

FIRE AND TORMENT

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Most people don't get their initial views of hell and heaven from the Bible. Most people "know" that Santa comes at xmas ... he doesn't. Most people know that Sunday is the day of worship ... it isn't. We have these preconceived ideas.

It is best to start with the plain, easy to understand scriptures ... and then move on to more complex scriptures in the light of the plain ones.

In the OT, Hell is translated as Sheol ... but doesn't appear in most translations.

But ... the wicked will perish ... will be destroyed ... Blown away like chaff and vanish ... or like smoke that vanishes away ... burned away like stubble. The wicked are destined to be no more. Like wax that melts.

Psalms 68:1-2

Let God arise,
Let His enemies be scattered;
Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.
As smoke is driven away,
So drive them away;

As wax melts before the fire,

So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

In the NT ... the narrow way will take you to life ... but the broad way will take you to destruction.

John 3:16

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

Jesus talked about Gehenna. It was the Valley of Hinnom ... just outside the city of Jerusalem. Historically, it was a wicked and cursed place ... full of corruption. Ultimately, the city dump. A very evil place ... repulsive to the Jews. A place of destruction.

The Book of Revelation is full of Apocalyptic language. It communicates truth ... but ... it is coded. It is not all plain, literal language.

Eg The Beast with 7 heads and 10 horns. It is an image, a picture. We see Jesus pictured as a lamb with 7 horns and 7 eyes ... this is symbolic.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. A Woman standing on the moon with the sun bathing her? A Harlot riding a scarlet beast with the name "Babylon" etched on her forehead? Jesus is said to have a sword sticking out of His mouth? The devil is said to pour flood waters out of his mouth?

The many symbols all communicate truth but are not to be taken literally.

Let the Bible interpret itself. So ... we don't have to speculate!! Is that the case with the Book of Revelation? The answer is, "Yes". There are over 500 references to themes, ideas, expressions that are borrowed from the OT.

Revelation 14:9-11

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. **He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the **smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever;** and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Can we find similar language? Yes ... it points out complete, total destruction. NB This is the punishment for those who worship the beast.

Isaiah 34:1-10

Come near, you nations, to hear;

And heed, you people!

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

The world and all things that come forth from it.

For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations,

And His fury against all their armies;

He has utterly destroyed them,

He has given them over to the slaughter.

Also **their slain** shall be thrown out;

Their stench shall rise from their corpses,

And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven;

Indeed it shall come down on Edom,

And on the people of My curse, for judgment.

The sword of the Lord is filled with blood,

It is made overflowing with fatness,

With the blood of lambs and goats,

With the fat of the kidneys of rams.

For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah,

And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance,

The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

Its streams shall be turned into pitch,

And its dust into brimstone;

Its land shall become burning pitch.

It shall not be quenched night or day;

Its smoke shall ascend forever.

From generation to generation it shall lie waste;

No one shall pass through it forever and ever.

Picturing complete destruction!!

What about the "cup of His indignation"? Picturing calamity, desolation ... the language of death and destruction.

Jeremiah 25:15-18

For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me: **"Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them."** (Death and destruction)

Then I took the cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord had sent me: Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, **to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day;**

Jeremiah 25:27-33

"Therefore you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you." ' And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "You shall certainly drink! For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? **You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth,"** says the Lord of hosts.'

"Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

'The Lord will roar from on high,

And utter His voice from His holy habitation;

He will roar mightily against His fold.

He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes,

Against all the inhabitants of the earth.

A noise will come to the ends of the earth—

For the Lord has a controversy with the nations;

He will plead His case with all flesh.

He will give those who are wicked to the sword,' says the Lord."

Thus says the Lord of hosts:

"Behold, disaster shall go forth

From nation to nation,

And a great whirlwind shall be raised up

From the farthest parts of the earth.

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

Obadiah 1:15-16 (addressed to Edom)

“For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near;

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

Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.

For as you drank on My holy mountain,

So shall all the nations drink continually;

Yes, they shall drink, and swallow,

And they shall be as though they had never been. (Destruction, annihilation ... end)

Revelation 14:9-11

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also **drink of the wine** of the wrath of God, (destruction) which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be **tormented with fire and brimstone** (destruction) in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the **smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever;** and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Let's find out the fulfillment.

Revelation 14:14-16

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Revelation 14:17-20

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

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

So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

The whole picture is devastation, destruction ... death!!

Revelation 18:1-5

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!** (Babylon is going to be destroyed!!) For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, (illicit relationships) and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Revelation 18:8

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

Revelation 18:9-10

“The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, **when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment,** saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

Revelation 18:17-19

For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’ Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What is like this great city?’

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

Revelation 19:1-3

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.” Again they said, “Alleluia! **Her smoke rises up forever and ever!**” (**the language of total destruction ... it never gets reversed!!**)

What about the final beast ... the end-time beast?

Daniel 7:2-3

Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And **four great beasts** (empires) came up from the sea, each different from the other.

Daniel 7:7-8

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, (Roman Empire) dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth;

it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

Daniel 7:11

"I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; **I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.** (the end of this empire, the end of its leader)

Let's read what it says in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 19:19-21

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. **Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.**

Revelation 20:7-10 ... An event at the end of The Millennium

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. **The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. (were cast) And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

Revelation 20:13-14

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.** (Can this be literal? It is the language of destruction. The death and grave will end ... finish). Compare:

1 Corinthians 15:26

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Death will be no more. Death will cease. It will terminate ... no longer exist.

1 Corinthians 15:54-55

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O Death, where is your sting?

O Hades, where is your victory?"

Revelation 21:4

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

Revelation 20:15

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in **the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."**

The Lake of Fire is the final death.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, (those mentioned in Hebrews 11) let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What about this "Cloud of Witnesses"? Are they saints in heaven "rooting for us"? What are witnesses? They are someone who has a witness to tell. Their testimony. They testify. In Hebrews 11 we read the testimonies of those who have gone before us.

Martus ... Greek for witness. The verb to testify ... to be a witness ...
Greek =Martureo

Hebrews 11:1-2

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained **a good testimony.** (Martureo)

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he **obtained witness** that he was righteous, God **testifying** of his gifts; and through it **he being dead still speaks.**

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken **he had this testimony,** (Martureo) that he pleased God.

Hebrews 11:39-40

And all these, having **obtained a good testimony** (Martureo) through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

The Hall of Faith is there to encourage us. We have their testimony as a witness. Bullinger says of Hebrews 12:1 ... "Whose lives witness to the power of faith. Not "spectators" ... for then the word would be "Autoptes (see Luke 1:2) or "Eoptes (see 2 Peter 1:16 ... we were witnesses of Jesus).

Conclusion. Once you are dead ... you are dead ... and would stay dead ... apart from a resurrection. But the wicked will be cast into the Lake of Fire which is the second and final death!!