

Lesson 55 What is Eternal Fire?

Memory Verse: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Jude 1:7

There are verses in the Bible that talk about unquenchable fire, everlasting or eternal fire, and being tormented for ever and ever. That sounds like the hell most people think about. But how does the Bible use these phrases? Let's study and see.

1. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:15 that we should _____ to show ourselves _____ unto God a workman that needeth _____ to be _____, **rightly** dividing the _____ of _____." So let us look at what the Scriptures say about the unquenchable, everlasting, or eternal fire.

I. Unquenchable Fire

2. Mark 9:43 says "And if thy _____ offend thee, cut it _____: it is _____ for thee to enter into _____ maimed, than having two hands to go into _____, into the _____ that _____ shall be _____."

3. What does the word "quench" mean? *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* tells us it means "to extinguish or put out". So when a fire is unquenchable, it means no one can extinguish it or put it out. The fires that burned the Twin Towers in New York on 9-11-2001 were unquenchable. They could not put them out. Are they still burning? YES NO
Why did they stop burning? They ran out of things to B_____.

This is the same way they often have to fight a forest fire. It is too big and too powerful to quench it or to put it out. They can dump hundreds and thousands of gallons of water on it, but it still keeps burning. So they do something called "containing" the fire. They make an area around the fire with nothing to burn. Sometimes they use a bulldozer and make an area of dirt around the fire with nothing that will burn in it. What happens when the fire gets to that area? It has nothing to burn, so it goes out.

Sometimes they actually burn an area around the fire to make an area where the big fire will find nothing to burn when it gets there. When the fire burns up to that place, it finds nothing else to burn and it goes out. The fire was unquenchable, but it went out by itself when it ran out of things to burn.

Do you believe that the fires of "hell" that will burn up sin and sinners could be put out by anybody? YES NO They will be unquenchable.

Why will it go out? Because all sin and all sinners are burned _____. (Malachi 4:____)
There is N_____ left to burn.

4. John the Baptist uses this term in Matthew 3:12. He is speaking of Christ "whose _____ is in his hand, and he will thoroughly _____ his floor, and _____ his _____ into the _____; but he will _____ the _____ with _____ fire."

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Note: Here he is using the example of a farmer who grows wheat. When he harvests the wheat, he has to thresh it, or beat it, to get the grain out of the husk so that he can have the kernels of wheat to eat. Then when he has done that, he takes the wheat and stores it in his garner, or granary. But he has a heap of worthless chaff which he burns up. The chaff is dry and can burn very well, but will it keep burning for ever and ever? YES NO

It probably goes out pretty soon, because it doesn't take that long to burn dry chaff. Even the verse we just read says He will burn _____ the chaff. When something is burned up, it can't burn any more. It stops burning.

5. Let us look at an example in the Bible of fire that would not be quenched.

Jeremiah gives a prophecy in Jeremiah 17:27: "But if ye will _____ hearken unto me to _____ the _____ day, and not to bear a _____, even entering in at the _____ of Jerusalem on the _____ day; then will I kindle a _____ in the _____ thereof, and it shall _____ the _____ of Jerusalem, and it shall _____ be _____."

6. This prophecy was fulfilled. We can read about it in 2 Kings 25:9:

"And he _____ the house of the Lord, and the _____ house, and _____ the houses of Jerusalem, and every _____ man's house _____ he with _____." Is that fire still burning? YES NO

What happened to the fire? It went O _____. Why did it go out? There was N_____ left to burn. This fire was unquenchable, yet it went out when everything that could burn was burned _____.

This is what the lake of fire will be like. It will definitely be unquenchable, but it will go out when every speck of **sin** is burned up.

II. Everlasting or Eternal Fire

7. Matthew 18:8 is similar to the one we read in Mark 9:43 in #2 above. There the fire was called unquenchable, here it is called _____.

"Wherefore if thy _____ or thy _____ offend thee, cut them _____, and cast them _____ thee: it is better for thee to enter into _____ halt or maimed, rather than having two _____ or two feet to be cast into _____ fire."

That sounds like it would last forever. But in Mark 9:43 we already saw that the same fire was unquenchable and could go out when it finished burning everything up.

Is this talking about something different? YES NO

8. Does everlasting or eternal fire burn for ever and ever, throughout eternity? The Bible gives us an example of eternal fire.

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Look in Jude 1:7. "Even as _____ and _____, and the cities about them in _____ manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an _____, suffering the _____ of _____ fire."

Are Sodom and Gomorrah still burning today? YES NO
They are given for an example of the eternal fire that will burn up the wicked.

9. Let's see what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19:24-25 tells us:

"Then the Lord _____ upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah _____ and _____ from the _____ out of _____; And he _____ those cities, and _____ the plain, and _____ the _____ of the cities, and that which _____ upon the ground." Everything was burned.

In Luke 17:29 it tells us: "But the same _____ that Lot went _____ of Sodom it _____ fire and brimstone from heaven, and _____ them all."

They were all D_____. They were not kept alive and burning forever.

2 Peter 2:6 tells us how the fire ended: "And _____ the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into _____ condemned them with an _____, making them an _____ unto those that _____ should live _____." So the cities and all that was in them were turned into _____. This is an **E**_____

of what will happen to all the ungodly at the end when they are put into the lake of fire.

Once everything is burned up and destroyed, and turned into ashes, the fire goes out.

10. What does Jesus say to the wicked at the judgment? Matthew 25:41

"Then shall he say also unto them on the _____ hand, _____ from me, ye _____, into _____ fire, prepared for the _____ and his _____." Matthew 25:46 tells us what that means: "And _____ shall go

away into everlasting _____: but the righteous into life _____."

The P_____ is everlasting. What is this punishment? Romans 6:23

"For the wages [or punishment] of _____ is _____; but the _____ of God is _____ life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The life that the righteous receive is

E_____. The death that the wicked receive is also E_____.

11. 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9 tells us that Jesus will be revealed from heaven "In flaming

_____ taking vengeance on them that _____ not God, and that _____

not the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be _____ with

everlasting _____ from the _____ of the Lord, and from the

_____ of his power." The wicked who have chosen not to O_____ the

gospel of Jesus will be punished with everlasting D_____.

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They will be **destroyed**. They can't burn for ever and ever and still be destroyed, can they? _____

So we have learned that the unquenchable fire does go out when there is N_____
left to burn. And the eternal or everlasting fire also goes out when all sin and sinners are
D_____. There will be nothing left but A_____. The results will be
eternal.

III. Tormented For Ever?

12. In Revelation 14:9-11 we read the warning of the third angel: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a _____ voice, If any man _____ the beast and his image, and receive his _____ in his forehead, or in his _____, The same shall drink of the _____ of the _____ of God, which is _____ out without _____ into the _____ of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with _____ and _____ in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the _____ of their torment ascendeth up for _____ and _____: and they have no _____ day nor night, who worship the _____ and his _____, and whosoever receiveth the _____ of his name."

It says they will be tormented with fire and brimstone. This must take place in the lake of fire because Revelation 21:8 tells us the lake of fire burns with _____ and _____. Therefore, this must be the same fire and brimstone as the lake of fire. It also says that the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Will there be continual smoke throughout all eternity from this torment, never ever ending throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity? We will see other places where the Bible says "for ever" and what it means.

13. It also says about Satan in Revelation 20:10: "And the _____ that _____ them was _____ into the _____ of _____ and _____, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented _____ and _____ for _____ and _____."

This is the same lake of fire that those who worship the beast and his image and all the wicked are put into at the end.

Revelation 21:8 tells us this: "But the fearful, and _____, and the _____, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all _____, shall have their part in the _____ which burneth with _____ and _____: which is the _____."

This tells us clearly that the fire and brimstone which burns the wicked is the second _____. This is the kind of death spoken of in Romans 6:23 which is the wages of _____. It is the same fire as the unquenchable fire and the everlasting or eternal fire. When there is nothing left to burn, it goes out. The wicked and Satan have been turned to A_____ and they will **remain** D_____ for all eternity.

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14. Now let us look at some other texts that use the term "for ever".

First let us look in Exodus 21:6. This is talking about a Hebrew who had sold himself into slavery to another Hebrew because he was in a needy condition. The master could only keep him for 6 years, then he had to let him go free. But verse 5 tells us that "if the servant shall _____ say, I _____ my _____, my wife, and my children; I will _____ go out _____:" Then verse 6 tells us what would happen: "Then his _____ shall bring him unto the _____; he shall also bring him to the _____, or unto the door _____; and his _____ shall _____ his _____ through with an _____; and **he shall _____ him _____**." How long is forever in this case? Is it throughout eternity? No. It will be as long as he lives, the rest of his life, in other words, until he D_____.

15. Let's look at another verse that uses "for ever" where it is very clear that it does not mean throughout eternity. That is Jonah 2:6. Jonah rebelled against the word of God and tried to run away from God. But because of the storm that arose which pricked his guilty conscience, he told the sailors to throw him overboard into the sea. We know the story of how he was swallowed by a giant fish. Jonah 1:17 "Now the Lord had _____ a great _____ to _____ up Jonah. And Jonah was in the _____ of the fish _____ days and _____ nights." Jonah 2:1 says: "Then Jonah _____ unto the _____ his _____ out of the _____." He prayed down there in the belly of the fish! Part of what he said is found in verse 6: "I went _____ to the bottoms of the _____; the _____ with her bars was _____ me _____; yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God."

Was Jonah in the fish's belly for all eternity? YES NO

How long was he actually there? Matthew 12:40: _____ days and _____ nights.

It seemed to Jonah that he would be there for the rest of his life at least, I'm sure. There was no way out that he could see. But God had a way out. When Jonah prayed and surrendered himself to God, God answered him. Jonah 2:10 "And the Lord _____ unto the _____, and it _____ out Jonah upon the _____ land." So in this verse "for ever" only lasted _____ days and _____ nights.

16. In 1 Samuel 1:22 it is talking about when the child Samuel was born. Hannah did not go up to the feasts at the tabernacle until he was W_____. "But Hannah went not up; for she _____ unto her husband, I will _____ go up until the child be _____, and **then** I will _____ him, that he may appear before the _____, and **there** _____ **for** _____."

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When she brought Samuel to Eli, she said to Eli, "For this _____ I _____; and the Lord hath _____ me my petition which I _____ of him: Therefore also I have _____ him to the Lord; as _____ as he _____ he shall be _____ to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there." 1 Samuel 1:27,28

Hannah told Elkanah, her husband, that she would bring Samuel to the tabernacle to stay there for _____. But she told Eli that he would stay as _____ as he _____. That is for all of his life. This is what the "for ever" meant. And this is the meaning of "for ever" when it talks about the torment of the wicked. It will last only as long as they live.

We already learned that they will be burned _____.

We learned that they will be turned into _____.

We learned that they would suffer the second _____.

This is the end of the wicked.

Then there will be no more sin in the universe. We will not need to watch the wicked burn for all eternity in order to keep us from sinning again. All sin will have been burned out of the hearts of the righteous. They are totally loyal to Jesus and have no desire whatsoever to indulge selfishness and pride, which are the roots of all our sins. So ask Jesus NOW to burn out all **selfishness** and **pride** from YOUR heart. Ask Him to show you how YOU manifest these two deadly traits of character. Then surrender all to Him so that YOUR heart can become totally **unselfish** and **humble**.

17. Jesus suffered the second death for us on the cross. It was a terrible thing. We cannot imagine the horror of that death. Jesus endured the awful sense of the separation from God. This was the cup that He had prayed about in Gethsemane "Saying, Father, if thou be _____, remove this _____ from me: nevertheless not _____ will, but _____, be done." Luke 22:42 "And he said, _____, Father, _____ things are possible unto thee; take _____ this _____ from me: nevertheless _____ what _____ will, but what _____ wilt." Mark 14:36 "He went away again the _____ time, and _____, saying, O my Father, if this _____ may not _____ away from me, _____ I _____ it, thy will be _____." Matt. 26:42 "And being in an _____ he prayed more _____: and his _____ was as it were great _____ of _____ falling down to the ground." Luke 22:44

Note: "Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid **the iniquity of us all**. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. **The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart**. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, **He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the**

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Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt." DA 753.1

"Satan with his fierce temptations **wrung the heart of Jesus**. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. **He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal**. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that **made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.**" DA 753.2

18. On the cross He drained the cup. "And about the ninth hour Jesus _____ with a _____ voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My _____, my _____, why hast thou _____ me?" Matthew 27:46

Note: "At the ninth hour the darkness lifted from the people, but still enveloped the Saviour. It was a **symbol of the agony and horror that weighed upon His heart**. No eye could pierce the gloom that surrounded the cross, and none could penetrate the **deeper gloom that enshrouded the suffering soul of Christ**. The angry lightnings seemed to be hurled at Him as He hung upon the cross. Then 'Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' As the outer gloom settled about the Saviour, many voices exclaimed: The vengeance of heaven is upon Him. The bolts of God's wrath are hurled at Him, because He claimed to be the Son of God. Many who believed on Him heard His despairing cry. Hope left them. If God had forsaken Jesus, in what could His followers trust?" DA 754.3

"The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. **And all that He endured – the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father's face – speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life, – offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, **and this from love to thee**. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself." DA 755.1**

"Suddenly the gloom lifted from the cross, and **in clear, trumpetlike tones, that seemed to resound throughout creation, Jesus cried, 'It is finished.'** 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' A light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like the sun. He then bowed His head upon His breast, and died." DA 756.2

"Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him. He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. **By faith** He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. **And as in submission He committed Himself to God**, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. **By faith, Christ was victor.**" DA 756.3

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19. The wicked will feel this awful agony of separation from God, the Source of all life and blessing. This will be much worse than the physical suffering which they will endure. The second death, that the wicked will die in the lake of fire, includes this separation from God. It includes the horror of a death that is eternal. We cannot fathom it now, but **we CAN avoid ever suffering this death** because Jesus has already suffered it for us. **If** we accept HIS WAY of salvation and allow Him to come in and change us into His image, He has something far more wonderful prepared for us than we can imagine now.

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is _____, Eye hath not _____, nor ear _____, neither have _____ into the _____ of man, the things which _____ hath _____ for them that _____ him."

20. Where you will spend eternity is either too wonderful to imagine, or it is too horrible for us to fathom. It will depend on the choices you make NOW. Therefore, choose Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and King in your life. In all the situations of your life, say with Jesus, "nevertheless not _____ will, but _____, be _____". Luke 22:42 This is how you, too, can be an overcomer, or a victor, in the conflict with sin! And Jesus promises: "He that _____ shall inherit _____ things; and I will be his _____, and he shall be my _____." Revelation 21:7

21. Revelation 21:1 tells us: "I saw a _____ heaven and a _____ earth: for the first _____ and the first _____ were passed _____."

Note: "The fire that **consumes the wicked** purifies the earth. **Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.** GC 674.1

"One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear **the marks of His crucifixion**. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are **the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought**. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: 'He had **bright beams** coming out of His side: and there was the **hiding of His power**.' Habakkuk 3:4, margin. That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God – **there is the Saviour's glory**, there 'the hiding of His power'. 'Mighty to save', through the sacrifice of redemption, **He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God's mercy**. And the tokens of His humiliation are **His highest honor**; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will **show forth His praise and declare His power**." GC 674.2