



THE LAKE OF FIRE

BIBLE REFERENCE GUIDE #14

John 3:16 God is a God of love (1 John 4:8). All Bible teaching must reflect this characteristic of God.

WHEN WILL HELL-FIRE BURN?

Matthew 13:36-43; 49,50 The wicked are punished at the *end* of the world.

2 Peter 2:9 The wicked are “reserved” until the judgment day.

2 Timothy 4:1 God's judgment day for the wicked begins at His appearing when He comes again.

Revelation 20:11-15 The final phase of the judgment will occur at the second resurrection where the wicked will be sentenced and receive their final “reward” in the lake of fire at the end of the world.

WHERE WILL HELL-FIRE BURN?

Proverbs 11:31 The wicked will be punished on the earth, just as the righteous will receive their reward on this earth (Matt. 5:5).

Deuteronomy 32:22 Hell-fire will burn the earth with everything in it and even burn the mountains.

2 Peter 3:7 God is keeping it all in store to burn at the end of the world (vs. 10-13). The earth and all that is in it will be burned up and God will then create a new heaven (atmosphere) and earth.

Revelation 21:1-5 A picture of the new earth.

HOW LONG WILL HELL-FIRE BURN?

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is *death* (not everlasting life in hell-fire).

Psalms 37:9-11 The wicked will cease to exist.

Psalms 37:20 The wicked shall perish and consume into smoke.

Psalms 68:2 The wicked shall perish as wax before a fire.

Psalms 104:35 Sinners will be consumed and the wicked shall be no more.

- Malachi 4:1-3** The wicked will be as stubble, the fire shall burn them up and they will be ashes under our feet in the day that God does this.
- Revelation 20:9** As the wicked try to overtake the holy city, fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them (vs. 14); this is the *second* death. The second death is never called a “sleep” as the first death is because there will never be a resurrection from it. It will be an eternal annihilation.
- Ezekiel 28:18, 19** The devil will also be devoured in the lake of fire. He will be brought to ashes and will never be any more.

A FEW PERPLEXING TEXTS:

REVELATION 20:10 - FOREVER AND EVER.

Revelation 20:9 says the fire devours the wicked. Verse 10 seems to say the fire goes on and on. How long is forever and ever? The word that is translated “forever” in the English is a word that becomes relative to that which it is describing. For example, in Jonah 2:6, “forever” was only for three days and three nights. First Samuel 1:22, 28, shows us that “forever” means as long as Samuel lived. In Psalm 48:14, “forever and ever” means until death. Isaiah 47:14 says when the fire burns the wicked as stubble and goes out there won’t be a coal to warm yourself at or any fire at all. The word literally means “for an age.” Therefore the word in the original Greek and Hebrew translated as “forever” is a term that is to be understood in the context of what is being described. Fifty-six times in the Old Testament the term “forever” was applied to someone or something that had a definite end.

MARK 9:43, 44 - UNQUENCHABLE FIRE.

In Jeremiah 17:27 God said if the people refused to obey, He would burn Jerusalem with unquenchable fire. It happened in 2 Chronicles 36:19-21! But is Jerusalem still burning? No! “Unquenchable” simply means that when God sets something on fire it's beyond anyone's power to quench it while it burns, and it will accomplish the purpose that God has determined for it.

MATTHEW 25:41-46 - EVERLASTING FIRE AND PUNISHMENT.

Jude 1:7 says Sodom and Gomorrah burned with eternal fire. They are not burning now though. 2 Peter 2:6 says these cities burned to ashes *as an example* of what will happen to the wicked at the end of the world. The punishment is everlasting in its *effect* or *consequences* but not in the duration of the time of the burning. (Compare the usage of the word “eternal” in Jude 7 with the same word in Hebrews 5:9 and Hebrews 6:2). It is obvious that the word “eternal” is referring to the *result of the act* rather than the duration of the act itself.

LUKE 16:19-31—THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

This story is a parable. It begins with the same words that Jesus began many of His parables with, i.e. “a certain man.” It follows in the line of a list of parables. Parables are not meant to be taken literally in every point of detail. (Example, Judges 9:6-15, in Jotham’s parable where the trees and brambles are talking to each other.) The main point that Christ was making with this story is the duty we have of giving the gospel message to those who are in need of it. To whom much is given, much is required. The story was not meant at all to be a thesis on the state of the dead.