

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

*John 3:16*

- There is no need for anyone to experience hell
- Eternal life comes through belief in Jesus as Saviour—and is available to everyone

# DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

## LESSON 31 PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKED

A Bible doctrine has to be proved correct from scripture. In the case of what happens to the wicked we need to bear in mind God's character rather than our own possible feelings as human beings

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"*

*Romans 6:23*

- The wages of sin is death
- In contrast the gift God gives is eternal life
- What character of God does this reveal?

*"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."*

*Revelation 20:12*

- The dead are judged by their works—they have nothing else to rely on

*"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."*

*Revelation 21:8*

- Death for sin is for the unbelievers described in the passage
- This destruction is described as the Second Death
- The suggestion is that they will not suffer this fate until after their 'second life'

*"They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power."*

#### *2 Thessalonians 1:9*

- The second death is eternal separation from God—this is worse than physical torture
- This effect means that the effects of sin are shut out of heaven—pain, suffering and agony

*"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth--Gog and Magog--to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them."*

#### *Revelation 20:7-9*

- Hell as a place of punishment does not exist at this time
- Hell will be on this earth after 1000 years when God rains fire on the wicked.
- This destruction takes place after the wicked have been raised to life and shown they have not changed
- What does this say about God's character?

*"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty."*

#### *Malachi 4:1-3*

- The wicked burn up as stubble, leaving nothing behind
- The wicked disappear completely
- Those in Christ will be healed
- Is this fair of God?

*"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."*

#### *Revelation 21:1-3*

- God will re-create this earth. Former things pass away and all is made new.
- This earth becomes the dwelling place of God and His people
- Therefore hell must do its work and be completed. It cannot last forever.
- Why doesn't God allow us to watch sinners burning for ever?