

The Sure Word Bible Studies
Lesson 11

The Second Death

As we continue to study the subject of the punishment of the wicked, we need to keep these two verses in mind:

Job 4:17 *“Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?”* and **Isaiah 55:8** *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,”* declares the LORD.”

The teaching of the eternal torments of hell has turned more people against God than any other lie of Satan! Many people would rather be an atheist than to believe in a God who will burn people for eternity. Unfortunately, most Christians believe this lie, but God’s desire is that our relationship with Him comes from a heart of understanding and love, not superstition, ignorance, and fear.

Luke 9:52–56 *“And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? **But he turned, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.**”*

Jesus wants the disciples to understand that this “spirit” or this attitude that would burn sinners alive is not from God.

I John 4:16–18 *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love*

casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

Fear will produce a rebellious nature. Many young people are anxious to leave home because their parents rule by fear of punishment rather than by patient teaching and training.

Punishment serves one of two purposes:

1) Punishment is used as a means of retaliation or “justice.”

In a sense, retaliation has come to be the common meaning of justice today. It is giving a person what society feels they deserve for misdeeds or violation of the law. We have laws against cruel and unusual punishment of even the worst of criminals. We have laws against a parent exerting excessive punishment on children. Yet some people believe our loving Heavenly Father will torture His disobedient children for eternity for a brief lifetime of sin. That is not justice! And no matter how one may sugarcoat it – whether for eternity or a few minutes - inflicting pain and suffering upon another, not to rehabilitate, but for no other purpose than “*to make them pay,*” or retaliate for their past actions is not justice, but torture!

2) Punishment is used as a tool in discipline or training.

A loving parent does not punish a child to “bring him to justice” – or to “give him what he deserves,” but when needed the loving parent punishes the child to teach them that certain types of conduct will result in unpleasant consequences. The Bible addresses this clearly in the following -

Hebrews 12:5-11: *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and*

live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

The “chastening,” (from a Greek word which means “training, discipline”) spoken of in this text will produce “*the peaceable fruits of righteousness*” – that is, right behavior through right character.

Remember what we read earlier, God is not like us, His ways are higher than ours. If God subjects the wicked to painful suffering after the final judgment, aware that they are hardened in their sinful life style and will not change, what purpose could it serve other than saying to the rest of the universe “If you reject and disobey Me this is what will happen to you!” Then the motive for obeying and loving God is the fear of what He will do to us if we don’t stay in line.

Which of these two methods we believe God uses depends upon our understanding of God’s character.

But what about the “wrath of God?” This is a question that should be asked and we should let the Bible interpret itself to give us the correct answer.

Deuteronomy 31:16-18 *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, **and will forsake me**, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, **and I will forsake them**, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day. **Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?”***

II Chronicles 15:2 *“And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; **but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.**”*

II Chronicles 29:8-10 *“Wherefore the **wrath of the LORD** was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble,*

to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce **wrath** may turn away from us.”

2 Chronicles 30:7 “And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, **who therefore gave them up** to desolation, as ye see.”

Psalms 81:11-12 “But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. **So I gave them up** unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.”

Romans 1:18-28 “For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also **gave them up** to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God **gave them up** unto vile affections: And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over** to a reprobate mind.”

According to the Bible, God does not inflict pain and torture on the unrepentant sinner, but rather He “gives them up” to suffer the consequences of their choices. “You reap what you sow.” God in His “wrath” gives the determined sinner up to go his or her own way. God is love and this is the only way love can respond to rejection! We find more evidence of this truth in the following verses:

Psalms 9:15-16 “The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: **the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.**”

Psalm 34:21 *“Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.”*

Proverbs 11:5 *“The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: **but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.**”*

Ezekiel 22:29 *“The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.”* **Verse 31** *“Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: **their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.**”*

In these texts it is clear that God allows the wicked to suffer the consequences of their own actions. They suffer because of what they are – not because God is inflicting some kind of pain or torture on them. If God inflicts pain and torture on those who reject Him – we have reason to fear Him. On the other hand, if we suffer and die as a natural consequence of going our own way ignoring God’s warnings about sin, understanding that sin is like a poison within us that kills, we have no reason to fear God, but every reason to fear sin! We have every reason to cling to God - for He is our only help! Only He has the antidote for the poison of sin!

Make no mistake, there will be torment for the unrepentant sinner - but it will not be the physical pain of literal fire. The suffering of the wicked will be the heart wrenching emotional pain of despair, terror, heartbreak and hopelessness when they realize the truth of their condition.

Let’s go to the book of Revelation and take a closer look at the Great White Judgment scene to better understand the final fate of the wicked. Begin by reading verses 7 - 10 which portrays the period at the end of the one thousand year millennium.

Revelation 20:7–10 *“And when the thousand years are expired (ended), Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 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. 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. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

This is a summary statement of what John saw in vision. In the following verses he gives us more detail of what happened before the fire came down and devoured those outside the city.

Revelation 20:11 – 15 *“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. 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. 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. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

As hardened sinners gather themselves outside the “*beloved city*,” the “*The Great White Throne Judgment*” takes place. Picture this scene in your mind. All of mankind who have ever lived on earth is alive at the same time and place. All the righteous will be inside the city – all the wicked (who have now been resurrected) will be outside the city. The Bible says we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10). This is the time it is speaking of. Some will be inside the city and some outside, but all will be there. Christ described the despair of the lost as they find themselves outside those walls.

Luke 13:28 *“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 cast out.”*

It is at this time the terrible realization that the final consequence of sin is to be visited upon them! Their torment will be great emotional pain. The heart wrenching anguish of guilt, self-condemnation, fear, and hopeless despair.

For those who find themselves outside the walls of the “*beloved city*,” the severity of suffering will correspond with the measure of guilt – because the measure of guilt depends on the amount of

knowledge. The more knowledge they willingly reject, the more guilt and condemnation they will experience.

The knowledge they have rejected is the knowledge of God as seen in Christ. But the reality of that will be clearly shown to them at the Great White Throne Judgment. The word "*name*" in the New Testament Greek is a word for character. When Christ is seen on the Great White Throne, His gracious name or character will be revealed to all present. As they see this all will bow in acknowledgement of the truth.

Philippians 2:10, 11 *"That at the **name** (character) of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

The wicked will experience the reality of their lost and hopeless condition. As they witness the glory of God as revealed in Christ at the final judgment they will perish. It is not because God will lash out at them in anger that hardened sinners can't see God and live, but because they cannot bear the reality of what they are, compared to what Jesus is! It's not a matter of who is "*forgiven*" but who is "*changed*." It is a matter of who has a new heart and right spirit - Only those can live in the consuming fire of God's literal presence!

Emotional pain can cause great suffering and ultimately death. The following report is evidence of this fact.

"During the January 17, 1994, Northridge/Los Angeles earth-quake, over one hundred Californians literally died of fright. This was the conclusion of Robert Kloner, cardiologist at Good Samaritan hospital in Los Angeles. Apparently a terrorized brain can trigger the release of a mix of chemicals so potent it can cause the heart to contract - and never relax again." [Religion News Today.Com](#)

- This condition is known as the "broken heart syndrome." Medical scientists have discovered that extreme stress can cause the body to secrete excessive amounts of adrenalin, which can cause the heart to stop beating. This is what most of those outside the Holy City on that day will experience.

Isaiah speaks of this - **Isaiah 33:10 – 13** “*Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.* (At the Great White Throne judgment) *Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath (Hebrew “ruwach” which also means spirit or character), as fire, shall devour you. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.”*”

Now note the question asked in verse 14 -

*“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. **Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”***”

What or who is the “devouring fire”? According to the Bible, it is God **Hebrews 12:29** says “**Our God is a consuming fire.**” In other words, the question is - Who can live in the literal presence of Almighty God?

Now note the answer in verse 15 -

*“**He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.**”*

Because the righteous have been changed, and have a new heart and a right spirit, they can now live in His presence; and they will rejoice as they “*see the King in His beauty*” (verse 17).

For the clearest evidence of how the sinner dies, we must go to the cross. Jesus died the death of the sinner. How did Jesus die? What caused His suffering and death? We will study this in detail in the next lesson.

As the wicked die, the redeemed will stand at the walls of the city and watch. How will you feel as you see those people suffer and die the awful second death? When we look back into the Father’s face as His lost children die – what will we see? A vengeful, vindictive God crying out “Now at last My justice is satisfied!” **or** a loving Father crying for His lost children?

God will by no means clear the guilty - it would do no good - He must give them up – they are incurable. At the last, God will fully unveil His “*power and glory*” and “*fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them.*” The fire that consumes the already dead bodies of the wicked will purify the earth.

II Peter 3:10 - 13 *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”*

This will be the end of sin and sinners! The universe will be returned to the state it was before sin entered – freedom and trust and unselfish love will abound throughout. When this is all over the redeemed will witness God’s mighty power as He creates a “*new heaven and new earth.*”

Revelation 21:1-5

“And I saw a new heavens and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

No more sorrow, no more pain, no more crying - How can this statement be true if there’s a place somewhere where the wicked are suffering in agony and pain as they burn for eternity?

What a glorious inheritance we have reserved in heaven for us!

I Peter 1:3-5 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”*

“Reserved in heaven for you”, put your name there. God created no other one like you; you are an original! God will miss you if you are not there!

Jesus took your place on the cross – no one can take your place there! There will be an eternal void in His heart for all those who reject His gracious love. Be there! Make your reservations today!

Response Questions:

1. Is it clear to you that the wicked will be
 - (1) Destroyed – forever
 - (2) On the earth
 - (3) At the end of the 1000 yearsYes ___ No ___

2. Is it clear to you that the wicked are dead when the fire comes down from heaven and “devours” them? Yes ___ No ___

3. Is it clear to you that *“The wages of sin is death – but the gift of God is eternal life?”* Yes ___ No ___