

On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope

The Fires of Hell

Lesson #10 for December 3, 2022

Scriptures: Mark 9:42-48; Malachi 4:1; Jude 7; 1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 2:29,34-35; 1 John 5:3-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

1. Does Dante's poem, *The Divine Comedy*, agree with biblical theology?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) wrote his famous work, *The Divine Comedy*, about a fictional journey of the soul after death. The soul went either to the *inferno* (hell) within the earth; or to purgatory, where the human spirit can purge itself and become worthy of ascending to heaven; or to Paradise, to the presence of God Himself.

Though only a poem, fiction, Dante's words ended up having a great deal of influence on Christian theology, especially Roman Catholic theology. The basic notion of an immortal soul's going either to hell, or to purgatory, or to Paradise is foundational to that church. Many conservative Protestant denominations also believe in an immortal soul that after death ascends either to Paradise or descends to hell. **Indeed, if the human soul never dies, then it has to go somewhere after the body dies. In short, a false understanding of human nature has led to terrible theological errors.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, November 26.^{†‡§} [Dante just popularized Roman Catholic doctrine that was already believed.][‡]

2. **Read Mark 9:42-48; compare it with Isaiah 66:24. These are two key passages.**

Mark 9:42-48: [Jesus said:]⁴² "If anyone should cause one of these little ones to lose his faith in me, it would be better for that person to have a large millstone tied round his neck and be thrown into the sea. ⁴³**So if your hand makes you lose your faith, cut it off!** It is better for you to enter life without a hand than to keep both hands and go off to hell, to the fire that never goes out. ⁴⁵And if your foot makes you lose your faith, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a foot than to keep both feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye makes you lose your faith, take it out! It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to keep both eyes and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁸There "the worms that eat them never die, and the fire that burns them is never put out."—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Mark 9:42-48). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*]^{†‡}

Isaiah 66:22-24:²² "Just as the new earth and the new heavens will endure by my power, so your descendants and your name will endure. ²³On every New Moon Festival and every Sabbath, people of every nation will come to worship me here in Jerusalem," says the LORD. ²⁴ "As they leave, they will see **the dead bodies** of those who have rebelled against me. The worms that eat them will never die, and the fire that burns them will never be put out. The sight of them will be disgusting to the whole human race."—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Does that sound like "good news"?][‡]

[BSG:] Some interpret the singular noun “worm” (*Mark 9:48*) as an allusion to the supposed disembodied soul or spirit of the wicked that, after death, flies into hell, where it never dies and suffers eternal torment.

But this interpretation does not reflect the biblical notion of unconscious death; it also ignores the Old Testament background of this passage. Actually, “the singular ‘the worm’ is used generically for ‘the worms’—it does not mean a single worm. The reference is to worms which feed upon decaying bodies.”—Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Gospel of Mark* (London: United Bible Societies, 1961), p. 304.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, November 27].^{†‡§}

3. What kind of “worms” or “fire” are we talking about in these passages? Please note that there is no evidence that any “souls” are escaping and going either to heaven or to hell.
4. In the Isaiah passage, are the worms immortal? And where will this fire and worms be?
5. Isaiah seems to suggest that there will be a wonderful reception in heaven for the righteous. But, are there immortal worms? And is there fire consuming the wicked within eyesight of the righteous?
6. Clearly, this is an “either/or” situation. One is either totally saved; or, s/he is totally lost. So, what are those “fires of hell”?

[BSG:] In his booklet for children titled, *The Sight of Hell* (Dublin: James Duffy, [1874]), English Roman Catholic priest John Furniss (1809–1865) illustrates the eternal torment by means of a great solid-iron ball, larger than the heavens and the earth. “A bird comes once in a hundred millions [*sic*] of years and just touches the great iron ball with a feather of its wing.”—Page 24. Furniss argues that the burning of sinners in hell continues even after that iron ball is worn away by such occasional feather touches!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, November 28.^{‡§} [Brackets in the first line are added; brackets and the content in brackets in the paragraph (including “[*sic*]”) are in the Bible study guide.]^{‡§}

7. Contrast that idea with the following verses from the Bible.

Malachi 4:1: The LORD Almighty says, “**The day is coming when all proud and evil people will burn like straw. On that day they will burn up, and there will be nothing left of them.**”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Jude 7 [1:7]: Remember Sodom and Gomorrah, and the nearby towns, whose people acted as those angels did and indulged in sexual immorality and perversion: they suffer the punishment of **eternal fire** as a plain warning to all.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡} [Look up *Sodom* on Youtube and see some amazing new information.][‡] <https://youtu.be/CpAYW5DUyVQ>

8. What is the meaning of the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, and *forever*? Is there a difference?

[BSG:] The word “eternal” (Hebrew *’olam*; Greek *aion*, *aionios*) carries different meanings, depending on the immediate context. For example, when associated with God (*Deut. 33:27*, “*everlasting*”), the word expresses His eternity. When related to human beings (*Exod. 21:6*, “*forever*”), the word is limited by their life span. **When qualifying fire (*Matt. 18:8*, *Matt. 25:41*,**

“everlasting”), it implies that the fire will not go out until it fully consumes what is being burned. This means that the **“eternal fire”** will be eternal in the sense that it will consume the wicked completely and irreversibly, leaving them **“ ‘neither root nor branch’ ”** (*Mal. 4:1, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, November 28.†§

Deuteronomy 33:27: God has always been your defence; [sic] his **eternal** arms are your support. He drove out your enemies as you advanced, and told you to destroy them all.—*Good News Bible*.*†

Exodus 21:5-6: ⁵ And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:

⁶ Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him **for ever**. [sic]—*The Holy Bible: King James Version*.* (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version. Exodus 21:5-6). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.†

Deuteronomy 15:16-17: [Moses said:] ¹⁶ “But your slave may not want to leave; he may love you and your family and be content to stay. ¹⁷Then take him to the door of your house and there pierce his ear; he will then be your slave **for life**. Treat your female slave in the same way.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

Matthew 18:8: “If your hand or your foot makes you lose your faith, cut it off and throw it away! It is better for you to enter life without a hand or a foot than to keep both hands and both feet and be thrown into the **eternal** fire.”—*Good News Bible*.*† [Compare Mark 9:42-48 in item #2 above.]†

Matthew 25:41: “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Away from me, you that are under God’s curse! Away to the **eternal** fire which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels!’”—*Good News Bible*.*†

9. If there is such a thing as everlasting punishment somewhere in the universe, that means that sin and wickedness will never be eliminated. Is it fair for a person, even if s/he has lived a wicked life in this short human existence, to be punished forever?

10. And we need to remember what we have already learned that only God can produce life. In other words, God would have to keep these people alive indefinitely. Does that mean that He would have to feed them from the tree of life? That is what keeps the righteous alive in heaven!

11. Where is this “eternal fire” located? The lake of fire surrounds the New Jerusalem!

Revelation 20:10: And the devil that deceived them was cast into **the lake of fire** and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and **shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever**.—*King James Version*.*†

12. The church had struggled with this idea of eternal punishment until long ago when the Roman Catholic Church tried to suggest a possible solution.

[BSG:] The Roman Catholic Church holds that the dead who do not deserve hell but who are **not yet ready for Paradise can have their sins purged**

in purgatory and then ascend from there to Paradise. Their sufferings in purgatory can be reduced by the prayers and penances of loved ones.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is explicit about purgatory: “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”—*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 291. It states, too, that their suffering can be alleviated by the prayers of their loved ones, as well as by other acts on behalf of the dead. “The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.”—*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 291.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, November 29].^{†‡§}

13. These ideas are clearly refuted by the following verses:

Ecclesiastes 9:10: Work hard at whatever you do, because there will be no action, no thought, no knowledge, no wisdom in the world of the dead—and that is where you are going.—*Good News Bible*.*

Ezekiel 18:20-22: ²⁰ “It is the one who sins who will die. A son is not to suffer because of his father’s sins, nor a father because of the sins of his son. A good person will be rewarded for doing good, and an evil person will suffer for the evil he does.

²¹ “If an evil person stops sinning and keeps my laws, if he does what is right and good, he will not die; he will certainly live. ²²All his sins will be forgiven, and he will live, because he did what is right.”—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] **The dogma of purgatory combines the pagan notion of a burning hell with the pagan practice of praying for the dead.** This dogma is unacceptable for those who believe in the biblical teachings (1) that the dead remain resting unconsciously in their graves (*Eccles. 9:10*); (2) that the righteousness of one fallen human being cannot be transferred to another fallen human being (*Ezek. 18:20–22*); (3) that our only Mediator is Jesus Christ (*1 Tim. 2:5*); and (4) that death is followed by the final judgment, without any second chance to repent from the pitfalls of this life (*Heb. 9:27*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, November 29.^{†‡§}

14. **The idea of hell and of purgatory seriously misrepresent the character of God.** They are anti-biblical theories.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Satan’s work since his fall is to misinterpret our heavenly Father.** He suggested the dogma of the immortality of the soul. “Thou shalt not surely die,” was spoken by the great deceiver to Adam and Eve in Eden, and we are acquainted with the result of believing his words. [Genesis 3:4.] **The idea of an eternally burning hell was the production of Satan; purgatory is his invention. These teachings falsify the character of God, that He shall be regarded as severe, revengeful, arbitrary, and not exercising forgiveness. Without the correct knowledge of God, the human family would be divested of**

all divine strength. With false attributes kept before the mind as belonging to God, the human family would be the dupes of satanic lies and the subjects of satanic agencies, and he could practice upon their credulity with success. The plans of Satan have been indeed in a large degree successful, as the lack of a knowledge of God in the Christian world can testify. Satan's cruel deceptions have had their effect and have demonstrated his attributes as a deceiver, a liar, a murderer, and an accuser of God and of all who love God.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 51*,* 1890.†‡

15. Does it really matter what we believe? Or, is it only important *in whom* we believe?

[EGW:] **We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character.**—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,* April 5, 1887, par. 10.†‡ Compare *OHC* 176.5. Compare *TMK* 262.2.

16. It is true that many Protestant groups have rejected the idea of purgatory; but, they still believe in the immortal soul as a disembodied spirit which lives in the presence of God.

17. What is the truth about God's plan for the dead?

Revelation 20:12-14: ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, the book of the living. **The dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books.** ¹³Then the sea gave up its dead. **Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged according to what they had done.** ¹⁴Then death and the world of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire. (This lake of fire is the second death.)—*Good News Bible*.*†

18. The Bible clearly teaches that there are only a few human beings currently in heaven: Those who have been translated such as Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:9-11) or resurrected from the dead, such as Moses (Jude 9) and those raised with Christ. (Matthew 27:51-53) We do not know how many were raised to life with Christ.

Revelation 6:9-11: ⁹ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar [Compare Exodus 29:12; Leviticus 4:7 & 8:15.] the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

¹¹ And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.—*The Holy Bible: King James Version*.* (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version. Revelation 6:9-11). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.‡

[Another Catholic reference to this passage says: *Spirits and souls of the righteous: There is no hint in the context that this phrase refers to anything other than living people. Compare Psa 103:1–2. "All faithful people" in GNT*

may be less forceful, but it avoids the idea that departed souls are in view here.—Slager, D. (2006). Preface. In P. Clarke, S. Brown, L. Dorn, & D. Slager (Eds.), *A Handbook on the Shorter Books of the Deuterocanon** (p. 227). New York: United Bible Societies.]^{‡§}

19. Compare this passage from the Apocrypha.

2 Esdras 4:35: “Did not the souls of the righteous in their chambers ask about these matters, saying, ‘How long are we to remain here? And when will the harvest of our reward come?’”—*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. (Catholic edition)** (1989). (2 Esdras 4:35). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

20. Heaven is supposed to be a place of rest, peace, and joy. Does it sound like the “souls” under the altar are having a great time? Or, a peaceful, joyful time?

21. Clearly, Roman Catholic doctrine is based on a couple of passages from the Apocrypha.

22. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:18 that if there is no resurrection of the dead, “those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (*NKJV**) If those people are already in heaven and enjoying the bliss of heaven, how can we say they are perished?

23. The New Testament doctrine of the resurrection of the righteous is in complete opposition to the idea of an immortal soul.

24. We need to remember that the dead are having the longest, deepest sleep that they have ever experienced. God will arouse them from their sleep, either at the second coming (for the righteous) or the third coming (for the wicked).

John 5:28-29: ²⁸ “Do not be surprised at this; **the time is coming when all the dead will hear his voice** ²⁹**and come out of their graves:** those who have done good will rise and live, and those who have done evil will rise and be condemned.”—*Good News Bible.*†* [Those two resurrections are 1000 years (a millennium) apart.][‡]

25. Will the wicked really be alive forever, suffering in hell? In 1 John 5:3-12, what did John suggest about who will receive eternal life?

1 John 5:3-12: ³For our love for God means that we obey his commands. And his commands are not too hard for us, ⁴because every child of God is able to defeat the world. And **we win the victory over the world by means of our faith.** ⁵**Who can defeat the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.**

⁶ Jesus Christ is the one who came with the water of his baptism and the blood of his death. He came not only with the water, but with both the water and the blood. And the Spirit himself testifies that this is true, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷There are three witnesses: ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and all three give the same testimony.... ¹¹**The testimony is this: God has given us eternal life, and this life has its source in his Son.** ¹²**Whoever has the Son has this life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**—*Good News Bible.*†*

26. There is an interesting side note that we need to look at in the *King James Version*.

1 John 5:7-8:⁷ For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

⁸And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.—*King James Version*.*

27. You should notice that these words from the *King James Version* (#26) do not appear in the *Good News Bible* (#25) or in any other of the more up-to-date versions. Why is that? Because they were written by a Roman Catholic priest early in the church's history and imported into the *King James Version* at the insistence of a Roman Catholic cleric in 1611.
28. Just to make things completely clear, let us remember that only the Godhead have inherent immortality.

1 Timothy 6:15-16: ¹⁵His appearing will be brought about at the right time by God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. ¹⁶**He alone is immortal**; he lives in the light that no one can approach. No one has ever seen him; no one can ever see him. To him be honour and eternal dominion! Amen.—*Good News Bible*.*†

29. Let us remember that Adam and Eve had access to the tree of life and, thus, should have lived forever. We should all be living in the Garden of Eden. But, when Adam and Eve chose to sin, they were expelled from the garden and, thus, none of the human family since then has been able to access the tree of life.
30. Romans 5:12-21 explains that while sin came in because of the act of one man, Adam, we can inherit eternal life because of another human, in that case, a Human/Divine Jesus Christ who makes it possible for us to return to that original condition.
31. John 6:40 and John 11:25 make it clear that only those who believe in the Son will have eternal life; even though they may die that first death, they will live. Eternal life is a gift from God to His faithful followers.

[EGW:] **Had man after his fall been allowed free access to the tree of life, he would have lived forever, and thus sin would have been immortalized. But cherubim and a flaming sword kept “the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24), and not one of the family of Adam has been permitted to pass that barrier and partake of the life-giving fruit. Therefore there is not an immortal sinner.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 533.3-534.0.†‡

[EGW:] How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live. Yet this doctrine has been widely taught and is still embodied in many of the creeds of Christendom. Said a learned doctor of divinity: “The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. When they see others who are of the same nature and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, it will make them sensible of how happy they are.” Another used these words: “While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who,

instead of taking the part of these miserable objects, will say, Amen, Alleluia! praise ye the Lord!"...

Those who present the views expressed in the quotations given above may be learned and even honest men, but they are deluded by the sophistry of Satan. He leads them to misconstrue strong expressions of Scripture, giving to the language the coloring of bitterness and malignity which pertains to himself, but not to our Creator. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11....

It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? **The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 535.1-536.2.††

[EGW:] **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 542.2-543.0.††

32. So, why do those who believe in the immortal soul cling to that belief so tenaciously? We might understand why they want to believe that their loved ones are "with the Lord." However, would they really want to be able to see from heaven the sight they speculate they could see—of all the wicked who are being punished?
33. **The ideas of hell and even purgatory present God in a very terrible light. God is seen as a monster and a tyrant.**
34. Let us review the different views on punishment and death held by various Christian groups.

[BSG:] **Three views** regarding the eternal fire of hell compete in Christianity:

1. **Traditionalist view: Hellfire that torments forever and without ceasing.** Hell exists as a real place somewhere in the underworld where real fire torments immortal souls forever. According to this view, the conscious suffering of the wicked comes right after death and lasts throughout eternity.
2. **Conditionalist or annihilationist view: The lake of fire irreversibly and totally consumes the wicked, evil angels, and the devil in the last judgment.** [This is the traditional Seventh-day Adventist view.] Human beings are not inherently immortal, and they do not possess immortal souls.

As sinners, they are doomed to eternal death unless they accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Immortality is conditioned on receiving God's grace and exercising faith in Jesus (*John 3:16, John 5:24, Rom. 3:21–31, Eph. 2:1–10*). Hell is not a place where wicked souls or spirits go immediately after death but is understood as a "lake of fire" in which the wicked will be totally consumed at the end of human history (*Mal. 4:1; Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; Rev. 20:9, 10, 14, 15*). This fire, prepared for the devil and the fallen angels, will annihilate them, together with the wicked, at the last, or executive, judgment....

3. **Restorationist or universalist view: Hellfire ultimately purifies and saves everyone.** Universalists claim that all people will ultimately be saved, including the wicked, evil angels, and Satan, because hellfire will purify them. This understanding is built on the recognition that after death, the immortal soul of the wicked cannot go immediately to heaven but will suffer in the fire of God's judgment. This fire will gradually cleanse them, and then, at some future time (the precise moment will depend on the individual's response to this purification process), everyone will finally be saved. For an evaluation of these three different views, see Jiří Moskala, "The Current Theological Debate Regarding Eternal Punishment in Hell and the Immortality of the Soul," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1 (2015): pp. 91–125.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 132-133.^{†§}

35. We have suggested that the idea of "immortal worms" is repugnant; but, there are also other problematic expressions we need to look at.

1. [BSG:] *Worms (maggots) will not die (Isa. 66:24)*. How are we to understand the biblical statement: "The worms [*tola'im* in Hebrew] that eat them [the wicked dead] will not die" (NIV)? In the context of Isaiah 65 and 66, the wicked are those who do not serve the Lord and who rebelled against Him (*Isa. 66:3*), and who, finally, are "slain by the LORD" (*Isa. 66:16, NIV*). **First, the description is physical. These wicked are seen, and they have physical bodies. The maggots do not prey on the souls, or immaterial spirits, of the deceased. Second, nowhere does the biblical text presuppose that these worms are endowed with immortality. The worms do not receive the gift of eternal life. No divine miracle is performed on them. Third, this picture of maggots that eat the dead bodies of the wicked is a metaphor of the same sort as the picture of the fire that will not be quenched.**
2. "*Their fire shall not be quenched*" (*Isa. 66:24, ESV*). " 'And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire **shall not be quenched**, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh' " (*ESV, emphasis supplied; see also Isa. 66:15, 17*). To *quench* a fire is to put it out, to prevent it from burning up, or to stop it before it accomplishes its task. Thus, by extension, a fire that "shall not be quenched" means that the fire has not been extinguished because there is no power to stop it from achieving what fire naturally achieves: total destruction. The fire cannot be resisted or refused. Thus, the meaning of

the imagery is transparent: these dead persons have no chance to be alive again. The judgment on these wicked is final, and it means that God's judgment of destruction will not be stopped until a complete consummation has been accomplished. **There is no escape from this ultimate death. No one can rescue the wicked from this horrible end. No reversal is possible. Judgment is ultimate, and destruction is complete. It will not be interrupted until the bodies perish; thus, the final destiny of the wicked is irrevocable and permanent.** Barry Webb concludes on Isaiah 66:24: **"As it stands, it seems to depict annihilation rather than eternal torment. The bodies are dead."**—*The Message of Isaiah: On Eagles' Wings* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), p. 251.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 133-134.^{†‡§} [Brackets in the first line are added; brackets and the content in brackets in the paragraph are in the Bible study guide.][‡]

36. So, how does all this fit with our teaching from the third angel's message?

Revelation 14:10-11: ¹⁰ "Will themselves drink God's wine, the wine of his fury, which he has poured at full strength into the cup of his anger! **All who do this will be tormented in fire and sulphur before the holy angels and the Lamb.** ¹¹**The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up for ever [sic] and ever. There is no relief day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, for anyone who has the mark of its name.**"—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

Revelation 20:10: ¹⁰**Then the Devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown; and they will be tormented day and night for ever [sic] and ever.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡} [See *King James Version* as quoted in item #11 above.][‡]

[BSG:] "This text fits well into the Conditional Immortality interpretation. This view holds that God will finally and fully bring his enemies to judgement, with absolute destruction and extinction as the result."—"Does Revelation 14:11 Teach Eternal Torment? Examining a Proof-Text on Hell," *Evangelical Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (January 2001): p. 36.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 134].^{‡§}

37. Suggesting that God's fire represented in the third angel's message is eternal means it is unquenchable and further suggests there is no point of return. There is no second chance. Annihilation is total and complete.

38. We should also remember the various understandings of the words *eternal*, *forever*, and *everlasting*. For God, it is without end. For us, as long as we live. For fire, until it is out.

39. The Bible clearly speaks about a *lake of fire*. Is that just another term for *hell*? How long does the lake of fire last? How can each one of us make absolutely certain we do not end up in that lake of fire. Will the New Jerusalem be surrounded by a "lake of fire"?

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Last Modified: October 27, 2022