

## **DO THE WICKED BURN FOREVER?**

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What happens to people when they die? Most don't know? Those who are not religious probably believe nothing happens — you die ... you are buried — the end!!

**Religious people believe good folk will go to Heaven. Wicked people — go to Hell!**

So religious people — **most Christians — believe everyone will “live on” after death.**

Probably the underlying reason for the views of most churches is that man is some sort of immortal soul. **The only question is “where do you continue to live”?** Typically — if you are good — you go to heaven. If you are bad — you will go to hell.

**And — what is hell like?** Traditionally ... most churches see it as **a place of eternal torment.** Fires burning ... endless agony ... demons sticking pitchforks into the damned — etc!

That is why you must “give your heart to the Lord” at some point!

Some debate today. It may not be torment in flames. It might be “just” eternal separation from God. Some say: Fires will torment for a period — then — after “purification” — all will end up in heaven — hell is only temporary.

Some hold to the traditional view and accuse others of “weakening — watering down the Gospel”! Of removing the fear of hell!

**Others teach “annihilation”. That the wicked are eternally destroyed. Completely vanished — gone!** Which is what many of us believe. **And more importantly — it is what the Bible teaches.**

If we just read the Bible with an open mind ... without pre-conceived ideas from our denomination — what do we find?

## What does the Bible language picture?

### **Psalms 37:1, 7, 9-10**

1 **Do not fret because of evildoers,**

**Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.**

7 **Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;**

Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,  
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

9 **For evildoers shall be cut off;**

But those who wait on the LORD,  
They shall inherit the earth.

10 For **yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;**

**Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,**

**But it shall be no more.**

**BE NO MORE.**

### **Psalms 37:18-20**

18 **The LORD knows the days of the upright,**

**And their inheritance shall be forever.** (*That's the good folk*)

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,  
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But **the wicked shall perish;**

And the enemies of the LORD,

Like the splendour of the meadows, **shall vanish.**

**Into smoke they shall vanish away.**

**INTO SMOKE — VANISH AWAY!**

### **Psalms 92:5-7**

5 O LORD, how great are Your works!

Your thoughts are very deep.

6 A senseless man does not know,

Nor does a fool understand this.

7 When **the wicked** spring up like grass,

And **when all the workers of iniquity flourish,**

**It is that they may be destroyed forever.**

**DESTROYED FOREVER.**

We all know what destroy means. We have seen a house or factory destroyed by fire.

**Psalms 68:1-2**

1 **Let God arise,**

**Let His enemies be scattered;**

Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.

2 **As smoke is driven away,**

**So drive them away;**

**As wax melts before the fire,**

**So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

**The outcome of the wicked — AS WAX MELTS before the fire.**

Why would you believe that something else happens to the wicked other than that?

**Psalms 145:17-20**

17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways,  
Gracious in all His works.

18 **The LORD is near to all who call upon Him,**

**To all who call upon Him in truth.** (*The righteous have got a good future*)

19 **He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;**

**He also will hear their cry and save them.**

20 **The LORD preserves all who love Him,**

**But all the wicked He will destroy.**

**GOD WILL DESTROY THE WICKED! END OF STORY!!**

The simple reading is that the wicked have no future — vanish ... perish ... destroyed ... smoke ... melt.

**Malachi 4:1-3**

1 “For behold, the day is coming,  
Burning like an oven,

**And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.**

**And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”**

Says the LORD of hosts,

**“That will leave them neither root nor branch. (Utterly destroyed)**

2 But to you who fear My name

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise

With healing in His wings;

And you shall go out

And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

3 **You shall trample the wicked,**

For **they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet**

On the day that I do this,”

Says the LORD of hosts.

**BURNED UP. STUBBLE. ASHES UNDER OUR FEET.**

Just reading the Old Testament ... the descriptions of the future of the wicked are consistent. **THE WICKED HAVE NO FUTURE.**

But **what about the New Testament?** That’s where most churches get their Christian doctrines. **Surely it talks a lot about hell fire doesn’t it?**

**The English word “hell” can be a little bit misleading.** It appears 23 times in the KJV New Testament ... only 13 times in the NKJV and the NASB ... 14 times in the ESV — and **not at all in Youngs Literal Translation or the Weymouth New Testament.**

The English word “hell” translates from the Greek words **“Hades”** (the grave). **“Gehenna”** (what we think of as fiery punishment) and once for the abode of wicked spirits **“Tartarus”**.

**It was only Jesus who spoke about Gehenna (almost exclusively).**

Let’s review the New Testament and what is the fate of the wicked.

### **Matthew 7:13-14**

13 “**Enter by the narrow gate**”; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 Because **narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

**TWO WAYS OF LIFE. Life versus destruction. Not life versus life** (in torment ... in hell).

**“Destruction” = APOLEIA in Greek. Which means: Destruction ... utter destruction ... ruin.**

### **Matthew 10:28**

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*)

**DESTROY BODY AND SOUL — “ALL” of you.**

**“Destroy” = APOLLUMI (the same root as APOLEIA).**

The language is plain. Unless you already believe in eternal “life” in hell before you even read the Bible?

### **John 3:16**

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

**SHOULD NOT PERISH.**

**APOLLUMI = BE DESTROYED ... but on the other hand — HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.**

**ETERNAL LIFE — or — the opposite — UTTER DESTRUCTION.**

### **1 Corinthians 15:13-19**

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.

16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Those who have fallen asleep — have perished. Even saints in Christ have perished ... **IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION.**

**APOLLUMI AGAIN. DESTROYED. LOST FOR EVER.**

### **2 Peter 3:5-9**

5 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,

6 by which **the world that then existed perished**, being flooded with water. (*Apollumi*)

7 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 of ungodly men.** (*Perdition = destruction*)

8 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.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish** but that all should come to repentance.

**PERISH — APOLLUMI = DESTRUCTION**

The world of Noah's day — completely destroyed! It will be the same for the wicked!

## **No hint of living forever ... in conscious torment?**

Some might say “Perhaps perish or destroy can mean living forever ... in some terrible place.

But **the language means just what it says.**

### **Matthew 2:13**

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; **for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.**”

**Herod seeks to DESTROY (APOLLUMI) Jesus as a baby.** Stab or behead with a sword.

### **Matthew 12:13-14**

13 Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.

14 Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, **how they might destroy Him.**

**The Pharisees plotted to DESTROY Jesus (APOLLUMI).**

The language of the fate of the wicked is consistent. To perish ... to be destroyed.

### **Acts 3:19-23**

19 **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,**

20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,  
21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.

23 **And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’**

**UTTERLY DESTROYED. GREEK: EXOLOTHREUO**

**A different Greek word: To utterly destroy ... to extirpate (to remove or destroy something completely). That is what will happen to the wicked!**

**(R. F. Weymouth, Life In Christ, page 365, translator of The New Testament in Modern Speech)**

**"My mind fails to conceive a grosser misinterpretation of language than when the five or six strongest words which the Greek tongue possesses, signifying "destroy," or "destruction," are explained to mean maintaining an everlasting but wretched existence. To translate black as white is nothing to this."**

**John Baptist warned of the COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED.**

**Matthew 3:7-12**

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

9 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.

10 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.**

11 I indeed baptize 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 baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

12 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.**" *(It doesn't mean a fire that can go on and on)*

**CUT DOWN AND THROWN INTO THE FIRE.**



## **BURN UP — WITH UNQUENCHABLE FIRE.**

We have some more passages to look at ... but so far it's a consistent story. **No hint of eternal conscious torment!! JUST UTTER DESTRUCTION — PERISH ... VANISH AWAY ... BE ASHES ... BE NO MORE ... MELT LIKE WAX.**

Just what we would expect.

**No one goes to heaven immediately after they die. They need a resurrection — or they stay dead.**

**Likewise with the wicked. They stay dead — till their resurrection ... to judgment or condemnation.**

**THE FULLY-WICKED WILL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED — FOREVER!!**

**Our God is not interested in torturing people forever.**