER HE HAS KILLED, has power to cast into HELL; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”

THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE MARK OF THE BEAST WILL BE JUDGED IN THE FLESH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

REVELATION 14:9-11:

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall 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** ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Some have read and misunderstood Revelation 14:9-11 to mean that anyone who receives the mark of the beast will be cast into hell and be tormented forever there. This is not actually the case. Whoever receives the mark will be tormented on Earth, through the judgment of the Lamb (Yeshua / Jesus). Those who receive the mark will be judged on Earth, through various fire and sulfur plagues (nuclear annihilations carried out by the Antichrist and other world armies). The smoke of the torment of the earthly flesh and blood bodies of those who have received the mark, after being incinerated, will ascend forever.

CONDEMNED UNREPENTENT SINNERS WHO ARE CAST INTO HELL WILL BE BURNED UP AND WILL DIE THE SECOND DEATH

REVELATION 2:11:

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the SECOND DEATH.”

REVELATION 20:6:

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the **SECOND DEATH** has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Messiah (Christ), and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

REVELATION 20:14-15:

This is the SECOND DEATH. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

REVELATION 21:8:

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, untrustworthy, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, drug sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the SECOND DEATH.”

The second death awaits condemned unrepentant sinners, not eternal torment in a torture chamber known as hell. Condemned unrepentant sinners will have died the first death in their flesh and blood bodies, and their soul (spirit) will be judged to die a second time and then be thrown into hell where they will die the second death.

SATAN, THE BEAST, AND THE FALSE PROPHET WILL NOT DIE THE SECOND DEATH, BUT WILL BE TORMENTED FOREVER

torment:

severe physical or mental suffering.

REVELATION 19:19-21:

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. AND THE REST WERE KILLED with the sword, which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

REVELATION 20:10:

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And THEY will be TORMENTED day and night FOREVER AND EVER.

Satan, the beast (Antichrist), and the false prophet (final Catholic pope) will be kept alive and tormented forever in hell. The rest (their armies, those who receive the mark) will be killed.

Why doesn't God kill Satan? This is a theological question that is not answered in Scripture. It can be theorized that God had already granted Satan and the angels eternal life, and therefore since God is Holy, once He gives His word He must keep it. Therefore if God cannot kill Satan without going back on His promise of granting Satan eternal life, before Satan sinned, He must imprison Satan forever, instead of judging Satan to eternal death.

As for the beast (Antichrist) and false prophet, as flesh and blood human beings, why do they not die the second death? Again, this is a theological question not answered in Scripture, but it can be surmised that they may have pledged their souls to serve Satan, and God in judgment, will grant them their wish and they will exist with Satan, alive and tormented, for all eternity.

Scripture proclaims that these three, Satan, the beast, and the false prophet will be *tormented* forever. That does not mean that they will be searing in burning torture forever. Being held in hell prison forever will be torment. These three will be tormented mentally in their spirit bodies; they will not exist in flesh and blood bodies that are capable of burning in agonizing pain, then having their flesh supernaturally renewed by God to be in a state of unthinkable continual agonizing torture.

SATAN WILL BE BOUND FOR ONE THOUSAND YEARS OF HELL PRISON *BEFORE* BEING SENTENCED TO ETERNAL HELL PRISON

REVELATION 20:1-3,7-8:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and BOUND him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his PRISON and will go out to deceive the nations...

Satan will be bound in hell prison for a thousand years, released for a while, and then will be bound once again in hell prison with the beast and false prophet for all eternity. Being held in hell prison *will be* torment for these three evil beings for all eternity.

torture:

The action or practice of inflicting severe pain on someone as a punishment or to force them to do or say something, or for the pleasure of the person inflicting the pain.

EZEKIEL 18:32, 33:11:

“For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says YHWH (the Lord) GOD. “Therefore turn and live!”

...

‘As I live,’ says YHWH (the Lord) GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die...?’

PSALM 116:5:

Yes, our God is merciful.

(Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 4:31; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Nehemiah 9:17,31; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Hebrews 2:17).

Our God is a merciful God, not a torturer. Torture is evil and sadistic. God is not one who receives pleasure from torture. God will have mercy on condemned humanity, destroying them in the second death. God, in His mercy, will not keep condemned mankind bound alive and tortured for all eternity. God will not even inflict torture on Satan, the beast, and the false prophet, who surely deserve it, but will keep them imprisoned forever. Hell is a place of the second death for condemned sinners and will be the eternal holding prison for Satan, the beast, and the false prophet.

1. Oxford Dictionaries, ‘parable,’ Oxford University Press.
< http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/parable >.
2. Oxford Dictionaries, ‘destroy,’ Oxford University Press.
< http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/destroy >.
3. Oxford Dictionaries, ‘death,’ Oxford University Press.
< http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/death >.
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