

A row of lit candles in a dark, textured setting, with the text "HELL YES...OR HELL NO" and "WEEK 2" overlaid.

# HELL YES...OR HELL NO

WEEK 2

Jeff Toner & Scott Blore

# HELL OF A DISCLAIMER:

**We are all Christian brothers and sisters and our conversations will be centered on biblical texts. No one should claim to “know” all of the answers. Our discussion presupposes that Hell is real. We may not always agree but we strive to respect each others points of view**

# GIVE 'EM HELL:

- Eternal Torment

- Largely held “Traditional” view of eternal suffering
- **Matthew 25:46 (NRSV)**<sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- Terminal Punishment

- Some passages discuss Hell in terms of death and destruction, suggesting a finality
- **Matthew 10:28 (NRSV)**<sup>28</sup> Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.<sup>[a]</sup>

- a: Gehenna

# GIVE 'EM HELL:

- Universalist View

- Still other passages suggest that everyone will be reconciled with God in the end
- **Romans 5:18 (NRSV)** <sup>18</sup> Therefore just as one man's trespass (Adam) led to condemnation for all, so one man's (Jesus') act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all

- Hell and Purgatory

- A view largely rejected by Protestants. Yet, the bible does speak of a postmortem cleansing of the soul
- **1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (NRSV)** <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— <sup>13</sup> the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. <sup>14</sup> If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

# WHAT THE HELL:

- ~~Week 1~~

- ~~– Introduction~~

- ~~– Eternal Damnation~~

- Week 2

- Eternal Damnation

- Terminal Punishment

- Week 3

- Terminal Punishment

- A Universalist View

- Week 4

- A Universalist View

- Hell and Purgatory

- Summary

# WEEK 1 QUESTIONS: HELL IF I KNOW...

- Does the Bible teach that Jesus actually went to hell?
  - Sheol was widely understood as the place that the soul goes to await resurrection (paradise)
  - Jesus, a Jew and his apostles would certainly have expected him to go to Sheol after his death
  - Some believe that Jesus had to actually go to Sheol, in order to prove resurrection and NOT resuscitation
  - May help explain “you will be in paradise with me”
  - Ephesians 4:8-10, 1 Peter 3:18-21
- What is the difference between Hebrews and Jews
  - Abraham is referred to as “the Hebrew”. The nation of the descendants of Abraham (Isaac and Joseph)
  - Joseph was renamed Israel and his descendants make up the 12 tribes of Israel (Israelites)
  - The tribes separated: 10 were “northern” and 2 “southern”.
  - Southern tribes known as Judah. After captivity and the re-unification of the tribes, they became known as Jews

# HOT AS HELL: ETERNAL FIRE

- All sins are against God, who is infinite, so punishment must be infinite
- Final Separation
  - Occur at final judgement
  - Irrevocable separation of wicked from the righteous and from God's mercy
- Unending Experience
  - Never ending conscious torment
- Just Retribution
  - A punitive judgement meant to magnify the justice of God

# HOT AS HELL: ETERNAL TORMENT

- Scripture References
  - **Isaiah 66:22-24**
  - Daniel 12:2-3
  - Matthew 18:6-9
  - **Matthew 25:31-46**
  - **Mark 9:42-48**
  - 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10
  - Jude 7, 13
  - **Revelation 14:9-11**
  - **Revelation 20:10, 14-15**

## Isaiah 66:22-24 (NRSV)

<sup>22</sup> For as the new heavens and the new earth,  
which I will make,  
shall **remain** before me, says the LORD;  
so shall your descendants and your name remain.

<sup>23</sup> From new moon to new moon,  
and from sabbath to sabbath,  
all flesh shall come to worship before me,  
says the LORD.

<sup>24</sup> And they shall go out and look at the **dead bodies of the people who have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.**

## **Matthew 25:31-46 (NRSV) The Judgment of the Nations**

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he **will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,** <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food... <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,<sup>[a]</sup> you did it to me.’ <sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food...<sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, **‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’** <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

## Mark 9:42-48 (NRSV) Temptations to Sin

<sup>42</sup> “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me,<sup>[a]</sup> it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; **it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell,<sup>[b]</sup> to the unquenchable fire.<sup>[c]</sup>** <sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell.<sup>[d][e]</sup> <sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be **thrown into hell,<sup>[f]</sup>** <sup>48</sup> **where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.**

## **Revelation 14:9-11 (NRSV)**

<sup>9</sup> Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, “Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, <sup>10</sup> they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

## **Revelation 20:10 (NRSV)**

<sup>10</sup> And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

## **Revelation 20:14-15 (NRSV)**

<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; <sup>15</sup> and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

# HOTTER THAN HELL: ETERNAL TORMENT

- Thoughts?
  - Final Separation
  - Never Ending
  - Just Retribution

# HELL NO: THE PUSH BACK

- Terminal Rebuttal
  - Largely deductive reasoning
  - No where in the bible does it say that sin against God deserves infinite punishment
  - Paints a picture of God pursuing his own glory. Missing God's love
    - **John 3:16, Hebrews 12:2**
  - Inferences to the Eternal: Worm that does not die, Fire that is not quenched
  - Scripture also suggests that although God's wrath is severe, is not eternal

# HELL NO: THE PUSHBACK

- Universalist Rebuttal
  - Focusing on these 10 passages ignores others that may contradict them.
  - Some verses speak to eternal hell, some to terminal, and some universal. When forming an opinion on anything from the Bible, it should take into account the entirety of the Bible
  - Aonios: translated “eternal” often refers to pertaining to an age. Sodom did not burn forever.
  - Does God rejoice in the death of sinners?
  - How can a saint be fully happy watching a loved one burn in hell forever?
  - Finite creatures are not capable of committing a sin that deserves infinite suffering

# HELL NO: THE PUSHBACK

- Purgatory Rebuttal

- Doesn't necessarily disagree with eternal hell
- Can you reconcile God's love with Eternal Hell?
- Does God love all sinners? Does he get joy in their suffering?
- What of those that are not given the opportunity to hear the gospel and repent in this life? Human emotion, in the likeness of God can provide insight
- Hell is free chosen by sinners that have been given every opportunity to repent but continue to refuse God's grace

# TO HELL AND BACK...TO HELL: TERMINAL PUNISHMENT

- Scripture References
  - **Romans 6**
  - **Hebrews 6:1-2**
  - **Psalm 1**
  - **Psalm 37**
  - **2 Peter 2:1-10**
  - **Revelation 20:7-15**
  - **John 3:16**
  - **1 Cor. 15:50-54**

# TERMINAL PUNISHMENT

- Hell (and why its good)
  - A Destination: by rejecting God (Destruction)
  - Fire: purifies and destroys
  - A dump: Gehenna. A place where those go who reject God
- Terminal: works within the “goodness” of God
  - Our choice, with real consequences
  - Hell itself is eternal but serves to make right, God’s Justice, and eliminate evil
  - Our choice has eternal consequences

# TERMINAL PUNISHMENT

- Destruction and Death
  - Generally refers to “termination”
  - Disappearance of the thing in question
  - Psalm and Proverbs are replete with examples of this use of death and destruction
  - Sodom and Gomorrah: Smoke rose forever but it was wiped out
  - In Revelations: audience would have understood the symbolic language

# TERMINAL PUNISHMENT

- Finite Punishment and the Cross
  - Suffering and death = the result of sin **Romans 6:23**
  - Payment for sin
  - Jesus full atoned for sin and was resurrected to new life
  - Someone pays for the sin: Us or Jesus
- The goodness of God
  - No one is “let off”
  - Hell is horrible
  - Banishment from God is eternal

## **Romans 6: 20-23**

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Hebrews 6:1-2 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### The Peril of Falling Away

6 Therefore let us go on toward perfection,<sup>[a]</sup> leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation: repentance from dead works and faith toward God,  
2 instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

## **Psalm 1 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

### **Psalm 1**

#### **The Two Ways**

<sup>1</sup> Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;<sup>2</sup> but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. <sup>3</sup> They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. <sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; <sup>6</sup> for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

## **Psalm 37 NRSV**

...But the wicked perish,  
and the enemies of the LORD are like  
the glory of the pastures;  
they vanish—like smoke they vanish  
away...

## **2 Peter 2:1-10 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

### **False Prophets and Their Punishment**

2 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. <sup>2</sup> Even so, many will follow their licentious ways, and because of these teachers<sup>[a]</sup> the way of truth will be maligned. <sup>3</sup> And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced against them long ago, has not been idle, and their destruction is not asleep...

## Revelation 20:7-15 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### Satan's Doom

<sup>7</sup> When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison  
<sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth,  
Gog and Magog, in order to gather them for battle; they are as numerous  
as the sands of the sea. <sup>9</sup> They marched up over the breadth of the earth  
and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came  
down from heaven<sup>[a]</sup> and consumed them. <sup>10</sup> And the devil who had  
deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast  
and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night  
forever and ever....

**John 3:16 New Revised Standard Version  
(NRSV)**

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

## **1 Corinthians 15:50-54 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<sup>50</sup> What I am saying, brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die,<sup>[b]</sup> but we will all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

<sup>54</sup> When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

# BACK THE HELL UP....

- Eternal Rebuttal
  - God's wrath and love at not at odds with each other
  - Hell as fire to "cleanse" and a dump "for sinners" falls short
  - Palatability of Terminal doesn't make it true
  - Finite Sin doesn't imply finite punishment

# BACK THE HELL UP...

- Universalist Rebuttal

- If God can deliver all people without violating their freedom but sends them to hell, does God love sinners?
- If God cannot deliver all people without violating freedom, then God is forever thwarted, is that likely ?
  - So either God is love or God completely wins but not both
  - Like winning an election by killing all that voted against you
- Death isn't necessarily interchangeable with non-existence or vanishing
- Termination is often followed by restoration (Sodom and Gomorrah) **Ezekiel 16:50-59**

# BACK THE HELL UP...

- Purgatory Rebuttal

- Traditional interpretations should be given benefit of the doubt unless you can show false beyond reasonable doubt

- More fitting punishment

- Human Freedom

- Final destruction doesn't allow for resurrection