

# THE FIRES OF HELL

The image features a fiery, orange and yellow background with silhouettes of people and hands reaching up, suggesting a scene of judgment or suffering. The title "THE FIRES OF HELL" is prominently displayed at the top in a stylized, outlined font. The silhouettes include several human figures in the background and several hands of various sizes reaching upwards in the foreground, set against a backdrop of falling sparks or embers.

Lesson 10 for December 3, 2022

**“Test all things; hold  
fast what is good”**

**1 Thessalonians 5:21**





The Bible teaches that we are mortal, and the soul dies (Is. 51:12; Ro. 6:12; Ez. 18:20). However, most Christians believe and teach that we have an immortal soul that keeps living after we die.

However, there's no consensus among those Christians about where the soul is supposed to go. Since that is not a Biblical doctrine, several theories have arisen.



### Immortal souls?

➤ The immortality of worms

### Where are immortal souls supposed to go?

➤ Hell

➤ Purgatory

➤ Heaven

### Who can be immortal?

➤ How to get eternal life

IMMORTAL SOULS?

# THE IMMORTALITY OF WORMS

“And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isaiah 66:24)



The word “worm” in this verse (also in Jesus’ quote in Mr. 9:44, 46, 49) refers to the worms that eat decomposing bodies. Are those worms immortal?



Those worms will finish their task eventually. That is, they will consume the corpse they’re eating (a physical cadaver, not an incorporeal soul). It’s the same concept as the fire that endures until everything has been consumed.

Both Isaiah and Jesus used this metaphor to compel us choose between two destinies: eternal life or eternal destruction.





**“I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, ‘The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon.’”**

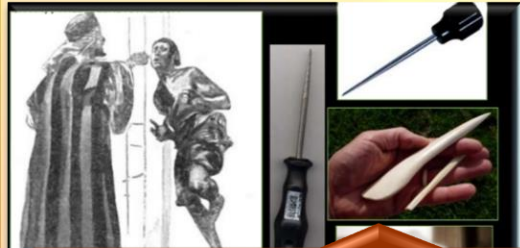
WHERE ARE IMMORTAL SOULS  
SUPPOSED TO GO?

# HELL

**"If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched." (Mark 9:43)**

**Hell is an eternal fire where sinners are punished (Mt. 25:41). Does that mean that sinners will be burning forever?**

**The word "eternal" or "forever" has several meanings in the Bible:**



**Eternity with a beginning and an end. For example, slavery (Ex. 21:6)**



**Eternity with a beginning but no end. For example, the eternal life of the redeemed (Jn. 3:36)**



**Eternity without a beginning or an end. Only God's (1Tim. 6:16; Gn. 21:33)**

**Where does the eternal fire fit in?**



# HELL

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**According to Malachi 4:1, hell (the eternal fire) will begin on a day that's coming, "burning like an oven." It will end when it "will leave them neither root nor branch."**

**Jude 7 introduces an example of this "eternal fire:" the fire that consumed Sodom and Gomorrah. That fire began when Lot was taken out of Sodom. It ended when all the cities had been fully consumed.**



**Hell is shown as a "lake of fire" in Revelation 20:11-15. This fire will begin on the day of the Final Judgment. It will end once every condemned sinner has died "the second death." No one will suffer forever, not even Satan: "And shall be no more forever." (Ezekiel 28:19)**

# PURGATORY

**"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment," (Hebrews 9:27)**

**Purgatory is described as a place or state between heaven and hell. There, souls are purifying their sins before entering heaven. Their living relatives or friends are supposed to intercede for them with penance and masses.**



**Several churches like the Catholic, the Coptic, and the Orthodox defend similar doctrines. However, this goes against the Bible:**

**The dead are not conscious souls (Eccl. 9:10)**

**No one can sanctify or transfer their holiness to other people (Ez. 18:20; Ps. 49:8)**

**There is only one Mediator between God and men: Jesus Christ (1Tim. 2:5)**

**After death there's only the judgment, there's no intermediate state (Heb. 9:27; Acts 17:31)**





# HEAVEN

**“Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.” (Revelation 13:6)**

**Who are dwelling in Heaven?**

**According to the Bible: God (1K. 8:30); the angels (Ps. 148:1-2); Enoch (Gn. 5:24); Elijah (2K. 2:11); Moses (Jud. 9); and those who were resurrected along with Jesus (Mt. 27:52-53).**

**There are no incorporeal souls living there. The human beings who ascended to Heaven have resurrected or transformed bodies.**

**Paul explained that we'll go to Heaven at the Second Coming with a physical body. The dead will be resurrected, and the living will be transformed (1Ths. 4:15-17; 1Co. 15:51-52).**

**If there were no resurrection, “then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (1Co. 15:18).**





E. G. W. (Counsels to Writers and Editors, cp. 4, p. 36)

**“Men entertain errors, when the truth is clearly marked out; and if they would but bring their doctrines to the word of God, and not read the word of God in the light of their doctrines, to prove their ideas right, they would not walk in darkness and blindness, or cherish error. Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions, and they mislead themselves and deceive others by their misinterpretations of God's word.”**

WHO CAN BE IMMORTAL?

# HOW TO GET ETERNAL LIFE

**“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”  
(Matthew 25:46)**



**We've learned that the eternal punishment has an end. Does eternal life have an end too?**

**God is the only truly immortal being (1Tim. 6:15-16). He's the only one who can give and sustain life (Ps. 36:9; Col. 1:17).**

**Therefore, all created beings have (and will have) a conditional immortality. Therefore, the question is: What must we do to get eternal life and never die?**

**The answer can be found in 1 John 5:11-12: “He who has the Son has life.” Since we will be close to Jesus forever after His Second Coming, we will never die.**





**“Not until the personal advent of Christ can His people receive the kingdom [...] Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. Therefore man in his present state cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs.”**

**E. G. W. (The Great Controversy, cp. 18, p. 322)**

**“Jesus is coming! But not to reign as a temporal prince. He will raise the righteous dead, change the living saints to a glorious immortality, and, with the saints, take the kingdom under the whole heaven. This kingdom will never end. Then those who have patiently waited for Jesus will be made like Him.”**

**E. G. W. (Lift Him Up, December 31)**