

WHAT IS HELL REALLY LIKE?

What I will call the “traditional view” of Hell is something like that of the Koran (the holy book of Islam), which presents an image of Hell as a place where unbelievers and the wicked are tortured endlessly. For example, the Koran says this about Hell: ¹

Garments of fire have been prepared for the unbelievers. Scalding water shall be poured upon their heads, melting their skins and that which is in their bellies. They shall be lashed with rods of iron.

Whenever, in their anguish, they try to escape from Hell, back they shall be dragged, and will be told: “Taste the torment of the Conflagration.” ²

But doleful shall be the return of the transgressors. They shall burn in Hell, an evil resting-place. There let them taste their drink: scalding water, festering blood, and other putrid things. ³

What do these images tell us about Allah? Does it make sense that the just punishment for our sins would include torture, pain, and torment throughout all eternity? Both the severity and the duration of the punishment seem grossly excessive, as if it were motivated not by mere justice, but by vengeance, cruelty, or even evil.

For a Christian, such an image of Hell should be very troubling. After all, the New Testament tells us that God is a loving Father. According to the first letter of John, “God is love.” ⁴ Jesus urges us to love our enemies and pray for those who are unkind to us, just as God is kind to all of His creatures. ⁵ Are we to believe that “God so loved the world” ⁶ that He will torture some of His beloved creatures throughout eternity? If Jesus told us to “ ‘love one another, just as I have loved you,’ ” ⁷ should we expect less from God? Do God’s purposes truly require the infliction of eternal pain and torment upon the “damned”? Could a just God—much less a loving and compassionate God—impose the kind of suffering described in the Koran? The answer to these questions must be a resounding NO!

This is not to say that God must, or will, let everyone into Heaven. If Heaven is to be a place without crying or pain, ⁸ then I can see how God might have to exclude those who selfishly insist on hurting others, or Heaven would not be Heaven. ⁹ But what purpose does God advance by inflicting pain and torment upon those He has excluded? Torturing the damned will not make Heaven a better place. To the contrary, He would cause unnecessary grief for those in Heaven who care

about some of the condemned. Could you be truly happy in Heaven if you knew that someone you love was being tortured endlessly in Hell?

But wait a minute. Doesn't the New Testament, like the Koran, teach that Hell is a place of eternal, unrelenting torture and pain? Many Christians believe so. Yet, unlike the Koran, the New Testament contains surprisingly little support for such a view of Hell, while a great many verses present a very different picture.

However, before I go further, let me frankly state that I am not a clergyman. I am a lawyer. As such, I bring a slightly different perspective to this discussion. The law follows a rule which I believe is useful in interpreting Scripture—the doctrine of *pari materia*. Simply stated, this doctrine says that we should interpret laws so that they are consistent with each other, so long as they address the same general subject, or have the same general purpose.¹⁰ This rule recognizes that lawmakers do not intentionally enact laws that conflict with each other, so every effort should be made to avoid such conflicts when interpreting the law. I believe a similar rule makes sense in Biblical interpretation: verses should be interpreted, whenever possible, so that they are in harmony with one another. A corollary is like it: if two verses appear to be in conflict, then we are interpreting at least one of them incorrectly.

With this in mind, let us take a detailed look at the verses that talk about Hell, either explicitly or by implication.¹¹

1) First, a large number of verses speak of “judgment,” “wrath,” and “condemnation,” but give us no specifics about what Hell is really like. I also include in this category verses which mention “hell” or “hades,” but without elaboration. Frankly, these verses do not help us, because they are very vague about the nature of Hell and can easily be interpreted to support any of several possible images of Hell. For example, eternal torture would certainly signify God's judgment, wrath, and condemnation, but so would other types of punishment, such as death or exile. I mention the verses in this category only for the sake of completeness, but I will not spend any further time discussing them.

2) Another group of verses associates the fate of the damned (and sometimes the saved) with “fire.” For example:

[Jesus speaking] “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch; and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”¹²

3) A third group of New Testament verses speaks of “death” and/or

“destruction.” For example, Jesus warns His followers:

“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”¹³

4) Jesus also spoke of Hell as a place where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” or as an “abyss” or a place of darkness.

5) Finally, some verses speak of “punishment” or “torment.” Certainly, the most graphic of these is Jesus’ parable of Lazarus and the rich man:

“Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’ Then Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ But he said, ‘No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ”¹⁴

Punishment and Torment. Let us begin with this last group of Scriptures, which appear to most strongly support the traditional view of Hell. This group consists of a mere nine Scriptures: Matthew 18:34-35, Matthew 25:41-46, Luke 12:46-48, Luke 16:22-31, Romans 2:5-9, 2 Peter 2:9, Jude 6-7, Revelation 14:9-11, and Revelation 20:10. Of these nine Scriptures, four appear in the Gospels, three in the epistles, and two in the Book of Revelation.

Three of the four Gospel Scriptures are drawn from parables. Luke 16:22-31 is of course the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, which is quoted above. Matthew 18:34-35 is from the parable of the unforgiving slave, who refused to

forgive a small debt after he was forgiven a large debt; verse 34 says that this unforgiving slave was handed over to “the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.”¹⁵ The third of the parables, Luke 12:46-48, discusses the fate of the disobedient slave who is caught by his master’s unexpected return. Jesus tells us that the slave will receive “many lashes,” will be cut to pieces, and will be assigned “a place with the unbelievers.”¹⁶

Can we conclude from these parables that the fate of the unbelievers will include burning, torture, and lashes? If so, then shouldn’t we also conclude that Jesus was advocating robbery when He compared Himself to a robber who overpowers Satan?¹⁷ Shall we strive to be dishonest, like the unrighteous steward whom his master praised?¹⁸ Are the stories of the Prodigal Son,¹⁹ the Good Samaritan,²⁰ and the angry dinner host²¹ to be accepted as literal fact rather than simply stories? Are men trees, bearing both good and bad “fruit”?²² No. Jesus’ parables are stories which teach a lesson. We must therefore be careful not to read too much into those parables which present possible images of the afterlife.

In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, for example, I believe Jesus deliberately exaggerates the ferocity of Hell for effect. The rich man (who, by the way, should be screaming in agony, not carrying on a calm conversation with Abraham) requests an absurdly trivial favor: that Lazarus be allowed to dip the mere tip of his finger in water and cool off nothing but the rich man’s tongue. I would have asked for at least a bucket of ice water! Perhaps Jesus used such hyperbole to emphasize the complete separation of the saved from the unsaved. But He also used it to prophetically illustrate that some people simply refuse to be persuaded to accept God’s salvation: neither threats of consequences nor Jesus’ own resurrection from the dead are sufficient to convince them.

We also find horrific images of Hell in the Book of Revelation. For example, Revelation 14:9-11 says that those who worship the “beast” and receive his mark “will 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 goes up forever and ever. . . .” And Revelation 20:10 says the “beast” and the “false prophet” will be thrown into the lake of fire, where “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” However, any person knowledgeable about the Book of Revelation must concede that it contains a great deal of symbolism.

For example, in Revelation 20:15, those whose names are not found in the “book of life” are thrown into the “lake of fire.” But just before this, in Revelation 20:14, we read: “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”²³ In 20:14, the image of “death and Hades” being cast into a lake of fire is clearly symbolic. The “lake of fire” also seems to

be symbolic, since it is said to be “the second death.” As with Jesus’ parables, we are on very shaky ground if we interpret Revelation’s images as a true and literal representation of Hell.

We have discussed five of the nine Scriptures in this category. What about the other four? Paul, in Romans 2:8-9, says there will be “tribulation and distress” for evil-doers, while 2 Peter 2:9 talks of “punishment” for the unrighteous in the day of judgment. Yet Peter and Paul do not tell us what this tribulation, distress, and punishment will be. Jude 6-7 talks of “the punishment of eternal fire” that will be imposed on wicked angels. Does Jude mean that they will be tortured by that fire? Or simply that fire will be the means by which their “punishment,” whatever that may be, will be carried out?

Finally, in the last of our nine Scriptures, Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus presents an image of the final judgment, in which people are divided into sheep (those who are saved) and goats (the unsaved). The latter are told, “ ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ” (Matthew 25:41) Their fate is described as follows: “ ‘And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’ ” (Matthew 25:46) This language, while similar to that of Jude, is also stronger, since the punishment suffered by the damned is now “eternal.” Matthew 25:31-46 provides the strongest New Testament support for the traditional view of Hell.

If the New Testament were otherwise silent, the verses in this category would make a pretty strong case for the traditional view of Hell. But remember that these verses must be interpreted in the light of other Scriptures, which paint a very different picture. Let us begin by considering the question: when is “fire” not really fire?

Fire. The traditional view of Hell includes fire as a central element. And as we have already seen, some New Testament verses associate fire with the afterlife and the fate of unbelievers. Another example is found in Matthew 18:8-9:

“If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell.”²⁴

But does “fire” mean literal heat-producing, scorching, burning fire? Frequently in the Bible, the concept of “fire” carries a symbolic meaning. For

example, in Romans 12:20, Paul uses “burning coals” to symbolize guilt and remorse:

But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.

James uses fire as a symbol of wickedness in James 3:5-6:

So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire. And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. ²⁵

Fire often symbolizes God’s wrath or judgment, as in Nahum 1:6:

Who can stand before His indignation?
Who can endure the burning of His anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are broken up by Him. ²⁶

Fire is also a symbol of God’s presence, His Spirit, and His word:

“For I,” declares the Lord, “will be a wall of fire around her [Jerusalem], and I will be the glory in her midst.” ²⁷

And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves and they rested on each one of them. ²⁸

God even uses “fire” to modify or correct His people’s behavior, as in Malachi:

But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness. ²⁹

These verses illustrate the plausibility of a symbolic interpretation of such

verses as Matthew 5:22 and 18:8-9, which talk of the “fiery hell,” and Mark 9:43, which talks of the “unquenchable fire” of hell. But how do we decide whether the literal or the symbolic interpretation is correct? The answer will be found in other verses, which are difficult or impossible to reconcile with anything but a symbolic interpretation. As a starting point, let us now turn our attention to one of the letters of Peter, which provides another clue that the “fire” of Hell is not literal.

Death and Destruction. 2 Peter 3:7 warns us that:

the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

In this verse, “fire” does not torture and inflict pain, but instead destroys! This is but one of many New Testament Scriptures that talk about the fate of unbelievers in terms of “death” or “destruction.” Here are some examples:

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ³⁰

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³¹

“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” ³²

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ³³

And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. . . . ³⁴

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” ³⁵

These verses do not speak about the physical death of the body, which all of

us—saved and unsaved alike—must one day suffer. Instead, they refer to a spiritual death, which suggests one of two interpretations: (1) the literal death of the soul—in a very real sense, a “second death,” as stated in Revelation 21:8, above; or (2) spiritual death through separation from God (as Paul says, “away from the presence of the Lord”³⁶).

The death of the soul—the “second death”—is probably the more merciful of the two, because the alternative, separation from God, would be a horrid existence. Unsaved souls would be separated from the source of everything good and kind and loving—a life, in other words, without everything that makes life worthwhile. Worst of all, it would seem to be a life without hope. People facing such an existence might prefer to be put out of their misery, and a kind and loving God would reluctantly oblige them.

The “second death” also avoids two problems inherent in the idea of mere separation from God: (1) where can these souls possibly go to escape the omnipresence of God?;³⁷ and (2) while souls separated from God would be spiritually “dead,” how are they “destroyed,” as some verses assert?

If wicked souls are punished through a “second death”—the death of the soul—then the traditional view of Hell, as eternal torture, becomes untenable, for no souls would remain upon whom to inflict pain and torture in Hell (except perhaps Satan and his demons). Under this interpretation, the “furnace of fire” or the “lake that burns with fire and brimstone” could simply be the means of destruction. Or perhaps “fire” symbolizes the guilt these souls feel as they are judged by God.

On the other hand, spiritual death through separation from God is appealing if you believe that a loving God would be unable to bring Himself to kill any of His human creatures, no matter how wicked. If we adopt this second interpretation, then we must ask whether separation from God is inconsistent with the traditional view of Hell. Couldn't God banish the wicked to a place of eternal torture? Of course He could. But scriptures in the final category suggest otherwise.

“Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth” and “Darkness.” In Matthew 13:41-42, Jesus says:

“The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In Matthew 8:12, Jesus speaks of the fate of some Jews, saying that they

“shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”³⁸

Do these verses, and others like them, prove that Hell is a place of severe pain? Does “gnashing of teeth” refer to pain so severe that the sufferers grit their teeth? Actually, no. In the Bible, gnashing of teeth always refers to anger or rage, not pain, as in Job:

His anger has torn me and hunted me down.
He has gnashed at me with His teeth;
My adversary glares at me.³⁹

Job is not saying that God is in pain, but that God is angry with him. Similarly, other Old Testament verses use “gnashing of teeth” to refer to anger or rage, not pain.⁴⁰ The phrase is also used in the New Testament, describing the anger of Stephen’s enemies:

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.⁴¹

Hell is a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” because the residents will either blame themselves for their situation, and weep, or they will blame God, and rage. Pain does not enter the picture. Now Jesus always chose His words carefully. If He had intended to include pain or torture, He certainly could have done so. His repeated use of the phrase, “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” is therefore significant, especially when juxtaposed with the “furnace of fire,” as in Matthew 13:42 and Matthew 13:50.

Hell is also referred to as “the outer darkness”;⁴² the “abyss”;⁴³ “pits of darkness”;⁴⁴ “black darkness”;⁴⁵ or simply “darkness.”⁴⁶ In this context, “darkness” probably symbolizes evil, as in John 3:19 (“men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil”). Darkness may also imply sadness or loneliness, but the term does not connote physical pain or torture.

Thus, to the extent that the unbelievers continue to live after they have been judged, these verses demonstrate that their lives include regret and/or burning rage—but not pain. If there is any pain or torment in Hell, I am certain that the

residents, not God, will inflict it.

Conclusion. God cannot share Heaven with evil. But the kind, loving, and merciful Father of whom Jesus spoke would not—could not—inflict everlasting and unnecessary pain and torture upon even the most evil of mankind. Such cruelty would conflict with His nature. Because of this, only the most convincing Scriptural evidence would persuade me to accept the Koran’s view of Hell as literal truth. We find no such evidence in the New Testament.

Only two interpretations appear to be consistent with all of the many New Testament verses which discuss the ultimate fate of the damned: (1) God will end their existence, once and for all; or (2) God will quarantine their evil in “Hell.” If the first interpretation is correct, then the Scriptures regarding “death” and “destruction” must be accepted as literal fact, and the Scriptures which talk of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” merely describe a temporary condition. On the other hand, if the wicked are separated from God, rather than destroyed, then they will “die” only in the spiritual sense of being separated from the Source of all life, and “weeping and gnashing of teeth” describes their permanent existence. Both possibilities are sad to contemplate. But unlike the traditional view of Hell, neither is inconsistent with God’s nature.

APPENDIX: LIST OF NEW TESTAMENT VERSES REGARDING HELL AND THE FATE OF UNBELIEVERS

I. “Judgment,” “Condemnation,” “Wrath,” and similar vague, judgmental references, and references to “hell” or “hades”

1. “Judgment” and “condemnation”

MATT 10:15: [Jesus speaking] “Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of **judgment**, than for that city.”

MATT 11:22-24: [Jesus speaking] “Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of **judgment**, than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of **judgment**, than for you.”

MARK 12:40: [Jesus speaking] “[Beware of the scribes . . .] who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater **condemnation**.”

MARK 16:16: [Jesus speaking] “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be **condemned**.”

LUKE 12:58-59: [Jesus speaking] “For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, in order that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into **prison**. I say to you, you shall not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.”

LUKE 20:47: [Jesus speaking] “[Beware of the scribes . . .] who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater **condemnation**.”

JOHN 3:18-20: [Jesus speaking] “He who believes in Him is not **judged**; he who does not believe has been **judged** already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the **judgment**, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds be exposed.”

JOHN 5:28-29: [Jesus speaking] “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth;

those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life; those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of **judgment**.”

ACTS 24:15 : [Paul speaking to Felix] “. . . having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a **resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked**.”

ROMANS 2:5-9: But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous **judgment** of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek. . . .

ROM 11:21-22: . . . for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be **cut off**.

I COR 11:32: But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be **condemned** along with the world.

COL 3:25: For he who does wrong will receive the **consequences** of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

II THESS 2:11-12: And for this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be **judged** who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

HEBREWS 2:2-3: For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a **just recompense**, (3) how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

II PET 2:4, 9: For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for **judgment** . . . then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of **judgment**.

II PET 3:7: But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of **judgment** and destruction of ungodly men.

JUDE 6-7: And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode,

He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the **judgment** of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

REV 20:12-15: And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were **judged** from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were **judged**, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

I PET 4:5-6: . . . but they shall give account to Him who is ready to **judge** the living and the dead. For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are **judged** in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

2. "Wrath"

MATT 3:7: But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he [John the Baptist] said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the **wrath** to come?"

JOHN 3:36: [John the Baptist speaking] "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the **wrath** of God abides on him."

ROMANS 2:5-9: But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up **wrath** for yourself in the day of **wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **wrath** and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek. . . .

EPH 2:3: Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of **wrath**, even as the rest.

EPH 5:5-6: For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the **wrath** of God comes

upon the sons of disobedience.

COL 3:5-6: Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the **wrath** of God will come.

I THESS 5:9: For God has not destined us for **wrath**, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

3. “**Hell**” or “**hades**”

MATT 5:22: [Jesus speaking] “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca’ [meaning “empty-head”] shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery **hell**.”

MATT 5:29-30: [Jesus speaking] “And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into **hell**. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into **hell**.”

MATT 10:28: [Jesus speaking] “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in **hell**.”

MATT 11:23: [Jesus speaking] “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to **Hades**; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.”

MATT 16:18: [Jesus speaking] “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of **Hades** shall not overpower it.”

MATT 18:6-9: [Jesus speaking] “. . . but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery **hell**.”

MARK 9:43-50: [Jesus speaking] “And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into **hell**, into the unquenchable fire, [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.] And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than having your two feet, to be cast into **hell**, [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.] And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into **hell**, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

NOTE: Mark 9:44 and 9:46 are in brackets because many ancient manuscripts do not include those two verses, which are identical to 9:48.

LUKE 10:15: [Jesus speaking] “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to **Hades!**”

LUKE 12:5: [Jesus speaking] “But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into **hell**; yes, I tell you, fear Him!”

LUKE 16:22-31: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of Lazarus and the rich man] “Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in **Hades** he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’ Then Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ But he said, ‘No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

ACTS 2:27: [Peter speaking, quoting Psalm 16:10] “Because Thou will not abandon my soul to **Hades**, Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.”

ACTS 2:31: [Peter speaking] “. . . he [David] looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to **Hades**, nor did His flesh suffer decay.”

EPH 4:8-10: Therefore it [Psalm 68:18] says, “When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.” (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does that mean except that He also had descended into **the lower parts of the earth**? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)”

JAMES 3:6: And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by **hell**.

II PET 2:4, 9: For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into **hell** and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment . . . then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.

REV 1:17-18: And when I saw Him [Jesus], I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of **Hades**.”

REV 20:12-15: And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and **Hades** gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and **Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

II. Verses Which Speak of “Fire”

MATT 3:10: [John the Baptist speaking] “And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the **fire**.”

MATT 3:12: [John the Baptist speaking] “And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable **fire**.”

- MATT 5:22: [Jesus speaking] “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca’ [meaning “empty-head”] shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the **fiery** hell.”
- MATT 7:19: [Jesus speaking] “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the **fire**.”
- MATT 13:30, 40-42: [Jesus speaking] “ ‘Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to **burn them up**; but gather the wheat into my barn. . . .” ’ Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with **fire**, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of **fire**; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- MATT 13:49-50: [Jesus speaking] “So it shall be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of **fire**; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- MATT 18:6-9: [Jesus speaking] “ . . . but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal **fire**. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the **fiery** hell.”
- MATT 25:41, 46: [Jesus speaking] “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal **fire** which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. . . .’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
- MARK 9:43-50: [Jesus speaking] “And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable **fire**, [where their worm does not die, and the **fire** is not quenched.] And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than having your two feet, to be cast into hell, [where their worm does not die, and the **fire** is not quenched.] And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the

kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the **fire** is not quenched. For everyone will be salted with **fire**. Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

NOTE: Mark 9:44 and 9:46 are in brackets because many ancient manuscripts do not include those two verses, which are identical to 9:48.

LUKE 3:9: [John the Baptist speaking] “And also the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the **fire**.”

LUKE 3:17: [John the Baptist speaking] “And His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable **fire**.”

LUKE 16:22-31: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of Lazarus and the rich man] “Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this **flame**.’ Then Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ But he said, ‘No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

JOHN 15:6: [Jesus speaking] “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch; and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the **fire**, and they are **burned**.”

I COR 3:11-15: For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for

the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with **fire**; and the **fire** itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through **fire**.

II THESS 1:6-9: For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming **fire**, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. . . .

JAMES 3:6: And the tongue is a **fire**, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on **fire** the course of our life, and is set on **fire** by hell.

JAMES 5:3: Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like **fire**. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

II PET 3:7: But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for **fire**, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

JUDE 6-7: And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal **fire**.

JUDE 22-23: And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the **fire**; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

REV 19:20: And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of **fire** which **burns with brimstone**.

REV 20:10: And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of **fire and brimstone**, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

REV 20:12-15: And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and

books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of **fire**. This is the second death, the lake of **fire**. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of **fire**.

REV 21:8: [God speaking] “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with **fire and brimstone**, which is the second death.”

III. Verses Which Speak of “Death” or “Destruction”

MATT 7:13: [Jesus speaking] “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and way is broad that leads to **destruction**, and many are those who enter by it.”

MATT 10:28: [Jesus speaking] “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to **kill the soul**; but rather fear Him who is able to **destroy** both soul and body in hell.”

MARK 8:35-36: [Jesus speaking] “For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and **forfeit his soul**?”

LUKE 13:2-5: And He [Jesus] answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all likewise **perish**. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all likewise **perish**.”

LUKE 13:8-9: [Jesus speaking] “And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, **cut it down**.’ ”

LUKE 19:26-27: [from Jesus' parable of the minas; nobleman speaking] “ ‘I tell you, that to everyone who has shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and **slay** them in my presence.’ ”

ACTS 3:23: [Peter speaking, loosely quoting Deuteronomy 18:19] “And it shall be that every

soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly **destroyed** from among the people.”

ACTS 13:46: And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”

ROMANS 6:16: Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in **death**, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

ROMANS 6:23: For the wages of sin is **death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 7:5: For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for **death**.

ROMANS 7:9-11: And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I **died**. . . .

ROMANS 7:24: Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this **death**?

ROMANS 8:6: For the mind set on the flesh is **death**, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. . . .

ROMANS 8:10: And if Christ is in you, though the body is **dead** because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

ROMANS 8:13: . . . for if you are living according to the flesh, you must **die**; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

I COR 3:16-17: Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will **destroy** him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

II COR 2:15-16: For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are **perishing**; to the one an aroma from **death to death**, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

II COR 4:3: And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are **perishing**. . . .

II COR 7:10: For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces **death**.

EPH 2:5: . . . even when we were **dead** in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). . . .

PHIL 1:27-28: Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; (28) in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of **destruction** for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

I THESS 5:3: While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then **destruction** will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

II THESS 1:6-9: For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of **eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. . . .

II THESS 2:10: . . . and with all the deception of wickedness for those who **perish**, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

JAMES 5:19-20: My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from **death**, and will cover a multitude of sins.

II PET 2:3: [speaking of false prophets, false teachers, and those who follow them] . . . and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their **destruction** is not asleep.

II PET 2:12: For these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the **destruction** of those creatures also be **destroyed**. . . .

II PET 3:7: But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and **destruction** of ungodly men.

II PET 3:16: . . . as also in all his [Paul’s] letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own **destruction**.

JUDE 10: For these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which

they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are **destroyed**.

REV 2:11: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the **second death**.

REV 11:18: And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to **destroy** those who destroy the earth.

REV 20:6: Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the **second death** has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

REV 20:12-15: And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

REV 21:8: [God speaking] "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the **second death**."

IV. "Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth"; "Darkness" or "Abyss"

1. "Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth"

MATT 8:12: [Jesus speaking] ". . . but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**."

MATT 13:30, 40-42: [Jesus speaking] "'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn. . . ."' Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**."

MATT 13:49-50: [Jesus speaking] “So it shall be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**”

MATT 22:13: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of the king’s wedding feast that the invitees failed to attend] “The king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’ ”

MATT 24:50-51: [Jesus speaking] “. . . the master of that [evil] slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; **weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth.**”

MATT 25:30: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of the talents, and at this point speaking the part of the master after his return] “. . . ‘And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’ ”

LUKE 13:24-25, 28: [Jesus speaking] “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying ‘Lord, open up to us!’ then He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from. . . .’ There will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth** there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out.”

2. “Darkness” or “Abyss”

MATT 8:12: [Jesus speaking] “. . . but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the **outer darkness**; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

MATT 22:13: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of the king’s wedding feast that the invitees failed to attend] “The king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the **outer darkness**; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

MATT 25:30: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of the talents, and at this point speaking the part of the master after his return] “. . . ‘And cast out the worthless slave into the **outer darkness**; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

LUKE 8:31: “And they [demons called “Legion”] were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the **abyss.**”

JOHN 3:18-20: [Jesus speaking] “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the

name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the **darkness** rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds be exposed.”

II PET 2:4, 9: For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to **pits of darkness**, reserved for judgment . . . (9) then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.

JUDE 6-7: And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under **darkness** for the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

JUDE 12-13: These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the **black darkness** has been reserved forever.

REV 20:1-3: And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the **abyss** and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the **abyss**, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

V. “Pain,” “Torture,” etc.

MATT 18:34-35: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of the unforgiving slave] “And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the **torturers** until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

MATT 25:41, 46: [Jesus speaking] “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. . . .’ And these will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.”

LUKE 12:46-48: [Jesus speaking, telling a parable comparing the fates of faithful slaves and wicked slaves] “. . . the master of that [wicked] slave will come on a day

when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive **many lashes**, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."

LUKE 16:22-31: [Jesus speaking, telling the parable of Lazarus and the rich man] "Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in **torment**, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am **in agony in this flame**.' Then Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in **agony**. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of **torment**.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.' "

ROMANS 2:5-9: But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be **tribulation and distress** for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek. . . .

II PET 2:4, 9: For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment . . . then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under **punishment** for the day of judgment.

JUDE 6-7: And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Just

as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the **punishment of eternal fire**.

REV 14:9-11: And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will 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** goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

REV 20:10: And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also [see Rev. 19:20]; and they will be **tormented** day and night forever and ever.

Endnotes:

¹ All quotes from the Koran are taken from *The Koran*, translated with notes by N. J. Dawood (Penguin Books 1956-1999).

² Koran 22:19-22

³ Koran 38:55-58. Many additional examples can be given. For example, many verses in the Koran describe Hell as a fire, which burns and torments the damned: 2:81, 2:167, 2:175, 3:16, 3:181, 3:191-192, 4:14, 4:55-56, 4:93, 4:115, 5:72, 6:27, 9:63, 9:68, 11:98, 11:106, 11:113, 13:35, 14:30, 18:53, 22:9, 25:11, 31:21, 32:20, 33:64, 34:42, 39:8, 39:16, 39:19, 40:72, 41:19, 41:24, 41:28, 52:13-14, 55:35, 55:43-44, 56:94, 57:15, 58:17, 59:3, 64:10, 66:6, 66:10, 67:5, 67:10-11, 69:31, 70:15, 72:15, 73:12, 74:29-31, 76:4, 77:31-32, 82:14. Hell is also called a “prison-house for the unbelievers” (17:8), guarded by 19 angels (74:30-31). There the unbelievers and the evil-doers drink scalding water (47:15, 56:54, 56:93). They eat filth (69:36), choking food (73:13), and the fruit of the Zaqqum tree (37:62-66, 44:43, 56:52-53)—a tree which is a “scourge for the unjust,” with fruit “like devils’ heads” (see 37:62-68). The unbelievers are surrounded by scorching winds, scalding water, and smoke (40:71-72, 56:41-43, 56:93). Those so doomed are bound in heavy chains and cry out for death (25:13-14, 34:33, 40:71, 43:77, 69:30-32, 73:12, 76:4, 89:26). But they cannot die, for they are condemned to dwell in Hell forever (2:81, 2:161-162, 2:167, 3:192, 4:14, 4:93, 4:169, 5:80, 6:122, 9:63, 9:68, 14:17, 16:29, 16:85, 18:53, 20:74, 32:14, 33:65, 35:36-37, 39:72, 40:76, 41:24, 41:28, 43:74-75, 43:77, 58:17, 64:10, 82:14-16).

⁴ 1 John 4:8, 4:16. All quotations from the Bible are from the *New American Standard* translation.

⁵ Matthew 5:44-45

⁶ John 3:16: “ ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.’ ”

⁷ John 15:12

⁸ See Revelation 21:4.

⁹ For more on this topic, see “Sharing Heaven.”

¹⁰ See 53 Texas Jurisprudence 2nd, “Statutes,” Section 186, page 280, as quoted in *Cheney v. State*, 755 S.W.2d 123, 126 (Tex.Crim.App. 1988).

¹¹ I have provided a complete list of these verses as an appendix to this article. I have intentionally made the list expansive, including therein all verses which even arguably address the subject of Hell or the afterlife. Also, some verses are included in more than one category.

¹² John 15:6

¹³ Matthew 10:28

¹⁴ Luke 16:22-31

¹⁵ Matt 18:34

¹⁶ Luke 12:46-47

¹⁷ See Luke 11:21-22, Mark 3:27, and Matthew 12:29.

¹⁸ Luke 16:1-8

¹⁹ Luke 15:11-32

²⁰ Luke 10:25-37

²¹ Luke 14:16-24

²² Luke 6:43-45; Matthew 7:16-20

²³ A similar image is presented in Revelation 21:8: “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

²⁴ Similarly, see Mark 9:43-50.

²⁵ Similarly, see Isaiah 9:18-19 and Psalm 39:3.

²⁶ For other references to fire as a symbol of God’s wrath or judgment, see: Isaiah 65:3-5 and 66:15-16; Jeremiah 4:4, 5:14, 21:12, and 48:45; Lamentations 2:3-4; Ezekiel 21:31, 22:20-22, 24:1-13, 28:18, 36:5, and 38:19; Amos 5:6-7. Fire is also used to carry out God’s judgment, as in Genesis 19:24; Leviticus 10:1-2; Numbers 11:1; and 2 Kings 1:10 and 1:12.

²⁷ Zechariah 2:5

²⁸ Acts 2:3. Other verses which use fire as symbolic of God’s presence or His word include: Exodus 3:2-4 and 13:21; Judges 6:21; 1 Kings 18:36-39; 1 Chronicles 21:26; Isaiah 31:9; Jeremiah 20:9 and 23:28-29; Daniel 7:9-10; Matthew 3:11; and 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

²⁹ Malachi 3:2-3. For additional verses which use “fire” in this way, see Zechariah 13:9; Matthew 3:11; Mark 9:49; and 1 Peter 1:7. See also 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (“If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.”)

³⁰ Romans 6:16

³¹ Romans 6:23

³² Matthew 10:28

³³ 2 Corinthians 7:10

³⁴ 2 Thessalonians 1:9

³⁵ Revelation 21:8

³⁶ 2 Thessalonians 1:9

³⁷ See Psalm 139:7-8: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.” Or Jeremiah 23:24: “ ‘Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?’ declares the LORD. ‘Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?’ declares the LORD.”

³⁸ Note that at least one of these two verses from Matthew must be interpreted symbolically, since a “furnace of fire” would hardly be a place of “darkness.”

³⁹ Job 16:9

⁴⁰ See Psalm 35:15-16, Psalm 37:12, Psalm 112:10, and Lamentations 2:16.

⁴¹ Acts 7:54

⁴² Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30

⁴³ Luke 8:31 and Revelation 20:1-3

⁴⁴ 2 Peter 2:4

⁴⁵ Jude 13

⁴⁶ Jude 6