

Endless Misery the Portion of All Mankind

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Annihilation the Portion of All Mankind (Job 3:11, 13-17, 19-22; Eccl. 3:19-20; 9:5, 10).

Endless Misery the Portion of All Mankind (Dan. 12:2; Mt. 25:46; Rev. 20:10, 15; 14:11).

In an effort to discredit Almighty God, some people use dramatic words, or phrases, such as “annihilation” and “endless misery” as embellishments in their attempt to create apparent contradictions in scripture, when none exist. In order to counter these accusations, this study will examine whether God intends to annihilate mankind or assign them to endless misery. If neither of these claims is true, there is no contradiction between any of the scriptures in the heading of this document.

First, it is important to define what “annihilation” means before examining the scriptures that supposedly support this position,

To destroy completely; wipe out; reduce to nonexistence; utter destruction. To overwhelm completely; render helpless or ineffective. In theology, the destruction of the soul at the death of the body (Reader's Digest Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary – Vol. 1; published by Houghton Mifflin Company of Boston; 1987).

If it was ever God's intent to annihilate mankind or subject them to endless misery, why did He inspire the following texts?

For a mere moment I (Almighty God) have forsaken you (because of man's sins; 1Jn. 3:4), but with great mercies I will (at a future date) gather you. ⁸With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment (cf. Isa. 1:18-20; 59:2); but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer (Isa. 54:7-8; Ed. notes in parentheses; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Although God eventually punishes sinful behavior, His intent is always to rehabilitate those He is correcting (Isa. 1:18-20; cf. 2Pet. 3:9). Therefore, He will never completely annihilate mankind or this earth,

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease (Gen. 8:22).

With this background the scriptures that some use, in their attempt to create a contradiction in God's word, will be examined. The context of the first scripture is dealing with Job's anguish following the death of his children, the loss of his possessions, and the sickness that had overtaken him,

Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish (expire) when I came from the womb? (Job 3:11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

For now I would have lain still and been quiet, I would have been asleep; then I would have been at rest ¹⁴with kings and counselors of the earth, who built ruins for themselves, ¹⁵or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver; ¹⁶or why was I not hidden like a stillborn child, like infants who never saw light? ¹⁷There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest (Job 3:13-17).

The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master. ²⁰Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, ²¹who long (wait) for death, but it does not come, and search for it more than hidden treasures; ²²who rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave? (Job 3:19-22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because Job was suffering both physically and emotionally, the verses above were an expression of how he felt. In his current state, he concluded that death would be a welcome release. However, none of these same texts are commenting on the subject of annihilation. The next section of scripture is also dealing with the subject of dying and has nothing to do with annihilation either,

For what happens to the sons of men also happens to beasts (see study: Every Beast of the Field); one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over beasts, for all is vanity. ²⁰All go to one place: all are from the dust (see study: Did God Create Adam from the Dust?), and all return to dust (Eccl. 3:19-20; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The next two scriptures, supposedly dealing with annihilation, are actually commenting on what occurs when someone dies,

For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing (they are no longer conscious of anything until they are resurrected either at Christ's return, or at the end of Christ's millennial rule on earth; i.e. the second resurrection; cf. Rev. 20:4-6), and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is (eventually) forgotten (Eccl. 9:5; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going (Eccl. 9:10).

So, using the word "annihilation" in juxtaposition to "endless misery" is a deceptive ploy that some use in their attempt to create a supposed contradiction in scripture. However, as God does not intend to annihilate mankind or the earth, it is a ruse. Next, the scriptures used to claim that God wants mankind in "endless misery" will be examined,

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake (at a resurrection from the dead), some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt (abhorrence) (Dan. 12:2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Daniel was inspired to write about a future resurrection when mankind is no longer deceived by the Adversary. At this point in time, they will have an opportunity to repent and be restored in their relationship with God. In order to repent, an individual must first recognize the shame of their previous sins. If they actively promoted, or taught, a sinful way of living to others during their previous lifetime, Christ pointed out that their past conduct would still carry a stigma, despite the fact that God would forgive them upon repentance. However, this shame and everlasting abhorrence that Daniel referred to

would apply primarily to Satan and the fallen host who deceived and manipulated mankind by teaching lies (Jn.8:44; Rev. 12:9),

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:19; emphasis added).

In the next scripture, Christ used figurative language to describe activities associated with a resurrection of the dead. Those described as “going away” are the ones who remain dead until after Christ’s millennial reign on earth is completed. Therefore, their punishment continues, in a figurative sense only, until the second resurrection. At this point, they will be resurrected and given an opportunity to repent, and begin living in accordance with God’s law and commandments (cf. Eze. 37:5-14),

And these (who refused to obey God’s word during their lifetime) will **go away** (SGD 565 – go away from the place, or person, from whom one departs) into *everlasting* (SGD 166 – saving purpose of God adopted from eternity; cf. Rev. 14:6) *punishment* (SGD 2851 – corrective punishment with the goal of rehabilitation), **but the righteous into eternal life** (Mt. 25:46; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The key to correctly understanding the scripture above is the context of the 25th chapter of Matthew, which is dealing with Christ’s return. Those who chose to obey God’s law and commandments during their lifetime will inherit everlasting life as soon as Christ takes up his position as King of kings and Lord of lords. However, the balance of mankind will remain dead until the second resurrection to judgment (Rev. 20:4-6). The latter are the ones who figuratively “go away” and wait for their judgment and final opportunity to repent (cf. 2Pet. 3:9).

It is very important to note that Almighty God’s plan, to rehabilitate and reconcile sinners to Himself, was established before mankind was created. This proves that His motive to provide an opportunity for repentance has always been uppermost in His mind. Christ’s willingness to offer himself as a sacrifice for sinners, long before his birth as a human being, was central to this plan,

And all who dwell on the earth will worship him (Satan’s instrument), whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of **the Lamb** (symbol representing Christ) **slain from the foundation of the world** (Rev. 13:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So, Matthew 25:46 is not describing “endless misery” for mankind. Instead, God’s plan is meant to provide endless happiness for mankind, but there are conditions and the majority of mankind has rejected those since the time of Adam and Eve,

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Prov. 14:12; cf. 16:25).

Just as figurative language was used by Christ in Matthew 25:46 to describe his return to rule this earth as well as the sequence of the first and second resurrection, most of the book of Revelation describes future events in figurative terms. With this principle in mind, the next scripture that supposedly proves “the portion of mankind is endless misery” will be examined.

Babylon is pictured as falling and it symbolizes the entire system of Satan and the fallen host (see study: *Babylon Has Fallen!*). Therefore any judgment associated with it, does not involve mankind at all,

And the smoke of their (the beast and his followers) torment (*SGD 929* – mental anguish associated with pending, or actual, judgment - cf. Mt. 8:29) ascends forever (*SGD 165* – as a perpetual memorial of their sin) and they have no rest day or night (unless they repent of sin), who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name (Rev. 14:11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Satan and the fallen host have the freedom to choose God's way of life or reject it. Because they continue to make wrong choices, those against God's way, they can never be truly happy, no matter how hard they try to convince themselves otherwise. Repentance of sin is their only hope of living forever in harmony and happiness (see study: *Azazel and The Angel*). When correctly translated, Revelation 20:10 shows that Satan and the fallen host have been unhappy since they rebelled against Almighty God,

And the devil, who deceived them (cf. Rev. 12:9), was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were cast (no verb "are" in the original Greek). And they were tormented (cf. Mt. 8:29) day and night *forever and ever* (*SHD 165* – since the world began; cf. Lk. 1:70; Ac. 3:21) – from the beginning of the world (cf. Ac. 15:18) (Rev. 20:10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Unfortunately, most Bible translations render Revelation 20:10 in a future tense when it was meant to be a commentary on the miserable mindset of Satan and the fallen host since they chose to reject their heavenly Father, which could be millions of years ago. They fear their judgment just as every human being fears death. The main difference is that evil spirit-beings have existed with this fear for a much longer time.

As the Apostle Paul stated, Satan will eventually become a "flesh and blood" man (cf. Isa. 14:15-17) and according to another scripture, he will die by fire. However, this does not preclude him from the second resurrection and his final opportunity to repent of sin (cf. 2Pet. 3:9),

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly... (Rom. 16:20a).

You shall trample **the wicked**, for **they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet** on the day that I (God) do this, says the Lord of hosts (Mal. 4:3; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The final scripture, that some claim proves that mankind is meant to live in endless misery, actually proves the opposite. Instead of having to live forever in misery, those who may choose to reject Almighty God's law and commandments will be put out of their misery. Hopefully this does not occur. However, as God does not force anyone to obey His word, the possibility exists that some will insist on ignoring what He says to their ultimate and final peril,

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was (will be) cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In conclusion, it is not the portion of all mankind to be annihilated or to live in endless misery. However, those who chose to live contrary to God's law and commandments can never attain true and lasting happiness. Therefore, both annihilation (cf. Rev. 20:15) and endless misery is a choice that every individual has control over. God never predisposed anyone to either of these conditions. Instead, He has made everlasting happiness available for every sinner who repents, and chooses willingly to trust Him and obey His every word (Mt. 4:4).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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