

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF REVELATION THROUGH BIBLE PROPHECY

12 Revelation's Lake of Fire

Images of a burning lake of fire that burns the wicked come from the Book of Revelation. At the end of the millennium, the thousand-year period, **Revelation 20:7-9** tells us Satan leads the wicked of all ages to surround the holy city. Then fire comes down from heaven and devours them right here *on this earth*. The next chapter, **Revelation 21**, speaks of the earth made new. **Revelation 21:4** promises: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain," for the old order of things has passed away. These words of hope refer to life on the New Earth. No more crying or pain—the old order passed away. But the previous chapter described a lake of fire—*on the earth*. Think about it. This presents a big problem. If hell fire burns forever and ever, there'll still be a great deal of mourning and crying and pain. The old order will *not* have passed away. Will God's promise be fulfilled? To put it simply, *you can't have hell and heaven in the same place*. The burning must come to an end!

Hell Hasn't Happened Yet: Hell is not a hot spot burning in the center of the earth now. According to verses like **2 Peter 2:4 & 9**, **Job 21:30**, **Jude 6**, and **Matthew 8:29** the wicked—and even evil angels—are "reserved unto judgment." The wicked will be burned in the future.

The Fate of the Wicked Is Death & Destruction: The Bible declares the utter destruction of the wicked: "Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be *stubble*. And the day which is coming shall burn them up [not just "burn them" but "burn them up"]. . . . They shall be ashes." **Malachi 4:1-3**. This is consistent teaching of the Bible: "But the wicked shall perish; and the enemies of the Lord . . . shall consume. Into *smoke* shall they consume away." And scholars tell us that the Greek word translated as "destruction" is the strongest word that could be used meaning utter loss of existence.

The Words Eternal, Everlasting, & Forever: All three words are virtual synonyms and usually come from the same Greek word, *aiionios*. The Bible uses the term "forever" to refer to the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of the eternal fire of judgment (Jude 1:7). Are those fires still burning? No. It refers to the eternal results of fire and not the process of burning. Eternal fire is not *the process* but *the consequences*—the end result is eternal death, the second death.

Bible gives just one dominant picture of the destiny of the wicked—death and destruction. Prophets and apostles unite in making the picture forceful. Note the words used to describe their fate: The wicked will die - **Romans 6:23**. The wicked will perish - **Luke 13:3**. The wicked will be burnt up - **Malachi 4:1**. The wicked will be utterly consumed - **Psalms 37:20**. The wicked will be turned to ashes - **Malachi 4:3**.

Jeremiah 31:3	God's character is one of infinite love. (Also see 1 John 4:8 & 16).
2 Peter 3:9	The Lord is not willing that <i>any</i> should perish.
Hebrews 12:29	Yet to sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire.
2 Peter 2:4 & 9	Hell is not burning now—evil angels and the wicked are “ <i>reserved</i> for judgment.”
Malachi 4:1-3	Sinners will ultimately be burned up and turned to ashes.
Psalms 37:10	The wicked “shall not be”—they shall ultimately cease to exist.
Psalms 37:20	The wicked shall perish and consume; into smoke they shall consume away.
Psalms 37:36	The wicked shall not be found.
Romans 6:23	“The wages of sin is death”— <i>not</i> burning forever.
Revelation 21:8	Being cast into the Lake of Fire, the Bible says “is the second death.”
Jude 7	Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as an example of “eternal fire.”
2 Peter 2:6	But the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are <i>not burning</i> today. They were turned into “ashes” thousand of years ago.
Matthew 3:12	“Unquenchable fire” is not one that shall never go out but one that cannot be put out. Hell-fire <i>must</i> be unquenchable, or the wicked would put it out.
Jeremiah 17:19-27	God predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed by fire that “shall not be quenched”—yet that city is not burning today (2 Kings 25:1-9).
Isaiah 47:14	The fire burns itself out so completely, there'll not be even a coal to warm at.
Matthew 25:46	The “punishment” will be “everlasting.” The text does not say “everlasting punishing.” It's not the <i>process</i> , but the <i>effect</i> or <i>result</i> that lasts forever.
Exodus 21:6	If he chooses, a slave shall serve his master forever—or, <i>as long as he lives</i> .
1 Samuel 1:22 & 28	Hannah brought her son Samuel to the Temple so “that he may . . . remain there forever”—which means “ <i>as long as he lives</i> .”
Revelation 20:9	Fire comes down from God out of heaven and “devours” the wicked.
Ezekiel 28:17-18	Fire will consume and “devour” even Satan himself to “ashes.”
Obadiah 16	The wicked “shall be as though they had never been.”
2 Peter 3:10-13	“All these things shall be dissolved” when “the <i>elements</i> shall melt with <i>fervent heat</i> ”—but God shall create “new heavens and a new earth.”