

Bible Cosmology 303B:

Immortality, Consciousness, Hell, Universal Salvation



biblestudying.net

Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson

Copyright 2016

Introduction to Hell and the Immortal Spirit

We should begin this segment by emphasizing that in light of all the evidence we've seen so far, Hell is the only option that remains as even a possible mechanism for ending the existence of a human being. We've already seen from scripture that the death of the body does not end the conscious existence of the human spirit. Neither does the departure of the spirit from the body or its ultimate return to God result in the loss of conscious, individual existence.

Moreover, the evidence that life is an inherent property of spirit and that spirit is inherently unyielding to destruction itself actually argues against the possibility that Hell can bring an end to human existence. And that point must be stressed. The fact that scripture depicts life as an inherent property of spirit and spirit as inherently unyielding to destruction itself argues against the possibility that Hell can bring an end to the existence of a human spirit. So, even as we begin to examine more scriptural evidence regarding Hell and its impact on human existence, we must not forget the evidence that we've already seen. However, despite having already offered evidence against cessation of existence in Hell, the concept of Hell is substantial and deserves to be addressed directly, which we have not yet done with regard to this study.

Next, it is important to start with a few notes about terms and vocabulary.

First, although the term "Hell" is a familiar English term, in modern usage it has become somewhat of a misleading term that is used without regard for the distinctions found in the Hebrew and Greek languages of the Old and New Testament. A few examples are worth noting.

Number one, the English term "Hell" is commonly conceived of exclusively as a place of fiery torment. However, earlier we examined the Hebrew term Sheol, which is the rough equivalent of "Hell" in ancient Jewish theology. And as we noted, Sheol contained separate areas for the wicked and the saints. Although the area set aside for the wicked is depicted as a place of fiery torment, the area reserved for deceased saints was a place of comfort, not torment.

Number two, we have also documented that Sheol was located below the surface of the earth. In fact, the New Testament Greek terms indicate that some portions of Sheol descend to very great depths within the earth. In earlier sections, we have already discussed the Greek word “Hades” (Strong’s Number 86), which the Online Bible Greek Lexicon describes, saying, “In Biblical Greek it is associated with Orcus, the infernal regions, a dark and dismal place in the very depths of the earth.” In addition, in the New Testament the Greek word “phrear” (Strong’s Number 5421) is typically translated into “pit” in English. This word occurs numerous times in Revelation 9:1-2, 11, 11:7, 17:8, and 20:1-3. It frequently but not always is used side by side with the Greek word “abussos” (Strong’s Number 12), which the Online Bible Greek Lexicon defines as “bottomless, the abyss, the immeasurable depth.” According to the Online Bible Greek Lexicon, “Abussos” is also used to describe “Orchus” which was a “very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth.” There is also the word “tartaroo” (Strong’s Number 5020), which Britannica online states was “originally used for the deepest region of the world, the lower of the two parts of the underworld.” We have also seen that in Luke 16:19-32, Jesus describes Sheol as including a place of fiery torment for the wicked.

But regardless of how deep Sheol was, its location below the surface of the earth in some ways contrasts with the image of the “Lake of Fire” described in Revelation 19:20, 20:10, 14-15, and 21:8. In all of these passages, the Greek word for “lake” is “limne” (Strong’s Number 3041), which literally means “a lake.” It is the exact same word used to describe Lake Gennesaret in Luke 5:1-2. The use of this Greek term indicates a location on the surface of the landscape of the earth, as any other lake would be. In fact, another Greek word for “Hell” is “geena” or more commonly “Gehenna” (Strong’s Number 1067). “Gehenna” is a term Jesus frequently uses in reference to “Hell” in passages like Matthew 5:22, 29-30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, Mark 9:43-47, and Luke 12:5. We also find this term in James 3:6. Just like Sheol, passages like Matthew 5, Matthew 23, Mark 9, and James 3 describe Gehenna as a place of fire. However, unlike Jewish concepts of Sheol, the term Gehenna was actually a literal place neighboring the city of Jerusalem. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon notes that the term “was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned.” Consequently, the terms “Lake of Fire” and “Gehenna” seem to refer to a location on the surface of the earth, rather than below it.

The English word “Hell” is typically used without regard for such nuances. But ultimately, the lack of distinction isn’t really problematic due to the fact that the differences between Sheol and the Lake of Fire are easily resolved. All that is necessary for Sheol and the Lake of Fire to be reconciled is for the fires of Sheol to one day break forth from below the surface of the earth and form a lake on the surface in the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem.

Below is an excerpt from Part 3 of our Cosmology Study, which provides additional supporting details from the scripture regarding the connections between the Lake of Fire, Gehenna, and Sheol (Hades or Hell). One minor addition has been added in brackets in order to identify key Hebrew and Greek terms.

The Song of Moses begins in Deuteronomy 31:30 and in chapter 32:16-22, Moses predicts that Israel will sacrifice to devils and for this sin (among other things) God will raise up a fire from hell to the lower parts of the surface of the earth, particularly at the "foundations of the mountains," which could easily be a reference to valleys. [In this verse, the Hebrew word for "hell" is "Sheol," Strong's number 07585. In the Septuagint translation of this verse, the Greek word "Hades," Strong's Number 86, is use in place of the Hebrew word "Sheol."] The Israelites did make such sacrifices, including sacrificing their own children to false gods, which they did in the valley of Hinnom (2 Kings 23:10, 2 Chronicles 28:3, 2 Chronicles 33:6, Jeremiah 7:31, Jeremiah 32:35.) The New Testament term "Gehenna," (Strong's No. 1067) used frequently by Jesus to refer to "hell," is the Greek name for the valley of Hinnom. The valley of Hinnom is located south of Jerusalem and Revelation 14:10-11 states that the wicked will be tormented with fire and brimstone forever in the presence of the Lamb. As we will see in the segments ahead, since Jesus is coming to reign in Jerusalem and then, after Jesus 1000 year reign, God the Father will also come here on the restored earth to dwell with man for eternity, the Lake of Fire may actually be a place where the fire from the abyss breaks through the surface of the earth near the actual valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, in the presence of Jesus Christ eternally, where the subterranean fire of Sheol broke through to the "foundations of the mountains," a valley just outside the Holy City.

Yet despite the fact that the terms Sheol, Gehenna, and Lake of Fire all easily reconcile, it is still important to be aware of the details associated with scripture's use of particular terms. Nevertheless, because the terms do ultimately reconcile, we will often simply use the more general term "Hell" as we move forward, although at times we may use more particular terms like Sheol or the Lake of Fire when greater specificity is needed.

Second, typically the prospect of ending up in Hell is contrasted with ending up in heaven. The concept of spending eternity in heaven is popular in the modern church, after having risen to prominence through the influence of men like Augustine. Yet despite this popularity, scripture is quite clear that heaven is not the ultimate dwelling place for God and the saints. Instead, God and the saints will reside forever on a restored earth with significant changes made even to the structure of outer space. The evidence supporting this conclusion can be found in numerous studies, including "Covenant and Dispensational Theologies," "Gospel Overview," "Prophetic Symbols," "Revelation Chronology," "The Sabbath Millennium" and "Bible Cosmology." Consequently, whenever it becomes necessary to mention the eternal dwelling place of the saints in contrast to Hell, we will refer to the kingdom of God on earth instead of heaven.

Third, up until this point in our study, we have been using phrases such as "ending human existence" or "cessation of existence" in order to maintain clarity. However, although clear, these phrases can sometimes be arduous or wordy. As a substitute, Merriam-Webster's Dictionary lists the third definition of "annihilate" as "to cause to cease to exist." Therefore, as we move ahead to focus more

directly on the issue of hell, in order to be able to reflect this same concept in a more streamlined fashion, we will instead use the simple term “annihilate” to refer to “ending human existence” or “cessation of existence.”

Fourth, in our previous examination of Sheol we saw that the spirits of the dead went to reside in Sheol as far back as the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:18-20, 4:6) and early Genesis (Genesis 25:8, 37:35). The early references in Genesis show that Sheol was already a well-established concept by the time of Abraham. Such early scriptural references to Sheol reasonably infer that Sheol has existed from the very beginning of creation when it was created as part of the interior structures of the earth. When referring to the “everlasting fire” of Hell in Matthew 25:41, Jesus uses the perfect tense when describing that this fire was “prepared.” As noted in the Online Bible Greek Lexicon, “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.”

Fifth, despite the fact that the fires of Hell have existed for some time going back into early Genesis, it should be noted that our present investigation is specifically concerned with what happens on the future day of Final Judgment when God will condemn the wicked. Nevertheless, the past existence of Hell throughout history will still be relevant as we examine what scripture teaches about Hell and Judgment Day.

When it comes to Hell and human existence, there are several possibilities.

One possibility is that Hell is not actually a real place. Perhaps the Hebrew and Greek terms used for “Hell” in scripture are really meant either metaphorically or perhaps as merely poetic references to the state of being dead and buried. However, we have already examined numerous passages from both the Old and the New Testament establishing the existence of Sheol as a place where the spirits of the dead consciously resided. Consequently, the ancient Jewish and Christian belief in Sheol makes it impossible to deny that Hell is a real place.

This leaves only three possibilities regarding the function of Hell.

- 1) Hell is a place where God sends condemned human beings to annihilate their individual existence.
- 2) Hell is a place of suffering where God sends condemned human beings for a fixed amount of time to punish and reform them but eventually all of the condemned (no matter how wicked or stubbornly unrepentant they were when they died) will be released from Hell, reconciled with God, and enter the kingdom of God on earth alongside the saints.
- 3) Hell is a place of suffering where God sends condemned human beings and condemned angels to consciously live and dwell for all eternity with no hope of release, salvation, or reconciliation at any point in the future.

As diverse as these three options are, it is possible to identify a single issue upon which all three of these options will rise or fall. How long are the wicked in Hell?

Are they only in Hell for a relatively short amount of time, only as long as it takes for the fires of Hell to annihilate them from existence? Are they in Hell for a finite duration, as long as it takes for God to bring about sincere repentance and reformation of their character? Do they remain in Hell for whatever duration of time that God deems fitting as a penalty for their sin, even for potentially long durations, and then become annihilated upon completion of their punishment? Or, are they in Hell forever, conscious and alive and in torment? Consequently, a great deal of our exploration going forward will center on issues that in one way or another relate to how long the wicked remain in hell according to scripture.

Hell and a Loving, Merciful God

When God appears to Moses in Exodus 33-34, in addition to pronouncing his own name before Moses in verse 5, in verses 6-7 God also identifies himself with “Keeping mercy for thousands.” Moreover, 1 John 4:16 declares that “God is love.” Likewise, Psalm 86:15 states that God is “full of compassion” and “plenteous in mercy.” Of course, descriptions like these are not difficult to find in scripture. And because God is so loving, so merciful, and so compassionate, the question can be raised whether a loving, compassion, and merciful God would or could condemn any conscious being to never-ending fiery torment? This question, perhaps more than any other, holds great emotional and ethical weight when it comes to the debate regarding hell. In fact, the concept of never-ending torment may be seen as so unacceptably cruel that annihilation in Hell or a finite limitation on the duration of Hell (followed by either reconciliation with God or conceivably annihilation) are viewed as necessarily preferable on face value. In short, the basic argument is that Hell cannot last forever because that would be too cruel for a loving God.

There are three points that must be addressed with regard to this essential argument.

First, it should be noted that even the most fundamental identifications of God as a merciful God seem to place limits on that mercy when it comes to resilient wicked behavior. When God describes himself in Exodus 34:6-7 as “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,” the verse does not stop there. It concludes with the important phrase, “that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” As we can see, these verses declare that God may wait multiple generations but he will punish a nation for unrepentant sin. Of course, the text does not mention the question of how long or what manner that punishment should have. Still, the inclusion of God’s promise to punish here in Exodus 34 demonstrates that even God’s great mercy has limits. He might wait for some time to give a chance for repentance, but his mercy would not cause him to refrain from the appropriate punishment due to those who refuse to repent of their wicked ways.

Second, consider Deuteronomy 7 in which God commands the Israelites how to treat the ungodly nations they were about to displace in the Promised Land. In verse 2, God declares, “when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them.” In other words, the utter destruction of these nations was an act characterized by God as inherently without mercy. So, while God’s command to “utterly destroy them” might at first seem to suggest the possibility that God favors annihilation as punishment, the end of the verse makes it equally clear that “utter destruction” is not an act of mercy in God’s eyes. Quite to the contrary, this passage demonstrates that whether caused by man or God, acts that levy the maximum degree of destruction are regarded in scripture as the complete absence of divine mercy, as indicated here in Deuteronomy. Consequently, this passage shows that it is inappropriate to frame the idea of annihilation as an act of divine mercy.

(Incidentally, it should be noted that the phrase “utterly destroy” here in Deuteronomy 7 was not intended to refer to the annihilation of the soul. The context of the Deuteronomy 7 clearly reveals that the phrase refers to the Israelites putting the people of these nations to bodily death as part of their military conquest. Of course, if the Israelites believed that the soul itself was mortal and died with the body, then putting these nations to bodily death would also result in the annihilation of the soul as well. However, we have already established the evidence from early Genesis as well as the deaths of Aaron and Moses during the Exodus journey that the Jewish people believed the soul continued to exist after the death of the body. Therefore, God’s command to “utterly destroy” these particular ungodly nations should not be taken as an affirmation of annihilation of their existence, but merely as the death of their bodies. Moreover, a comparison to 1 Samuel indicates that this concept of “utter destruction” referred to the number of people destroyed, not the extent of destruction suffered by each individual soul. In 1 Samuel 15, the Prophet Samuel commands King Saul to “utterly destroy” all of the people of Amalek including their livestock. When King Saul spares King Agag of the Amalekites and the “best” of the livestock, Samuel rebukes him for not having “utterly destroyed” them as God had commanded. As we can see, the phrase “utterly destroy” is clearly not intended in reference to the status of the individual soul but to the numerical proportion of a national population that is killed in human warfare. They were to kill absolutely all of the people of these nations without exception.)

Third, it is necessary to combat this presumptive notion that annihilation is more humane or less cruel than living forever imprisoned in Hell. Such assertions about what is humane or cruel should not be taken at face value. Not all cultures or cultural philosophies view annihilation of existence as humane. The European Union is a paramount example of this fact. The official website of the European Union can be found at http://europa.eu/index_en.htm. Below is a quote describing the official position of the European Union regarding the death penalty.

“EU Policy on Death Penalty - The European Union holds a strong and principled position against the death penalty... The death penalty is cruel

and inhuman, and has not been shown in any way to act as a deterrent to crime.”

- http://www.eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/adp/index_en.htm

There are several items worth noting from the European Union’s statement.

Number one, it should be noted that the European Union holds a position of religious neutrality, as indicated by the quote below from the EU website.

"Freedom of Religion or Belief - ...the EU remains neutral and is not supporting any specific religion or belief.” -

http://eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/frb/index_en.htm

The fact that the European Union does not endorse or support any specific belief informs us that the European Union does not operate based on the belief that the soul is immortal and survives the death of the body. Consequently, for all intents and purposes, the death penalty is equivalent to utterly ending the existence of the individual. As such, in a religiously neutral civil government, the death penalty is by definition tantamount to annihilation in the theological sphere. Both entail the utter cessation of existence as a penalty.

Number two, the European Union asserts that the death penalty does not “act as a deterrent to crime.” Arguably, if the soul is annihilated in Hell, then Hell itself is arguably not a very good deterrent to sin. After all, it creates a scenario in which you can enjoy life as much as you can regardless of how sinful your lifestyle or choices are and then nothing bad happens to you as a consequence. Instead, you simply run out of time and your existence ends.

Number three and most importantly, the European Union specifically regards the “death penalty” as “cruel and inhuman.” To be fair the European Union also regards life sentences without the possibility of parole to be inhuman.

“Whole-life jail sentences without any prospect of release amount to inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners, the European court of human rights has ruled.” – The Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/law/2013/jul/09/whole-life-jail-sentences-without-review-breach-human-rights>

However, as part of its ongoing effort to bring an end to the death penalty around the world, the EU sometimes advocates that foreign governments convert death sentences into life imprisonment. The excerpts below are but a few examples of this trend.

“The EU encourages Mongolia to commute all existing death sentences into life sentences.” - News@EU, Issue Date: 14 January 2010,

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/australia/documents/press_corner/newsletter/2010/261_en.pdf

“Even though **there are different ways to achieve abolition**, looking at the experience of abolitionist countries shows some common features. Active discussion among intellectual and parliamentary groups, political debate leading to proposals for new legislation are experiences which can be found among most abolitionist countries. In nearly all countries abolition did not take place with majority public support. Politicians led the way and public opinion followed. Besides, **alternatives to capital punishment exist like life imprisonment without parole. Introduction of such alternatives is often a crucial step towards abolition.**” - Death penalty in the world: the abolition of capital punishment is progressing. Guy Ledoux, Head of the European Economic and Trade Office, 10 Oct 2010, eeas.europa.eu/delegations/taiwan/documents/eu_taiwan/human_right/201010_dp_article.pdf

“Let me take this opportunity to commend the recent visit of President Lungu to the Maximum Security Prison and his decision to commute death penalty sentences to life imprisonment.” – SPEECH – H.E. Ambassador Mr. Gilles HERVIO, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Zambia and Representative to COMESA

Here again we must keep in mind that the EU’s stance on the topic of life imprisonment does not entail a belief in the immortality of the soul after the death of the body. Although a life sentence is finite, in the eyes of an areligious civil institution, a life sentence still equates to a punishment that lasts for as long as the recipient continues to exist. Or in other words, the duration of punishment corresponds to the duration of the individual’s existence. They are punished and imprisoned for as long as they continue to exist. Consequently, while we may certainly conclude that the European Union regards life imprisonment without parole as inhumane and cruel, it is equally clear that it regards life imprisonment without parole as less inhumane, less cruel, and more preferential to the death penalty.

Of course, our point here is not that annihilation is wrong because it contradicts a basic philosophical principle of the European Union. Nor is our point that the European Union intends to condemn theological annihilation in Hell as cruel and inhumane. In point of fact, the European Union’s position on the death penalty must be viewed without any relationship to religious belief in Hell. Nevertheless, the European Union’s opposition to the death penalty demonstrates that a prominent cultural institution views the use of cessation of existence as a punishment as inherently more inhumane and cruel than life imprisonment without parole. Consequently, the argument that the use of cessation of existence as a penalty is not cruel but humane remains nothing more than a matter of a personal philosophical opinion, and one that is widely contested. Subjective philosophical views such as these cannot and should not drive, filter, or arbitrate the proper interpretation of scripture.

In summary, what have we learned concerning arguments based primarily around God’s love and mercy? First, we’ve noted that scripture always assures us that

although God's love and mercy result in patience and opportunities for repentance, they do not in any way prevent God from ultimately punishing the unrepentant wicked in due measure for their sins. Second, we've learned that in scriptural terms, "utter destruction" is not an act of mercy, but the absence of mercy. Put another way, when God seeks "utter destruction" as a consequence for unrepentant sin, it is not a decision based on mercy or undertaken in order to accomplish mercy. And third, we've seen that, as a form of punishment, ending existence is far from universally or inarguably regarded as humane and without cruelty. Even those who oppose life sentences without parole as inhumane and cruel prefer such life sentences to the inhumane and cruel nature of using cessation of existence as a punishment. Consequently, whether or not unending punishment in Hell is scripturally valid or not will have to be decided on the specific details revealed in scripture rather than on a presumptive philosophical argument that unending punishment is inhumane and too cruel for a Loving Merciful God. In addition, a full analysis of scripture will continue to demonstrate significant misconceptions regarding exactly how intolerably painful Hell is.

Hell, Pain, and Immortal Spirits

In this section, we will address certain assumptions about the nature of pain in Hell. In general, the amount of distaste that Hell engenders is directly attached to the amount of pain that is perceived to be involved in incarceration there. If Hell were merely a place of restraint without any pain whatsoever, then one wonders whether there would be much of a basis to object to Hell as cruel or inhumane.

To illustrate, consider the use of imprisonment even in politically liberal modern societies. Imprisonment has a long-standing and widely-accepted status as an appropriate recourse for dealing with transgressions of societal law. And certainly, the simple act of being confined to prison itself inherently includes a measure of unpleasantness, not only in the mental duress involved in having one's movements so restricted but also in terms of the deprivation of much of the physical comforts enjoyed by the rest of society. Some prisoners are even considered so dangerous as to require restraining devices, such as handcuffs, which are physically uncomfortable. Yet the discomfort is deemed necessary in order to prevent further criminal behavior. Yet none of these measures on their own necessitate or constitute extreme physical torture. Why then must we conclude that suffering in Hell must entail torture? Even if there is a degree of physical discomfort in Hell, should that necessarily be deemed cruel or torturous if the discomfort was a necessary component of a restraining system? Certainly, if scripture teaches that Hell involves torture, then we should accept that conclusion. But if scripture doesn't necessitate that Hell entails torturous pain then we must be prepared to jettison the idea of Hell as a place of constant, torturous physical suffering. With these observations in mind, we will now turn to scripture to determine the nature of suffering in Hell.

As the previous paragraph indicates, our intention here is not to deny that suffering is a component of incarceration in Hell (both in Sheol prior to Final

Judgment or in the Lake of Fire afterward). Nevertheless, there are important misconceptions about the nature of suffering in Hell, which sometimes factor into perception that Hell is inherently and unacceptably cruel. By examining those misconceptions in scripture, our intention is to demonstrate that although Hell does include pain, it is not of the intolerably torturous variety that is often imagined. And in demonstrating that fact, we believe much of the objection about Hell will erode.

Let's start by establishing that there is suffering in Hell.

First, we should discuss whether the Greek words for suffering are uniquely associated with annihilation. One particular word used to refer to the "torment" of Hell is "basanismos" (Strong's Number 929). This word is used to refer to the permanent and utter destruction of a city in Revelation 18:7, 10, and 15. Does that mean that "basanismos" always necessarily denotes the short-lived torment involved in quick and absolute annihilation similar to what is experienced by this city? The answer can be found in the other occurrences of "basanismos" in Revelation. In chapter 9:5, the noun "basanismos" is used in direct conjunction with the related verb "basanizo" (Strong's Number 928) in reference to torment that lasts five months and specifically does not kill men. Similarly, the verb "basanizo" is used in Revelation 20:10 to refer to the devil being cast into the Lake of Fire "and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." We will return to Revelation 20 again later on, but for now it is clear that regardless of how the phrase "for ever and ever" is interpreted, the word "torment" does not refer to quick and absolute annihilation in Revelation 20:10. Based on the usage in Revelation, it would seem that these Greek terms are indifferent to any particular duration of time. They can be used regarding sudden and conclusive destructive events, such as the city of Revelation 18. Or, they can be used to refer to suffering that lasts for months or even long ages of time.

Second, it is important to consider the types of pain that "basanismos" and "basanizo" entail. For example, in Revelation 14:9-11 the English words "torment" and "tormented" are used with regard to the penalty that awaits those who worship the beast or his image or receive the mark of the beast. The Greek word for "torment" in verse 11 is the noun "basanismos" (Strong's Number 929) and the Greek word for "tormented" is the verb "basanizo" (Strong's Number 928), both of which we have already mentioned above. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon defines the noun "basanismo" simply as "to torture or torment." Often, additional insight into the meaning of a word can be found by examining other contexts where it is used. Unfortunately, "basanismo" only occurs in Revelation where it appears 6 times in 5 verses.

However, the Online Bible Greek Lexicon notes that the noun "basanismo" is actually derived from the verb "basanizo," which means we can gain additional insight by examining the definition and usage of "basanizo." The Online Bible Greek Lexicon states that "basanizo" means "to torture" but it also notes that this torment includes can include "grievous pains of body or mind." Note that it can at times refer to mental anguish rather than bodily pain. For example, this same

Greek word is used in 2 Peter 2:8 when describing how Abraham's nephew Lot was "vexed" or bothered by the unlawful deeds of his neighbors in Sodom and Gomorrah. According to the Online Bible Greek Lexicon, the word can also simply mean "harassed" or "distressed" in the sense that "those who are at sea are struggling with a head wind" as we see in Matthew 14:24 and Mark 6:48. Consequently, we can conclude that both the verb "basanizo" as well as the noun "basanismos," which is derived from it, can denote a range of discomfort, no doubt including actual physical torture but sometimes referring to the mental or physical strain of combatting a dangerous storm at sea or even to mental anguish, frustration, or distress in general.

Again, our point here is not that there is no physical pain in Hell, but merely that common perceptions of Hell as torturous are exaggerated, at least as far as what is required by the vocabulary. We will learn more regarding vocabulary and suffering under our next point below.

Third, we have already examined Jesus' teaching in Luke 16:19-31 regarding the rich man who dies and finds himself in Hell. On the specific subject of pain, there are several points worth noting from Luke 16.

Number one, Luke 16 also includes two additional Greek words for "torment." In verses 23 and 28, we find the noun "basanos" (Strong's Number 931), which is related to "basanizo" and "basanismos." In Matthew 4:24, we see this same Greek word used to refer to those who have "divers diseases and torments." No doubt there are many human diseases and chronic health issues that are quite painful, but it's unlikely that Matthew 4 intended to convey only those maladies that reach the level of excruciating torturous pain. It's more likely that Matthew intended to convey a variety of afflictions with varying degrees of pain, some of which were significantly less than torture. Verses 24-25 of Luke 16 employ the word is "odunao" (Strong's Number 3600), which can mean "to cause intense pain" but can also mean "to be in anguish" or "to distress one's self." The same word is used in Luke 2:48 to describe the sorrow Mary felt when she noticed Jesus was missing while they were returning from Jerusalem.

So, once again, here we see that the Greek words used to describe suffering in Hell do not necessarily denote torturous pain, which leads us to the next two points below.

Number two, it is important not to overlook the simple fact that Jesus' description of Hell includes, rather than avoids or deviates from, familiar characteristics regarding the suffering of the wicked. Verse 24 includes fiery torment among these familiar characteristics. In verse 28, Jesus refers to the part of Sheol that is reserved for the wicked as a "place of torment" and the context demonstrates that this torment is ongoing and consciously experienced by the wicked who dwell there. It is very significant that Jesus does not regard such ongoing, conscious suffering as grotesque or cruel. He is not critiquing or objecting to such conditions.

Number three, although there is no denying the fiery pain endured by the rich man, it is important to note what is absent when it comes to his suffering. The rich man is not shrieking or wailing. He is not pictured as delirious with torturous agony. Instead, he is in a very rational state of mind. He recognizes the deceased beggar that used to lie at his gate waiting for scraps. Rather than experiencing pain on such a level that his only thought is for it to cease, even for a moment, instead the rich man is shown to be thinking about how to spare his family from similar discomfort. And when he does petition for some relief from the flames, he does not ask for the fire to stop but simply for a little water to cool his tongue. In fact, while the rich man is explicitly described as being in great discomfort, the depiction of his state of mind and behavior is hardly one of torture. Rather, he is depicted as experiencing a significant but not utterly intolerable amount of discomfort. While it is true that the rich man's suffering in Hell exceeds the degree of suffering that the beggar experienced during his lifetime, we must acknowledge that Jesus' description doesn't indicate any largescale categorical difference between the magnitude of their respective suffering. On the contrary, Jesus description seems to deliberately equate the experiences of the two men, conveying that their circumstances are reversed in the afterlife. Previously, the beggar suffered and the rich man was comforted. Now the beggar is comforted and the rich man is in physical discomfort. During his life, the beggar was certainly in serious pain. But he was not in a state of absolute physical torture. So, if we take Jesus' depiction here as the baseline for how to gage suffering in Hell, then the distasteful picture of intolerable, screaming torture seems to fade into mere exaggerated imagination.

Number four, it is also fundamentally important to remember that it is not the mortal body of the rich man that is suffering in the fire in Luke 16. This is of critical importance. Fire is incredibly painful for the human body. And when we conceive of the fire of Hell, we mistakenly conceive of it acting on a mortal human body. But that is not at all the case. In Luke 16:22, the rich man's body is buried. His body does not descend into Hell to experience the pain of the fire. It remains in the grave or sepulcher to decompose.

What is suffering in the fire in Luke 16 is the rich man's immortal soul. We have also already established from scripture that the soul is the individual being and that God created the human soul with two components, a mortal body made from inanimate soil and immortal spirit imparted from God himself to Adam. With his body dead and buried, the soul of the rich man is at that point entirely comprised of spirit. It is his immortal spirit that experiences the fire. Furthermore, we have shown that life is an inherent property of spirit and that spirit is inherently unyielding to destructive forces. Consequently, when we conceive of the fires of Hell, we must imagine the fires' effect, not on mortal flesh, but on immortal spirit, which is inherently resistant to destruction. It is a fundamental mistake to conceive of Hell in terms of the way the mortal, corruptible human body experiences fire. Given what we know about spirit, we have every reason to think that even something as painful as fire is going to be far less painful when experienced by immortal, undying, incorruptible spirit rather than mortal,

corruptible flesh. There is much to say on this enormously significant point, but we'll take it one step at a time in each of the remaining points below.

Fourth, while the rich man in Luke 16 may only be experiencing the fires of Hell as a disembodied spirit, it is also a fact that not everyone in Hell will do so without a body. Does that mean it is accurate to conclude that suffering in Hell includes the kind of pain that humans feel when our mortal, corruptible bodies are burned by fire? The answer from scripture is a resounding and unequivocal "no," which is triangulated by several clear proofs.

Number one, early in our study we examined Jesus' teaching in Matthew 22:30, Mark 12:25, and Luke 20:35-36 that in the resurrection men are equal to angels. Luke's version even goes so far as to explain that this equality with angels includes that resurrected men are no longer able to die. This statement from Jesus proves that resurrected men and angels are both immortal and, in fact, inherently unyielding to death. Of course, Jesus is here only specifically talking about the resurrection of the righteous. We see this in the phrase "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world" in Luke 20:35. The Greek word for "world" is "aion" (Strong's Number 165). According to its definition, "Aion" can either refer to "for ever" and "perpetuity" or to a long period of time or age.

We can compare this statement from Jesus to Revelation 20, which we will examine in more detail momentarily.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and **I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.** 5 **But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.** 6 **Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection:** on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.** 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.** 11 **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.** 12 **And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.** 13 **And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to**

their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

Revelation 20 explains that those saints who die between Christ's ascension and his return are resurrected at the start of the first thousand years of the kingdom of God, during which time Christ Jesus will prepare the earth to receive the Father at the end of that millennium. From verses 4-5 and 7, we can see that there is a particular period of a thousand years for which only the saints are resurrected. It is also worth noting that the phrase "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" in verse 6 is conceptually parallel to Jesus' statement in Luke 20 regarding the resurrection of those who "shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world." Both statements refer to those who are worthy to be resurrected at the beginning of Jesus' millennial reign. According to verses 5 and 12-13, the rest of the dead are not raised until after that first thousand years. Verses 4-6 and 12-13 are clear that there will be two distinct resurrection events, one at the start of Jesus' millennial reign and one at the end. And verses 12-13 denote that at least some of those resurrected at the end of the millennium will be condemned as "wicked" and "cast into the lake of fire."

In verses 11-12, we see the arrival of the Father, which is indicated with phrases like "a great white throne" and "him that sat on it." We know these phrases refer to the Father, not Jesus Christ, because of a comparison to earlier phrases in Revelation. In Revelation 4:2-3, John writes that he saw "a throne" that was "set up in heaven, and one sat on the throne." The narrative from chapter 4 continues into chapter 5. In verse 1 of chapter 5, the one who sits on the throne has a book in his hand, which no man was allowed to open. Then, verses 5-7 use titles like "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" "the Root of David," and "a Lamb" to identify Jesus as he receives the book from out of the hand of "him that sat upon the throne." Since Jesus is the one receiving the book from the one who sits on the throne, the person on the throne must be the Father. This factor will be important momentarily when we return to Revelation 20 shortly below.

Ultimately, the critical facts from Revelation 20 are that there will be two resurrection events on either side of Jesus' millennial reign and that everyone will eventually be resurrected, not just the saints. Consequently, since Jesus' comment about worthiness is explained by the two resurrections before and after the millennium, the critical points from Matthew 22, Mark 12, and Luke 20 remain clear. These three passages establish the fundamental facts that resurrected men are equal to angels and that both resurrected men and angels lack the ability to die. Under points two and three below, we will continue to see additional evidence that the resurrection of the wicked is also facilitated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as such, their resurrection shares the same immortalizing effect as the resurrection of the saints.

Number two, interestingly when Jesus describes sending wicked men to the fires of Hell in Matthew 25 he explicitly states that the fires of Hell were prepared specifically for angelic beings.

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

There are several things to note about this statement. First, we must keep in mind that Matthew decided to include this statement from Jesus just 3 chapters after Jesus' declared that resurrected men are equal to angels. This is placement is not coincidence. Second, what are we to make of Jesus' assertion that Hell was made for angels? There are only three options here.

Option one is that the absence of the word "men" is incidental. First, arguing that certain details of scripture are incidental can simply be a pretext for ignoring textual evidence. Second, an analysis of the statement indicates that the final phrase doesn't really fit with the concept of "incidental." Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary defines "incidental" as "happening as a minor part or result of something else." However, it is quite clear that nothing about Jesus' statement or his main point in this passage necessitates or would explain any inadvertent mention of who Hell was prepared for. If Jesus had simply said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" and ended the sentence there, it wouldn't seem abrupt. Nothing would seem missing. The fact that there is no natural need for Jesus to inadvertently include the closing phrase indicates that Jesus included the phrase quite intentionally. In other words, he didn't need to include it, but he chose to include it. And so long as there is a reasonable indication that Jesus added this phrase deliberately, then we should not dismiss it as inconsequential.

Option two is that God did not anticipate humans would be wicked or did not anticipate how to punish wicked humans. But that option is utterly unacceptable theologically. Whether the determinism of Calvinism, or the foreknowledge of Arminianism/Freewill theology, or even Open Theism which reject the notion that God has direct knowledge of the future, there is no school of Christian theology that would endorse the idea that God didn't anticipate humans becoming wicked or wisely make arrangements beforehand for how to deal with such a development. And in any case, there would be no way to explain how or why God anticipated the wickedness of the angels and its proper punishment but did not anticipate human wickedness and its proper punishment. God's anticipatory action regarding wicked angels demands similar awareness and anticipation on God's part regarding human sin. Nor can sending wicked humans to Hell simply be an afterthought, as if God either initially prepared something else for wicked humans and then changed his mind or God hadn't prepared anything in particular for wicked humans, found himself with nothing prepared, and then decided that the best thing to do was to just put them in Hell even though it wasn't made for humans. There is no variation of this option that sensibly explains how God could end up in a situation where he sends wicked humans to a place that wasn't intended or prepared for them. This leaves only one option, which fortunately makes much more sense than any of these alternatives.

Option three is that God did indeed anticipate human wickedness and he prepared a proper way to deal with human wickedness, just as he had regarding angelic wickedness. This is really the only option. But then why wouldn't Jesus describe Hell as being prepared for "angels and men?" Matthew 22, Mark 12, and Luke 20 have already provided an answer for why Jesus did not describe Hell as prepared for "men." In simple terms, the resurrection makes men equal to angels, including immortality. And consequently, by declaring that Hell was prepared for "the devil and his angels," Jesus isn't excluding humans from the group for whom Hell was prepared. To the contrary, Jesus is including wicked humans as part of the "devil's angels" because wicked humans will enter Hell resurrected and equal to angels.

Ultimately, Jesus' statement that wicked men will go to a place that was made for angels along with wicked angels itself argues that the wicked men who are condemned to Hell go there as angels, not as mere mortal men.

Number three, scripture is quite clear that the wicked will indeed be resurrected, not only the saints.

We have already seen explicit evidence for this from Revelation 20 a moment ago. Specifically, we saw that according to Revelation 20, there will be two general resurrections in the future. One will occur at Jesus' return as he begins to reign over the earth. The second will occur 1,000 years later at which point God the Father will enact final judgment and the rest of the dead will be raised. Verses 12-15 also indicate that at least some of those who are resurrected will be damned and cast into the Lake of Fire.

However, Revelation 20 is not the only passage to describe the resurrection of the wicked. This teaching is attested to by Daniel in the Old Testament. Daniel clearly differentiates between those who are resurrected "to everlasting life" and those who are raised "to shame and everlasting contempt."

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

In John 5, Jesus himself confirms that the wicked will be resurrected in a statement that very much parallels Daniel 12. According to Jesus, "all that are in the graves" will be resurrected, "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life" and "they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

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.**

We will discuss what Daniel and Jesus mean when they distinguish the resurrection of the wicked from "everlasting life" and "the resurrection of life" a

little later on. But for now, it is clear that Revelation 20, Daniel 12, and John 5 all unequivocally declare that the wicked will be resurrected, not just the saints.

1 Corinthians 15 also testifies to the resurrection of the wicked. And the details provided in 1 Corinthians 15 can be compared to what we find in Revelation 20.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But now is **Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.** **21** For since **by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.** **22** For as **in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.** **23** But **every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.** **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. **27** For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. **28** And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, **that God may be all in all.**

Our primary interest here is on those particular details, which prove that the wicked dead will receive the same type of resurrection as Jesus Christ and the saints. In other words, just as Jesus and the saints are raised immortal with bodies that are unable to die just like the angels, the wicked are as well. There are several evidences for this conclusion in 1 Corinthians 15.

One, we have examined 1 Corinthians 15 earlier in our study and highlighted the use of the term “firstfruits” as a description of Jesus Christ being “risen from the dead” in verse 20. As we stated previously, this term “firstfruits” indicates that Christ is the first in a larger group of the same kind, which would follow after him. This establishes the basic premise that Christ’s resurrection provides the pattern for the manner of resurrection that others will also experience. They will not be resurrected in a different manner than Christ Jesus, but in the same manner. The next question is whether this includes the wicked.

Two, the full phrase is “firstfruits of them that slept.” The designation “them that slept” clearly does not distinguish between the wicked and the saints. It is an all-inclusive category. The only qualifying description is “those who have slept.” In other words, this refers to anyone and everyone who has died. Consequently, verse 20 depicts Christ Jesus as the first member of a larger group who will experience the same resurrection that Christ did and this larger group simply includes everyone who has died.

Three, verse 22 confirms that all men, not just the saints, are recipients of the same resurrection which Christ Jesus was the first to experience. We see this in the phrase “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” There are actually two proofs here. The first proof is the comparison to Adam. The pattern of death experienced by Adam is not just experienced by some men. It is

the rule. Both the wicked and the righteous die. This statement about Adam clearly is not made with regard to the righteous only. Like the phrase “them that slept” in verse 20, this is yet another all-inclusive description. The Greek word translated as “all” in verse 22 is “pas” (Strong’s Number 3956). The fact that the same Greek word is used with regard to the pattern exhibited in Christ Jesus’ resurrection informs us that all men, including the wicked, will experience the same resurrection that Jesus first exhibited.

Four, verse 23 asserts that the resurrection of “all” men happens in a particular order. In fact, verse 23 completes the thought expressed in verse 22. So, the full phrase is “in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order.” This is intriguing because in some sense it functions as an explanation for why it doesn’t seem like “all” men are resurrected. Instead, at any particular point in time, only some men are resurrected. But these “partial” resurrection events do not indicate that only “some” will be resurrected. Instead, it is necessary to understand that the resurrection of “all” will occur in different stages. By explaining that there is an order with different groups of men resurrected at different times, Paul is actually giving another proof that “all” men will be resurrected, not just some.

Five, the specific order that Paul outlines itself provides another proof that all men will be resurrected. This order is identified in verses 23-26. The first resurrection is designated by the phrase “Christ the firstfruits.” The next resurrection event is designated by the phrase “afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” This conforms exactly to Revelation 20, which refers to the resurrection at the start of Jesus’ millennial reign as “the first resurrection” and identifies that this resurrection includes those who are “blessed and holy” all the way up until the time of the persecution under the antichrist just before Jesus’ return.

Of course, the two resurrections mentioned so far in verse 23 only include Christ and those that are his. But, verse 24 begins with the phrase “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.” At first glance, this may seem as though Paul is moving on to describe a different event rather than listing a third resurrection. However, from Revelation 20 we know that is not the case at all. Revelation 20 has already delineated that there is another resurrection 1,000 years after the saints are resurrected by the returning Christ Jesus. We also know from Revelation 20 that this post-millennial resurrection occurs when the Father arrives to enact judgment from his Great White Throne. From John 5, we know that up until this future point in time, the Father had entrusted all judgment to the Son, Jesus Christ. So, the fact that the Father is enacting judgment at the end of the millennium in Revelation 20 informs us that Jesus had handed judgment back over to the Father. This, in turn, corresponds with the phrase “when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father” in 1 Corinthians 15:24. Consequently, we already know from Revelation 20 that there is another resurrection, which occurs at “the end” when the Father sits in judgment. Therefore, we should understand that the phrase “Then cometh the end” in 1 Corinthians 15:24 does indeed correspond with another resurrection

event that occurs at the point in time when Christ delivers the kingdom to the Father.

Six, verse 25 also provides additional evidence that verse 24 designates a separate resurrection event at “the end” of the millennial reign when the Father enacts 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.” Of course, from Hebrews 2, we know that this is no mere metaphor or abstract concept. Hebrews 2:14 identifies specifically that “the devil” is “him that had the power of death.” These sequential details inform us that Jesus’ defeat of death, which began with his own resurrection, will be completed right before he delivers the kingdom to the Father for judgment. Moreover, the defeat of death at the end of the millennium itself strongly necessitates that there will be an accompanying resurrection, liberating men from death. It wouldn’t make much sense if the last time men were liberated from death was 1,000 years before the final defeat of death.

Seven, now that we have shown that the text of 1 Corinthians 15 includes a resurrection at the end of the millennium, we can revisit the fact that Revelation 20 proves this post-millennial resurrection includes the wicked. Concerning those resurrected after the millennium, Revelation 20:15 states that “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” As such, we know the wicked are raised at that time. (See Revelation 20:5-6.)

Eight, intriguingly the details of Revelation 20 suggest that those resurrected after the millennium won’t all be wicked.

Verses 7-8 describes how the devil will be loosed after the thousand years at which point he will deceive the nations, gather an army to do battle, rise over the “breath of the earth,” and leave the “beloved city” as the only place of refuge for the saints. Of course, verse 9 concludes that the devil and his army are defeated when fire comes down from God out of heaven. However, the military conquest and global persecution of the saints makes it quite reasonable that godly people will be killed at this time, especially given the precedent that saints will be killed during the great persecution under the antichrist right before the resurrection that occurs when Jesus returns at the start of the millennium. (Certainly, the saints of the Old Testament period as well as those who are resurrected at Christ’s return will have already been immortalized before this point and, therefore, they will not be vulnerable to the devil’s violent aggression at the end of the millennium. Of course, this invites the question of who will remain alive on earth as mortals at this time and, therefore, susceptible to being killed during this final persecution. Fortunately, the bible provides answers to these questions.)

Next, Isaiah 65 also describes the millennium. Verse 20 mentions infants and children and old men, which affirms the idea that there will be some mortal people who continue to reproduce and grow old during the millennium. Yet it also mentions the possibility of someone dying at the age of “an hundred years old” being considered still a child due to a restoration of long lifespans (verse 22), like

we see in Genesis 5. Verse 20 also acknowledges the possibility that some will still chose to sin during the millennium when it says, “the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” These statements make it possible that, despites the unprecedented scale of peace and righteousness on earth during the millennial reign of Christ, there will still be mortal people, some of which sin, and others which die unexpectedly possibly even at the hands of the rare sinner. These details from Isaiah demonstrate that there is more than enough room for righteous people to die during the millennium and be resurrected at the Final Judgement before God the Father.

(Other passages which help identify mortal men who will be present during the kingdom of God include Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14, and Luke 18:16. In these verses, like Isaiah, Jesus speaks of the presence of little children who enter into the kingdom of God. It certainly makes sense that any children who are alive when Christ returns would be allowed to continue their natural lives into the kingdom. If so, as Isaiah indicates, they could marry and have children themselves. Similarly, as Luke 6:20 may indicate, it is reasonable to consider that poor people who are alive at the time of Christ’s return and who are not yet believers may likewise enter into the kingdom as mortals so long as they do not take the mark of the beast, do not worship the beast, and are not part of the military forces gathered to make war against Jesus when he comes. The possibility that some unbelievers from the nations will survive and enter the kingdom of God is confirmed by Zechariah 14:1-4 which describes the Lord’s return to the Mount of Olives and his battle against the forces gathered from the nations to make war against him. Verses 12-13 describe the deaths of those who come to fight against Christ when he returns. Verse 16 explains that those who are “left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts.” This indicates that there will be survivors from the nations who were against Christ. And yet, as verses 17-19 tell us, some of those who survive will not be obedient to the commands of Christ. These will be punished with a lack rain. Lack of rain is significantly detrimental to societies dependent on agriculture, but it wouldn’t be much of an impediment to immortalized beings. Moreover, as we have seen, the righteous will be resurrected immortal at the beginning of the kingdom while the wicked will not be resurrected until after the millennial kingdom concludes. Therefore, the presence of disobedient people and the punishment they are issued provide additional evidence that some mortal men will be allowed into the Messianic kingdom. It is these groups and their descendants that are vulnerable to the devil’s final campaign, which is described in Revelation 20.)

Lastly, even Revelation 20:15’s use of the phrase “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” itself suggests that some of those resurrected might indeed have their names found in the book of life.

The fact that the resurrection at the end of the millennium includes both righteous and wicked men is also informative regarding the nature of the resurrection that the wicked receive. If the wicked were resurrected in their own unique event, then perhaps there might be some space to speculate that the wicked receive a different

kind of resurrection than the righteous. But the fact that the wicked are resurrected in the same resurrection event as righteous people again demands that the wicked will receive an immortalizing resurrection facilitated by Jesus' resurrection, just like the righteous will.

Nine, 1 Corinthians 15:26-28 declares that when Jesus accomplishes the final defeat of death and delivers the kingdom to the Father, at that time "God will be all in all." We have already examined this phrase "all in all" earlier in our study. We also compared the use of this phrase in 1 Corinthians 15 to Romans 8:11, 19-23 and Ephesians 1:5, 13-23 both of which describe Christ Jesus as providing the pattern for the resurrection of the saints. Romans 8 also specifically states that the resurrection of the saints liberates them from mortality and susceptibility to corruption and it declares that all creation will one day also share that same liberty from death and corruption. Consequently, we know from our previous investigation that the phrase "God will be all in all" refers to this point when all of creation will share in God's immortality. The fact that Paul includes the phrase "all in all" in 1 Corinthians 15 is itself a proof that its meaning has to do with receiving everlasting life from God.

Number four, it is also worth noting that resurrecting the wicked to mortal life is both logically and pragmatically entirely pointless, particularly for those who deny the immortality of the soul after death. If the soul ceases to consciously exist at death, then there is no need to resurrect the wicked if their punishment is for God to simply turn around and terminate their existence. Why restore them to life and conscious existence just to terminate their existence? Why not just leave them nonexistent? Perhaps God intends to raise them so he can judge them publically and vindicate his condemnation of them. But such a public vindication could surely be accomplished simply by reading aloud "those things which were written in the books, according to their works" as stated in Revelation 20. The wicked do not have to be present for their evils to be made known before all the saints and angels. And even if the soul is immortal, the resurrection of the wicked to mortal bodies remains entirely pointless. In such a scenario, those mortal bodies are going to be consumed and cease to exist in a very short time as soon as they are cast into Hell, at which point their immortal souls will reside in Hell perpetually without bodies anyway. So, there is simply no reasonable way to explain why the wicked would need to be resurrected at all if their resurrection is to a mortal body. On the other hand, if the wicked receive immortal bodies, then resurrecting them makes perfect sense since Hell was created for angelic beings. Since wicked angels will be placed in Hell in their immortal bodies, it makes sense for wicked men to be resurrected to immortality and then placed in Hell alongside them. Moreover, restoring the wicked to their bodies prior to casting them into Hell would also make sense due to the fact that immortal bodies would not quickly vanish in the fire like mortal bodies would.

In conclusion, 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation 20 make it abundantly clear not only that the wicked will be resurrected, but that Christ's own immortal resurrection provides the pattern for the resurrection of the wicked who are ultimately resurrected as part of a great immortal resurrection at the end of the

millennial reign of Christ, which will include some faithful people as well. In a moment, we will discuss some possible objections to this conclusion. But for now, it is important to summarize the triangulated proof that the wicked enter Hell after receiving immortal bodies equal to the angels through the process of resurrection made possible through Christ Jesus' own resurrection. First, in Matthew 22, Mark 12, and Luke 20 Jesus himself states that the resurrection makes men equal to angels, specifically in the sense that those who are resurrected no longer have the capacity to die. Second, in John 5:29 Jesus states that wicked men will be resurrected unto damnation while in Matthew 25 Jesus states that wicked humans will end up in Hell and that Hell was made for angelic beings. And third, in 1 Corinthians 15 Jesus' resurrection is identified as the first occurrence of a kind of resurrection that will apply to all men, both righteous and wicked.

Consequently, when we consider the degree of pain experienced by those in the fires of Hell, we must keep in mind that those fires are not experienced by "burnable," corruptible, mortal human bodies but by immortal, incorruptible, resurrected spiritual bodies like angels have. And this fact is the best explanation for why the rich man in Luke 16 is not in shrieking, irrational agony. Even though the rich man in Luke 16 has not been resurrected, he does not experience pain to that degree because he experiences the fires of Hell with his immortal spirit, not with his mortal body. The vocabulary used in scripture to describe Hell can describe a range of pain, including torturous physical pain but also less degrees of both physical and mental pain. While the text of scripture is clear that Hell is a place of suffering, there is no reason to conclude that the degree of pain is utterly intolerable and tantamount to an eternity of the kind of torturous pain that the mortal human body is capable of experiencing in this age. If we want to fairly weigh the possible objections and concerns regarding Hell, we must do so in light of the full picture presented in scripture. And that picture necessarily includes the fact that the fires of Hell act on immortal spirits, not weak and consumable mortal bodies.

Pain is Not the Purpose of the Fire

Having established that it is incorrect to conceptualize the fires of Hell as acting on mortal, corruptible human bodies with the inherent pain perception of a mortal body, we can move on to discuss another critical aspect of the pain and fire of Hell. As we have noted previously, the fires of Hell are experienced only by immortal spirits (whether disembodied or with immortal angelic spirit bodies), which are most likely more resilient to pain due to the fact that they are resilient to corruption, injury, and destruction. Nevertheless as we've seen, scripture does describe the fires of Hell as painful. But the question arises, why not just eliminate the fire and get rid of the pain altogether? Or to put it another way, did God make Hell full of fire just to make sure it was painful? These questions raise the specter that including any painful element is cruel and unnecessary.

However, there is good reason to think that the purpose of the fire is not to cause pain. Yes, the fire causes pain, but perhaps the pain is simply an acceptable byproduct of the fire while the real purpose of the fire is something else. Consider the other elements that we know about Hell.

First, Hell is a prison, particularly for the wicked. We saw this in 1 Peter 3:19-20, 4:6. The souls of deceased humans are not allowed to roam the earth with the living. Instead, they are taken to a location below the surface of the earth. This fact demonstrates a fundamental aspect of Hell. Its purpose is to restrict movement and sinful activity.

Second, Hell has a gate that is kept under lock and key. We see this in Matthew 16:18-19 and Revelation 1:18, 9:1-3, 20:1-3, 7. This again shows the intention to prevent the wicked from moving freely about. Like the subterranean location, the gates and key are additional mechanisms of restraint.

Third, the interior layout of Hell is designed to restrict movement. We saw this in Luke 16:26 which describes “a great gulf” that exists to prevent the wicked from going to the side of Sheol where the righteous were kept in comfort.

Fourth, those angels who have already been placed in Hell are in chains. Jude 1:6 states that “the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness.” 2 Peter 2:4 similarly states “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.” The Greek word translated as “hell” in 2 Peter 2:4 is “tartaroo” (Strong’s number 5020). According to the Online Bible Greek Lexicon, “tartaroo” is “the name of the subterranean region, doleful and dark, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the abode of the wicked dead, where they suffer punishment for their evil deeds; it answers to Gehenna of the Jews.” The chains are obviously another mechanism of restrain for these wicked beings.

Fifth, Hell is also a place of darkness. Both Jude 1:6 and 2 Peter 2:4 mention this darkness when they describe wicked angels in “chains under darkness.” Similarly, verses 12-13 of Jude describes the sentence of the wicked men, saying “to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” Anyone who has found themselves in a dark room or in the countryside at night knows that darkness can also be an effective way to slow and restrict movement and activity. If you cannot see, it is difficult to move and act. (On a side note, it may seem irreconcilable for a place of fire to be described as a place of darkness given that fire produces light. However, passages like Deuteronomy 4:11, 5:22, and Revelation 9:1-2 demonstrate that the darkness and fire are easily reconciled by the presence of thick smoke caused by the fire, which obscures the light. Revelation 9:1-2 is particularly interesting because it is a description of the subterranean prison where wicked beings are kept. When their prison is opened, Revelation 9 describes the “smoke of a great furnace” that rises out of their prison and the smoke even darkens the light of the sun.)

Sixth, the city of New Jerusalem has walls and gates. We see this in Revelation 20:10-18. Here we might ask why the New Jerusalem would need walls and gates. But, we have already established that the Lake of Fire breaks forth to the surface of the earth at a site located in the valley of Hinnom, which is south of present-day Jerusalem. One of the Greek words that is used to describe Hell in the New Testament is “geenna” or more commonly “Gehenna” (Strong’s Number 1067), which the Online Bible Greek Lexicon defines as “originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned.” Moreover, Revelation 14:9-10 states that anyone who worships the antichrist will be “tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” The phrase “in the presence of the Lamb” also demonstrates a close proximity to Jerusalem, which where the Lord Jesus will reside with the saints. Consequently, the walls and the gates demonstrate another mechanism to control and restrict movement.

In other words, virtually everything we know about Hell pertains to the restriction of movement of the wicked. The location, the gates, the key, the chains, the darkness, and even the walls and gates of the nearby New Jerusalem suggest that Hell was “prepared” primarily as a means of restraint and containment, to keep the wicked from affecting the society of the righteous (and perhaps even from further harming one another).

Here we might also take a moment to mention a few other relevant considerations.

Number one, the Bible establishes an early precedent in which fire is used as a barrier. We mentioned this historic episode earlier as recounted in Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 4-5. Deuteronomy 4:12 and 15 explain that when God descended on Mount Sinai, he placed a barrier of fire between him and the people of Israel and spoke to the Israelites “out of the midst of the fire.” Exodus 19:20-21 indicates that the placement of this intervening fire served God’s purpose “lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze.” In these passages, we see an early indication that God uses fire a barrier or to restrict movement. (Although perhaps less definitive, the use of fire to deter movement is also reflected even earlier in Genesis 3:22-24 when Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden of Eden and God takes steps to prevent their return.)

Number two, it is conceivable that even the pain or discomfort of Hell is simply another mechanism of restriction. We see this perhaps illustrated very effectively in our own mortal bodies in which some measure of pain can lead us to restrict or at least be careful about our movements.

Number three, as discussed earlier, the Jewish concept of Sheol, which included areas for both the righteous and the wicked, was essentially a great receptacle for the disembodied spirits of dead men. As we explained from Luke 16 and John 5, not even the wicked were annihilated in Sheol, despite their placement within the fire of Sheol. The fact that Sheol was created by God as part of the structure of the universe (Matthew 25:41 indicates that its fires were prepared for wicked angels), itself strongly demonstrates God’s intention to confine sinful beings for long

periods, not annihilate them. As we discuss elsewhere in this study, 1 Peter 3:18-20 specifically describes Sheol as a place of imprisonment that still housed formerly sinful men from Noah's day who remained in Sheol even to the time of Christ's first advent in the first century AD. Even for those who reject that the Lake of Fire is simply where the fires of Hell break forth onto the surface of the earth in the valley of Gehenna, which is south of Jerusalem, the fact that God created a place that would house sinful beings for thousands of years, rather than annihilating them, suggests that God's original intent is imprisonment, not annihilation. (There will be more to say on this later when we discuss problems with the potential mechanisms of annihilation.)

Moreover, Jesus' statement in Matthew 25:41 is even more specific and states that Hell was not meant to restrain just anyone but it was particularly "prepared for the devil and his angels." In short, every detail that we know about Hell tells us that it was designed to restrain powerful, immortal, incorruptible angelic beings. Therefore, we should assume the same thing regarding the fire.

Consider what we've learned about angels and spirit and spiritual bodies from our study so far. In Luke 20:35-36, Jesus states that resurrected humans are equal to angels and that angels lack the capacity to die. When Paul describes the spiritual bodies that the resurrected will have, he refers to them as "spiritual bodies" and as "incorruptible" in 1 Corinthians 15:35, 42-44, 50-54. As we've already noted, the Greek words "incorruptible" and "incorruption" are "aphtharsia" (Strong's Number 861), which means "perpetuity," and "aphthartos" (Strong's Number 862), which means "not liable to corruption or decay, imperishable." Therefore, angelic beings (and immortal men) have bodies that are inherently unyielding to the forces of decay and destruction. And we even saw from John 5:2-4 that angels exude such vitality that when an angel entered the pool of Bethesda, the first afflicted person to enter the water was healed. We also examined Exodus 33:17-23, 34:28-35, 2 Corinthians 3:7, 12-13, Acts 7:22-29, Exodus 7:7, and Deuteronomy 34:7 and saw that Moses' exposure to the presence of God on the mountain allowed him to go without food or drink for forty days, caused his skin to glow even after he left God's presence, and very probably reversed decades of Moses' aging. Moreover, Deuteronomy 8:4 and 29:5 explain that during the entire forty years that the Israelites wandered through the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land, their clothing did not get worn out and their shoes did not get old. In other words, God supernaturally preserved their material goods against the forces of decay and corruption, which would normally wear away fabrics and other substances over the space of forty years. Although indirect, this account from Deuteronomy provides another piece of evidence that spirit inherently counteracts the forces of decay.

Let's pull these facts together. The other features of Hell that we find in scripture (the subterranean location, the gates, the keys, the gulf, the chains, the darkness) are all mechanisms of restraint. The angels are immortal spirits whose bodies are inherently unyielding to the forces of decay and destruction. And Hell was designed for wicked angels. Given these facts, it is reasonable to conclude that the purpose of the fire is to act as yet another restraining mechanism. To be more

specific, perhaps the best way to incapacitate beings with bodies that are inherently unyielding to forces of decay and destruction is to subject them to a constant exposure to a corruptive force such as fire. Because they are immortal and their bodies are incorruptible, the fire would not destroy them but it would likely consume some of vitality that they exude. When we consider the healing property of the angelic body as exemplified in the Bethesda Pool combined with the fact that scripture describes their bodies as “not liable to decay” and “imperishable,” the picture begins to emerge that even if angelic bodies could be subjected to powerful forces of decay such as the fires of Hell, their bodies bounce back and resiliently resist the injury in an ongoing fashion, just as the clothing and shoes of the Israelites resisted the forces of decay for forty years in the wilderness. So, while there may be pain caused by the consuming effect of the fire, this pain is most likely mitigated by the equally constant healing resilience of their inherently incorruptible bodies, even as exhibited in the Pool of Bethesda.

In short, there is good reason to conclude that God has not included fire in Hell just to cause pain but rather the primary purpose of the fire is to act as yet another mechanism of restraint suited to beings that are immortal and whose bodies are incorruptible. In this sense, it is possible that the pain is simply a necessary byproduct of the restraint. Certainly, not everyone would consider it unjust or cruel to deliberately apply a measured amount of discomfort to wicked and unrepentant beings. But since the pain is at the heart of the objections regarding cruelty, it is critical to recognize the possibility that the pain may indeed just be incidental. It is also possible that the pain is itself another restraining mechanism. Anyone who has experienced even mild persistent pain knows that it not only can restrict or deter physical movement, but it can even preoccupy the mind, making it difficult to concentrate or focus. When you consider the fact that God has at times described the wicked with statements like “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5), restricting not only movement but also wicked thought processes might be not only beneficial, but necessary.

On the other hand, if annihilation is viewed as more acceptable based on the notion that it would be cruel for God to subject people to eternity in the fires of Hell, then another question arises. Why would God use fire at all? Why not just employ some other method of terminating the existence of the wicked that doesn't involve a painful instrument like fire? Of course, the point of this question is not to prove that God is cruel or that the fire is inhumane. But instead, the point is to show that annihilation in the fires of Hell should not be mistaken as something that is pain free. In fact, in certain periods of world history, some societies burned people at the stake as a form of capital punishment. Later on in our study, we will discuss the process of cremation, which uses fire to reduce the human body to ash in a matter of a few hours. A few hours is virtually nothing in contrast to the prospect of an eternity in the fires of Hell. Yet despite the relatively minimal amount of time involved, most people would consider being burned to death as an incredibly painful way to die. Ultimately, for those who reject the prospect of eternity in Hell on the grounds that it is too painful and too cruel, the proposition that the fires of Hell result in annihilation hardly seem to avoid their own

criticism. In other words, based on the criteria often used to object to painful existence in Hell, if God has chosen to annihilate people by essentially burning them alive that would be an unnecessarily painful method for terminating their existence. God's choice to do so would imply that the pain is intentional and fire was selected because of its ability to convey suffering. Therefore, the only way to avoid problematic levels of pain, which raise the specter of cruelty, is if the fires of Hell act as a necessary restraining force on immortal beings, whose bodies are less susceptible to the consuming power of the fire or its painful effect. By contrast, having the fires of Hell act as the agent which annihilates wicked beings would seem to warrant the same characterization of cruelty on God's part. Although the fire may be a relatively fast way to extinguish their existence, it undoubtedly still involves the same unnecessary suffering that is involved in essentially being burned alive.

It is perhaps worth mentioning the statement in Revelation 19:20 that God casts that beast and the false prophet alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. This declaration undermines any sense that God is particularly interested in sparing wicked beings the suffering of hellfire. In other words, using fire as a mechanism to annihilate wicked men and angels by burning them until they cease to exist hardly seems to avoid the charge of cruelty and unnecessarily subjecting them to extreme pain. After all, even some modern cultures have sought to put criminals condemned with capital sentences to death in the most painless way possible employing methods of execution which involve little or no suffering. Likewise, it is reasonable to assume that God has the ability and the option to annihilate the wicked in a manner that doesn't involve fire or any semblance of painful mechanisms. The fact that God has chosen to incorporate some manner of fire in the punishment of the wicked demonstrates that God's mercy and justice do not demand painless forms of punishment, that the amount of pain involved does not reach an objectionable level, and that any perception that Hell involves cruelty and torturous pain is a gross exaggeration of the biblical facts.

Lastly, here we might take the opportunity to revisit the extent to which Greek words for "torment" can refer to either physical or mental anguish. We started with the verb "basanizo" (Strong's Number 928), which can refer to "pains of body or mind." We also saw that the Greek words "basanismos" (Strong's Number 929) is derived from "basanizo" and the related word "basanos" (Strong's Number 931). The word "basanos" is also closely related to "basanizo" and in Matthew 4:24 it is used to refer to the pain caused by a variety of human ailments, some of which are no doubt well below the level of torture. Another Greek term that we saw associated with Hell was "odunao" (Strong's Number 3600), which is used in Luke 2:48 to describe the sorrow Mary felt when she noticed Jesus was missing while they were returning from Jerusalem. In Matthew 8:12, 13:42, 50, 22:13, 25:30, and Luke 13:28, Jesus describes Hell as a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The Greek word for "weeping" is "klauthmos" (Strong's Number 3805), which means "lamentation." Hebrews 12:16-17 cites Esau as an example of someone who is "rejected," has no more opportunities for "repentance," and subsequently had "tears" of regret. It is easy to imagine the mental anguish that would gnaw at an unrepentant angel or human being while

they are restrained in Hell, unable to move freely and pursue their sinful desires, imprisoned there by the very God whose commands they have rejected and painfully aware that at the very same time the saints are enjoying their rewarded in the kingdom. Given that at least some of these Greek terms can describe mental anguish, not necessarily physical anguish, it is important to point out that involuntary confinement and imprisonment can be a great source of mental torment, even if there is no physical pain involved. Although it is not necessary to exclude the possibility that there is physical pain in Hell, it is at least possible that the torment of Hell is largely due to the heavy degree of restraint that is placed upon its residents.

Ultimately, the torturous pain and cruelty that are normally associated with Hell are turning out to be rather shallow and out of sync with the whole picture of Hell as described in scripture. There is most likely pain, but neither the vocabulary nor the depiction of the rich man in Luke 16 requires torturous levels of pain. Some of the torment of Hell is most likely simply the anguish of the significant restraint and confinement of movement and activity. There is fire in Hell, but that fire is acting on immortal spirits with incorruptible bodies, not mortal men with frail corruptible bodies that bruise and injury and feel pain so easily. (And even if the wicked were not resurrected with angelic, immortal bodies but with mortal bodies, their spirits would still be immortal and, therefore, only their spirits would be subjected to the fires of Hell long term, while their bodies would be quickly annihilated at which point the pain from their bodies would cease.)

So, before we dismiss the possibility that the wicked will spend eternity in Hell based on some notion that Hell entails torturous physical pain equivalent to a mortal body burning in fire, we should first take the time to examine those assumptions about the degree of pain. And when we do examine those preconceptions, we find not only that the description in scripture is much more reasonable but also that there is very little basis in scripture to support the charge of cruelty. It is difficult to categorically dismiss Hell as cruel if in reality the fire of Hell functions primarily as a restraining mechanism to constantly countermand the inherent vitality of immortal beings whose bodies have exude healing properties, are unyielding to destructive forces, and most likely experience pain differently than the weak, corruptible, mortal human body. That is the scriptural concept of Hell that critics must contend with, not an oversimplified or exaggerated, pop-cultural reinterpretation.

Corruption Does Not Inherit Incorruption

When it comes to the idea even the wicked will received immortal bodies, there is one question that emerges immediately. If the wicked live forever, even if they are damned to Hell, aren't they still receiving eternal life? This question points out a relevant challenge that needs to be addressed. Scripture is clear that the wicked will not inherit eternal life. Doesn't this rule out the possibility of the wicked becoming immortal? Doesn't this require that their existence will be brought to an end?

There are actually several more specific nuances to this question. But the central objection expressed in these questions is largely resolved by a single clarifying point.

Many of the passages that contrast what happens to the righteous and what happens to the wicked center on terms like “inherit” and “kingdom of God” or some synonym for the kingdom. The proof that we’ve examined in Matthew 22, Mark 12, Luke 20, Matthew 25, and 1 Corinthians 15 only demonstrates that the wicked will become immortal. It does not demonstrate that the wicked will inherit the kingdom. To the contrary, the thrust of our argument was that through the resurrection the wicked become like the immortal angels for whom Hell was prepared. In other words, despite being made immortal, the wicked will inherit the Lake of Fire and Hell, not life in the kingdom with God. Consequently, stating that the wicked become immortal is not the same thing as stating that the wicked will enter or inherit the kingdom. Therefore, passages which declare that the wicked will not enter or inherit the kingdom do not disprove the conclusion that the wicked will become immortal.

Below is a list of passages, which contain such language. Although there are individual points that need to be made with regard to some of these passages, the distinction we have made here reconciles any challenge that might be raised from these passages.

First, we’ll start with 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; **neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.** 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed,** 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, **and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** 53 For **this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.** 54 So when **this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,** then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Here it is critical to properly identify the meaning of the words “corruption” and “incorruption” in verse 50. If “corruption” here is intended as an identifier for wicked men, then verse 50 would say that the wicked do not inherit incorruption or immortality. However, that is not what verse 50 is saying at all.

Number one, in the phrase “neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” in verse 50, the term “corruption” is not a reference to wicked men. We can see this plainly in verses 53-54, where Paul goes on to state that “this corruptible must put on incorruption” and “this mortal must put on immortality.” Consequently, if “corruption” referred specifically to wicked men in verse 50, then verses 53-54 would be declaring that the wicked do indeed become incorruptible. In that scenario, verse 50 and verse 53 would contradict one another. In reality, verses 53-54 reveal that the words “corruption” and “corruptible” here refer to the

mortal, corruptible human body. But this brings up the question of what “incorruption” refers to in verse 50.

Number two, it is clear that in verses 53-54 “incorruptible” is parallel to “immortality” as a description of the transformation of the body that occurs at resurrection. So, how can Paul say in verse 50 that “corruption” cannot “inherit incorruption” and then just two verses later say that the “corruptible” does indeed become “incorruptible?” The answer is that in verse 50 the term “incorruption” refers to the kingdom of God itself and the whole of creation that is transformed to an immortal, incorruptible state by the end of the millennial reign of Christ. We have discussed this issue before, particularly when examining Romans 8:19-23, which states that “the whole creation” is waiting to be “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” The entire mortal and corruptible part of creation will eventually be made immortal and incorruptible. Moreover, Daniel 2:44 declares that “the God of heaven” will “set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.” It will never be destroyed. It is literally “incorruptible.” But you cannot inherit an eternal thing if you yourself die. When you die, your inheritance will pass to others. Yet Daniel 2:44 also declares that “the kingdom shall not be left to other people.”

Consequently, in order to prevent the eternal kingdom from passing to another people, the heirs of that kingdom must also become incorruptible and immortal. And that is why Paul states in verse 50 that “corruption” does not “inherit incorruption.” Our bodies, which are currently corruptible and mortal, must be made incorruptible and immortal so that we can inherit a kingdom that will never be destroyed and so that our inheritance will not pass to others after us. Therefore, the phrase “corruption doth not inherit incorruption” does not in any way refute the conclusion that the wicked will be resurrected immortal and incorruptible. It simply declares the need for the righteous to receive immortal, incorruptible bodies.

And there is something else worth noting about Paul’s explanation that the righteous need immortal bodies in order to inherit the kingdom. It is clear that the reason Paul provides for why the righteous need immortal bodies does not apply to the wicked since the wicked will not inherit the kingdom. Nevertheless, the mere fact that Paul provides an explanation for why the righteous need to receive immortal bodies does not in any way rule out that there might be other reasons for the wicked to receive immortal bodies. As we have already seen, passages such as Matthew 25:41 provide a different reason for why the wicked to receive immortal bodies. The wicked need immortal bodies because the fire of Hell were prepared for immortal beings like the wicked angels.

Second, we will examine 1 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5.

1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Galatians 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Both of these passages clearly declare that the wicked will “not inherit the kingdom of God.” But as stated earlier, the crucial component is that the word “inherit” refers to the kingdom of God, not to immortality. Consequently, nothing in these passages states that the wicked do not inherit immortality. It only states that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom. And on that point, our model entirely agrees. The wicked will be raised immortal and will inherit the Lake of Fire, where they will be confined. They will not participate in the kingdom of God. Revelation 21:8 states that “the 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.” Notice the phrase “shall have their part.” The Greek word for “part” is “meros” (Strong’s Number 3313), which means, “a part due or assigned to one, a lot.” We find the same Greek term used in Luke 12:46 in which Jesus explains that the wicked servant will be “appointed his portion with the unbelievers.” We also find this same Greek word in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:12, where the younger son asks his Father “give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.” As we can see, this is language of “their part” and “his portion” related to the idea of inheritance. For example, Deuteronomy 10:9 and 18:1 state that the tribe of Levi would “have no part nor inheritance” with the rest of the tribes of Israel due to their unique role in the priesthood and religious service. The Septuagint translates the word “part” into the Greek word “meros” as well. Consequently, 1 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5 are classic examples of texts that refer to inheritance and participation in the kingdom, not to immortality specifically. And while the wicked do not inherit eternity in the kingdom, passages like Revelation 21:8 and Luke 12:46 indicate that they do inherit something. They receive their allotted “portion” of the fires of Hell.

Third, the Gospels contain several passages that fit the same pattern as 1 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5.

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Mark 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

Luke 18:17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Luke 13:22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. **23** Then said one unto him, Lord, are **there few that be saved?** And he said unto them, **24 Strive to enter** in at the strait gate: for **many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.** **25** When once the master of the house is risen up, and **hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without,** and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: **26** Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. **27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.** **28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.** **29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.**

Once again, it is clear that each of these passages from Matthew, Mark, and Luke are discussing whether the wicked will participate in the kingdom of God or be cast out of it. None of these passages discusses the question of immortality, let alone refutes the idea that the wicked receive immortality.

Fourth, Hebrews 3-4 discuss the example of the Israelites during the Exodus and describes how some of them were told that “They shall not enter” God’s “rest.”

Hebrews 3:11 So I swear in my wrath, **They shall not enter into my rest** (2663)... **18** And to whom sware he that **they should not enter into his rest** (2663), but to them that believed not? **19** So we see that **they could not enter in because of unbelief.** **4:1** Let us therefore fear, lest, **a promise being left us of entering into his rest** (2663), **any of you should seem to come short of it.** **2** For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. **3** For **we which have believed do enter into rest** (2663), as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, **if they shall enter into my rest** (2663): although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. **6** Seeing therefore it remaineth that **some must enter therein,** and they to whom it was first preached **entered not in because of unbelief:** **7** Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. **8** For if Jesus had given them rest (**2664**), then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. **9 There remaineth therefore a rest** (4520) **to the people of God.** **10 For he that is entered into his rest** (2663), he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. **11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest** (2663), **lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.**

Number one, it is important to note that Hebrews is quoting Psalm 95:8-11, which itself is referring back to when God made the Israelites wonder in the wilderness for forty years so that the first generation that left Egypt would not enter the Promised Land. The original incident is recorded in Numbers 14:26-35. Consequently, the term “rest” refers initially to the geographic region known as the Promised Land. It should also be noted that the Greek word used for “rest”

throughout this passage is “katapausis” (Strong’s Number 2663), which means “a putting to rest” or “a resting place.” Hebrews 4:1-11 goes on to refer to “a rest” that “remaineth” for the people of God at the time Hebrews was written. And the author warns his audience to be vigilant so that they will enter into the rest that remains. In this case, the “rest” refers to the Millennial Reign of Christ. (It is noteworthy that verses 9 does not use “katapausis” for the term “rest,” but instead uses “sabbatismos,” Strong’s Number 4520, which means “a keeping Sabbath.” More information on this can be found in our Sabbath Millennium study.) But in any case, nothing about the phrase “not enter rest” contains any direct or specific reference to immortality, only to inheriting the Kingdom of God.

Number two, it is interesting that Revelation 14:9-11 describes the punishment for those who worship the antichrist and verse 11 in particular declares “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast.” We’ll talk more about this passage in Revelation 14 later on regarding the issue of conscious, ongoing existence in Hell. But for now it is noteworthy that the Greek word for rest in verse 11 is “anapausis,” Strong’s Number 372. Even the spelling reveals its relationship to “katapausis.” In fact, both are compound words with the Greek word “pauo” (Strong’s Number 3973) as their root. “Pauo” means “to make to cease or desist.” “Katapausis” combines “pauo” with the Greek preposition “kata” (Strong’s Number 2596), which means “down from, through out, toward, along.” And “anapausis” combines “pauo” with the Greek preposition “ana” (Strong’s Number 303), which means “into the midst, among, between.” But, of course, the real intriguing component is “pauo,” especially because “pauo” specifically conveys “to make to cease.”

Consequently, by comparing Hebrews 3-4 to Revelation 14, we learn two things. One, the idea of “not entering rest” in Hebrews 3-4 does not refer to immortality but instead refers once again to the fact that the wicked do not participate in God’s kingdom, which is a place of rest for the righteous. Two, and perhaps even more important to our current study, we learn from Revelation that the wicked explicitly do not “cease” in Hell. We’ll return to focus more on this fact from Revelation 14 in a later section.

Lastly, in Revelation 20:10 we find similar statements to those we have seen in Revelation 14:9-11. Revelation 20:10 declares that the devil, the beast, and the false prophet are all cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. As we have seen, the Lake of Fire is described in Revelation 21:8 as the “part” or “portion” assigned to the wicked. Therefore, these passages in Revelation indicate that while the wicked do not inherit eternity in the kingdom along with God and the saints, they do inherit a place in the Lake of Fire with the devil and his angels “for ever and ever.” (Once again, it will be necessary to discuss the meaning of the phrase “forever and ever” later in this study. For now, we know that it at least seems to at least convey a lengthy period of time.)