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# **Hell or the Grave. The Final Destination of Humans Without Christ.**

(2013)

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## The Final Destination of Humans without Christ.

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### Topics.

- The meaning of sheol, hades and hell.
  - Worms, death and the grave.
  - A brief overview of the resurrection to eternal life and eternal death.
  - The eternal and majestic blessings of the first resurrection.
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**NOTE:** the purpose of this document is not to do an in depth study on each topic, but simply to discover whether those outside of Christ are condemned to a place of everlasting torment, agony and suffering for all eternity or to eternal death (i.e., total extinction).

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To help discover if the dead without Christ go to a place where they exist as an eternal conscious spirit to be cruelly tortured by demonic evil creatures called demons and painfully burnt by everlasting fiery flames for all eternity in a place called hell (as many believe) we first need to look at some of the meanings and symbolisms the Bible uses when referring to the grave.

### The grave in the Bible is sometimes referred to as: -

- Sheol and Hades.
- The pit and the underworld.
- The place of the dead and hell.

All of these titles are different names for the grave those who have died without faith in God are referred to as being in sheol; hades; the pit; the underworld; the place of the dead and hell while those who have died in Christ are spoken of as being asleep in Christ because their death is only temporary.

**Sheol:** is a Hebrew word and simply means the grave.

**Hades:** is a Greek word and means the grave.

**The Pit:** refers to a massive hole dug in the ground to bury multitudes of bodies in, such as is used in wartime or extreme famines and plagues when thousand are dying and it is just not practical to dig individual graves. So the pit can be seen as a grave on a massive scale since multitudes of bodies are buried in it.

**The underworld:** is the personification of the grave.

**The place of the dead:** refers to the grave.

**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 title: -**

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

### **Worms, Death and the Grave.**

The following words of Jesus, "It is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched' (Mark 9:47-48) have been used to support that theory that there is an eternal place of fire and torment that the dead are cast into. To understand what Jesus is saying we first need to look at other verses that link worms to death and the grave.

Following are all the verses using the word worms when they are link to death and the grave: -

- For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth and though after my skin *worms* destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God whom I shall see for myself. (Job 19:25-27).

Job knew his body would decay in the grave until that glorious day that he (with everyone else who has died in faith) would be resurrected to eternal life and see the Lord with his own eyes.

- One dies in his full vigor, being wholly at ease and secure and another dies in bitterness of soul, never having tasted of prosperity, they lie down alike in the dust, and the *worms* cover them (Job 21:23-26).

Job in this verse is highlighting the truth that whether a person is rich or poor, noble or lowly we all die and are buried in a grave where our bodies decay.

- The womb forgets them; the *worms* finds them sweet; they are no longer remembered, so wickedness is broken like a tree (Job 24:20).

This verse is referring, murderers and adulterers, to those who oppress their labourers and take advantage of widows and the poor and needy. Job is saying that sheol (the grave) will snatch them away and they will rot in the grave where worms will eat them.

- Behold, even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure in his eyes; how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a *worms* (Job 25:5-6).

This verse is contrasting the pure holiness with that of mankind, Bildad is basically saying that our holiness when matched to God's Holiness falls so far short that we are like worms in comparison to the glory of God's pure Holiness. He goes on to say that no-one born of a woman can be pure in God's sight, this is the whole reason Christ died. Jesus didn't die so that we could be Holy like God, but because our fallen condition is so full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that we can never attain to God's Holiness and the perfect standard the law demands.

- Your (the king of Babylon) pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and *worms* are your covers (Isaiah 14:11).

Isaiah in this verse is saying no matter how mighty the king of Babylon is or how glorious his kingdom is amongst the nations his end will be the grave where worms will cover him.

- The moth will eat them up like a garment, and the *worms* will eat them like wool (Isaiah 51:8)

In this chapter Isaiah is using poetic language to highlight the glorious destination of those who remain faithful to God to the death of those who turn away from Him. God says to those who seek Him that He will comfort them and make all the wilderness and deserts like the garden of the LORD and fill them with everlasting joy and gladness whereas those who turn away from God and act wickedly will be left to be eaten by worms.

- They shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their *worm shall not die*, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh (Isaiah 66: 24).

This verse is in the context of Christ's return and God gathering all nations who have chosen their own ways; delight in their abominations and do evil before God to His holy mountain Jerusalem and destroying them with flames of fire.

The words, "Their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched" does not mean they are in some place of eternal torment with eternal worms and maggots eating at their flesh, This is typical biblical lofty language to depict the disdain God has toward those who come to battle against Christ and the utter defeat they will suffer (i.e., multitudes of dead bodies will be left upon the surface of the earth being eaten by worms until they can be buried).

#### **Now we can better understand what Jesus was saying when he said: -**

- If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell (Gehenna), 'where their *worm* does not die and the fire is not quenched' (Mark 9:47-48).

**HELL:** in this verse is the English translation of the Hebrew word Gehenna which refers to the Hinnom valley near Jerusalem. This valley was the place where child sacrifices were made to the pagan god Molech. The valley later became used as the place where the inhabitants of Jerusalem disposed of all their filth, dead animals and dead bodies so it continually had fires burning and worms and maggots eating the rotting flesh of the dead bodies cast into it.

It is not the dead bodies that do not die (they already have that's why they are there), but the fire and the worms.

Like in any rubbish dump the fires are forever burning and worms and maggots are forever present as long as there is rubbish to burn and flesh to eat. Jesus in this verse is not teaching that there is an eternal fiery rubbish dump full of maggots and worms that the dead are cast into as some kind of conscious eternal spirit body that will not only be eaten by worms and maggots, but also be cruelly tortured by eternal evil creatures called demons and suffer in extreme agony and pain for all eternity (as many believe).

No sane Christian believes Jesus is literally telling his listeners to tear out their eye so why would we think Jesus is literally teaching an eternal place of fire, worms and maggots. The Lord is speaking figuratively and using graphic language to depict the enormous horror and destruction of sin.

**Destruction and perish:** when linked with the grave mean to perish; to abolish; to die; to put to death and to end or put out of the way entirely. Perish and destruction when linked to death and the grave carry the idea of non-existent and total extinction.

**Punishment:** when linked with the grave or death does not mean that there are different levels of eternal suffering and agony in Gehenna or the Lake of Fire (i.e., people who haven't murdered will suffer a different level of eternal agony and pain to those who have murdered). The word punishment carries the idea of penalties and the everlasting penalty of God's final judgment to those who are cast into the Lake of Fire is eternal death (i.e., total extinction).

The picture the Bible paints when the words, destruction; perish; punishment; everlasting flames; worms and the Lake of Fire are linked to death and the grave is of a sea of everlasting fire which is used symbolically to depict the total and eternal destruction of the body, soul, and spirit for all eternity.

When the words, destruction; perish; punishment; everlasting flames; worms and the lake of fire are linked to death and the grave they refer to the total and eternal destruction of the body, soul, and spirit for all eternity. This is why the Lake of Fire is spoken of as the Second Death (Rev 20:11-15) is used symbolically to picture a fiery lake that totally destroys all who are cast into it until they are utterly consumed and perish forever meaning they are extinct, body, soul, and spirit for all eternity.

### **A Brief Overview of the Resurrection to Eternal Life and Eternal Death.**

The book of Revelation states that those who have died in faith and those who are alive when Christ returns will come to life and reigned with Christ during his millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords on earth. The rest of the dead do not come to life until this glorious new age has ended. This is the first resurrection. The Second Death has no power over those who attain to this resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

When this new age of Christ's reign are ended the kingdom of men will surround the city of Jerusalem and attempt to battle against the Kingdom of God, but fire from heaven will destroy them (Rev 20:4-10). God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and if their name is found in the Book of Life other heavenly books are be opened and they are judged according to what is written and according to what they had done (Rev. 20:11-13).

Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see the titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

### **The Eternal and Majestic Blessings of the First Resurrection.**

The Bible says that those who attain to the first resurrection: -

- Will be like angels in heaven and cannot die.
- Will be called children of God and be priests of God and of Christ.
- Will be blessed and holy and the second death will have no power over them.
- Will reign with Christ during the glorious millennial new age.

(Matt. 22:30) (Mark 12:25) (Luke 20:36) (Rev. 20:5-6).

The Bible tells us that the rest of the dead do not come to life until Christs reign on earth is ended (Rev. 20:5-6). We are told that the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done (Rev. 20:12-13) and that if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, they were thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). This obviously implies that not all are thrown into the Lake of Fire, but it does not give us any detail of the type of life those who are counted worthy at the Great White Throne judgment will have or mention any blessings they might be granted except to say that they are judged according to what is written in the books according to what they had done (Rev. 20:12-13).

Clearly much of this fly's in the face of traditional Christian teaching which proclaims that only those in Christ will be resurrected, this is certainly true of the first resurrection and whoever attains to it will be greatly blessed, but it cannot be applied to those who are raised at the Great White Throne judgment since it appears that God recognizes there are many good people with very charitable hearts that have a belief in God, through the language of creation and live a godly life, treating other humans with respect and doing-good who in their hearts are neither against God nor enemies of God (consider all those who have never heard the glorious Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ).

It appears that their names have not been blotted out of the Book of Life and their good-deeds are recorded in these other heavenly books that are opened and they do receive some position in ETERNITY. Perhaps this is those Jesus was referring to when he said: -

- Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward (Matt. 10:42).

### **NOTE.**

Since much is this is controversial to traditional Christian thinking it should be mentioned that it is not important to understand ETERNITY to be saved to eternal life. Jesus will not cast out those who have been faithful to him simply because they did not understand ETERNITY. After Christ's resurrection most New Testament Bible writers simply state that those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory this is because it is not understanding ETERNITY that is important to salvation, but believing that we will be resurrected to it and having faith in Christ and in God's grace.

**CONCLUSION:** we began this study to discover whether 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 or be judged to eternal death (i.e., total extinction). From the above Scriptures it is clear that the Bible only teaches the following two choices eternal life or eternal death.

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**For further information see the titles: -**

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  - The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.
  - In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).
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