

Hell – Torment or Destruction

By Marcie Lynn
www.30days.info

This is a response to a post on a forum. It may or may not make sense standing alone, but I figured why waste the research so I'm publishing it here.

Before I begin, let me say that I really had no preconceived notion on this topic. I had never studied it nor even gave it much of a thought. Yes, I am aware of what is taught about tormenting, but it isn't something that I have used personally nor do I hear it taught very often in my church. But the topic surely did intrigue me. I read EVERY post, but not all of the external links. I am not biased in any way.

As I reply, I may repeat something that other's wrote, to be honest, with so many posts prior to this, I can't address them individually. I decided the best thing for me was to start from scratch and do my own research and let it lead where it may.

Before I dive into my findings, I would like you to know my method of research, since you don't know me personally. I developed this method of using a Word Flow Chart. You can see the one I used at http://30days.info/word_flow_charts.xls – you will have to download it. Warning, if you print it, print it with 2 per page and it will be like 60 pages. I research every single occurrence in the NT of the following words: Destroy, Hell Geena, Death, Hell Hades, Rest, Slain, Torment (3 kinds), Brimstone (2 kinds), Fire, Smoke, Eternal, Judged, Penalty/Damnation, Dead, Consumed/Burned, Kill, Flame, Hell, Wailing, Gnashing, Perdition/Destruction, Punishment (3 different words), and Destruction. During my study I used E-Sword (if you don't have it, check it out <http://www.e-sword.net/> – it's free! I find it a must for Biblical research.) I use the Amplified, KJV, NIV, ESV, and Youngs Literal Version. I also use Strongs and the Lexicon website (<http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/frequency.cgi?number=1100&book=1co&translation=str>). I use the following commentaries Robertson's Word Pictures, Vincent's Word Studies, John Wesley's Notes, John Gill's notes, Albert Barnes notes, and Matthew Henry's notes.

Here are my findings, beginning with the text you began with. I did not quote every part of a scripture, I'm sure you are quite capable of looking them up if you need to.

[Matthew 10:28](#) refers to a body and soul being destroyed in hell. Therefore we have to establish our vocabulary. What does destroy mean? What is a body? What is a soul? And what is hell?

A body is human flesh and the soul is our spirit to state it very simply. I think these are easy to come to an agreement on. If not, then say so and I'll define them in more direct terms.

A comment made on the forum that I feel can add to this:

I do have to correct 1 thing. Man is a 3 part being, not a 2 part being. Man is a spirit-being, he has a soul, and he lives in a body. ([1 Thess. 5:23](#)). [Hebrews 4:12](#) says that the Word of God divides the soul and the spirit. So if Matt 10:28 refers to a body and soul being destroyed, then everlasting torment is for the remaining spirit to endure.

To destroy, the original Greek word (apollumi) comes from the root word olethros which means to *destroy*; a prolonged form); *ruin*, that is, *death, punishment*: – destruction. The definition for apollumi is to “put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to ruin, render useless, to kill, to declare that one must be put to death, metaph. to devote or give over to eternal misery in hell, to perish, to be lost.” Because of the various definitions available to us, we can not determine from this one scripture verse whether destroy would be a permanent state or something that could be on going – as in to put out of the way entirely or render useless and especially to give over to eternal misery in hell. It would be quite a jump, with just this one scripture, to saying that there is no torment for sinners. Therefore, we will have to do further research to discover the answer to the question: Are sinners tormented or destroyed?

Hell in this context is referring to Geenna, The definition given by Thayer is “Hell is the place of the future punishment call “Gehenna” or “Gehenna of fire”. This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction.” So in this particular scripture, Hell would be a place of punishment. Given that definition of hell, we could, within the context of this verse alone, say that destroy would not be a final state as punishment would not be a final state. However, the fact that at Gehenna things were burned, we would tend to think of that as a final state. They were cast out and destroyed, finished, nothing was left but ashes. There would be punishment during the burning stage however. But it is not wise to take one verse of the Bible and take a stance on something. It is always important to keep everything in context of the entire Bible. So let’s look a little further.

We do know that there will be suffering, of course, let me throw you into a fire and I’m sure you will suffer! lol But [Matthew 23:33](#) clarifies that this is true as it reads, “How can you escape the penalty to be suffered in hell (Gehenna)?”

If we look at [Rev 14:10-11](#) we can see that he (or they) that permits the stamp/mark of the beast on their forehead or his hand will be tormented with fire and brimstone and the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever with no respite. I think we are limiting God to think that just because when we see something burned here on earth and it dies and evaporates or is destroyed, that it is so everywhere. I mean, we are talking about God here, he made man from dirt! First of all, what we see burned and that perishes forever is human flesh and bones. At this point, that is no long in existence. Therefore what is going to burn is the soul or spirit. We do not know what affect fire, brimstone, or any kind of burning has on the soul. However, here, it indicates that it is very much a torment and that it can go on forever and ever. But, this is referencing those who take the mark of the beast, which does not tell us about those who would die as a sinner and not with the mark of the beast. We do know that those who paid homage and gave divine honors to him will also be “hurled alive into the fiery lake that burns and blazes with brimstone,” as recorded in [Rev 19:20](#).

We also know that along with the beast and the false prophet, the devil will be thrown into the fiery lake and that they will be “tormented day and night forever and ever,” as recorded in [Rev 20:10-15](#). So we know that the lake will not destroy, as a permanent state, angels or demons.

Another question that Rev 20:10-15 presents us with is the when of the torment. Here we see that people have been dead and have not been judged yet. It says that “the sea delivered up the dead

who were in it ... and all were tried and their cases determined by what they had done.” So a question has arisen in regards to what was happening with them up until this time?

We also find out that Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire. I believe that is because there is no need for them anymore. Death has no use anymore as there will be no one left to die. Everyone and everything left will have eternal life. Hades is where the dead were – it is defined as “the nether world, the realm of the dead.” Or it could also mean “the grave, death, or hell.” No matter what it’s definition, there is no need for it anymore. To me these are a state and a place and are just being discarded. It doesn’t matter if they are tortured or not.

From Rev 20 we also see that anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was hurled into the lake of fire. So now we know that even those without the mark of the best will end up in the lake of fire. We now have them in the lake of fire, but not the answer as to whether they are tortured either in death/Hades or in the lake of fire. In [Rev 21](#) this is confirmed when it lists several kinds of people (cowards, ignoble, contemptible, unbelieving and faithless, depraved and defiled with abominations, murders, lewd, adulterous, magical arts, idolaters, and liars) who will have “their part in the lake that blazes with fire and brimstone.” But we still don’t know about torment per se.

Basically, anyone who doesn’t believe will experience the second death. We know that the second death will be the lake of fire as stated in several of the scriptures already listed. Some have said that the first death was in the garden and the second is when we actually die here on earth. But this clearly states that the lake of fire is the second death. And based on the scriptures mentioned above, we know that many of those people listed were already naturally dead or died here while on earth. I’m not going to get into whether the first death was in Eden or the first was our earthly death – all I know is that the second death IS the lake of fire and believers will not experience that death.

I did find it interesting the wording of [Matthew 13:40-42](#). It says that “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all causes of offense and all who do iniquity and act wickedly.” Notice that it says “His Kingdom.” That might be an excellent topic for another posting, I just wanted to mention that. Either way, they will be cast into the furnace of fire and there will be weeping and wailing and grinding of teeth. Sounds like torture to me, but the question is for how long? Will it be for eternity?

[2 Thes. 1:7-9](#) reveals some more information to us as it states “such people will pay the penalty and suffer the punishment of everlasting ruin and eternal exclusion and banishment from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” This just brought a thought to my mind. What would be more of a punishment than to be in the presence of God and then taken out of it? They WILL be in the presence of God at judgment. They will experience everything we will experience, the difference is, they will all be taken away. I know it’s not really relevant here, but just a thought that crossed my mind. Anyway ... It does say everlasting and eternal, which seems to indicate no end to it.

[Matthew 8:11-12](#), mentions something that seems to be odd as it states, “I tell you, many will come from east and west, and will sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, While the sons and heirs of the kingdom will be driven out into the darkness outside,

where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. [Ps. 107:2, 3; Isa. 49:12; 59:19; Mal. 1:11.] (AMP).” The sons of the Kingdom comes from a favorite Hebrew wisdom which basically means the sons of hell. So they will be driven out into the darkness outside. Outside where? Could this be something alluding to where they are such as in Death or Hades? I can’t image it is after they are thrown in the lake of fire, so it almost has to be during the time between death on earth and the judgment day. This is strictly speculation on my part however.

Truly, we do not know what goes on after one dies as an unbeliever. We know that they will not be judged immediately, and we know that they will not be in the lake of fire until judgment day. Because we are unable to know the properties and laws of matter after death, we can not determine the affect of fire and brimstone on the soul. All we can do is rely on what the Bible tells us. We either believe it is true or it isn’t. We can’t have it half way.

The Bible clearly states that even though people, angels, things (whatever you want to call them lol) are thrown into the lake of fire, there is tormenting forever and ever. Let me give you one final scripture verse to chew on for a bit. And just so there isn’t any issue over what version, I’ll give it to you in several versions:

(AMP) Then they will go away into eternal punishment, but those who are just and upright and in right standing with God into eternal life. [Dan. 12:2.]

(ASV) And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

(ESV) And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

(KJV) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

(LITV) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life.

(NIV) “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

(YLT) And these shall go away to punishment age-during, but the righteous to life age-during.’

This is [Mathew 25:46](#), and if you have a red letter Bible, you will see that this is in red letters. Now, the real question becomes, do you believe what Jesus says, whether you can prove it or not? Because Jesus says, that they will go away into everlasting punishment. Punishment, kolasis, from [G2849](#); penal *infliction*: – punishment, torment.

Enough for me, is it enough for you?

Thanks for the subject matter. Thoroughly enjoyed my day in God’s Word.

SIDE NOTE: I spent the entire day researching this topic. I really enjoyed it and was even able to do most of it outside in the beautiful weather. But it wasn’t until near the very end that I came across that verse in Matthew. I’m glad the Lord allowed me the journey before revealing that verse to me. Lol God is good!!