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Worm In the Old and New Testament. (2013)

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Worm in the Old and New Testament.

Topics.

- You are my father, and the worm my mother or my sister.
- The wicked shall lie down alike in the dust and worms shall cover them.
- The worm should feed sweetly on those who have sinned.
- Man, who is a maggot and a son of man, who is a worm.
- I am a worm a reproach of men, and despised by the people.
- The maggot is spread under you and worm cover you.'
- Fear not, you worm Jacob.
- The worm will eat them like wool.
- A worm that does not die.
- God prepared a worm and it caused a plant to wither.
- Like worms they will be afraid of the Lord.
- Herod gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worm.
- Cast into hell fire, into the fire where their worm does not die.

NOTE: the purpose of this study is not to do an in depth study on each topic, but simply to put the word worm into its context to discover whether worms are linked to everlasting torment, agony and suffering for all eternity in a place of fiery flames or to death in the grave.

OLD TESTAMENT.

In the Old Testament the word worm comes from the Hebrew word towla` and from Strong's Concordance can refer to a worm, a maggot or a grub especially the kind that preys upon dead bodies.

EXODUS

Exodus 16:20 ----- 20 Israel did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of the mana until morning, and it bred worms and stank (Exod. 16:20).

This refers to literal worms and maggots that ate of the mana.

DEUTERONOMY

Deut. 28:39 ----- 39 Israel shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them (Deut. 28:39).

This refers to literal worms that ate the vineyards and grapes.

Job 7:5 ----- ³⁹My (Jobs) flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken (Job 7:5).

Job sickness is so bad his body or at least he feels his body is being infected with some kind of worm.

You are my Father, and the Worm My Mother or My sister.

Job 17:14 ----- ¹³If I hope for *sheol* as my house, if I make my bed in darkness, ¹⁴if I say to the *pit*, 'You are my father,' and to the *worm*, 'My mother,' or 'My sister,' ¹⁵where then is my hope? Who will see my hope? ¹⁶Will it go down to the bars of *sheol*? Shall we descend together into the dust?"

Job feels he is near death and that the graveyard is ready for him. Corruption in this context refers to death and the body decaying in the grave while worms are eating the corpse. Job is saying if he accepts death where is his hope in God. Job by refusing to give in to his horrific sickness manifest his hope for healing, but if he surrenders his life to death, the grave and the worms he has also surrendered his hope in God for healing.

Worms Destroy my Flesh, yet I shall see God.

Job 19:26 ----- ¹³After worms destroy this body, yet in my (Job) flesh I shall see God (Job 19:26).

Job is saying even if he goes down to the grave and worms destroy his body he will be raised to see God.

The Wicked shall Lie Down alike in the Dust and Worms shall Cover Them.

Job 21:26 ----- ²⁶They (the wicked) shall lie down alike in the dust, and the *worms* shall cover them.

Prior to this verse Job is asking, "Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? Their children prosper, their houses are safe, they are healthy, they have no fear, their business's flourish and they are happy. They spend their days in wealth, riches and peace and not only tell God to depart from them, but boast that they get all their prosperity from their own hand and therefore say, "What profit can they gain by praying?" Then Job looks to their end and says, "In a moment they go down to the grave, were worms will eat them.

The Worm should Feed Sweetly on those who have Sinned.

Job 24:19-20 ----- ¹⁹As drought and heat consume the snow waters, So the grave consumes those who have sinned. ²⁰The womb should forget him, The *worms should feed sweetly on him*. He should be remembered no more, and wickedness should be broken like a tree.

Job is saying mothers who give birth to sinners should forget them; the grave should consume them; worms should enjoy feeding on them and they should be remembered no longer so that wickedness would be broken off and not spread like a cancer to others. Here the worm and the grave are identified with each other and carries the idea of worms eating dead bodies in the grave.

Man, who is a Maggot and a Son of Man, who is a Worm.

Job 25:5 ----- ⁴How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be pure? ⁵If even the moon does not shine, And the stars are not pure in His sight, ⁶How much less *man, who is a maggot, and a son of man, who is a worm?*

Bildad is using biblical lofty and figurative language to express how unclean he considers humans are when they are compared to God's perfect Holiness. I expect if most of us took an honest look at the condition of the world today with its wars, rapes, abuses, violence, oppressions and self-centeredness and greed I expect most of us would agree with Bildad.

Summary of worms in Job: Job knew that after he had died he would be raised from the grave in the resurrection and that he would see God. Worms in the context of these verses are literal and real worms or maggots that will eat any food they can whether it is rotten food, plants or sick bodies or dead and decaying corpses.

PSALMS

I am a Worm a Reproach of Men, and Despised by the People.

Psalm 22:5 ----- 5 They (the Old Testament fathers) cried to you, and were delivered; They trusted in you, and were not ashamed. 6 But *I am a worm and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people.*

This Psalm begins with David saying, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest" (clearly echoing Christ on the cross). This is a prayer of David, he feels forsaken, his enemies are all around him, people are mocking him and he feels despised and loathed by the people who surround him. David is using biblical lofty language to depict how terrible he feels and also echoing how much Christ felt forsaken when hanging on the cross. David in this context is using worms figuratively to express the worthlessness and loneliness that he is feeling because he has been deserted by his friends and those he trusted. Worm in this context symbolizes that feeling people have when others make them feel the lowest of low.

ISAIAH

The Maggot is Spread under You and Worms cover You.

Isaiah 14:11 ----- 11 Your (Lucifer) pomp is brought down to Sheol, *And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot (worms in KJV) is spread under you, and worms cover you.*

This is a proverb against the King of Babylon (v4) because he said in his extremely prideful heart: -

- I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High," but God says, he will be cast down to hell (sheol) to the sides of the pit to the grave (Isaiah 14:13-14).

Hell: is in this verses is the English translation of the Hebrew word sheol which simply means the grave.

The pit: is a massive hole in the ground that multitudes of dead bodies are buried in, the graves in it refer to the area within the pit were the dead body is lying. It is very much like today when masses are killed on the battle field or because of diseases, plaques and widespread famines where it is just not possible to bury everyone in and individual graves so slaves (or today bulldozers) are brought in to dig a huge hole for the multitudes of bodies to be laid in. The pit is personified with all those who are in their graves lying in it waiting in excitement for the arrival of the king of Babylon.

This is biblical lofty language predicting the king of Babylon will be brought down to the grave. Isaiah is saying that the king with all his pride power and glory without God will end up in the grave with worms eating him. This verse is showing the futility of life without God because no matter how glorious a king and his kingdom maybe if he does not acknowledge God he will descend to the grave were worms and maggots will eat his decaying and dead body. Worms in this context are natural worms that eat and destroy dead and decaying human bodies. Isaiah is saying, the king regardless of how great he is esteemed by those he rules over and how glorious his Kingdom is he will eventually end up in the grave covered with worms.

For further information concerning this chapter see the title: -

- Lucifer.
- In, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Fear not, you Worm Jacob.

Isaiah 41:14 ----- ¹⁴Fear not, *you worm Jacob*, You men of Israel! I will help you,” says the LORD And your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Prior to this verse Israel is in fear of their enemies, so God says to them, fear not, you worm I am the one who helps you, I am the one who has called you from the ends of the earth you are my servants, I have chosen you and will not cast you off, but those who war against you will perish. (Isa 41:9-14). Worm in this context is used figuratively to express Israel's low self-esteem and their feeling of helplessness, weakness and their fear that they have little strength before their enemies to go to battle against them.

The Worms will Eat them like Wool.

Isaiah 51:7-8 ----- ⁷Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is my law: *do not fear the reproach of men*, Nor be afraid of their insults. ⁸For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the *worm' will eat them like wool*; But my righteousness will be forever, And my salvation from generation to generation.”

God is encouraging those that love Him, He tells them not to fear the wicked because in contrast to those who belong to God being raised to eternal life and everlasting glory the wicked will ultimately go down to the grave where worms will eat them. The following clearly shows how much God and the Lord Jesus Christ love us, the apostle Paul wrote the following beautiful words: -

- While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6).

Meaning though we were full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within our bodies (i.e., self, ego, pride, greed and lustful thoughts etc.,) Christ died for us, he laid down his life that we could be made righteous by faith and God's grace apart from the law, self-effort and religious works. In spite of our corrupted fallen nature God counts our faith in Christ as our righteousness it is imputed to us as a pure and free gift. Though some of us might die for a friend or loved one, Christ died for us while we were ungodly, meaning indifferent to God and His ways and for many of us blasphemers, consider; if God was willing to Sacrifice His Son for us while we were indifferent to Him by sending his Son how much more will He love us now that we love His most beloved Son.

Some in the Christian faith determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances, (i.e., if life is calm and running smoothly God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes they feel God has withdrawn his love), but this is superstition and judging God according to this world, when anyone who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered so that we could have put upon us a royal crown and majestic robe of righteousness apart from the law and works and not only be justified but granted eternal life in everlasting glory.

A Worm that does not Die.

Isaiah 66:23-24 ----- ²³And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before me,” says the LORD. ²⁴“And they shall go forth and look Upon the *corpses of the men* Who have transgressed against me. For their *worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched*. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

Prior to these verses the LORD said, after he has come in fury and judgment and slain many he will make a new heaven and a new earth that will remain forever. He will restore Jerusalem and extend peace to her like a river and in Jerusalem His

people will be comforted. All nations will come and see and declare his glory because he will set a sign among them (himself as King and the Redeemer). Jesus said, the nations will worship before him and when they go out they will see the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against him and their worms that will not die and their fire that will not be quenched and their corpses will be a loathing and revulsion to all who see them.

NOTICE: it is the worm that will not die and the fire that will not go out, not the people they are dead corpses (v24).

This event seems to be when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth and the kingdoms of men go against him to battle, but are destroyed by fire from heaven. Isaiah is using graphic biblical language to depict the horrific fate of those who rebel against the Lord during his glorious millennial reign on earth and showing that rebellion against Christ will not go unpunished. It appears to be a vivid and striking picture of the armies of the nations who the leaders of this world and the false religious rulers have gathered together against Christ as they did when Christ came to Jerusalem on a donkey as the Lamb to be slaughtered, but this time the Lord is not coming as the Lamb to be slaughtered but as the King of kings and Lord of lords to rule over the nations (Rev. 19:11-16).

It seems there will be so many dead bodies left on the battle field to decay that it will take some time to bury them so until they are all buried those who go up to worship the Lord will see certain men burning these dead bodies in fires and certain others that they haven't yet been able to get to decaying and being eaten by worms until they are burnt in the fires (this no-doubt is one of the reasons Jesus says they will be a loathing and abhorrence to those who see them) (v24).

Worm in this context refers to literal worms and figuratively to the rottenness of the heart of those who rebel against Christ. Worms in the previous verses have been identified with death and the grave. So the phrase, "Their worm does not die" means that, wherever there is death there will be worms to eat the dead bodies. Isaiah is using biblical lofty language to depict the futility of rebelling against the Lord Jesus Christ. Fire is pictured in the Bible as a hungry mouth that is never satisfied it is always looking for more food to feed its devouring appetite, likewise fire that devours the wicked is never satisfied, because without dead bodies to burn the fire goes out.

The Lake of Fire (also called the second death) (Rev. 20:14-15) is the ultimate destination of the wicked. The title the Lake of Fire is the perfect symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) because the flames of a fire never stop burning until everything in their path is totally destroyed and utterly consumed to ashes which are blown away in the wind never to be seen again.

Isaiah is not teaching that the dead who do not know God will be condemned to a place of fiery flames in some form of eternal conscious spirit body not only to be cruelly tortured by demonic spirits and eternal worms, but also to suffer extreme, torment, agony and pain for all eternity (as many mistakenly believe). Should this be a true theory it would mean the worms and maggots would have to have immortal and eternal bodies to survive the flames of the fire and live for all eternity.

Rather it is better to view the expression "Their worm dies not" to be a result of the battle of Armageddon when Christ returns and destroys the armies that comes against him. Since God destroys these armies by fire from heaven there will be multitudes of dead and decaying bodies lying on the surface of the earth until such time as they can all be buried or burned in fires.

JONAH

God prepared a Worm and it caused a Plant to Wither.

Jonah 4:6-7 ----- ⁶And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. ⁷But

as morning dawned the next day God prepared a *worm* and it so damaged the plant that it withered.

Clearly this is a real worm or grub that feeds of plants and vegetation and destroys living things.

MICAH

Like Worms they will be Afraid of the LORD.

Micah 7:17 ----- ¹⁷They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like *worms* of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.

Micah is depressed because he lives amongst ungodly people and cannot even trust his own friends, but he knows that he will rise from the GRAVE and be justified (v8-9), but his enemies will be like WORMS that crawl out of their holes when they see God. Micah is using worms in this context to give a picture of the fear the enemies of God will have when they are raised to God's Throne at the great White Throne Judgment and actually seeing God prior to them being cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., eternal extinction). The Lake of Fire is also called the second death (Rev. 20:11-15).

NEW TESTAMENT.

Remember the purpose of this study is not to do an in depth study on each topic, but simply to put the word worm into its context to discover whether worms are linked to everlasting torment, agony and suffering for all eternity in a place of fiery flames or to death in the grave.

MARK

Cast into Hell Fire, into the Fire where their Worm does not Die.

Mark 9:42-49 ----- ⁴²But 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 (gehenna)* 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 (Gehenna) 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 (gehenna) fire*—⁴⁸“where their *worm does not die*, And the *fire is not quenched*. ⁴⁹“For everyone will be *seasoned with fire* and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.

Gehenna: is from the Greek word *geenna* and from Strong's Concordance (New Testament) means gehenna of fire it is of Hebrew origin. Gehenna was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem.

The following verses shows that it had previously been the site of child sacrifice to an Ammonite god called Molech.

- Manasseh (v1) burned his sons as an offering in the *valley of the son of Hinnom* and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger (2 Chron. 33:6).

(2 Chron. 28:3 2) (Kgs. 16:3) (2 Chron. 33:62) (Kgs. 21:6) (Jer. 32:35) (Jer. 19:1-13).

Gehenna later became the place where the filth and dead animals of the city of Jerusalem were cast out and burned this is the reason it is used as a symbol of the wicked and their future destruction in the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) and used figuratively as a name for the place (or state) of the dead. Fire is linked with it because gehenna was a place of enormous grief sorrow and pagan sacrifice and had continual fires burning in this valley.

The Bible paints a picture of hell (the grave) as always wanting more to burn its fuel is people. It is likened to a living fire that is never satisfied it always wants more food to keep it alive. Jesus is not expecting us to pluck out our eye or cut off our hand, he is speaking in hyperboles to highlight the destruction sin can lead to so it follows that the references to the worm and hell fire are also in hyperboles (deliberate and obvious exaggeration used for dramatic effect).

After the Old Testament period, Jewish apocalyptic writers began to call the valley of Hinnom (gehenna) the entrance to hell, sheol and hades which are all titles for the grave and became the name for the actual grave itself. It is the fire that never shall be quenched and the worms that never die, it does not say that the people never die.

It is the fire and the worms that are ever alive ready to devour all who come near them Jesus is speaking in hyperboles to dramatically express his and God's absolute and utter disdain toward anyone that would cause one of God's little ones who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to stumble. Historically gehenna was the valley of Hinnom; it was a place full of worms, maggots and fire where the inhabitants of Jerusalem would throw their rubbish, dead animals and dead bodies the worms, maggots and fire lived forever (not the dead corpses) as long as refuse and dead bodies were being thrown into the pit.

ACTS

Herod gave not God the Glory: and he was Eaten of Worms.

Acts 12:23 ----- ²³And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. ²²And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. ²³And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the spirit.

Worms in this context are natural worms that eat and destroy dead and decaying human bodies. In this instance it is the dead body of King Herod.

SUMMARY: Worms that Do Not Die.

Worms in the Bible can refer to the following three things: -

1. Literal worms that live in the earth and eat plants and vegetation.
2. The worm is used to speak of the rottenness of the human sinful heart, the Amplified Bible says, the worm is a symbol of the wounds inflicted on a person by their sin.
3. Worms eat dead bodies until they are stripped of their flesh, they are destructive they stink and are identified with maggots. When they are in the context of forever it is the fire and the worm that does not die. Jesus uses both the fire and the worm as hyperboles to depict his utter disdain toward those who harm anyone who belongs to his family especially little children.

Worms in the Bible are natural worms that pollute or eat any living thing especially dead and decaying human bodies. In one verse they are used figuratively to describe the worthlessness, fear and terror the enemies of God will feel when they are raised at the great White Throne Judgment and actually see God prior to being cast into the Lake of Fire (as symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction)). We began this study not to do an in depth study on each topic, but simply to put the

word worm into its context to discover whether it teaches or is linked to death in the grave or teach that the dead who do not know God will be condemned to a place of fiery flames in some form of eternal conscious spirit body to be cruelly tortured by demonic spirits and suffer extreme, torment, agony and pain for all eternity (as many believe). Worms in these verses are not a picture of a real place of eternal torment where human bodies have worms and maggots crawling over them for all eternity, if this was the case the worms and maggots would have to have immortal bodies to survive the eternal flames of fire and to live for all eternity.

FOOTNOTE.

Hell: (sheol) (hades) from the Strong's Concordance refers to the place where the wicked are sent it means the grave; the pit; the abode of the dead and a place of no return. Figuratively it carries the idea of extreme degradation in sin. The word hell in the Old Testament is the English translation of the Hebrew word sheol which means grave and in the New Testament hell is the English translation of the Greek word hades which also means the grave.

Sadly because the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades meaning the grave has been translated to the English word hell many have been taught that it means those outside of Christ will exist in some form of conscious spirit state and be painfully and cruelly tortured by eternal evil spirit creatures called demons in a place full of fiery flames which will forever burn their bodies for all eternity so that they will never be free of the most extreme agony. This is a gross misunderstanding of the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades and a gross miss-representation of the nature and character of God.

Following are four reasons this theory of hell (the grave) may have come about: -

1. In the 325 A.D. when the Roman papal church had power over the state and certain bishops at the Council of Nicea determined what the official doctrines of the Christian faith would be they then set about aggressively enforcing them onto society by torturing, imprisoning and burning at the stake those who held a different view to the doctrines they had officially stamped to be the only true doctrines of the Christian faith. One of these doctrines is the traditional teaching of hell that many believe today (i.e., eternal torture in hell for all eternity).
2. This sadistic teaching of hell that proclaims all who die outside of Christ will in some form of conscious spirit state suffer eternal torture, pain and extreme agony in a place full demons and fiery flames for all eternity may have been introduced to scare people into the church. It is almost certain this is one of the reasons it has continued throughout history and very rarely been questioned by ministers and leaders of certain churches.
3. Those who formed this inhuman brutal and extremely violent teaching of eternal agony in flaming fire not only had a total lack of the meaning of the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades, but also had a total lack of understanding the nature and character of God.
4. When the bishops of the Roman papal church established the doctrine of eternal torment they were influenced by the teachings of pagan religions that existed amongst them at that time.

Whatever the reason and there are no-doubt many other possible scenarios both the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades refer to mortal death in the grave. When the word eternal is added to the word hell it carries the idea of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) for all who are cast into the Lake of Fire (a symbol of eternal death) also called the Second Death. (Rev. 2:11) (Rev. 20:6) (Rev. 20:14) (Rev. 21:8).

For further information see the titles: -

- Torment and Tormented in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- Lake of Fire, in Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).
 - Death (What happens when we die) in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).
 - The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

End