THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES
Thanks to
Edward Fudge, JD
Douglas Jacoby, DMin

• http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHUPpmbTOV4
• www.EdwardFudge.com
• www.douglasjJacoby.com
All glory and praise to God’s Son, our Savior, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who delivers us from the wrath to come.
Hell is much in the news today.
Our measuring stick and standard will be God’s Word
In this hour we will see ...

Three Views of Hell

WHAT IS THE WICKED’S END?
O.T. * Intertestamental * N.T.

CHURCH HISTORY:
traditional doctrine evolves

Why it matters
Three Views of Hell

1. The fire that torments forever (Majority/traditional view)
Three Views of Hell

1. **The fire that torments forever** (Majority/traditional view)

   *Emphasizes* ‘eternal punishment’

   ‘fire not quenched’

   ‘smoke goes up forever’
A troubling question: Must we conclude that God, who gave his Son for sinners, will keep billions of them alive—to torment them without end?

However, highly-respected, Bible-believing scholars in increasing numbers are answering NO!
Besides the traditional view, two other explanations have been offered.
Three Views of Hell

1. The fire that torments forever

2. The fire that purifies (Universal restoration)

Emphasizes

God is not willing that any perish, especially believers. Savior of all, Reconciled the world to himself.
Three Views of Hell

1. The fire that torments forever
   Emphasizes God is a consuming fire
   The wages of sin is death
   God destroys soul & body in hell

2. The fire that purifies

3. The fire that consumes
   (Most biblically consistent view)
Please do not CHANGE your mind today.
Please do __CHALLENGE your thinking today.
What can we learn about ... THE END OF THE WICKED?

Old Testament
Luke 24:44 - “all things ... written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the *Psalms must be fulfilled.”
(*also called the “Writings”)
THE OLD TESTAMENT

Law (Torah)

Prototypes

Prophets

Predictions

Writings ("Psalms")

Principles
WRITINGS:

Principles of divine judgment
Example: Psalm 37

1 Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers.
2 For they will *wither* quickly like the *grass*, and *fade* like the *green herb*. 
9 For evildoers will be cut off,
10 Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more;
And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there . . .
20 But the wicked will perish . . . They vanish -- like smoke they vanish away . . .
34 . . . Wait for the LORD and keep His way, And He will exalt you to inherit the land; **When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.**

But what if we do not see it here? Is God’s justice then thwarted?
The wicked will:

wither (Psalm 37:2)
be no more (Psalm 104:36)
perish (Psalm 1:6)
vanish (Psalm 37:20)
be destroyed (Psalm 37:38)

50 Hebrew verbs (active & passive)
God will:

break them in pieces (Psalm 2:9)
slay them (Psalm 139:19)
cut them off (Psalm 94:23)
blot out of book of living (Psalm 69:28)
rain fire & brimstone (Psalm 11:6)
Wicked will be *like*:

- chaff blown away (Psalm 1:4)
- slug that melts (Psalm 58:8)
- grass cut down (Psalm 37:2)
- wax melts (Psalm 68:2)
clay pot broken (Psalm 2:9)
water that flows away (Psalm 58:7)
smoke vanishes (Psalm 68:2)
stubble before the wind (Psalm 83:13)

70 metaphors, similes
Please Note:

- Not literal descriptions
- Reality will correspond to pictures
- Reality will not be exact opposite of pictures
- This variety of pictures creates a consistent impression . . .
TORAH:
Prototypes
of divine judgment
Exhibit 1: The Flood
What happened?

Gen 7:21  All flesh that moved on the earth **perished** . . .; 22 ... all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, **died**. 23 Thus He **blotted out** every living thing that was upon the face of the land . . .
WAS PREVIEW OF FUTURE
2 Peter 3:5-7

For . . . the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water ... 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

7 But . . . the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.
Exhibit 2: Sodom
What happened?

Gen. 19:24 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire ... out of heaven, 25 and He overthrew those cities, and ... the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground ...
WAS PREVIEW OF FUTURE
2 Peter 2:6

God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;
Jude 7 . . . *Sodom and Gomorrah* . . . are **exhibited as an example** [deigma] in undergoing the punishment of **eternal fire**.
PROPHETS: Predictions of divine judgment

(four sample messianic texts)
BROKEN LIKE POTTERY

I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have begotten you.

Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery” (Psalm 2:7-9).
CORPSES ON BATTLEFIELD

The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead, and crushing the rulers of the whole earth (Psalm 110:5-6).
"Then they will go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched, and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind" (Isaiah 66:24).
ASHES UNDERFOOT

The day is coming, burning like a furnace; and . . . every evildoer will be chaff; and the day . . . will set them ablaze,” says the LORD of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch” . . . [T]he wicked . . . will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing,” says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 4:1-3).
DO WE GET THE PICTURE?
broken pottery

Ps 2:7-9
Ps 110:5-6

battleground

corpses
corpses, fire & maggots

Isa 66:24
ashes underfoot

Mal 4:1-3
• Not literal descriptions
• Reality will correspond to pictures
• Reality will not be exact opposite of pictures
• What impression do you get from the Old Testament on this topic?
WHAT IS THE WICKED’S END?

INTERTESTAMENTAL

Views of Hell

1. Tormenting fire
2. Purifying fire
3. Consuming fire

Apocrypha
Pseudepigrapha
Dead Sea Scrolls
Rabbinical
WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY?
Let’s explore together . . .

New Testament

John the Baptist
JOHN THE BAPTIST: ‘BURN UP’

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I . . . . His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:11-12).
Let’s explore together . . .

New Testament

Jesus
JESUS CHRIST: *kill, destroy*

Do not fear those who *kill the body* but are unable to *kill the soul*; but rather fear Him who is able to *destroy* (*apollymi*) both *soul* and *body* in *hell* (Matt 10:28).

*gehenna (11 times in Gospels)*
Valley of Sons of Hinnom

GEHENNA TODAY
“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish (apollymi), but have eternal life (John 3:16).
Are ‘destroy’ & ‘perish’ figurative?

Traditionalists emphasize that ‘destroy’ and ‘perish’ (*apollymi*) sometimes have figurative meanings:

- *ruined* wineskins (Matt 9:17)
- *spoiled* food (John 6:12)
destroy / perish (apollymi)

- The disciples about to perish in storm (Matt 8:25);
- Pharisees seek to destroy Jesus (Matt 12:14);
- one loses life trying to save it (Matt 16:25);
- vineyard owner executes murderous tenants (Matt 21:41);
- troops sent to destroy murderers (Matt 22:7);
- one perishes by the sword (Matt 26:52);
- crowd asks to destroy Jesus (Matt 27:20)
destroy / perish (*apollymi*)

- better that **one** man **die** than for whole nation to **perish** (John 11:50);
- Insurrectionist/false messiah **perished** at hands of Rome (Acts 5:37);
- Israelites **perish** in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:9-10), or were **destroyed** there (Jude 5);
- some **perished** in the rebellion of Korah (Jude 11).
Greek scholar and New Testament translator R. F. Weymouth wrote:

“My mind fails to conceive a grosser misinterpretation of language than when the five or six strongest words which the Greek tongue possesses, signifying ‘destroy,’ or ‘destruction,’ are explained to mean maintaining an everlasting but wretched existence. To translate black as white is nothing to this.”
what about other phrases thought to suggest conscious unending torment?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Action Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt 8:11-12</td>
<td>expelled to outer darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt 22:13</td>
<td>expelled to outer darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt 25:30</td>
<td>expelled to outer darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 13:28</td>
<td>expelled from kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt 24:50-51</td>
<td>expelled (after cut in pieces/severed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt 13:40-42</td>
<td>expelled to furnace of fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt 13:49-50</td>
<td>expelled to furnace of fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(weeping and gnashing of teeth)*
"... your fathers ... killed [the prophets] who ... announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;

[They] were cut to the quick, and ... began gnashing their teeth at him. (Acts 7:52, 54)

Not Pain but Rage
Gnashing of teeth

The wicked will see [the righteous rewarded] and be vexed,
He will **gnash his teeth** and **melt away**;
The desire of the wicked will **perish**.

(Psalm 112:10)
eternal punishment

(Matt 25:46)
• ‘Eternal’ is a quality of the age to come

(aion, aionios)

eternal salvation (Heb 5:6)
eternal redemption (Heb 9:1)
eternal destruction (2 Thes 1:9)
eternal judgment (Heb 6:2)
eternal punishment (Matt 25:46)
2. ‘Eternal’ results that do not end

eternal salvation (Heb 5:6)  
eternal redemption (Heb 9:1)  
eternal destruction (2 Thes 1:9)  
eternal judgment (Heb 6:2)  
eternal punishment (Matt 25:46)

Parable of the Sheep and Goats:  
“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”
eternal punishment

but what is punishment?
Punishment: the penal consequences of wrongdoing, imposed under the law by a person with judicial authority.
MIGHT BE:

Fine -- Jail -- Prison -- Capital punishment
eternal punishment defined

[T]he Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction . . . . (2 Thes 1:7-9 KJV)
Result is ‘eternal’ -- not the process

‘When a very serious crime is punished by death, and the execution of the sentence takes only a minute, no laws consider that minute as the measure of the punishment, but rather the fact that the criminal is forever removed from the community of the living.’

– St. Augustine
eternal fire

(Matt 25:41)
1. eternal-quality fire

2. Unending-result fire

Sodom and Gomorrah . . . are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire (Jude 7).
Summary -- rest of N.T.

New Testament

James
JAMES

- Death (1:15)
- Destruction (4:12)
- Riches consume flesh like fire (5:3)
- Fattened for day of slaughter (5:5)
- Death (5:19)

Which view most resembles this?
ACTS

Only three references to final judgment

* God has appointed a day when *he will judge the world fairly by [Jesus] (17:30-31).

* Paul discussed righteousness, self-control and judgment to come with Felix, who became frightened (24:25).

* Whoever does not listen to Jesus “shall be *utterly destroyed from among the people*” (3:23, Peter quotes Deut 18).
ACTS: ONE WORD ONLY

‘Utterly destroyed from among the people’

\[\text{Exolothreuo} = \text{‘to destroy utterly, root out’}\]

**OT:** (Greek version used by early church):

* Regular word for capital punishment
* Word used in Flood story

**NT:** Destroyer (1 Cor 10:10; Heb 11:28)
PAUL

death (Rom 6:23)
perish (Rom 2:12)
destruction (1 Cor 3:17; Phil 1:28; 3:19)
eternal destruction (2 Thes 1:9)

Also . . .
Wrath, anger, trouble, distress (Rom 2:6ff)
anathema/accursed (Gal 1:9; 1 Cor 16:22)
not enter God’s kingdom (Eph 5:5-6)
New Testament
Hebrews
HEBREWS

worse than physical death (2:2-3)
cursed and burned (6:8)
raging fire that consumes (10:27-31)
destroyed (10:39)
consuming fire (12:29)

More like view #1, #2, or #3?
PETER & JUDE

destroy/perish (2 Pet 2:12)
blackest darkness (Jude 13)

like Flood
like Sodom
New Testament

John
John

LAKE OF FIRE (AND BRIMSTONE)
But for the cowardly and unbelieving, [etc.] , their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone ... (Rev 21:8).

ORIGIN -- Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire (Gen 19:24-25).
John

SECOND DEATH
But for the cowardly and unbelieving, [etc.], their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which IS the second death (Rev 21:8).

CONTRAST

Names in “Book of Life” (Revelation) “Eternal life” (Johannine generally)
JOHN

SMOKE ASCENDING
Abraham arose early in the morning ... and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and . . . the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace (Gen 19:27-28).
JOHN

SMOKE ASCENDING FOREVER
Its streams will be turned into pitch, and its loose earth into brimstone, and its land will become burning pitch. It will not be quenched night or day; Its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation it will be desolate . . . And He will stretch over it the line of desolation and the plumb line of emptiness (Isa 34:8-11).
If the traditional doctrine of everlasting torture is not required by Scripture . . .

**WHERE** did it come from?

**HOW** did it become so widespread?
The answers are clear, in ...
Greek philosophy vs. Bible teaching
SOCRATES & PLATO

Every human has a **mortal** body, inhabited by an **immortal** soul . . . .

469-399 B.C.  

424-348 B.C.
THE BIBLE PORTRAYS . . .

The human creature as wholly mortal

\[
\text{EARTH (BODY)} \quad + \quad \text{BREATH (SPIRIT)} \quad \text{LIVING BEING (SOUL)}
\]

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gen 2:7).
God “alone possesses immortality”

(1 Tim 6:16).
HUMAN IMMORTALITY

Always
Saved
Whole Person
Resurrection

Never
Lost
Naked Soul or Spirit
Creation or now
We hear from ... Apostolic Fathers
New Testament

Restored biblical (O.T.) teaching

Apostolic Fathers

*Didache, Barnabas, Ignatius, Clement*

teach a fire that consumes
(Limited to biblical language)
We hear from ... Apologists
Apologists

Converted Greek Philosophers, brought pagan doctrine of immortal souls into Christian church.

Athenagoras (127-190 A.D.)
Tertullian (born 160 A.D.)
Athenagoras (127-190 A.D.)

PLATO FIRST GOES TO CHURCH

"Since the cause of man's creation is...perpetual existence, [he] must be preserved forever."
SOUL DOES NOT NEED SAVING BECAUSE IT IS IMMORTAL ALREADY
Tertullian (160-200? A.D.)

Matt 10:28 does not mean that God will really destroy the soul, for souls are immortal and cannot be destroyed.
We hear from ... St. Augustine
St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.)

Answered pagan critics who denied possibility of eternal burning.

Endorsed Tertullian's view – set 'orthodoxy.' Least scriptural part of *The City of God.*
We hear from ...

Dante Alighieri
Dante Alighieri (14th c.)

Inferno, or (Divine) Comedy

“Cold as hell?”
We must finally ask ...
Why it matters?

• NOT salvation issue …
• NOT fellowship issue …
• nevertheless important, because:
  • we speak in God’s name
  • this impacts evangelism
• it speaks about God’s character
The teaching we have examined today is not tricky, difficult, or complicated.
IN FACT, you already know two Scripture verses that say it all . . .
The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Rom 6:23)
“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:16)
LIFE OR DEATH