

## **TORMENTED FOR EVER IN HELL FIRE?**

**JAMIE MCNAB**

**8.6.24**

As we commented recently ... **the most popular view in Churchianity is that people go to heaven or hell — immediately they die.**

We saw that **saints “sleep” till Jesus’ return and are resurrected.**

For the last couple of weeks ... we’ve been looking at **the fate of the wicked.**

If we just read **the plain language of scripture** — without preconceived ideas — we basically see that **their ultimate fate is destruction.**

We see a variety of expressions:

- **Vanish away**
- **Like smoke**
- **Burn up**
- **Ashes ... stubble ... chaff**
- **Perish**
- **Destruction and utter destruction**

**All point to the same outcome — CEASE TO EXIST —ANNIHILATION.**

**The most popular view** in most churches is that **the wicked go immediately to a burning hell ... where they experience conscious torment ... for ever ... in endless agony.**

No scripture really says that ... though there are a handful that people go to as we saw last week — references to **unquenchable fire ... eternal fire ... everlasting punishment.** We saw **these scriptures merely refer to fire that will not be extinguished ... or punishment that is eternal in its impact.**

Let’s recap one passage.

### **Mark 9:42-48**

42 “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

43 **If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to \*hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched**—

44 **where**

**Their worm does not die**

**And the fire is not quenched.’**

45 **And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into \*hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched**—

46 **where**

**Their worm does not die**

**And the fire is not quenched.’**

47 **And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into \*hell fire**—

48 **where**

**Their worm does not die**

**And the fire is not quenched.’**

Jesus uses the word “**Gehenna**” (\*hell) — a small valley in Jerusalem with an infamous history — in Jesus’ day a refuse dump with fires burning ... a stench ... flies and maggots — **as a symbol for the fate of the wicked.**

**It pictures the utter destruction that will come to wicked people.**

Jesus refers to **Isaiah Chapter 66** — **which pictures the complete destruction of the wicked.** You’ll see their corpses — as fires burn and maggots feed. (What you’d get after a battle).

Consistent story!!

However — there are a couple of passages in Revelation that we need to look at.

**Revelation 14:9-11** — a warning to a specific group of people!

9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “**If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,**

10 **he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God,** which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. **He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

11 **And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night,** who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Torment ... fire ... smoke? Proof positive? Let’s have a closer look.

## BACKGROUND

- i) We should base our understanding on plain Bible scriptures — which in this regard consistently talk of destruction
- ii) **The Book of Revelation uses a large number of symbols.** The symbols communicate truth ... but are not designed to be taken literally
- iii) The symbols are explained in the Bible. **The Book of Revelation has over 500 references to Old Testament passages**

Consider these symbols in Revelation:

- Beast — 7 heads and 10 horns. Not literal!
- Lamb — 7 horns and 7 eyes. It tells us that is Jesus Christ!
- Great Harlot
- Woman in the heavens with the moon under her feet
- White ... red ... black and green horses riding out
- Green horse ridden by death and hades following
- Locusts with crowns ... faces like men — torment mankind for 5 months
- Dragon spews water out of his mouth like a flood after a woman
- Jesus has a sword sticking out of his mouth
- And many more symbols!

Hopefully ... we get the picture. The symbols convey information — convey truth ... but aren't literal!

In Revelation 14:9-11: **Is the “wine” of the wrath of God literal? No! It's a symbol.**

**Does God have a literal “cup of indignation”? No! It's a symbol.**

Do we get to pick and choose what are symbols — and what we think are literal?

**The truth being conveyed is TOTAL DESTRUCTION** (in particular those who take the Mark of the Beast).

Compare:

**Isaiah 34:1-6**     **JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS**

1 Come near, you nations, to hear;

And heed, you people!

Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,

The world and all things that come forth from it.

2 **For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations,**

**And His fury against all their armies;**

**He has utterly destroyed them,**

He has given them over to the slaughter.

3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;

**Their stench shall rise from their corpses,**

**And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.**

4 **All the host of heaven shall be dissolved,**

**And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;**

**All their host shall fall down**

As the leaf falls from the vine,

And as fruit falling from a fig tree.

5 **“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven;**

Indeed it shall come down on Edom,

**And on the people of My curse, for judgment.**

6 **The sword of the LORD is filled with blood,**

It is made overflowing with fatness,

With the blood of lambs and goats,

With the fat of the kidneys of rams.

For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,  
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

**The indignation of God. Utterly destroyed! The stench of corpses.**

**Isaiah 34:8-10**

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

**9 Its streams shall be turned into pitch,**

**And its dust into brimstone;**

**Its land shall become burning pitch.**

**10 It shall not be quenched night or day;**

**Its smoke shall ascend forever.**

**From generation to generation it shall lie waste;**

**No one shall pass through it forever and ever.**

**Fire and brimstone. Not quenched — night or day. The smoke ascends — forever.**

The terminology God uses to describe the utter destruction of Edom — **similar language in Revelation 14**. Yet things do change afterwards — see the following:

**Isaiah 34:11-13**

**11 But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it,**

**Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.**

And He shall stretch out over it

The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.

**12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom,**

**But none shall be there, and all its princes shall be nothing.**

**13 And thorns shall come up in its palaces,**

**Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;**

**It shall be a habitation of jackals,**

**A courtyard for ostriches.**

Revelation Chapter 14 pictures **THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF THOSE WHO WORSHIP THE BEAST OR TAKE HIS MARK**. It is not suddenly a new revelation about sinners burning in eternal hell-fire!

What about the WINE OF GOD? Literal?

**Jeremiah 25:15-18**

15 For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: **“Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.”**

16 **And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.”**

17 Then I took the cup from the LORD’s hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD had sent me:

18 Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, **to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day;**

**“Wine cup of fury” — The picture is of desolation and destruction.**

**Jeremiah 25:27-33**

27 “Therefore you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: **“Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, (UTTER DESTRUCTION) because of the sword which I will send among you.”**’

28 And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “You shall certainly drink! 29 For behold, **I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name**, and should you be utterly unpunished? **You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth,**” says the LORD of hosts.’

30 “Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: ‘The LORD will roar from on high,  
And utter His voice from His holy habitation;  
He will roar mightily against His fold.  
He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes,  
**Against all the inhabitants of the earth.**

31 A noise will come to the ends of the earth—  
**For the LORD has a controversy with the nations;**

He will plead His case with all flesh.

**He will give those who are wicked to the sword,**’ says the LORD.”

32 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

**“Behold, disaster shall go forth  
From nation to nation,  
And a great whirlwind shall be raised up  
From the farthest parts of the earth.**

33 And at that day **the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of  
the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be  
lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse  
on the ground.**

## **PROPHECY OF DESTRUCTION! CORPSES!**

### **Obadiah 1:15-16**

15 **“For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near;**

As you have done, it shall be done to you;

**Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.**

16 For as you drank on My holy mountain,

So shall **all the nations drink continually;**

**Yes, they shall drink, and swallow,**

**And they shall be as though they had never been.**

Drink ... swallow (the wrath of the cup of God’s wine).

**“As though they had never been” — PERISH ... DESTRUCTION ...  
CORPSES ... ASHES ... VANISH AWAY.**

The truth conveyed is always the same — consistent language ...  
though often “symbolised” in colourful prophetic terms.

Back to:

### **Revelation 14:9-11**

9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **“If anyone  
worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his  
forehead or on his hand,**

10 **he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of**

**God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His**

**indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in

the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

11 And **the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever;** and **they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.**"

The language is similar to Isaiah 34. **TOTAL DESTRUCTION IS CERTAIN. TORMENT UNTIL FINISHED.**

This is the announcement from the Third Angel.

**FULFILLMENT:**

#### **Revelation 14:17-20**

17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, **he also having a sharp sickle.**

18 And another angel came out from the altar, **who had power over fire**, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "**Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.**"

19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, **and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**

20 **And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.** (*This is the Battle at Armageddon*)

Sickle ... grapes ... winepress — all literal? NO!

They are symbols of **VIOLENT DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ... LOTS OF BLOOD ... LOTS OF CORPSE?**

#### **Revelation 18:1-5**

1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen**, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! (*Notice: there are still unclean birds at the end of the age*)



3 **For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her,** and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “**Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.**”

5 **For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.**

**WINE ... FORNICATION — SYMBOLS. THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON THE GREAT!**

**Revelation 18:6-8**

6 Render to her just as she rendered to you, and **repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.**

7 In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, **in the same measure give her torment and sorrow;** for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’

8 **Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire,** for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

**TORMENT — UTTERLY BURNED. ASHES — EXIST NO MORE.**

**Revelation 18:9-10**

9 “The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, **when they see the smoke of her burning,**

10 standing at a distance for fear of her **torment,** saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

**SMOKE ... BURNING ... TORMENT. UTTER DESTRUCTION.**

### **Revelation 18:17-19**

17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance

18 and cried out **when they saw the smoke of her burning**, saying, What is like this great city?'

19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! **For in one hour she is made desolate.**'

### **DESOLATE.**

Babylon will not exist anymore.

### **Revelation 19:1-3**

1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

2 **For true and righteous are His judgments**, because **He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication**; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."

3 Again they said, "Alleluia! **Her smoke rises up forever and ever!**" (*It goes up and up and never comes back down*)

**"SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER" IS THE LANGUAGE OF TOTAL DESTRUCTION — FOREVER!**

Revelation 14 and Revelation 18 are good examples of the language of prophetic destruction.

We can see that in the Old Testament:

### **Daniel 7:7-8**

7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; **it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.** (*This is not literal — it is symbolic!*)

8 **I was considering the horns, and there was another horn**, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, **in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words**. (Symbolic)

The Fourth Beast in the end-time.

#### **Daniel 7:11, 26**

11 “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; **I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame**.

26 ‘But the court shall be seated,

And **they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever**.

**SLAIN ... DESTROYED ... BURNING FLAME** (would burn it to ashes).

Utterly consistent with the whole Bible. The picture is **TOTAL DESTRUCTION** of this Empire — its leaders and so on.

One final passage that some turn to claim conscious torment in flames forever.

#### **Revelation 19:19-21**

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 **Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence**, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone**.

21 **And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse**. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

**FIRE AND BRIMSTONE** — as elsewhere — is the language of **DESTRUCTION ... BURNING UP ... ASHES**. The first time we came

across fire and brimstone was in **SODOM AND GOMORRAH**. It was utterly destroyed.

#### **Revelation 20:7-10**

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, **to gather them together to battle**, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

9 **They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.**

10 **The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are.** (ESV ... ISV —“were”) And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

**FIRE AND BRIMSTONE IS THE LANGUAGE OF DESTRUCTION. FOR EVER AND EVER.**

#### **Revelation 20:14-15**

14 **Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.** This is the second death.

15 **And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.** (All of the people who are finally judged to be wicked. No mention of torment.)

**DEATH AND HADES are also cast into THE LAKE OF FIRE.**

Death and Hades are not beings — NOT ENTITIES — NOT INDIVIDUALS. You can't pick them up and cast them into a fire.

**This is a CONTINUATION OF THE LANGUAGE OF UTTER DESTRUCTION.**

You can't literally throw Death and Hades into a fiery furnace. But you can “destroy” them — bring them to an end ... so that they are no more — have VANISHED AWAY.

### **1 Corinthians 15:24-26**

24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 **The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.**

**DEATH — DESTROYED!** As if it had never been! Cease to exist.

### **1 Corinthians 15:54-55**

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “**Death is swallowed up in victory.**”

55 “**O Death, where is your sting?  
O Hades, where is your victory?**”

**DEATH “SWALLOWED UP”.** (More figurative language)

### **Revelation 21:3-4**

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; **there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.**”

**NO MORE DEATH!**

**Death and Hades cease to exist. As do the Beast and the False Prophet** (and their empires) ... and anything evil or ungodly. **No more!**

**EVEN THE MEMORY OF THEM IS NO MORE.**

So the colourful apocalyptic language and symbolism of Revelation 14 and 20 confirms the plain language of the rest of the Bible:

**THE FATE OF THE WICKED IS COMPLETE AND UTTER DESTRUCTION — AND EVEN THE MEMORY OF THEM IS NO MORE.**

