

Hell and the Immortal Soul

Some say the unsaved will live forever, in eternal, conscious, physical torment:

“The final wrath of God will be terrible, indescribable pain, for ever, and ever and ever.” (John Piper)

“I am deeply concerned, that even though you are sitting in a church building, that some of you, one day, will go to hell, to be tormented, day and night, for ever and ever.” (Francis Chan)

Others say the unsaved will live forever, in eternal separation from God:

“To be in hell is to be out of the presence of God. You'll go out into eternity thirsting for God, and you can never find Him.” (Billy Graham)

And others say the unsaved will be destroyed: they will perish and no longer exist:

“I'm saying that people that go to hell are finally, totally destroyed, soul and body, entirely and forever, and never come back again.” (Edward Fudge)

In the first two scenarios - eternal conscious torment and eternal conscious separation - the unsaved have an eternal conscious existence, understood to be an immortal soul.

In the third scenario the unsaved come to an end of their existence; they are annihilated or destroyed, after which they have no existence, no consciousness and no torment of any kind. Given that their existence ends they do not, apparently, have an immortal soul.

If we have immortal souls, then the eternal conscious torment/separation scenarios are possibly true and annihilation is ruled out: souls that are immortal must exist forever. Annihilation becomes a possibility only if we do not have immortal souls.

Do we have immortal souls? Here's what Jesus had to say:

"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 10:28)

Really? Our soul can be destroyed? Did Jesus really mean "destroy"? The Greek word for "destroy" in this verse was ἀπόλλυμι (which is transliterated into English as "apollymi"). Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible provides the following definition for ἀπόλλυμι

(Strong's word # G622):

ἀπόλλυμι apóllymi, _ap-ol'-loo-mee;_ from G575 and the base of G3639; to destroy fully (reflexively, to perish, or lose), literally or figuratively:—destroy, die, lose, mar, perish.

You can easily look this up yourself with online tools such as blueletterbible.org.

We learn in Ezekiel 18:20 that whatever a "soul" is, it can die:

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

So, how can we explain souls being destroyed? How can a soul die? It's simple, actually: the Biblical "soul" is not the same as the "immortal soul" which has come down to us from pagan Greek philosophy. "Soul" has two completely different definitions.

Try finding "immortal soul" in your Bible. It's not there. I searched many Bibles, including all these, and "immortal soul" was not in any of them:

KJV (King James Version)
NKJV (New King James Version)
NET (New English Translation)
NLT (New Living Translation)
NIV (New International Version)
ESV (English Standard Version)
CSB (Christian Standard Bible)
NASV (New American Standard Bible)
RSV (Revised Standard Version)
ASV (American Standard Version)
YLT (Young's Literal Translation)
DBY (Darby Translation)
WEB (Webster's Bible)
HNV (Hebrew Names Version)
CEB (Common English Bible)
RHE (Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible)
GW (GOD'S WORD Translation)
GNT (Good News Translation)
CSB (Holman Christian Standard Bible)
LEB (Lexham English Bible)
NCV (New Century Version)
NIRV (New International Reader's Version)
NRS (New Revised Standard)

OJB (Orthodox Jewish Bible)
BBE (The Bible in Basic English)
CJB (The Complete Jewish Bible)
MSG (The Message Bible)
TMB (Third Millennium Bible)
TYN (Tyndale)
WNT (Weymouth New Testament)
WEB (World English Bible)
WYC (Wycliffe)

What is the "soul" in the Bible? It's not some sort of immortal component we "have" that leaves us when we die; that's a pagan idea championed by Plato and other Greek philosophers hundreds of years before Christ. Consider what Plato wrote about 360 BC:

*"Do we believe that there is such a thing as death? And is this anything but the separation of soul and body? And being dead is the attainment of this separation; when the soul exists in herself, and is parted from the body and the body is parted from the soul . . . is not the conclusion of the whole matter this? - that the soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intelligible, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable; and the body is in the very likeness of the human, and mortal, and unintelligible, and multiform, and dissoluble, and changeable . . . beyond question the soul is immortal and imperishable, and our souls will truly exist in another world!" (Plato, in *Phaedo*, about 360 BC)*

How did the "immortal soul" enter traditional Christian doctrine? It came quite naturally in the early church as people "converted" to Christianity from their pagan Greek roots. Trouble is, they did not leave all their roots behind. Today the "immortal soul" that will always live on - someplace, somehow - has become firmly embedded into traditional Christian doctrine. Here is evangelist Billy Graham, teaching everyone's soul will always live somewhere, forever, in direct contradiction to Jesus' warning that the soul can be destroyed:

*"But you cannot change the fact that you're a living soul, and that you're going to live **somewhere** forever. That's a sobering thought . . . That's the part of you that will be living a thousand years from now, either in heaven or hell." (Billy Graham)*

Matthew 10:28 is by no means the only verse about ἀπόλλυμι - being fully destroyed or perishing. Here's a verse almost every Christian knows:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"Perish" in that verse is from the very same Greek word ἀπόλλυμι. We will either perish - fully destroyed - or else we will have eternal life. It seems that salvation is not about **where** you will spend eternity. Salvation is about whether you will even **have** an eternity, or will perish, not having an eternity.

Here's another verse about perishing:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

"Perish" is from the same Greek word ἀπόλλυμι. If we'll "come to repentance" we can avoid perishing, destruction.

Jesus gave a similar warning in Luke 13:4,5:

"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?
I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Again, "perish" is the same Greek word ἀπόλλυμι.

Jesus said:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13,14)

"Destruction" in the first verse is from the Greek [a poll lay uh] ἀπώλεια, a different form of ἀπόλλυμι. Strong's gives this definition:

ἀπώλεια apóleia, ap-o'-li-a; from a presumed derivative of G622; ruin or loss (physical, spiritual or eternal):—damnable(-nation), destruction, die, perdition, X perish, pernicious ways, waste.

As we saw in John 3:16, the alternatives are not life in one place or another; no, the alternatives are either perishing, or life. The life or perish alternatives are very clear in John 10:27,28:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish,
neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

"Perish," again, is from ἀπόλλυμι. And note this: eternal life is a gift. The next verse makes this clear:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

It is through death, specifically what the Bible calls the "second death," - after judgment - that the unsaved will come to destruction. More about that later.

Eternal life is a gift from God. We would have no need to receive eternal life as a gift if we already had an immortal soul.

Salvation is not about *where* you'll spend eternity. You won't even *have* an eternity of any sort, anywhere, unless you receive the gift of eternal life. Without the gift of eternal life, you'll perish.

We've looked at New Testament verses about perishing and destruction. Now here are a few verses from the Old Testament. The wicked will be destroyed: they will perish and not "be" anymore:

"For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt
diligently consider his place, and it shall not be" (Psalms 37:10)

"When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of
iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever"
(Psalms 92:7)

"The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction
shall be to the workers of iniquity" (Proverbs 10:29)

"As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the
righteous is an everlasting foundation" (Proverbs 10:25)

"Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth,
That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the
hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to
the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; Yet he shall
perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall
say, Where is he?" (Job 20:4-7)

The Biblical "soul" is not immortal: it can perish, be destroyed and not "be" any more. "Soul" in the Bible refers to a living being, a person, a self, a life. God did not *give* the first

man an immortal soul: the first man "**became** a living soul" - a person with life, with existence:

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

Why were the first couple removed from the garden? To prevent them from eating of the tree of life and then living forever. Conclusion: they did not have immortality or immortal souls:

"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (Genesis 3:22,23)

We have solid evidence that the unsaved will be destroyed; they will not even "be" any more. So, what is "hell" in the Bible? If it is not eternal conscious torment, and not eternal conscious separation, then what is it?

"Hell" in the KJV comes from several different Hebrew and Greek words, with different meanings. Later Bibles, as we'll see, dropped this generic use of "hell" in favor words better reflecting the original Greek words. Some Bibles do not even use "hell."

In the King James Version of the Bible "hell" appears 54 times: 31 times in the Old Testament and 23 times in the New Testament.

In all 31 OT uses, "hell" is from the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל [she-ol] transliterated as she'ol or Sheol in English. But that Hebrew word is not always translated as "hell" in the KJV OT: in 31 other instances it is translated as "grave" and in three more instances it is translated as "pit". The Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל means, "place of the dead": the pit, the grave, the tomb.

"Hell" in the OT came from only one Hebrew word. In the New Testament (KJV) "hell" appears 23 times, but does not come from just one Greek word. "Hell" in the NT comes from these three different Greek words, each of which has a different meaning:

- ᾗδης [_hah_-days] (noun, transliterated "hades"; Strong's G86); 10 times
- γέεννα [_ge(t)_en-nah] (noun, transliterated "geenna" or "gehenna"; Strong's G1067); 12 times
- τάρταρος [tar-ta_rah_-oh] (verb, transliterated "tartaroo"; Strong's G5020); one time

The first of these, ᾗδης or "hades," is much like the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל "Sheol" referring to the grave, the place of the dead. In one instance in the KJV, it was actually translated "grave" rather than "hell":

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)

Using an online search tool such as www.blueletterbible.org you can easily find all the verses where "hell" appears, and see what word was used in the Hebrew and Greek texts.

The next few pages show some examples of the 10 verses where ᾗδης or "hades" is translated "hell" in the King James, New Testament. In the list of Bibles to the right of each quote, you'll see how each of those Bibles rendered ᾗδης in that same verse: usually as "Hades," sometimes as "She'ol" (using the Hebrew word) or as "the grave" or "among the dead" or as "the realm of the dead":

example 1: KJV "hell" from Gr. ᾗδης "hades"

Acts 2:31 (KJV)
"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

KJV: hell
NKJV: Hades
NLT: among the dead
NIV: realm of the dead
ESV: Hades
CSB: Hades
NASB: HADES
NET: Hades
RSV: Hades
ASV: Hades
YLT: hades
DBY: hades
HNV: She'ol

example 2: KJV "hell" from Gr. ᾍδης "hades"

Revelation 1:18 (KJV)

"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."

KJV: hell
NKJV: Hades
NLT: the grave
NIV: Hades
ESV: Hades
CSB: Hades
NASB: Hades
NET: Hades
RSV: Hades
ASV: Hades
YLT: hades
DBY: hades
HNV: She'ol

Revelation 20 verse 13 describes a resurrection for judgment. Those who have died at sea, and those who are in "hell" - in the grave - will be raised for judgment:

example 3: KJV "hell" from Gr. ᾍδης "hades"

Revelation 20:13 (KJV)

"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."

footnoted:

* *Greek and Hades*

KJV: hell
NKJV: Hades
NLT: the grave*
NIV: Hades
ESV: Hades
CSB: Hades
NASB: Hades
NET: Hades
RSV: Hades
ASV: Hades
YLT: hades
DBY: hades
HNV: She'ol

example 4: KJV "hell" from Gr. ᾍδης "hades"

KJV: hell
NKJV: Hades
NLT: the grave*
NIV: Hades
ESV: Hades
CSB: Hades
NASB: Hades
NET: Hades
RSV: Hades
ASV: Hades
YLT: hades
DBY: hades
HNV: She'ol

Revelation 20:14 (KJV)

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

footnoted:

* *Greek and Hades*

After the judgment, there will be no one left in "hell" - the grave - awaiting resurrection for judgment. All the unsaved will have been disposed of through death, leaving only those who have received eternal life. From that time onward neither death nor "hell" - the grave - will happen anymore. The verse figuratively pictures death and the grave being "cast into the lake of fire": they are destroyed, never to happen again.

The apostle Paul wrote:

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Corinthians 15:26)

Death will be destroyed, never to happen again, after the unsaved have been destroyed through death.

At the end of this .pdf all 23 verses where "hell" appears in the KJV New Testament will be displayed: 10 verses from ᾍδης or "hades," 12 verses from γέεννα or "gehenna" and one verse from τάρταρος or "tartaroo."

Next, some examples where "hell" came from γέεννα or "gehenna." This would be a good time to point out that fire is never mentioned in the 10 "hell" verses from the Greek ᾍδης or "hades." For the 12 "hell" verses from the Greek γέεννα or "gehenna," however, fire is often mentioned, and there is good reason for that.

Here is a definition of "gehenna" from Easton's *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* published in 1897:

Gehenna (originally Ge bene Hinnom; i.e., "the valley of the sons of Hinnom"), a deep, narrow glen to the south of Jerusalem, where the idolatrous Jews offered their children in sacrifice to Molech (2 Chronicles 28:3 ; 33:6 ; Jeremiah 7:31 ; 19:2-6). This valley afterwards became the common receptacle for all the refuse of the city. Here the dead bodies of animals and of criminals, and all kinds of filth, were cast and consumed by fire kept always burning. It thus in process of time became the image of the place of everlasting destruction.

In this sense it is used by our Lord in Matthew 5:22 Matthew 5:29 Matthew 5:30 ; 10:28 ; 18:9 ; Matthew 23:15 Matthew 23:33 ; Mark 9:43 Mark 9:45 Mark 9:47 ; Luke 12:5 . In these passages, and also in James 3:6 , the word is uniformly rendered "hell," the Revised Version placing "Gehenna" in the margin. (See HELL; HINNOM .)

These dictionary topics are from
M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Third
Edition, published by Thomas Nelson, 1897. Public Domain

“Gehenna” was the dump on the south side of Jerusalem, where fire and maggots destroyed whatever refuse was thrown in. Jesus likened the fate of the unsaved to being thrown into the gehenna dump, into "gehenna fire": they would be permanently destroyed. This permanent destruction is the same [ap-ol'-loo-mee] ἀπόλλυμι - perishing, destruction - we have already seen Matthew 10:28, John 3:16, Luke 13:5, John 10:28 and 2 Peter 3:9. It is the same destruction, and no longer "being," we saw in Old Testament verses.

There are prophecies describing the actual destruction, by fire, of the unsaved living at a specific time in the future. It is interesting to note that they will be reduced to ashes, just outside Jerusalem, just as trash was destroyed in the “gehenna” dump outside Jerusalem in Jesus' time. We'll look at those prophecies later.

First, though, some examples of the 12 verses where "hell" in the KJV comes from the Greek γέεννα. In the original Greek some verses include a direct reference to fire, like the fire in the γέεννα dump. Where they do, the entire expression about hell and fire is shown next to the other Bibles listed.

example 1: KJV "hell" from Gr. γέεννα "gehenna"

Matthew 5:22 (KJV)

"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."

footnoted:

* Greek *Gehenna*

** Lit *the gehenna of fire*

*** Literally: *Gehenna of fire*

KJV: hell fire

NKJV: hell fire

NLT: the fires of hell*

NIV: the fire of hell

ESV: the hell of fire*

CSB: hellfire **

NASB: the fiery hell ***

NET: to fiery hell

RSV: the hell of fire

ASV: the hell of fire

YLT: the gehenna of the fire

DBY: the hell of fire

HNV: the fire of Gehinnom

example 2: KJV "hell" from Gr. γέεννα "gehenna"

Matthew 10:28 (KJV)

"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."

footnoted:

* Greek *Gehenna*

** Gr *Gehenna*

KJV: hell

NKJV: hell

NLT: hell*

NIV: hell

ESV: hell*

CSB: hell

NASB: hell**

NET: hell

RSV: hell

ASV: hell

YLT: gehenna

DBY: hell

HNV: Gehinnom

example 3: KJV "hell" from Gr. γέεννα "gehenna"

Matthew 18:9 (KJV)

"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."

footnoted:

* Greek *the gehenna of fire*

** Greek *Gehenna*

*** Lit *gehenna of fire*

**** Literally: *Gehenna of fire*

KJV: hell fire

NKJV: hell fire

NLT: the fire of hell*

NIV: the fire of hell

ESV: the hell of fire**

CSB: into hellfire ***

NASB: the fiery hell ****

NET: into fiery hell

RSV: the hell of fire

ASV: the hell of fire

YLT: the gehenna of the fire

DBY: the hell of fire

HNV: the Gehinnom of fire

example 4: KJV "hell" from Gr. γέεννα "gehenna"

Mark 9:43 (KJV)

"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:"

footnoted:

* Greek *Gehenna*

** Gr *Gehenna*

KJV: hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched

NKJV: hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched

NLT: the unquenchable fires of hell

NIV: hell, where the fire never goes out

ESV: hell, to the unquenchable fire*

CSB: hell, the unquenchable fire

NASB: hell, into the unquenchable fire**

NET: hell, to the unquenchable fire.

RSV: hell, to the unquenchable fire.

ASV: hell, into the unquenchable fire

YLT: gehenna, to the fire — the unquenchable —

DBY: hell, into the fire unquenchable

HNV: Gehinnom, into the unquenchable fire

We have seen some examples of the 10 verses where "hell" in the KJV NT is from ᾗδης "hades." We've seen examples of the 12 verses where "hell" is from γέεννα "gehenna." The one remaining instance of "hell" in the KJV NT actually deals with fallen angels rather than men,

and has nothing to do with fire, destruction or perishing.

In this verse "hell" is from the Greek word *ταρταρόω* ("tartaroo"), a verb, meaning to cast down to the deepest pit. The verse refers to some fallen (sinning) angels being put into a place or condition of restraint or isolation, no longer able to influence or meddle with mankind. They are to be held there in figurative chains awaiting judgment. Here is 2 Peter 2:4:

KJV "hell" from Greek *ταρταρόω* "tartaroo"

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;"

footnoted:

* Greek *Tartarus*

KJV: hell

NKJV: hell

NLT: hell*

NIV: hell*

ESV: hell*

CSB: hell*

NASB: hell

NET: hell

RSV: hell

ASV: hell

YLT: Tartarus

DBY: pit of gloom

HNV: Tartarus

In a similar manner, Satan is to be figuratively bound in chains and sealed away in a figurative "bottomless pit" or place of restraint for 1000 years after Jesus' return:

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." (Revelation 20:1-3)

We have covered verses with *ἀπόλλυμι* showing the unsaved will be destroyed, will perish. We have reviewed Old Testament verses showing the wicked will be destroyed and no longer "be." And we've seen Jesus' warning that the unsaved will be destroyed, "body and soul," much like trash was destroyed in the gehenna dump outside Jerusalem.

Now we can look at some difficult verses, keeping in mind that we do not have immortal

souls, and that the unsaved will perish, permanently destroyed.

In Matthew 25:46 Jesus describes the fate of the unsaved:

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

When a criminal is executed, his punishment is not "everlasting" in the sense of being ongoing, perpetual punishing. No, the punishment is "everlasting" in the sense that it is permanent, complete and final, standing forever. It will be the same for the unsaved; they will be destroyed and that will be the end of them. Their punishment is done and stands forever; it is not eternally ongoing punishing.

The words "permanent," "final" and "completed" are not used anywhere in the KJV. "Everlasting" is often used instead. In Matthew 25:46 "everlasting" means a permanent, irreversible finished condition, not a perpetual, ongoing process.

Next we'll look at Revelation 20:10 which states that the devil "[shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever](#)." It's easy to jump to the conclusion that Satan will literally suffer eternal torment. But after researching other scriptures, we'll learn that Satan will actually be reduced to ashes, and from that time forward "[never shalt thou be anymore](#)." Satan's torment, "[day and night for ever and ever](#)" is punishment - ending with destruction - that stands finished, permanently, for all time.

Earlier we saw that Satan will be held captive for 1000 years after Jesus' return. An angel will figuratively "[cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season](#)." (Revelation 20:3)

The account continues in Revelation 20:7:

"[And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,
And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.
And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.
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](#)." (Revelation 20:7-10)

Satan will lead a final rebellion; they will surround Jerusalem but will be "[devoured](#)" -

reduced to ashes - by fire "from God out of heaven." That is the prophecy I mentioned earlier, where the wicked will be reduced to ashes, just outside Jerusalem, as trash was destroyed in the gehenna dump outside Jerusalem in Jesus' time. With so many burning - "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" - it will look like a lake of fire has surrounded Jerusalem.

The prophet Malachi described what will happen:

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch . . .

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 4:1,3)

Will Satan be burned up too? The prophet Ezekiel described Satan and Satan's fate:

"Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." (Ezekiel 28:13-19)

Yes, Satan will be reduced to ashes "in the sight of all them that behold thee." Does

Satan somehow live after his destruction? No: "[never shalt thou be any more.](#)"

How is it possible for Satan, a spirit being, to be reduced to ashes? Satan will be made a man first: "[I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.](#)" Jesus - who was the Word as was with the Father from the beginning - was made flesh and died (see John 1:1-14). In like manner Satan will also be made flesh, for death. For Jesus, there was a resurrection. For Satan, there will be no resurrection: Satan will perish in death.

Hebrews 2:14 speaks of Jesus being a "partaker of flesh and blood":

["Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;"](#)

With His own death Jesus made available a ransom, by which we may be redeemed from death, the power of sin. Through His mortal life and death Jesus also set a precedent for Satan to be made flesh, for the purpose of Satan's destruction by death: "[that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.](#)"

Revelation 14:9-11 is another passage easily mistaken as proof of eternal conscious torment:

["And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,
The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and 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 ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."](#)

Context is important: the passage refers only to some people alive just before Jesus' return. These will have willingly worshiped and followed "the beast," a person/power that will dominate the world for 42 months (Rev 13:5) shortly before Jesus' return. They will have demonstrated allegiance to the "beast" by what they believe (a "mark" in their forehead) and by what they do (a "mark" in their hand).

Two punishments are in store for them: they will "[drink of the wine of the wrath of God](#)" and they "[shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.](#)"

The "[wine of the wrath of God](#)" is explained in detail in Revelation chapter 16. For a

short - not eternal - time they receive the wrath of God, delivered by seven angels who "pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Rev 16:1).

Here's what happens when the first angel pours out his vial, Revelation 16:2:

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

Many of the other vials are similar, and it appears that *during* these physical torments "they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image." The verse does not state that they have no rest day and night *forever*; these torments occur during their mortal lives, not afterward.

The other punishment was: "and 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 ascendeth up for ever and ever."

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were punished and destroyed by "fire and brimstone." That fire burned out, leaving ashes behind. But the smoke did not disappear as soon as the fire went out: it kept ascending, up "for ever and ever" as far as the eye could see. Abraham from very far away could see the column of smoke (Genesis 19:27,28).

The passage alludes to their eventual destruction in the "lake of fire and brimstone"; they will be destroyed, just as trash was destroyed in "gehenna fire." Revelation 21:7 defines going to the "lake of fire and brimstone" as "the second death":

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Revelation 21:7)

Finally we have the account of Lazarus and the rich man, found in Luke 16:19-31. Many believe the account to be proof of eternal conscious torment in a fiery hell. The account is not to be taken literally, however; it is a parable:

"But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples" (Mark 4:34).

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them" (Matthew 13:34).

The account of Lazarus and the rich man, found in Luke 16:19-31:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and

fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:
And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,
And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.
And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;
And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
And 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 thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.
And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.
Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:
For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."
(Luke 16:19-31)

Jesus staged the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in the common Greek mythology of that time (torment in hell, etc), knowing His listeners would recognize it as mythology and look for the real meaning. Jesus gave a hint to the identity of the rich man when He said the rich man had five brothers. The Jews knew their genealogy well and realized the rich man symbolized them, the Jews: the father of their tribe, Judah, had five brothers. (The parents were Jacob and Leah, as recounted in Genesis 35:23.)

The Jews were rich owing to their covenant with God, promising them national blessings and inheritance of the Kingdom of God. Lazarus represented the gentiles, outside the rich man's gate, without access to the promises. The parable showed that those who were "in Abraham's bosom" - had the faith of Abraham, and believed and obeyed - would be the ones who would inherit blessings and the Kingdom of God.

Jesus gave a similar parable in Matthew 21:33-43. Here, a man (God) built a vineyard

and rented it out to husbandmen (Israel, including the Jews) who failed "[to render him the fruits in their seasons.](#)" They killed the servants and even the son God sent to collect what was due. Jesus warned "[Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof](#)" (Matthew 21:43).

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man is about belief and repentance, and how believing Gentiles would be favored over unbelieving Jews. How did the "rich man" fail? He had lacked belief and so failed to repent. He figuratively begged Abraham for help, asking Abraham to send someone from the dead to warn his family. Abraham figuratively replied that they wouldn't believe *even if someone rose from the dead.*

Perhaps the parable was given about the same time Jesus raised Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, from his tomb. The resurrected Lazarus was being seen daily by all the Jews. Jesus' words about not believing even "[though one rose from the dead](#)" (Luke 16:31) would certainly have "rung their bells"! Or, perhaps Jesus was referring to His own resurrection.

In Romans chapters 10 and 11 Paul wrote about Israel's failure due to unbelief and the opportunity their failure opened for the Gentiles. Here are a few passages from Romans:

[“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.](#)

[For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.](#)

[For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”](#) (Romans 10:1-3)

[“But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.](#)

[But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”](#) (Romans 10:19-21)

[“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.](#)

[Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? ”](#) (Romans 11:11,12)

[“Thou wilt say then, The branches \[Israel\] were broken off, that I \[Gentiles\] might be grafted in.](#)

[Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest](#)

by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:
For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also
spare not thee." (Romans 11:19-21)

There are additional reasons not to take the parable of Lazarus and the rich man literally. There is no resurrection and no judgment in the parable: they were omitted. Jesus said there will be a resurrection and a judgment before anyone is condemned:

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are
in the graves shall hear his voice,
And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the
resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the
resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28,29)

The resurrection for judgment will be in the future; there is no "rich man" in "torments." And neither Abraham nor Lazarus are in heaven. Jesus said so:

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down
from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." (John
3:13)

That's right: Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David and all the others are still in their graves, waiting for their resurrection. The apostle Peter confirmed that even David, a man after God's own heart, was still in his tomb and had not ascended to heaven:

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch
David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us
unto this day . . .
For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself,
The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
Until I make thy foes thy footstool." (Acts 2:29,34,35)

Jesus mentioned "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Those who are condemned at judgment will see others receiving the gift of eternal life. There will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" - mental anguish - when they realize they, too, could have received eternal life were it not for their own foolish choices.

Satan lied when he said "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). The lie persists to this day as the doctrine of the immortal soul. We do not have immortal souls that "have to be somewhere, either in heaven or in hell, forever." There is no eternal, conscious, torment: the unsaved are destroyed through death. They perish and will "be" no more. The very idea that God would mercilessly torment anyone forever is frankly a Satanic, slanderous lie.

Where will you spend eternity: in heaven, or in hell? The question is as deceitful as asking "what kind of cheese is the moon made of" because *you will not even have an eternity* -

of any sort, anywhere - unless you receive from God the gift of eternal life. Otherwise you will perish, in death.

So, how can we receive the gift of eternal life, and be saved from perishing? There are many wrong answers to that question. Here are a few:

- just "say the sinner's prayer"
- just "give your heart to the Lord"
- just "have faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross"

Actually, we've already read two scriptures which show the way to eternal life, the way to avoid perishing:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
(Luke 13:4,5)

Jesus told His disciples to preach "repentance and remission of sins" - not "faith alone":

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:45-47)

We do not receive mercy and saving grace just because we *have* faith. No! As Ephesians 2:8 says, it is **through** faith - not just because we **have** faith:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

Through faith - faith that God exists and rewards - we may make this choice: to "come to God":

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of

them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Faith itself does not save. It's the choice you may make - to "come to God" - that matters. After all, you could have faith that God exists and rewards, but still not choose to "come to God." True believing is acting, positively, on your faith.

And how do we "come to God?" Obeying Him is a good start. What does God tell us to do?

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" (Acts 17:30)

If - IF - we'll choose repent: to forsake sin, and seek and do God's will, we'll receive mercy:

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)

And what is the mercy? It is forgiveness and grace. If we'll choose to come to God and forsake sin, our past sins will be erased and we'll be redeemed, by grace, from the death penalty we have already earned for sin:

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19, NKJV).

On the cross Jesus made available a ransom, His life for ours. Through His ransom, redemption from our death penalty is now available to all who will choose to forsake sin - sin which earned the death penalty in the first place.

Without repentance, we have no redemption and will surely perish - in death - as the "wages" of our sin. That's why Jesus warned "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:5). It's simple, and it makes sense.

Jesus did not die to make it okay for us to continue in sin. No. He died to make a ransom available - and redemption from death possible - for all who will choose to turn from sin.

That's not the end of the story. It's the beginning. We don't automatically stop sinning when we choose to come to God and forsake sin. We need help. That's what the holy spirit is for:

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:32)

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38)

On the cross Jesus finished making a ransom available, but His work is not finished. Through the holy spirit He now leads and corrects and helps those who have chosen to obey and repent:

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19)

He is the potter, we are the clay. An ongoing relationship with Him "yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11).

That is how we are prepared, made ready to receive the gift of eternal life and inherit the Kingdom of God, but this only works if we are willing. There is no other way.

God wants family - sons and daughters - to live with Him forever. Creation is not finished: those sons and daughters are being created right now, through Jesus. Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Listed below are all ten KJV New Testament verses where "hell" is from the Greek ᾗδης "hades": the place of the dead; the grave

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 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."

Luke 10:15

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell."

Luke 16:23

"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Acts 2:27

“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

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.”

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 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 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 20:14

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

Below are all twelve KJV New Testament verses where “hell” is from the Greek γέεννα “gehenna,” referring to the dump outside Jerusalem, where fire and maggots destroyed all that was thrown in. Jesus likened the fate of the unsaved to being thrown into “gehenna fire” for final, permanent destruction.

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 5:29

“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 5:30

“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 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 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 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 23:33

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

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 9:45

“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 9:47

“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.”

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.”

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.”

Here is the only KJV New Testament verse where “hell” is from the Greek *ταρταρόω*
“tartaroo”

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;”
