



Jesus is simply stating that it would be better for Judas to have died in his mother's womb rather than living to adulthood to betray Jesus. But even if "gennao" means "birth," we still have to ask how exactly it is better to die in the womb than to face annihilation.

Number one, let's imagine for a moment that the soul is not immortal but ceases to exist when the body dies. In that scenario, Judas' body dies in the womb and Judas immediately ceases to exist.

Number two, since we know that the soul is immortal and does continue to consciously exist after the body dies, we might consider that scenario as well. In this case, Judas' soul would continue to exist after his body dies in his mother's womb. But what happens to Judas' soul? Having died before birth, would Judas be judged as wicked and slated for annihilation or as righteous and slated to live forever in a loving relationship with God in the kingdom?

Ultimately, whether or not the soul continues to exist after the body dies, in order to determine how it would be better for Judas to die before being born, we would have to determine what happens to unborn babies when they die.

One, in any Christian theological system that adheres to or conforms with the Calvinist doctrine of Total Depravity or the doctrine of Original Sin, all human babies inherit Adam's guilt from the moment of conception and are just as guilty as if they had sinned themselves. In such a belief system, there is no reason to think that Judas would escape condemnation at the Final Judgment, even if he died before birth. Consequently, if Calvinism or Original Sin are correct, then dying before birth would not improve Judas' final state.

Two, our studies have shown that children are conceived and born innocent, contrary to Calvinism and popular doctrines about Total Depravity and Original Sin. (More information refuting those Calvinist concepts can be found in our Calvinism study outline.) Consequently, in our view if Judas died in the womb, he would die innocent and be eligible to be resurrected to participate in the kingdom of God. In such a scenario, dying in the womb would certainly be better for Judas than receiving annihilation as a consequence for living long enough to eventually choose to betray Jesus.

Consequently, in order to avoid annihilation being disproved by Mark 14:21, Calvinism and Original Sin must be false, the soul must continue to exist after the death of the body, and "gennao" must refer to "birth" not conception. Otherwise, one way or another Jesus' statement in Mark 14:21 necessarily shows that the final state of the wicked is worse than simply not existing. And although this proof is limited in the sense that it only disproves annihilation for those who believe in Calvinism or Original Sin, it is nonetheless worth noting here because such a large group of modern Christians believe in Calvinism and Original Sin. However, if Mark 14:21 is using "gennao" to refer to conception, just as Matthew 1:20 does, then there is no way for annihilation to survive Mark 14:21. Since never being conceived and annihilation are both equivalent to non-existence,

Jesus' remarks in Mark 14:21 clearly demand that the final state of the condemned must be worse than annihilation into non-existence, regardless of whether or not one believes in Calvinism and original sin or not.

## **#2 – Hell Was Made for Immortal Beings**

Earlier in this study, we demonstrated that wicked humans are sent to Hell at the Final Judgment, and that they will have immortal, spirit bodies. At the time, our purpose was to address the perception that Hell is inherently cruel because it entails God burning men alive in mortal bodies. However, it is important to revisit some of these scriptural facts here, specifically with regard to the question of whether or not Hell annihilates the existence of the wicked.

Previously, we offered three proofs that the wicked will enter Hell as immortal angels, not as mortal men. First, in Luke 20:35-36, Matthew 22:30, and Mark 12:25, Jesus states that when the saints are resurrected they become equal to angels and no longer have the capacity to die. Second, 1 Corinthians 15:20-24, Paul explains that just as all men follow the pattern of Adam and die physically, so too all men will follow the pattern of Jesus Christ in the resurrection. This demonstrates that the wicked will be resurrected in the same pattern as Christ Jesus and we know that Jesus' introduces a resurrection to immortality, not a mere return to mortal life, which we also established earlier. Third, in Matthew 25:41, Jesus said that Hell was specifically prepared, not for men, but for angelic beings.

These three facts impact the question of annihilation in Hell in two ways. First, these three facts demonstrate that the wicked enter Hell as immortals, which itself naturally leads to the conclusion that the wicked will not be annihilated in Hell. Second, the purpose for Hell is itself remarkably informative. Annihilation is based on the notion that Hell was created to annihilate wicked mortal men. But Jesus' comments in Luke 20, Matthew 22, Mark 12, and Matthew 25 disprove that faulty premise. According to Jesus, angels are immortal and Hell was made for angels. In other words, Hell was made for immortal beings. And if Hell was made to deal with wicked immortal beings, it is simply inaccurate to conceive of Hell fundamentally as a place designed to annihilate the existence of wicked mortal men. To put it another way, according to Jesus, Hell was not made to cause mortals to cease to exist. It was made for beings that do not have the capacity to die according to Luke 20:35-36.

## **#3 – Tormented Day and Night, No Rest Day or Night**

One of the particular problems that annihilation faces is the fact that Revelation plainly states that the torment of the devil and the wicked will not come to a quick end.

First, it should be noted that the word "tormented" occurs 4 times in Revelation and each time it is the same Greek word "basanizo" (Strong's Number 928). Earlier in this study, we discussed the possibility that words such as "basanizo" do not necessarily refer to torturous pain but can instead refer to lesser degrees of

physical discomfort or perhaps strictly mental anguish. However, what is important at this point in our study is not the degree of discomfort that this term conveys, but rather the duration of time that the discomfort, pain, or mental anguish is experienced. Fundamentally, the critical point here is that neither lesser discomfort, nor mental anguish, nor even great pain can be experienced by non-conscious or non-existent beings. On this note, we can examine the usages of “basanizo.” In fact, “basanizo” occurs 5 times in Revelation with the fifth time occurrence being in Revelation 12:2 where it is translated as “pained” in reference to childbirth. But more importantly, it should be noted that Revelation 9:5 uses “basanizo” in the phrase “they should be tormented five months.” Similarly, Revelation 11:10 uses “basanizo” in reference to the fact that the two prophets “tormented them that dwelt on the earth,” which no doubt denotes the plagues that these two men distribute over the course of the 1,290 days of their ministry, according to Revelation 11:3-7. Consequently, although there “basanizo” could potentially refer to a quick, short-lived suffering, such as the type of pain that might be experienced during childbirth or theoretically when burning to death, it is equally clear that the word can refer to suffering that is experienced over long periods of time, such as months and years.

Second, we’ll move on to examine the use of the word “torment” in Revelation 20:10.

**Revelation 20:10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

This passage states unequivocally that the devil will be cast into the lake of fire and he will be tormented there day and night for ever and ever. This statement teaches us several things.

Number one, whether great pain, lesser discomfort, or mental anguish, torment is inherently something experienced by a conscious living being, not a dead body or lifeless corpse. Consequently, any proponent of the idea that Hell annihilates the wicked from existence, particularly due to objections related to issues of cruelty, would need to have this torment last as briefly as possible and only as an unavoidable byproduct of the disintegration process. However, as we continue with our analysis we will see that according to the text their torment is anything but brief.

Number two, the phrase “day and night” is the first indication that the torment is ongoing rather than short-lived. This phrase does not denote merely a single duration of time comprised of only one day and only one night.

One, this phrase is a reference to the perpetual alternating cycle between day and night, which God set up on the first day of creation in Genesis 1:3-5 and which has continued ever since.

Two, the phrase “day and night” is used 28 times in the bible. (Genesis 8:22, Exodus 13:21, Leviticus 8:35, Deuteronomy 28:66, Joshua 1:8, 1 Kings 8:59, 1 Chronicles 9:33, 2 Chronicles 6:20, Nehemiah 1:6, 4:9, Job 26:10, Psalm 1:2, 32:4, 42:3, 55:10, 88:1, Jeremiah 9:1, 16:13, 33:20, 33:25, Lamentations 2:18, Luke 18:7, Acts 9:24, 26:7, Revelation 4:8, 7:15, 12:10, and 20:10.) With only four exceptions in Exodus 13:21, Jeremiah 33:20 and 25, and Acts 9:24, every other time this phrases occurs it denotes a repetition of days, never a single day. On occasion, the phrase may be used in conjunction with a specified, limited number of days, such as Leviticus 8:35, which specifies seven days total. However, the vast majority of the times when this phrase is used in scripture it denotes a long or continual duration of time, not a short one.

Three, at least two of the other times this phrase occurs in the Book of Revelation apart from chapter 20:10, it is used in reference to an unending period of time.

**Revelation 4:8** And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and **they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.**

**Revelation 7:15** Therefore are **they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple:** and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

**Revelation 12:10** And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: **for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**

In Revelation 4, the four beasts worship God “day and night” without rest. Surely, this indicates either that they continue this worship without ceasing forever or at least a very long period of time. Revelation 7 gives an encouraging promise that the saints will serve God “day and night in his temple.” The hopeful nature of this promise likewise strongly suggests that it continues at least for a long period of time if not perpetually, particularly because it is a description of the reward of the righteous, which no one would argue is only temporary or eventually comes to an end. The third occurrence of this phrase in Revelation occurs in chapter 12, in which the devil is described as “the accuser of the brethren” who has “accused them before our God day and night.” It is possible that this verse refers to the devil’s opposition to the two witnesses in Revelation 11:1-7, in which case it would only refer to accusations made in the final years of history when the two witnesses are active. However, even in this case it would still denote years of time, not hours or days. But, it is also possible that Revelation 12:10 is intended more generally to all the saints since the foundation of the world. After all, we do see Satan accusing Job in Job 1:9-11 and 2:4-5 and accusing Joshua the high priest in Zechariah 3:1. And, the word “devil” (“diabolos,” Stron’g number 1228) itself means “accuser.” If Revelation 12:10 is meant more generally, then the phrase “day and night” would likely refer to the long, ongoing work of the devil since the foundation of the world. Nevertheless, the occurrences of the phrase

“day and night” in Revelation 4:8 and 7:15 are clearly intended to denote an unceasing phenomenon.

Clearly, the scriptural precedent for the phrase “day and night” indicates that when Revelation 20:10 states that the devil is cast into the lake of fire and tormented day and night, it means to indicate that he is tormented for a long, ongoing period of time. That is simply not compatible with the doctrine of annihilation. It is incompatible because the longstanding torment means that the devil continues to exist in the fire rather than being annihilated. And it is incompatible because the longstanding pain contradicts a basic premise of annihilation, namely, that God would not punish people in fire for long periods because it would be cruel and inhumane. Certainly we do not believe that God is cruel. But our model mitigates the issue of pain on the grounds that it is simply a necessary part of the restraint of Hell and on the grounds that it is experienced by immortal, angelic beings rather than weak, mortal flesh.

Number three, the end of Revelation 20:10 doesn't just say “day and night” but it says, “day and night for ever and ever.” This phrase “for ever and ever” provides additional evidence that the torment is not only long-term, but permanent. In the Greek, this phrase begins with the word “eis” (Strong's Number 1519), which means “into, unto, toward, for, or among.” “Eis” is followed by the Greek word “aion” (Strong's Number 165) repeated twice, back to back. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon defines “aion” with a range that includes “for ever” or “eternity” on one end and “an unbroken age” or a “period of time” or “age” on the other end. Even if we assume that “aion” here simply means an “age,” the fact that “aion” is repeated twice back to back combined with the word “eis” indicates that the devil will be tormented from “age unto age,” which again conveys it is ongoing with no end ever specified.

When we take the phrase as a whole, “day and night from age to age,” it is clear that there is no way Revelation 20:10 could convey anything less than the idea that the devil will be tormented in the lake of fire for a very long, long time. There is no room for annihilation here. (Incidentally, in a later portion of our study, we will examine evidence supporting the conclusion that the phrase “for ever” and the use of the Greek word “aoin” should be understood to mean “eternity without end” when applied to the wicked in these contexts.)

Lastly, there are two objections that need to be addressed regarding Revelation 20:10.

Number one, it could be argued that Revelation 21:25 and 22:5 prevent the phrase “day and night” cannot denote a perpetual cycle of days and nights. Revelation 21:2 begins a long description of “the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.” Verse 25 is part of this long description of the city and it explains that “the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.” As the description of the heavenly city continues into chapter 22, verse 5 states, “there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and

ever.” Here the question arises, how can the phrase “day and night” mean that the devil will be tormented for a long, long period of time (possibly even eternally) if there isn’t going to be any night after the new Jerusalem descends out of heaven and God the Father dwells with men? But the answer here is simple and provided readily by the text of Revelation 21 and 22.

First, Revelation 21:23 explains why verse 25 declares that “there shall be no night there.” According to verse 23, there will be “no night there” because God the Father and the Lamb dwell in the city and they, not the sun or moon, are the source of light of the city. Chapter 22:5 likewise explains, “they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light.” Simply put, this reference to night is primarily a reference to the lack of light, which has defined virtually half of every 24-hour period since creation. In other words, the period of the day, which was formerly characterized by darkness, will no longer be characterized by darkness because God himself will exhibit light during that time of the day. But that does not mean the day will lose the amount of time previously characterized by darkness or that there will cease to be periods of time known as “days” altogether or that the cycle of days will utterly cease. Instead, there will simply be no darkness during roughly half the day but the period of time formerly known as “night” will nonetheless remain and the cycle of days will continue.

Second, both chapter 21:25 and chapter 22:5 state that “there shall be no night there.” It is important to note the pronoun “there,” which occurs at the end of the phrase. In both verses, the English word “there” is the Greek the word “ekei” (Strong’s Number 1563), which means, “in that place.” In other words, both verses are specifying the location of the new Jerusalem itself. There will be no night in that city. Neither verse suggests that night will end entirely or everywhere outside the city.

Consequently, Revelation 21 and 22 do not prove that night entirely ceases. Nor do these passages refute that the phrase “day and night” denotes a long, continual cycle of time.

Number two, it might be argued that Revelation 20:10 only refers to the devil being tormented day and night for ever and ever, but not wicked men. The hope of such an argument is to find some way to maintain annihilation at least with regard to men and thereby avoid the implication that men are tormented in the fire of Hell for a long period of time. But limiting the implications of Revelation 20:10 solely to the devil is problematic for several reasons.

One, we have already established from Matthew 22, Mark 12, Luke 20, Matthew 25, and 1 Corinthians 15 that Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels and that through the resurrection the wicked will become immortal like angels. It is doubtful that anyone would read Revelation 20:10 and conclude that the devil is the only long-standing resident of Hell and the rest of his angels are not there with him. After all, in Matthew 25:41 Jesus describes says that God has prepared “everlasting fire” for the devil and his angels. When Revelation 20:10 and Matthew 25:41 are considered side by side, the long-lasting nature of the fire is

clearly intended in connection with the long-lasting torment of the devil. Although Revelation 20:10 may not explicitly include the rest of the wicked angels when it describes the ongoing torment in the lake of fire, Jesus' comments in Matthew 25 do include them. And since we know that the wicked are indeed resurrected and in Jesus' words the resurrection makes men "equal to angels," therefore we also know that wicked men would be included among "the devil and his angels."

Two, in a previous section we noted that Revelation 20:10 describes events a thousand years after Christ's return and the beginning of his reign on earth. We also examined Revelation 19, which depicted Christ's return and which also stated that the beast and the false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire when Christ returns before the thousand years begins. Consequently, the fact Revelation 20:10 still identifies the beast and the false prophet in the lake of fire after the thousand years necessitates that they, too, are being tormented there day and night and have been for at least a thousand years at that future point in history. Given the fact that the purpose of Revelation 20:10 is to describe the nature and duration of the devil's punishment, the fact that Revelation 20:10 describes events after Christ's thousand-year reign, and the fact that the beast and the false prophet are included right alongside the devil at this point after the thousand-year reign, it is exceedingly difficult to reach the conclusion that the beast and false prophet merely suffer momentarily while the devil is tormented for a long period. On the contrary, the most reasonable conclusion is that wicked human beings suffer the same enduring torment as wicked angels, just as Jesus' statement in Matthew 25:41 also indicates.

Ultimately, Jesus' statement in Matthew 25:41 and the inclusion of the beast and the false prophet in Revelation 20:10 prohibit the conclusion that only the devil is being tormented day and night for ever and ever in the lake of fire, not wicked men.

Third, we should also examine the mention of "torment" in revelation 14.

**Revelation 14:9** And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,** **10 The same shall** drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall **be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:** **11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

As we can see, the word "tormented" occurs in verse 11. But there are several things worth noting about this passage.

Number one, Revelation 21:8 states that "fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and

all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Consequently, when we see the phrase “fire and brimstone” here in chapter 14, there should be no confusion regarding what it refers to. It is simply an early reference to the lake of fire.

Number two, verse 9 begins with the declaration, “if any man worship the beast.” Verse 10 continues with the phrase “the same shall,” which indicates that the same man who worships the beast will suffer the things that follow in the rest of verse 10 and 11. Consequently, while Revelation 20:10 primarily mentioned the devil in reference to torment in the lake of fire, verse 9 of chapter 14 makes it clear that it has wicked men in view with regard to the torment.

Number three, verse 10 clearly states that those who worship the beast “shall be tormented with fire and brimstone.” When verse 11 uses the phrase “the smoke of their torment,” it is clearly referring back to the torment in the fire and brimstone mentioned with regard to those who worship the mark of the beast in verse 10. Of course, proponents of annihilation might be quick to argue that only the smoke is identified as occurring for ever and ever in the text of the verse 11. And it is true, the verse does not directly include a phrase that says their torment continues forever. Based on this consideration, proponents of annihilation could theoretically try to argue that the torment was short-lived while the wicked were quickly annihilated by the fire and only the smoke of the fire continues for ever and ever. However, after the smoke is mentioned, the very next phrase in verse 11 says, “and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast.” Here an obvious question arises. What don’t they have rest from? The context clearly demonstrates that they have no rest from their torment.

Number four, the phrase “they have no rest day or night” itself provides a somewhat direct refutation of the doctrine of annihilation. How could a man be annihilated from existence and yet have no rest day or night? Something that doesn’t exist at all certainly doesn’t experience anything day and night. Moreover, if the absence of “rest” here isn’t meant with regard to the torment never ending, the most plausible alternative would be to use “rest” as a reference to sleep or cessation of some kind. Of course, earlier we established that the bible’s use of terms like “sleep” or “rest” as a reference to death do not indicate a cessation of conscious existence. But in any case, if the absence of “rest” here does not refer to the torment never ending, the most likely alternative would be that the absence of rest would mean there is no sleep or cessation for the wicked. Consequently, the declaration that those who worship the beast will have no rest day or night is simply incompatible with the idea that the torment of the wicked ends because they are annihilated from existence.

Number five, comparing Revelation 14:10-11 and Revelation 20:10 side by side confirms our interpretation that Revelation 20:10 doesn’t just have implications concerning the devil alone, but also concerning wicked men. Revelation 20:10 states that the devil will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And Revelation 14:10-11 uses similar language to declare that those men who worship the beast will also be tormented day and night with no rest. This indicates that “no

rest” and “for ever and ever” are most likely parallel in meaning so that “for ever and ever” means “without ceasing.” Consequently, both the devil and wicked men experience torment day and night without rest for ever in Hell.

In conclusion, Revelation 14:10-11 and 20:10 explicitly state that the wicked will be tormented for a long, long time at the very least, if not forever. There is no rest from their torment, neither day nor night.

#### **#4 – Long-Term Suffering in Hell is Historically and Scripturally Unavoidable**

Although we’ve saved it until near the end of this larger section, one of the most obvious problems with the doctrine of annihilation is that scripture is clear that some beings have already been subjected to the fires and torment of Hell for a very long time. Moreover, this fact will also pose significant problems for the doctrine of universal salvation, which is also known as “universal reconciliation” or “universalism.” As we established at the beginning of this study, Wikipedia.org defines universal salvation as “the doctrine that all sinful and alienated human souls – because of divine love and mercy – will ultimately be reconciled to God.”

As we begin to include analysis regarding the doctrine of universal salvation, we should take a moment to focus on the fact that the quote from Wikipedia defining Christian Mortalism does not explicitly mention what will happen to the wicked angels. It simply includes “all sinful and alienated human souls.” As such, we need to consider for a moment whether or not wicked angels would need to be included as well and the problematic implications for universal salvation if they are excluded from reconciliation.

First, we might start by pointing out that the hopeful and complete sentiment suggested by the term “universal” is largely useless if wicked angels remain unreconciled to God. In order to be truly universal, the wicked angels would also have to be reconciled to God. After all, once it is conceded that God is content to leave wicked angels unreconciled to him forever, arguments that God is going to reconcile all wicked men to him lose their internal, logical consistency. Of course, it is possible to conceive of reasons why God might distinguish between wicked humans and wicked angels and treat them differently when it comes to reconciliation. But the problem is, if God is not going to reconcile the wicked angels, then the prospect of sentient beings cast into Hell forever remains, even if all the humans are reconciled to God. This means that the concept of Hell as a place of long-lasting separation and suffering cannot be objected to on the principal that a loving God would not subject any being to such a punishment. And this leads us to our next few points.

Second, it is necessary to have a plausible explanation for what would happen to the wicked angels if they are not reconciled to God. We have already shown that angels are immortal and incorruptible, so their bodies are inherently unyielding to forces of destruction, which makes annihilation in Hell impossible for angels. And we’ve also seen that the devil will remain consciously alive in the fires of

Hell for a thousand years, then released for a short time, and afterward imprisoned again to be tormented day and night forever. Clearly, angels are not annihilated by the fires of Hell. So, if the angels are not included in universal salvation, then there is no avoiding God sentencing sentient beings to the fires of Hell for all eternity.

Third, ultimately it is not scripturally plausible to uphold a distinction between men and angels with regard to universal salvation. We have already established that wicked men are resurrected, that all resurrected men follow the pattern of Jesus' resurrection, that resurrected men are equal to angels, that resurrected men no longer have the capacity to die, and that wicked men will be sent to Hell, which was prepared for the devil and his angels, not for mortal men. These scriptural facts undermine any attempt to draw a line between men and angels when it comes to the implications of universal salvation. If angels are not reconciled to God, then there is little reason to suggest that resurrected wicked men will be treated any differently than wicked angels.

Having provided reasons to include wicked angels in any case for universal salvation, we will now turn our attention to several passages in scripture that argue against both annihilation and universal salvation. In particular, we will now examine scriptures which demonstrate that some beings, including human beings, have already been confined to conscious existence in Hell for a long duration of time.

First, we will examine 2 Peter 2 and Jude.

**2 Peter 2:4** For if **God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell**, and delivered them **into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment**.

**Jude 1:6** And **the angels** which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, **he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day**.

Number one, there are four items worth noting here from these passages.

One, both Peter and Jude identify that they are talking about angels.

Two, both Peter and Jude explain that God placed these angels in chains.

Three, Peter specifies that these angels are actually chained in Hell.

Four, both Peter and Jude state that the angels are "reserved" in those chains until "the judgment of the great day." In both passages, the Greek word for "reserved" is "tereo" (Strong's Number 5083). We have already come across "tereo" in an earlier discussion concerning Jude. As we noted, "tereo" can mean "to attend to carefully" but also conveys the idea of "to keep one in the state in which he is" in the sense of preservation. In fact, we also pointed out that Jude uses "tereo" again

in verse 21 when he encourages the Christians, “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” Clearly, Jude intends “tereo” to convey the idea of “preserving.” And his application of that term to the angels in verse 6 demonstrates that they, too, are preserved rather than destroyed as they await the final judgment.

Five, in both Peter and Jude, the Greek verb for “reserved” is rendered in the perfect tense. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon explains, “The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.” In other words, this event concerning the angels happened sometime in the past, prior to the first century when Peter and Jude are writing. (In our analysis, Peter and Jude are probably referring to the events of Genesis 6, which uses the title “sons of God” to refer to angels coming to earth and having children with human woman. However, it would be too lengthy to get into the evidence for that interpretation here.) Lastly, it is noteworthy that Peter and Jude mention this event concerning the angels surrounded by other ancient examples, including the Exodus journey in Jude 1:5, Sodom and Gomorrah in Jude 1:7, and the Flood of Noah’s day in 2 Peter 2:5. This suggests that the event involving these angels is also quite ancient from Jude and Peter’s point of view.

Ultimately, because these angels are chained in Hell prior to the time when Peter and Jude lived and remain preserved in chains in Hell until judgment day, the end result is that these angels are alive in Hell for at the very least two thousand years. There are several important consequences of this fact.

Number one, although these passages specifically entail an example involving angels, not men, they are still relevant regarding the final state of men in Hell with regard to both annihilation and universal salvation.

One, we have already shown in scripture that the soul of man is immortal and continues to exist consciously after the body dies. And we have already shown that the wicked are resurrected as immortal beings who are equal to angels, that Hell was prepared for angelic beings, and that all men who are resurrected, including the wicked, will be resurrected in the pattern of Christ’s resurrection, which is an immortal resurrection. Consequently, the depiction of angels in Hell in Peter and Jude is relevant because human souls are immortal and according to Jesus and Paul resurrected humans will be equal to angels.

Two, with regard to objections that arise concerning the pain of Hell, it doesn’t really matter whether we are talking about angels or men. As Peter and Jude demonstrate, the fact is that God had already put conscious beings in Hell for millennia. There is simply no avoiding that. Even if God annihilated wicked men when their bodies die or at the final judgment, none of that would change the fact that God has already cast conscious beings into the pain of Hell for exceedingly long periods of time. For those who think such a sentence would be cruel and inhumane, they will have to reconcile their idea of what constitutes cruel and inhumane with God’s actions as revealed in scripture. They can reject God as cruel. Or, they can concede that sending conscious beings into the pain of Hell for

long periods must not be cruel or inhumane after all. And on that point, our model provides a reasonable and scriptural basis for denying the cruelty of Hell. As we have outlined and demonstrated, the pain of Hell is mitigated by the fact that it is simply a necessary part of the restraint of Hell and by the fact that the fire is experienced by immortal, angelic beings rather than weak, mortal flesh.

Number two, regarding the doctrine of annihilation, these passages prove that Hell does not annihilate the angels. To the contrary, Peter and James attest that these angels remain in the fire for millennia in chains as they wait for the time of judgment. Consequently, any hopes of avoiding a scenario in which God subjects sentient beings to Hell for long ages of time is entirely unraveled by Peter and Jude.

Number three, regarding the doctrine of universal salvation, according to Wikipedia.org, universal salvation “may also include a period of finite punishment similar to a state of purgatory.” Although Peter and Jude affirm that some wicked angels are imprisoned in Hell for millennia prior to judgment, it would not necessarily rule out the possibility of repentance after a finite period of suffering in Hell. However, there are several points that argue against any eventual reconciliation, even after a finite period in Hell.

One, the fact that both Peter and Jude both declare that these angels are being “preserved for judgment” definitely indicates that they are not waiting to be reconciled with God. The phrase “reserved for judgment” is not in any way a hopeful statement. Of course, it is conceivable that the judgment is simply akin to formal sentencing in which case perhaps these angels might be sentenced to a finite amount of time in Hell. But even that would imply that what lies ahead at judgment is condemnation, not reconciliation.

It would also imply that what lies ahead after judgment is necessarily a lengthier duration in Hell than the period which they were kept there until the judgment. Here again we draw attention to Peter and Jude’s use of the phrase “reserved unto judgment.” Such language implies that God has decreed that judgment day is an event of paramount importance awaiting these wicked angels. And regardless of what the punishment entails, the term “judgment” itself implies sentencing is involved. But how can the sentencing on judgment day really be viewed as very relevant if the amount of time these wicked angels remain in Hell after judgment is less than (or even roughly comparable to) the millennia they remained in Hell beforehand waiting for judgment? In such a scenario, the comparatively short period of time in Hell after judgment makes sentencing at final judgment rather anticlimactic rather than a monumental event. It could be described as a significant formality, but it would basically be inconsequential in terms of sentencing and punishment, which would in turn completely contradict the very notion of “judgment day,” a that term inherently requires paramount relevance with regard to sentencing and punishment.

Furthermore, the idea that “sentencing” would be finite is nowhere even hinted at in either passage. Both passages are silent on the idea of limited sentences in Hell.

Consequently, the concept of limited time in Hell followed by reconciliation remains speculative, at least as far as Peter and Jude are concerned. However, we'll continue to examine additional evidence on this question as we move forward.

Two, one glaring question emerges from these two passages. Why don't these statements from Peter and Jude end with the phrase "preserved for reconciliation" or "preserved for repentance?" Since Peter and Jude both take the time to remark about the state of these angels and what awaits them, this would be an ideal place for scripture to attest that wicked angels will eventually be reconciled to God. It is informative that neither writer includes even a brief phrase to express a glimmer of hope ahead of these angels. On the other hand, the fact that both Peter and Jude state that the only thing awaiting these angels is "judgment" argues strongly that there is nothing hopeful waiting ahead for them. The word "judgment" that is used by both authors is "krisis" (Strong's Number 2920). We've already discussed this Greek term earlier in our study. A survey of its usage in the New Testament shows that it conveys the ideas of condemnation and separation, not reconciliation and fellowship. In fact, 2 Peter 2 concludes with a general statement referring to both wicked men and wicked angels. Verse 9 declares that, "God knows how to "reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished." Again, the word for "judgment" here in verse 9 is "krisis." But notice that the result of the judgment is specifically identified as being "punished." As such, the picture provided by Peter and Jude is not one of possible redemption and hope, but one that depicts criminals in chains in prison merely awaiting final judgment for their criminal behavior followed by punishment.

Number four, another approach to the question of reconciliation would be to examine how angels might behave if they were to be released from Hell. Would they be repentant, faithful, obedient, and good? Or, would they continue to engage in the deceptive and harmful behavior for which they were imprisoned in Hell in the first place? Although there is no way to definitively answer that question with regard to the specific angels that Peter and Jude refer to, there are passages in scripture describing other angels being released from Hell. Our next few passages will shed light on that very question.

Second, Revelation 9 describes one such event in which beings are released from the fires of Hell.

**Revelation 9:1** And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. **2** And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. **3** And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. **4** And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. **5** And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their

**torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.** 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and **on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.** 8 **And they had hair as the hair of women,** and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 **And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron;** and the sound of **their wings** was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and **their power was to hurt men five months.** 11 **And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.**

Number one, in this passage Hell is designated by the Greek words “abussos” (Strong’s Number 12) and “phrear” (Strong’s Number 5421), which are translated collectively as the “bottomless pit.” We’ve already examined the word “abussos” earlier. The definition for “abussos” provided by the Online Bible Greek Lexicon includes “Orchus, very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth” and “the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons.” In support of “abussos” as a reference to the abode of the dead, the Online Bible Greek Lexicon offers Romans 10:7. Romans 10:7 translates “abussos” as “the deep” and reads, “Who shall descend into the deep (12)? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” Likewise, in support of “abussos” as a reference to the abode of demons, the Online Bible Greek Lexicon offers Luke 8:31, Revelation 9:1-2, 11, 11:7, 17:8, and 20:1, 3. Luke 8:30-31 also translated “abussos” as “the deep.” The text of Luke describes Jesus casting a legion of devils out of a man and the demons petition Jesus, “that he would not command them to go out into the deep.”

Number two, verses 1-2 of Revelation 9 describe a “star” that is “given the key of the bottomless pit” and opens it. In part 5 (Section 2:04) of our Revelation Chronology study, we explain that the word “fall” in the phrase “star fall from heaven” is the Greek verb “pipto” (Strong’s Number 4098), which is rendered as a participle in the perfect tense. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon explains that “The Greek participle corresponds for the most part to the English participle, reflecting “-ing” or “-ed” being suffixed to the basic verb form.” As we noted a moment ago, the perfect tense denotes a completed, past action. Using the English word “fall,” a better translation of chapter 9:1 would be a “I saw a fallen star,” which implies the star already fell prior to chapter 9:1, rather than “I saw a star fall,” which implies that John is watching the star fall in chapter 9:1. Here the term “fallen star” is being used metaphorically to denote a “fallen angel,” which is evidenced by the male personal pronouns that chapter 9:1 and 2 assign to this “fallen star.” Verse 1 says that the key was given to “him.” Verse 2 says that “he” opened the bottomless pit. In fact, except for the metaphor, this statement in chapter 9 is very similar to chapter 20:1, which says, “I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.” Therefore, chapter 9 is describing an angel opening the bottomless pit, in this case a fallen angel.

Number three, notice that when the bottomless pit is opened the text states, “there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace.” Both the smoke and the reference to the “great furnace” demonstrate that the bottomless pit is indeed a reference to Hell, which is a fiery location below the surface of the earth. This language concerning the smoke and the furnace also demonstrate that those beings that come out of this bottomless pit in verses 3-11 were indeed engulfed in the flames of Hell just prior to their release.

Number four, the text uses metaphorical language to describe the beings that come out of the fires of Hell here, referring to them in comparison to “locusts,” no doubt because they work to destroy the great harvest at the end of the age. But verses 7-9 also describe them as having human faces, having hair like women, wearing armor, and having wings. These are clearly not ordinary locusts. In fact, verse 11 provides good reason to conclude that these are wicked angels. Verse 11 explains that “they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit.” Since their king is an angel, the most natural conclusion is that these are wicked angels as well. Moreover, verse 11 concludes its description of this angelic king by saying, “whose name in the hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.” As we can see, their king is a wicked angel known as “Abaddon” in Hebrew or “Apollyon” in Greek, both of which essentially mean, “destroyer.” Why is he called “destroyer?” Because he is the king over this place of “destruction.” Yet, the angels are not annihilated by this destruction! This exemplifies how “destruction” does not mean “annihilation” but rather “destruction” refers to spiritual beings being subjected for a long time to fiery forces of destruction as a punishment.

Number five, after having spent some undisclosed amount of time in the fires of Hell, does Revelation depict these wicked angels as repentant and behaving as though they have been reconciled to God? The text doesn’t seem to fit that notion. Instead, they are presented as following their king to torment men for five months. While it could be suggested that perhaps they are acting under God’s orders rather than behaving wickedly, the rest of Revelation refutes such a suggestion.

Number six, Revelation actually makes several more statements about this angelic king who ascends out of the bottomless pit here in chapter 9. The next comment regarding this angel can be found just two chapters later in Revelation 11.

**Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 7 **And when they shall have**

**finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.**

One, the critical phrase occurs in verse 7, which says, “the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against” God’s two witnesses and “shall kill them.” This phrase differs from Revelation 9 in a few small ways. It uses the term “beast” instead of “angel,” and it does not refer to him as a king. However, this phrase appears somewhat in isolation in chapter 11. There is no explanatory or identifying information in the surrounding context of chapter 10 or 11. In other words, this “beast” is mentioned here without introduction or additional identifying details as if the audience will already know who John is referring to. And the reason for that is simple. John has already described this “beast” in more detail in chapter 9. In fact, the only helpful description that chapter 11 provides is the phrase “that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit,” which is John’s way of referring the reader back to his previous description of an important figure who ascends out of the bottomless pit. As we have seen, that occurs in chapter 9. Although many beings ascend out of the pit in chapter 9, only one is identified individually by John. And that is the angelic king, who John even identifies by the specific titles, “Abaddon” and “Apollyon.” Consequently, John doesn’t think his readers will need any additional identification or description when John mentions this being again in chapter 11.

Two, when it comes to the doctrine of annihilation, this phrase in chapter 11 once again affirms that this angelic being was in the fiery “furnace” of Hell without being annihilated. Instead, he remained in the fires of Hell until the time he is allowed to leave, which is described in Revelation 9 and 11. The fact that he comes out when the bottomless pit is opened demonstrates that God did not cause him to cease to exist and then bring him back into existence in chapter 9. Moreover, the fact that the bottomless pit has to be shut and locked demonstrates the possibility for those in Hell to otherwise escape, which also demonstrates that those in Hell are alive and conscious, not annihilated. Ultimately, the imagery here is one of imprisonment in which this angel exists but is restrained and kept in a particular location, then released. We’ll see more evidence for this as we continue ahead.

Three, when it comes to the doctrine of universal salvation, here we are told exactly what kind of behavior this angel engages in as soon as he is released from the fires of Hell. Has he repented? Has he been reformed by his time in the fires of Hell? No. He immediately resumes his behavior of opposing God’s work and God’s people, making war against the two prophets that God has appointed and even ultimately killing those two prophets. The passage does describe the release of a being from Hell, but not in a repentant or reconciled state as we might imagine for an inmate that is deemed reformed and granted parole. Instead, the passage depicts that time spent in the fires of Hell does not have a reforming effect upon those imprisoned there.

Number seven, the final state of this “beast” is disclosed in Revelation 17.

**Revelation 17:6** And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. **7** And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. **8** The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. **9** And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. **10** And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. **11** And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. **12** And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. **13** These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. **14** These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

One, this passage refers specifically to the angel from the bottomless pit in verse 8 and verse 11. Verse 8 describes him with the phrase “the beast that was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit.” The descriptions here are similar to the brief description of him that we found in chapter 11:7, combining the term “beast” with the John’s key identifying phrase, “out of the bottomless pit.” And because verse 8 has already included this signature, identifying description, John can be even briefer in verse 11 where he describes the beast as “the beast that was, and is not.”

Two, the phrase “was and is not” occurs in both verse 8 and verse 11. At first glance, it might seem as though the phrase “was and is not” could potentially relate to the existence and non-existence of the beast. However, the terms “was” and “was not” do not refer to existence but to whether he “is” or “is not” present on the earth.

First, we have already seen in chapter 9 (and will again see in chapter 20 below) that the bottomless pit is both shut and locked, which demonstrates the possibility that without the lock, those in Hell might escape or leave. Peter and Jude also stated that angels have to be kept in chains in Hell. Consequently, if there is the possibility for them to escape or leave, then they must be alive. Non-existent beings do not need to have a chain or locks.

Second, the occurrence of the phrase “was and is not” in verse 8 is immediately followed by “and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit.” Here his ascending out of the bottomless pit is clearly portrayed as the remedy for his “not being,” or more accurately, his “not being around on earth.” In other words, this beast is on earth for a time and then is not on earth for a time because he is placed in the bottomless pit.

Third, the phrase “was and is not” is here in Revelation is similar to the description of Enoch in Genesis 5:24. Verse 24 says, “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Of course, the phrase “was not” doesn’t mean Enoch ceased to exist, but rather that he ceased to be around on the earth where the rest of men were. God did not annihilate Enoch or terminate his existence. Instead, God “took him” and he went to be with God. In short, the phrase “was not” meant that he was relocated away from where men generally dwell. And the same is true concerning the “beast” of Revelation 9, 11, and 17. Of course, this beast doesn’t go to the same place as Enoch, but they are both relocated away from the world of mankind. We’ll see additional evidence for this pattern when we examine Revelation 20 momentarily.

Fourth, we see this same use of the word “is” in verse 11, which says “there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.” Here the verb “is” is contrasted with “falling” and “coming.” But “falling” and “coming” denote changes in location. The Greek word for “fallen” here is “pipto” (Strong’s Number 4098). In Luke 10:18, Jesus uses the same Greek word when he says, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” And we already saw “pipto” used in Revelation 9:1 to describe a “star” that was “fallen from heaven.” In short, “fallen” refers to being cast down from heaven. It denotes a change in location. Likewise, the Greek word for “cometh” here in Revelation 17:10 is “erchomai” (Strong’s Number 2064). Although “erchomai” can be used metaphorically to mean, “to come into being,” its primary, literal definition is, “to come from one place to another, and used both of persons arriving and of those returning.” In fact, the same Greek word is used just 10 verses earlier in Revelation 17:1 which says, “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me.” Clearly, John isn’t saying the angel “came” into existence to talk to him but rather that the angel arrived to talk to him. The language here in Revelation 17:10 is also similar to Jesus’ statement in John 14:30, which says, “the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” Obviously, Jesus doesn’t mean that the prince of this world was beginning to exist, but rather than he was coming to oppose Jesus. Ultimately, because Revelation 17:11 contrasts the word “is” with words like “fallen” and “come” in verse 10, we know that “is” denotes being present on earth, not coming into existence. And the same is true for the word “is” in verses 8 and 10 as well.

Three, with regard to the doctrine of annihilation, it is also necessary to properly define the word “perdition” that appears here in verses 8 and 11. The Greek word here is the noun “apoleia” (Strong’s Number 684, which means, “destroying, utter destruction.” Here there might be a temptation to interpret this word as a reference to annihilation. However, that it is not the case. Scripture demonstrates that in this case, the term “destruction” functions as the name of a location, not as an action or the result of an event. More specifically, this is a location where destruction takes place. Beyond that, however, this verse does not identify whether the destruction that occurs in this location is akin to annihilation or instead to immortal, wicked angels and wicked men being subjected perpetually

to the forces of decay without end. It simply identifies the place of destruction while leaving the nature of that destruction unstated.

First, we've previously examined evidence that Hell is a place where destructive forces are exhibited and experienced on an unceasing basis. Two quote Jesus and Isaiah, "The worm never dies. The fire is never quenched." In other words, the process of decay never reaches completion. But as we've previously explained, in order for decay to continue, the forces of decay must still have material to operate on and consume. Worms die without food. Fire is quenched when its fuel is exhausted. And we've also established that whether we're talking about angels, resurrected wicked men, or merely the disembodied souls of the dead, the fires of Hell act on immortal things, not mortal things. And because they are immortal, they exude healing and resilience against the forces of decay are an inherent property, which is why the fire is never able to actually, fully consume them and exhaust its fuel supply. The fire merely counterbalances the inherent, unrelenting vigor and healing properties of immortal beings. Consequently, the model that we have established from scripture accounts for the use of the term "destruction" here. Instead of conveying annihilation, the term "apoleia" denotes that Hell is a place in which the forces of decay are exerted continually and without ceasing on the immortal beings imprisoned there but without ever terminating their existence.

Second, the Online Bible Greek Lexicon notes that "apoleia" is a "derivative of 622." Strong's Number 622 is the verb "apollumi," which means, "to destroy." We have also seen that Revelation 9:11 describes a "king" who is "the angel of the bottomless pit" and whose titles are "Abaddon" and "Apollyon." The Hebrew word "Abaddon" (Strong's Number 3) mean "destruction." The Greek word "Apollyon" (Strong's Number 623) not only means, "destroyer" but the Online Bible Greek Lexicon denotes that it is an "active participle of 622," which is "apollumi." The Online Bible Greek Lexicon explains that "The Greek participle corresponds for the most part to the English participle, reflecting "-ing" or "-ed" being suffixed to the basic verb form." When we bring all these facts together, we see that the angel who is king over the bottomless pit is given the title "Destruction" or "Destroying." In other words, he is the angel in charge of the place of destruction, which is the bottomless pit of Hell. In other words, his title conveys that "destruction" is simply another name for the bottomless pit over which he presides. But most importantly, we have seen that this angelic king and his army are imprisoned in the "furnace" of Hell without being annihilated. So, although Hell is a place where the forces of decay never cease, the immortal beings imprisoned there are not annihilated by those perpetual forces of decay that act on them.

Third, additional evidence that "apoleia" simply refers to Hell can be found in the Septuagint, the 2nd century BC Greek translation of the Old Testament. Job 26 provides an excellent example. Verse 6 states, "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." In English, this may at first appear to refer to the following two items: (1) Hell as the fiery place of the wicked and (2) the act of destruction. But that is not the case.

For starters, the Hebrew word for “Hell” is “Sheol” (Strong’s Number 07585). We have discussed in depth earlier in this study and demonstrated that it refers to the entire subterranean region, not just the fiery abode of the wicked, but also a place of comfort for the righteous. Britannica’s article on “Hell” explains that “The unjust, the improperly buried, and the untimely dead endure the misery of Sheol, but, for those who die in God’s favour, the natural bitterness of death is mitigated by reunion with their ancestors.” We have also seen Jesus’ depiction of Sheol in Luke 16:19-31. Verses 23-26 describe Abraham and the saints reside in a place of comfort within Sheol separated from the fiery torment of the wicked by a great gulf. Consequently, the word “Hell” in Job 26:6 is not referring specifically to the fiery part of Hell where the wicked dwell, but to the entirety of Sheol, including both the righteous side and the wicked side.

In addition, we must pay attention to the basic concept articulated in Job. The point of verse 6 is that God knows everything that goes on in Sheol, not only on the righteous side but even in the fiery side where the wicked are imprisoned. This makes even more sense when we consider that certain passages like Jude 1:6 and 2 Peter 2:4 describe certain parts of Hell as exceedingly dark. In fact, the Greek word that Peter uses for “Hell” is “tartaroo” (Strong’s Number 5020), which the Online Bible Greek Lexicon describes as “the name of a subterranean region, doleful and dark.” Likewise, verse 13 of Jude uses the phrase “blackness of darkness” to describe this place. With certain portions of Hell associated with such darkness, it is no wonder why Job would explain that God not only sees what goes on in Sheol in general, but would particularly specify that God sees what goes on even in the darkest parts of Sheol where the wicked dwell. Consequently, even the meaning of the verse itself demonstrates that “destruction” refers to a location in Sheol, not to the act of annihilation.

Furthermore, the Hebrew word for “destruction” is actually “Abaddon” (Strong’s Number 011). This is simply the original Hebrew version of the Greek word “Abaddon,” which Revelation 9:11 uses as a title for the angelic king of the bottomless pit. Revelation 9:2 also depicted the bottomless pit as a fiery furnace. Consequently, Revelation and Job both seem to be using the term “Abaddon” to refer specifically to the fiery portion of Sheol as well as to the angelic being who presides over this portion of Sheol and who is at some point himself incarcerated in that place.

Lastly, in the Septuagint translation of Job 26:6, the Greek word for “destruction” is actually “apoleia.” The full Greek text of the verse reads as follows: “γυμνὸς ὁ ἄδης ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι περιβόλαιον τῆ ἀπωλεία.” The word at the very end (which is spelled “ἀπωλεία” in Greek) is “apoleia.” And as we have seen, “apoleia” is the exact same word used in Revelation 17:8 and 11 where it states that the beast “goes to perdition.” So, as we can see, the Septuagint demonstrates that the ancient Jewish translators understood “apoleia” to simply denote the part of Sheol that is reserved for the wicked, not the act of annihilating someone or something.

These factors demonstrate that the term “apoleia” in Revelation 17:8 and 11 does not refer to an act of being annihilated. Rather, the term is used to refer to the place within Sheol where the wicked dead are kept. While it is true that this is a fiery place, we have already shown in detail that the fire does not annihilate the wicked. We will continue to demonstrate that fact. But the mere use of the term “destruction” or “perdition” does not constitute proof of annihilation because in Revelation 17 that term is simply used as the name for a particular location within Sheol.

Four, with regard to the doctrine of annihilation, these statements in Revelation 17 once again demonstrate that Hell does not annihilate angels, particularly the phrase “ascend out of the bottomless pit.” Instead of being annihilated by the fires of Hell, angels are imprisoned there under lock and key and sometimes they are released from that prison.

Five, with regard to universal salvation, there are two items worth noting from Revelation 17.

First, notice the type of behavior that the beast is associated with when he is released from Hell. Does he repent? Is he reformed and reconciled to God? No. Instead, in verse 6-8 he “carries” the “woman” who is “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” And in verses 13-14, he is associated with the ten kings who make war against the Lamb of God. Just as chapter 11 portrayed this “beast” as making war against God’s prophets and putting them to death, chapter 17 depicts the “beast” in association with killing God’s people and making war against Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Clearly, he is neither repentant nor reconciled with God. Consequently, this passage affirms that the fires of Hell do not lead to repentance, nor it is a place of reformation for the wicked. Even those who are released from Hell are not even grateful for their release but resume their ungodly activity. That is the depiction of Hell that we find in scripture. Any theories about Hell leading to repentance or reformation are entirely speculative and nowhere attested to in scripture.

Second, Revelation 17 also disproves universal salvation by identifying the final state of the beast after his release and continued wicked behavior. Both verses 8 and 11 describe that the beast “goes to perdition.” In fact, verse 8 is very specific about the timing of when he goes to perdition. Verse 8 says that the beast “was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition.” In other words, he “goes to perdition” chronologically after he ascends out of the bottomless pit to do evil. These two statements in verses 8 and 11 make it plain that the beast is not reconciled to God or forgiven after his release from Hell. Not only does Revelation 17 demonstrate that the fires of Hell have not had any reforming effect on this fallen angel, but Revelation 17 also depicts that even after he is released he will go back to Hell rather than be restored to fellowship with God. In fact, Revelation 9, 11, and 17 (as well as chapter 20 below) all establish the pattern that the only occasions in which anyone is released from the fires of Hell they are not reconciled to God, but instead they continue to do wickedness for a short time only to be subsequently returned to Hell.

Consequently, although our study has shown that saints like Abraham were previously kept in the comfortable side of Sheol and released to be with God in heaven, there is never a case in scripture where someone is released from the fire of Hell to be reconciled. The idea of the wicked being repentant, reformed, or reconciled after their time in the fires of Hell remains nothing but speculation that is nowhere stated in scripture. We will continue to see evidence for this conclusion in Revelation 20.

Third, Revelation 20 describes another event in which a wicked angel is released from the fires of Hell.

**Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season...7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

With regard to the doctrine of annihilation, several items are worth noting here.

Number one, although Revelation 20 does not mention any fire with regard to the devil's imprisonment, we have already examined Revelation 9:1-2. Verse 2 of chapter 9 states that when the bottomless pit is opened, smoke ascends out as if coming from a great furnace. Since chapter 9 has already depicted the bottomless pit as a fiery place, there is no need for chapter 20 to restate the presence of the fire. John simply assumes that his audience is paying attention and when he mentions the bottomless pit here in verse 20, his audience will know from chapter 9 that this is a fiery place that the devil is being cast into.

Number two, verses 1-3 describe a series of measures that are undertaken to prevent the devil from deceiving the nations. One, in verses 1-2 he is bound with chains. In verse 3, he is placed in the bottomless pit. Verse 3 also states that the pit is not only "shut up" but also "sealed." There are four actions here, including chaining, relocating to the pit, shutting the pit, and putting a seal on the pit. All of these are designed to ensure that the devil does not exit the pit for one thousand years. If the fires of Hell annihilated him, then he wouldn't exist and there would be no need for such measures, especially the seal. Like placing a royal seal on a letter, the seal ensures that the entrance to the pit is not tampered with over time.

It would not be necessary if the fires of Hell annihilated the devil in a relatively short period of time. In addition, given that these other mechanisms are all mechanisms which restrict activity and given that the fire is not annihilating the devil for a thousand years (which we will again see in our next point below), it is reasonable to conclude that the real purpose of the fire is also a restriction of activity, not annihilation.

Number three, verses 3 and 7 also demonstrate that the fires of Hell do not annihilate the devil. Verse 3 describes how he will be “loosed” after a thousand years in the fiery pit. And verse 7 confirms that when the thousand years are over, the devil is indeed loosed. This term “loosed” is “luo” (Strong’s Number 3089), which means, “to loose any person (or thing) tied or fastened.” Consequently, here we see that one thousand years in the fires of Hell has not annihilated the devil. His chains remain necessary to keep him bound for the entire thousand years. And when the thousand years is over, the text does not say that he is brought back into existence, but rather that he is simply released from his restraints.

Number four, verse 10 demonstrates that the devil is not alone in the fire. We have already noted in a previous section that the beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire in chapter 19:20-21 when Christ returns to start the thousand years of his reign. Yet, when the devil is cast into the lake of fire here after the thousand years, the beast and the false prophet are still in the lake of fire. A thousand years in the fires of Hell has not annihilated them.

Number five, Revelation 20:10 concludes that the devil will be “tormented day and night for ever and ever.” So, even when he is thrown back into Hell again after the thousand years are over, the fires of Hell do not annihilate him. Instead, he is tormented “day and night for ever and ever.” The Greek word for “ever” is “aion” (Strong’s Number 165). We have discussed “aion” already and in the next section below we will examine the evidence regarding whether or not it means eternity. But for now, even those who suggest that the phrase “for ever and ever” does not mean “eternity” would still agree that it denotes a long period of time. And within the context of Revelation 20, which depicts that the devil is bound in the bottomless pit once already for a period of a thousand years, we would have to conclude that this use of “aion” would at the least denote another period of one thousand years. Since the devil wasn’t annihilated in the first thousand years he is in Hell, there is no reason to think he will be annihilated by another thousand years. We’ve also pointed out that modern cremation can reduce a body to ash in a matter of just a few hours. Ultimately, since the devil’s torment continues day and night for a long time, we can see that the fires of Hell do not have an annihilating effect on him.

With regard to universal salvation, there are also a few points worth noting.

Number one, verse 3 conveys that God fully expects that even after a thousand years in the fires of Hell, Satan will not repent but will immediately resume deceiving the nations as soon as he is released from Hell. This is interesting for

two reasons. One, it provides evidence that the devil does not repent and is not reformed during his thousand years in the fire of Hell. And two, it confirms our conclusions that Hell serves primarily as a means of restraint for wicked beings, not as a means God has employed to bring about rehabilitation of their character. In this chapter, God expects that the devil would continue to deceive the nations unless he is restrained. And Hell is the means of that restraint, including the chains and the seal. Therefore, it stands to reason that the fire is also part of the restraint, particularly for immortal beings, which are so strong that not even a thousand years in the fire of Hell can annihilate them or deter them from sinning.

Number two, verses 7-10 state that the devil is released and, just as expected, he immediately resumes his wicked behavior. In verse 8, he deceives the nations and gathers them together for battle. In verse 9, we see that the purpose of his deception is to compel the nations to attack the saints of God and the holy city. Clearly, the devil's behavior shows no signs of change whatsoever after a thousand years in the fires of Hell. It would seem that every example in scripture in which someone is released from the fires of Hell, the fires of Hell have had no reforming effect on their character.

Number three, not only do these angelic beings continue to act wickedly, but Revelation 9 and 20 both depict that this resumption of wicked behavior is immediate. They resume sin the minute they are released without any hesitation or restraint. Even a thousand years in the fires of Hell has not deterred them even for a moment from their wicked behavior.

Fourth, since we have discussed the devil's future release from Hell in Revelation 20, we should also take a few moments to touch on 1 Corinthians 15, which relates to Revelation 20 and has additional implications for universal salvation.

**1 Corinthians 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.**

Number one, we have discussed this passage in an earlier section of this study at which time we established that the timeframe of verses 24-26 correspond to Revelation 20:7-15. The phrase, "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father" describes the end of Jesus' thousand-year reign when the Father comes to sit in final judgment. Verse 25 explains that Jesus Christ cannot deliver the kingdom to the Father "till he hath put all enemies under his feet." It also identifies that "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." We have also previously pointed out that Hebrews 2:14 identifies that "the devil" is "him that had the power of death."

Number two, with regard to universal salvation, the critical element is that verse 26 refers to the devil as an "enemy." As we have learned from Revelation 20, the devil has been imprisoned in Hell for a thousand years at the point when Jesus hands the kingdom over to the Father. Revelation 20 even told us that the devil

will be released from Hell for a short while. Yet, 1 Corinthians 15 makes it clear that he is not repentant or reconciled to God. To the contrary, he is still regarded as an “enemy.” Once again, it seems as though every time scripture remarks on the status of wicked beings who have been in Hell, Hell has not had any reforming effect on them and they show no signs of repentance despite the pain of the fires of Hell. Rather than being reconciled to God, they are judged and returned to Hell.

Fifth, although our evidence in this section has primarily focused on angelic beings, we do find some inferences regarding human beings in Luke 16:19-20 and 1 Peter 3:18-20, 4:6.

**Luke 16:22** And it came to pass, that **the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.** 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 **Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.** 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 **And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**

With regard to the doctrine of annihilation, there are several points worth noting from Luke. Although Luke 16 does not directly identify any wicked people in the fires of Hell for a long period of time, that conclusion can be inferred based on the details that are provided in the text.

Number one, Abraham is clearly an ancient figure who lived over a thousand years before this parable. Number two, Jesus does have a close friend named Lazarus. And although Lazarus does die in John 11:1-14, Jesus is not necessarily intending to describe an actual event that happened to Lazarus. Nevertheless, the fact that Jesus uses a contemporary name and specifically the name of a friend of his makes it unlikely that his audience would have perceived that the parable described events that took place a long time ago closer to the time of Abraham. Consequently, this parable depicts that Abraham is still alive in Sheol for over a thousand years since his death.

Number two, although verse 25 demonstrates that Abraham is not on the fiery side of Sheol, the rich man clearly is on the fiery side. Unlike Abraham, in the parable the rich man is recently deceased. He dies, is buried, and then we find him

immediately in the flames of Hell. So, the rich man does not depict longevity in the fire. However, the fire is not depicted as annihilating him either. There is no indication in the text that the rich man is ebbing away to nothingness in the flames. His eyes work. His ears work. His tongue works. He is fully conscious. There is no sign of impending termination of his existence.

Number three, the fact that other wicked people are not mentioned, particularly those from more ancient times, is easily explained. They are simply outside the narrow, narrative purpose of the parable. Jesus isn't trying to discuss various wicked people or even various righteous people. Parables are intended to be simple. As such, Jesus only includes the minimal number of people that he needs to make his point.

Consequently, when we put these two details together, we see that Abraham demonstrates the presence of very ancient people within Sheol and the rich man demonstrates the presence of wicked people in Sheol who do not appear to be in the process of being annihilated. It stands to reason that the rich man is not the only person in Hell but surrounded by others also. And the presence of an ancient figure like Abraham implies that ancient wicked people are probably in Sheol as well right alongside the rich man on the fiery side of the gulf. So, although Luke 16 doesn't directly mention wicked people who endure alive in Hell for centuries, the context infers the existence of ancient wicked people in the fires of Hell. And although Luke 16 may not specify how long the wicked endure in the fires of Hell, in John 5:28-29 Jesus provides an answer.

**John 5:28** Marvel not at this: for **the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**

As we have discussed earlier in this study, here in John 5 Jesus explains that while the wicked dead are still in their graves, they will hear Jesus call them forth to be resurrected. This requires that all the wicked dead will continue to consciously exist from the deaths of their bodies until the moments before they hear Jesus call them forth to bodily resurrection centuries and millennia later on the day of the general resurrection. Taken together, Luke 16 and John 5 inform us that the disembodied spirits of the wicked dead spend their post mortem conscious existence located in the fires of Hell without being annihilated.

With regard to universal salvation, a few things are worth noting.

Number one, although the rich man does ask for his brothers to be warned about Hell, not once does the rich man express regret or repentance for his own deeds or even beg for a second chance to do things right. In that sense, the parable is consistent with our assertions that the fires of Hell are never depicted as having a reforming effect on the wicked.

Number two, it is noteworthy that the parable is not entirely silent on the issue of what it would take to persuade men to repent of evil. In verses 27-28 when the rich man asks for Lazarus to be sent back from the dead to warn his brothers, in verses 29 and 31 Abraham responds that the only thing that could persuade his brothers is “Moses and the prophets.” Moreover, in verse 31 Abraham says “neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” This contrast between the persuasive power of the testimony of God’s word and a miraculous resurrection is interesting. Normally, we might think that a miracle would be more persuasive than mere words. But Abraham’s point here is that for those who refuse to be persuaded by the reason of words, the miracle would not be sufficient to convince them. In a context where even resurrection from the dead is depicted as insufficient to compel the unreasonable and unrepentant to change their ways, it is certainly implied that nothing other than the word of God can lead men to repent, not even the fires of Hell. In other words, even in a parable that describes the wicked suffering in the fires of Hell, nothing is able to persuade those who refuse to be persuaded by the scripture. As such, this parable leaves little room to think of the fires of Hell as a persuasive tool for repentance.

When we consider 1 Peter 3 and 4, we find additional evidence that the wicked survive in the fires of Hell for a long period of time.

**1 Peter 3:18** For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, **being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,** wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water... **5** Who shall give account to **him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.** **6** For for this cause was **the gospel preached also to them that are dead,** that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Number one, verses 19-20 states that there are dead people imprisoned in Hell since the time of Noah. With regard to the word prison, we have seen that the Jewish concept of Sheol was a place below the surface of the earth where all the dead were forced to reside until the time of Jesus when the righteous were set free by Jesus himself. In other words, all of Sheol was a prison for the dead, not just the fiery side where the wicked were. The righteous may have been in a place of comfort, but they were not allowed to leave to go and be with God. In fact, the Greek word for “prison” here in 1 Peter 3:19 is “phulake” (Strong’s Number 5438). This is the exact same word that Revelation 20:7 uses to describe Satan being kept in “prison” in Hell, although of course Satan is on the fiery side of Sheol in particular.

Number two, we should clarify that the specific people imprisoned here are not people who have died wicked. Instead, they are people who repented before they died. A larger discussion of this topic can be found in our study “The Days of Noah,” but for now we will only cover a few of the relevant highlights.

One, verse 20 describes these people as “sometimes were disobedient.” The Greek word sometimes here is “pote” (Strong’s Number 4218), which means, “formerly.” It is the same word used in passages like Romans 11:30, Galatians 1:13, Ephesians 2:2-3, 11, 5:8, Colossians 1:21, 3:7, and Titus 3:3 to describe Christians having “formerly” committed sins prior to repenting.

Two, we must also keep in mind that chapter 2:5 of Peter’s second epistle describes Noah as a preacher of righteousness.

Three, Genesis 6:13 states that at the time of Noah, “the earth is filled with violence.”

And four, we must also consider the point that Peter is trying to make here in 1 Peter 3. In verse 14 where he writes “if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.” In verse 17, Peter repeats the same sentiment, saying, “it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.” Peter is talking about being terrorized for righteousness and suffering for doing the will of God.

These factors strongly suggest that Noah not only built an ark, but also preached righteousness to his generation. Some people of that generation seemed to repent as a result of his preaching but were most likely persecuted and killed, which is why they did not enter the ark with Noah and his family. And this is why Peter is able to use such people as an example for his fellow Christians that it is better for them to endure persecution from the wicked.

Regarding annihilation and universal salvation, it is critical that Peter is talking about people who repented in Noah’s day but were killed in persecution.

Regarding annihilation, although Luke 16 didn’t specifically mention the ancient wicked people enduring the fiery side of Sheol for long periods, the presence of Abraham and the rich man inferred the presence of ancient wicked persons on the fiery side of Sheol. Likewise, although 1 Peter 3 doesn’t refer to the wicked dead, by depicting people who died from Noah’s time in Sheol the text infers that wicked people endure in Sheol from Noah’s day as well. In that sense, 1 Peter indirectly supports the conclusion that the fires of Hell do not annihilate the wicked, even over thousands of years.

Regarding universal salvation, Peter does not provide any evidence that the fires of Hell have a reforming effect on the wicked.

Number one, the people imprisoned in Sheol in Peter’s epistle are people who repented because of Noah’s preaching before they were put to death in persecution just as the Christians to whom Peter is writing repented of their sin after having heard the gospel preached to them. (Peter’s language here can be compared to Romans 11:30, Galatians 1:13, Ephesians 2:2-3, 11, 5:8, Colossians 1:21, 3:7, and Titus 3:3, all of which refer to people who turned from sin. For more information on this topic, see our study entitled, “The Days of Noah.”)

Therefore, regarding the people imprisoned in Sheol here in Peter's epistle, it was Noah's preaching that persuaded them to repent, not the fires of Hell.

Number two, while 1 Peter 3:19 does state that Jesus preached to these disembodied spirits from Noah's day, Jesus is not persuading them to turn from wickedness.

One, even if Jesus was preaching repentance, this passage still wouldn't prove that the fires of Hell have a reforming affect. Instead, it would be Jesus' preaching that persuaded repentance.

Two, the vocabulary and context of 1 Peter makes it clear that these people had already repented back in Noah's day.

Three, Jesus may have simply been preaching that he had come to bring "deliverance of the captives" as we see in Luke 4:18, or to "publish" the great things he had done similar to Luke 8:39, or even his impending resurrection and conquest over the angels in charge of death and hell. There is no need to insist that Jesus' preaching necessarily entailed a call to repentance from ongoing wicked behavior.

Four, the idea of Jesus' preaching and giving a second chance to those who died wicked would not only be completely out of the context of Peter's point in this chapter but it would contradict it. Christians were being persecuted in Peter's day. Some were being killed. Peter is encouraging them to endure that suffering rather than give up righteous living. In Peter's view, it is better to suffer and die than to relinquish righteousness. In the midst of such a context, for Peter to suddenly explain that there is a second chance for the wicked to repent in the fires of Hell would completely ruin the point he was making. It would convey to his audience that it was OK to surrender to the pressure from the wicked because there would always be a second chance to repent later. Given Peter's point, there is simply no room for Peter to cite Noah's contemporaries as an example of repentance in Hell. To the contrary, Peter's point is that even if you die from the persecutions, even if you were to be imprisoned in Hell, even if you have to wait thousands of years, Christ will come and get you. As such, Christ wasn't going to preach repentance to wicked people suffering in Hell. Peter is saying that Christ went and proclaimed his victory to these captives so that they might know him and believe on him directly. After all, how else would righteous people in Hell have heard that Christ had come unless Christ went down to tell them?

Consequently, with regard to universal salvation, 1 Peter does not teach that the fires of Hell prompt repentance, nor does it teach that people get a second chance to repent in Hell.

In conclusion, our examination of Revelation 9, 11, 17, and 20 along with 1 Corinthians 15, Luke 16 and John 5, 1 Peter 3-4, 2 Peter 2, and Jude has provided evidence against annihilation and against universal salvation.

Regarding annihilation, these passages have shown that the fires of Hell do not annihilate the wicked because the wicked continue to exist even after a thousand years in Hell. In addition, these passages demonstrate that God already has placed angels in Hell for thousands of years as they await the final judgment. Likewise, God these passages show that God has already placed the disembodied spirits of wicked dead men in Hell as they consciously await hearing Jesus' voice call them forth to resurrection at the final judgment. Consequently, these passages undermined the very purpose of annihilation, which is arguably born out of a desire to avoid a scenario in which God subjects conscious beings to suffering in the fires of Hell for long durations. Moreover, because scripture is clear that God does indeed place wicked angels in Hell to suffer for long durations, there is only one option for those who might regard such punishment as cruel. The only option is to let the perception of excessive and torturous pain evaporate by embracing the scriptural indications that the beings God sends to Hell are immortal. Mortal beings cannot survive in fire for years, let alone centuries. As such, having been made immortal, they do not suffer in the same way that weak, corruptible, mortal flesh does but instead, their immortal bodies are imbued with life, exude healing, and constantly resist the efforts of the fire to consume them. In this scenario, we neither have to deny passages of scripture that plainly teach that God does condemn beings to conscious existence to the fires of Hell, nor do we have to regard God as cruel for doing so.

Regarding universal salvation, scripture is not silent on whether or not the wicked are ever released from Hell. Nor is it silent on what happens when the wicked are released from Hell. But the problem for universal salvation is that every time scripture depicts wicked beings getting released from Hell, the fires of Hell have not had any reforming effect on the wicked. The wicked are not repentant at all, but instead immediately resume the same wicked behavior without any hesitation after which they are subsequently returned to Hell. While it may be considered unjust to continue punishing repentant and reformed people, the scriptural attestation that these beings remain unrepentant and disobedient shows that further confinement in the fires of Hell is both just and necessary. This continued incarceration in Hell cannot be viewed as an injustice because those kept there remain unrepentant and, if released, would return to their ungodly actions. This undermines a core concept of universal salvation, which is the notion that the wicked will eventually be reconciled to God after serving some time in Hell. Of course, one can always speculate that maybe the wicked just need more time than a thousand years or more in Hell in order to repent. But that must remain nothing more than speculation at best and more accurately it is speculation that runs contrary to the indications in those scriptural texts that do describe the wicked being released from Hell.