

WHAT ABOUT HELL? #2

BIBLE STUDY BY JAMIE MCNAB

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What happens at the end ... for the wicked? Obviously ... hell "kicks in there". A place of eternal, unending place of torment ... with no end?

Over the centuries a lot of fire and brimstone preachers have used this concept to "scare the pants off you". But ... this type of teaching about God ... a vindictive, heartless, cruel God ... puts a lot of people off God altogether.

Hell ... in the Old Testament ... 31 times in KJV. Not once in the NASB, NIV, RSV. Hebrew word "Sheol" ... the grave.

In the New Testament ... 23 times in KJV ... only 13 times in the NKJV. "Hades" ... the grave. "Gehenna" ... does have a reference to fire.

The Old Testament picture is that the wicked will be destroyed, perished, blown away like chaff, like smoke and vanish away ... destroyed forever ... burned up like stubble ... like ashes ... and like snails that vanish away. No mention of an everlasting hell fire.

What about the New Testament? If there was no resurrection ... the dead wouldn't be raised.

Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter by the narrow gate; for **wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction**, (many on the road to perishing) and there are many who go in by it. Because **narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life**, and there are few who find it.

Destruction = Apoleia = Greek ... utter, complete destruction.

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.** (Gehenna ... no come back ... all of you gone ... Greek = Apolumi)

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish (Apolumi ... utter destruction) but **have everlasting life.**

2 Peter 3:3-9

knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which **the world that then existed perished** (Apolumi ... utterly destroyed), being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, **are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition (destruction) of ungodly men.** (In this age)

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish** (Apolumi ... destroyed) but that all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

The fate of the wicked is to perish ... to be utterly destroyed.

1 Timothy 6:9-10

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in **destruction** (Greek = Olethros ... and **perdition**. (Apolumi) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Those who choose to go the broad way will end up with destruction and utter destruction.

1 Timothy 6:15-16

which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, **the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality**, (NB Only God has immortal life) dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is 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 **(OBEDIENCE IS REQUIRED!!)** the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. **These shall be punished with everlasting destruction (Olethros ... destruction ... destroyed once ... not over and over and over again!!)** from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

We will be judged once ... and that judgement will last for eternity. Eternal destruction is as it suggests ... it lasts forever.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who **perish (Apolumi ... heading to destruction)**, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

James 4:12

There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy (Apolumi ... the end ... wiped out!!). Who are you to judge another?

No hint anywhere of everlasting punishment yet? Let's have a look at some of the scriptures that people use in this regard. Remembering that The Bible is always consistent.

Matthew 3:8-12

Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. **Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; **but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."** (If you burn up chaff ... it is destroyed. Unquenchable fire is not the same as an everlasting fire. It means you can't interfere with it. It will fulfill its purpose. You can't stop it!! It will burn and burn and burn until everything is destroyed!!)

Mark 9:42-48

"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. 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 (Gehenna) , **into the fire that shall never be quenched—** where

'Their worm does not die

And the fire is not quenched. (A fire that cannot be put out until it has fulfilled its purpose)

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 (Gehenna) — where

'Their worm does not die (Jesus was quoting from **Isa 66:15-16, 24... see below**)

And the fire is not quenched.

Jesus used this term "GEHENNA" ... THE VALLEY OF HINNOM because the people of Jerusalem knew what it was and where it was. It was the city dump. Unclean and cursed. It gave people a picture of an awful place.

Jeremiah 17:21-22

Thus says the Lord: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

Jeremiah 17:27

"But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, **then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.**" ' " (It's not there today. It cannot be put out until "it's done its stuff")

Isaiah 66:15-16

For behold, the Lord will come with fire
And with His chariots, like a whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.

For by fire and by His sword
The Lord will judge all flesh;
And **the slain of the Lord** shall be many.

Isaiah 66:24

“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.”

Matthew 13:24-30

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. **(This is a parable about good and bad people)**. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, **“First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them,** but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ”

Matthew 13:40-43

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. (They will be burned up!!)** There will be wailing (sorrow) and gnashing of teeth (anger, hate). Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Luke 12:47-48

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Some that do wrong will suffer for a shorter period, some for a longer period ... the punishment will fit the crime.

Matthew 25:41-46

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into **the everlasting fire prepared for the devil** and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' (sins of omission!! CHRIST takes these things personally). **And these will go away into everlasting punishment** (that is not eternal punishment ... over and over and over ... the effect lasts for ever ... never reversed) , but the righteous into eternal life."

Jude 1:5-7

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, **suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**

(destroyed by fire ... like Sodom and Gomorrah ... its penalty is an example of utter destruction ... compare 2 PETER 2:6).

2 Peter 2:6

and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;

Revelation 14:9-11 (The announcement of what is to happen).

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."

What does this mean? The Book of Revelation is a book of symbols, pictures, colourful imagery. Apocalyptic Literature ... not everything is literal!! Not your standard Gospel narrative.

For example. A Beast with 7 heads and 10 horns. Have you ever seen one? No you haven't!! It's a picture. It's symbolism. It talks about Jesus as a Lamb with 7 eyes with 7 horns. Is Jesus a lamb? There is no such thing. It is symbolism. All of these communicate truth in colourful imagery ... but not literal ... it's the style of prophecy. A woman who flies on two wings of an eagle ... literally true?? It's symbolism. A picture of Jesus with a sword sticking out of His mouth? Again. Not literal.

Revelation 14:10

he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, (IS WINE LITERAL) which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation (does God have a cup?). He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

Let's look at another example.

Isaiah 34:5-6, 8-11, 13-15

“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven;
Indeed it shall come down on Edom, (Apocalyptic language)
And on the people of My curse, for judgment.
The sword of the Lord is filled with blood,
It is made overflowing with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

...

For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance,
The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

Its streams shall be turned into pitch,

And its dust into brimstone;

Its land shall become burning pitch.

It shall not be quenched night or day;

Its smoke shall ascend forever. (Imagery of destruction)

From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
No one shall pass through it forever and ever.
But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it,

...

And thorns shall come up in its palaces,
Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
It shall be a habitation of jackals,
A courtyard for ostriches.

The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals,
And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
Also the night creature shall rest there,
And find for herself a place of rest.
There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs
And hatch, and gather them under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered,
Every one with her mate.

We will continue next week. Nothing so far contradicts the fate of the wicked. God is not going to consign multiple millions into an everlasting hell fire.