

Heaven, Hell, Sleep, Awake, Eternal Destruction, Second Death

(159 passages)

The modern Christian understanding of this subject simply doesn't make sense. We go to heaven and live in splendor, some for thousands of years, others for a short time, but then leave their mansions and come back to earth to live in the dirt again. Many modern Christians have strong objection to perpetual punishment in hell, because they think God is bound by certain rules of morality. They forget God creates morality and God has the right to have a double standard. One for His creation and a different one for Himself, if He chooses.

I don't question God's righteousness. He could create sentient beings who can feel pain and create them for no other purpose than to torture them for billions of years. He could make their first year of existence pure ecstasy. Everything goes well for them. They never feel a moment of pain or frustration or ill of any kind. They could fully and completely learn what happiness and tranquility is. Then for no reason plunge them into an eternity of fully aware torture. Maybe that was the reason for their creation, to please God in that way. This really is God's prerogative.

There is an element of this masochism in scripture. Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" Daniel: Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah tell the Neo Babylonian king, God might save them from the fiery furnace, but probably not. It doesn't matter to them. Acts: Peter and John rejoice to have been beaten. Christ demands "Give up father and mother and your life for me" Even the love song of Solomon contains this masochistic theme. Twice it records. "The one I love retreated and I followed. He led me to a beating. I love my dearest one." Psalms 116: "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." These are all consistently masochistic thoughts.

The idea of abject submission is rejected by "Christians." Many question God's willingness to cause pain. I don't. God's entire creation is His and His alone to do with as He pleases. We are very fortunate that God is merciful and generous. He doesn't have to be so. Moses tells us that God never punishes as much as the transgression really deserves. It is also interesting to see the difference between what God asks of men and what He asks of women. God gave women a special blessing He did not give men. Of men He asks to give their lives. Of women only to submit to a school boy spanking in private. What a difference!

The scriptural record God left for us contains what modern Christians see as contradictions. Saints are described as sleeping, but Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Jonah and Lazarus are described literally speaking to others after they are dead. They just discard these contradictions. Please read over 200 scriptures describing

- 1) The Dead Sleeping
- 2) The Dead Speaking
- 3) Eternal, Everlasting Destruction
- 4) The Second Death
- 5) Miscellaneous descriptions of the dead

Read over 200 scriptures and come to your own conclusion. At the end I give a narrative that is consistent with all of these passages where none of the passages need any interpretation. They are just read with their plain meaning and the narrative does not contradict one of them. I did not arrive at this narrative myself. I found it. And when I found it, I thanked God. It was written about 2500 years ago and survives to today because of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It contains a peculiar passage that is similar to the prophets, but distinct. And which Christ quotes word for word. For these reasons I am persuaded of it.

Before reading the rest, Consider Acts 2:29,34

22-24 [Christ was killed and then immediately raised back to life again]

25-28 [David rejoiced to know that his flesh shall rest with the hope that he shall be raised again later]

29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30-33 [Christ has been bodily resurrected immediately, in contrast to]

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens:

This is said after Christ's resurrection. Think about Abraham and Moses speaking after their death and after Christ's resurrection. Yet Samuel spoke after his death but before Christ's resurrection. Think about what that implies.

Dead Sleeping

John 11:11

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Acts 7:60

And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 13:36

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

1 Corinthians 11:30

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

1 Corinthians 15:6

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:18

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

1 Corinthians 15:20

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

1 Corinthians 15:51

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

Ephesians 5:14

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

1 Thessalonians 4:15

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1 Thessalonians 5:10

Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

2 Peter 3:4

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Deuteronomy 31:16

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.

Job 7:21

And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

Psalms 13:3

Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

Jeremiah 51:54

¶ A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: 55 Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: 56 Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite. 57 And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

Jeremiah 51:39

In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD. 40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats.

Daniel 12:2

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Job 14:12

So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

Matthew 27:52

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

1 Kings 2:10

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

1 Kings 11:43

And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 14:20

And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 14:31

And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 15:8

And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 15:24

And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 16:6

So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 16:28

So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 22:40

So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 22:50

And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 8:24

And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 10:35

And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 13:9

And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 13:13

And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

2 Kings 14:16

And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 14:29

And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 15:7

So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 15:22

And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 15:38

And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 16:20

And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 20:21

And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 21:18

And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 24:6

So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 9:31

And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 12:16

And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 14:1

So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.

2 Chronicles 16:13

And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

2 Chronicles 21:1

Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 26:2

He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

2 Chronicles 26:23

So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 27:9

And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 28:27

And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 32:33

And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 33:20

So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

Daniel 12:13

But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

2 Kings 22:20

Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

2 Chronicles 34:28

Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.

I think "sleep" is nailed shut. The proper Biblical term for death of the body of a saint is "to sleep." Especially Daniel 12:2,13. "Gathered to thy fathers" is to "rest" and "sleep" where one's "eyes see no evil." "nor light." nor "have a voice." Christ Himself uses it in John 11. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11.

If God does not raise one from the sleep, one sees not even the morning. Job 7:21 and Job 14:12 "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

These are the written record which God, our Heavenly Father, left for us to understand the world. This is a consistent theme throughout the Old and New testament.

So with sleep nailed down, how do we explain the following scriptures describing the dead speaking? Is there any way to explain them? Do the scriptures contradict themselves?

What ever explanation one has for this seeming contradiction, it must make common sense of all of the ones about sleep above and all these below. If not, then we don't have sufficient understanding of the subject to teach it to others, especially so for a pastor.

Dead Speaking

Lazarus and the rich man might be only a parable, but this example is not the only one. There are two others.

Luke 16:19

¶ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Samuel actually came back from the dead and pronounced God's judgment on a matter.

1 Samuel 28:11

Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me for thou art Saul. 13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

Moses clearly died and was buried, but he spoke with Elijah and Christ 2000 years later.

Deuteronomy 34:5

¶ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

Matthew 17:3

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

Mark 9:4

And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

Luke 9:30

And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

These are less clear but still important

Revelation 6:9

¶ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth

Genesis 4:9

¶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

Luke 23:42

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. 43 And Jesus said unto him,

Jonah 2:2

And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

Eternal, Everlasting Destruction

What does the word "destroy" mean?

Hebrews 1:11 "They shall perish; (same Greek word) but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;"

2Co 4:9 "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed (same Greek word)"

1Co 15:18 "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. (same Greek word)"

1Co 10:10 "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed (same Greek word) of the destroyer."

Jhn 18:14 "Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die (same Greek word) for the people."

Jhn 12:25 "He that loveth his life shall lose (same Greek word) it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Jhn 10:28 "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall (same Greek word) never perish, G622 neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Jhn 6:12 "When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. (same Greek word)"

Jhn 6:27 "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, (same Greek word) but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

Luk 20:16 "He shall come and destroy (same Greek word) these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid."

Luk 21:18 "But there shall not an hair of your head perish. (same Greek word)" Here is a list of scriptures using that same Greek word with a different suffix changing its meaning from a verb to a noun. Like "bake" a cake becomes, a verb to, "baked goods" a noun.

Mat 7:13 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, (same Greek word) and many there be which go in thereat:"

Mar 14:4 "And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste (same Greek word) of the ointment made?"

Jhn 17:12 "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; (same Greek word) that the scripture might be fulfilled."

Act 8:20 "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish (same Greek word) with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."

Act 25:16 "To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, (same Greek word) before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him."

Rom 9:22 "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: (same Greek word) "

2Th 2:3 "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (same Greek word) "

1Ti 6:9 "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. (same Greek word) "

Heb 10:39 "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; (same Greek word) but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

2Pe 2:2 "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; (same Greek word) by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

2Pe 3:7 "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition (same Greek word) of ungodly men."

Rev 17:11 "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. (same Greek word) "

Strong's gives the meaning as "utter and complete destruction, a perishing, ruin, destruction"

There are more scriptures that use this word, but that is what the word means.
Everlasting judgement

Psalm 102:26

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

Isaiah 51:6

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Hebrews 1:11

They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

Matthew 18:8

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Matthew 19:29

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Matthew 25:41

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matthew 25:46

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Hebrews 1:11

They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

Isaiah 50:9

Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

Are these saying that moths shall eat their flesh for all time and beyond? Or is this simple, straight forward, idiomatic of the corruption or destruction of death? Like "fired" means terminate ones employment?

Matthew 3:12

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Luke 3:17

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Is "unquenchable fire" that burns until the stars burn our and beyond? Or is "unquenchable fire" fire that can not be quenched by that which it destroys?

Revelation 14:11

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

This is a quote from Isaiah. 34:10 read the context for the place from where the smoke ascends for ever and ever day and night.

Isaiah 34:8

¶ For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. 9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. 10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. 11 But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. 12 They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. 13 And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. 14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. 15 There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

The cormorant and bittern, the owl and raven dwell in it after the smoke ends. Those that once lived there "shall be nothing;" "there is no remembrance;" they "shall all be forgotten."

Job 18:17

His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

Psalm 6:5

For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks ?

Scripturally, what is "unquenchable fire." and "eternal fire." They are future events. No one has ever seen a fire that does not burn out. So without examples, questions remain. But fortunately, the Scriptures provide a specific example of each, so we can learn what it means.

Jer 17:27

But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

Jerusalem was subjected to unquenchable fire. It did burn out and people live there again, but when it happened, no one was able to stop it. No one could quench it. It was unstoppable, unquenchable.

Jud 1:7

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.

In the case of Sodom, we aren't even sure where the city is now. It was utterly destroyed and its destruction is eternal. Its fiery destruction was literal. When the fire burned out, the city is eternally gone, wiped from existence.

Not universal reconciliation. The opposite of it. A few enjoy everlasting life, while the others cease for ever, some after punishment which occurs in the "second resurrection."

Isaiah 51:6

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

What is the final, final disposition of those who do not live forever?

Ecclesiastes 9:4

For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 3:18

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. 19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. 20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. 21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? 22 Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

Isaiah 26:14

They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

Jeremiah 23:40

And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

Psalms 146:4

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Even their thoughts perish. They have no consciences.

Second Death

Does the above describe the second death? Which is defined here

Revelation 2:11

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:14

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Revelation 21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Jude 1:12

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Matthew 23:27

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

1 Timothy 5:6

But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

Matthew 8:22

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Luke 9:60

Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Other

Ecclesiastes 9:4 repeat this belongs in both categories

For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 3:18 repeat

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. 19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. 20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. 21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? 22 Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

Ecclesiastes 1:11

There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

Ecclesiastes 2:16

For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man as the fool.

Is Ecclesiastes written to mortals only?

2 Corinthians 2:15

For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things

Habakkuk 1:12

Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

John 5:24

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

2 Thessalonians 1:9

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Matthew 25:46

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Obadiah 1:10

For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

Isaiah 56:5

Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters:

I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

Isaiah 33:14

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?

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Thessalonians 1:9

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Jude 1:6

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

A candidate explanation

Many make the ill conceived suggestion that any number of facts can be interpreted in many ways. This is false. Given one or two related facts, more than one explanation can be conjured, made up. But as the number of related facts increase the likelihood of deriving a random explanations that is consistent with all the facts reduces to negligible. It becomes so difficult that an explanation that actually is consistent with all of the related facts must be the only true one.

There is an easy way to explain all of this. It is not new, nor something to which I arrived myself. It is given in the second book of Ezra as recorded in a text of the Apocrypha, found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. I give it a lot of credibility because it quotes the prophets but changes one word. "Stars" (astra) is said "Sun" (sol) Huge difference in the Greek. The Greek words do not mean similar things like "star" and "sun" do in English. Christ quotes this change of words. In addition, the fact that it consistent with all the related facts makes it the logical probability as well.

Simply stated, it says that no matter if an Israelite dies thousands of years before the resurrection or a month before, the time between his death and the resurrection seems to him to be seven days.

For those seven days, he is conscious and aware but without a body. He can't eat, can't smell or touch. He can only communicate. Those seven days don't have to be continuous. The second day could be a thousand years later. This perfectly explains the thief on the cross, Samuel, Moses talking to Elijah and Christ, Lazarus' rich man, the souls under the alter, Jonah crying from the fish and righteous Abel. The rest of the time, they sleep. Moses was not conscious for three thousand years until he spoke with Elijah and Christ. It just seemed to him the next day. Then when he was done with all his visions after death, he sleeps until his resurrection.

What an elegant explanation!

The text goes on to explain that each of the sleeping saints are guarded by an angle assigned to him alone in his own bedroom, prepared especially for him.

While all other Israelites sleep in a common area awaiting the second resurrection of judgment or temporal reward according to their works until the second death at which time they "cease for ever" Psalm 49:8 "For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever: . . . None of them can by any means redeem. . . "

I set no limitations on God. He could inflict conscienceless of pain for billions of years on a living soul and do so righteously.

Punishment after death does not require someone to consciously feel torture until the stars burn out and beyond. If that were true then Moses would be broken as explained by Luke 12:48 "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."

For if two people who deserve different punishments both receive a punishment of infinite duration, one of lower temperature than the other, after an infinity of time, both have received the same. An infinite number of 10 stripe whippings is the same number as an infinite number of 20 stripe whippings which is the same number as an infinite number of 40 stripe whippings.

But what of punishment after death? Punishment after death is certain.

2 Timothy 4:1

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;"

Hebrews 4:12

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." and

1 Peter 4:5

"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

The question this raises is "what happens to those who are not given eternal life, but should be rewarded?" An honest man who gives his life to save another, yet Christ does not know him. These people lead blessed and long lives in the Kingdom to come.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Ezekiel 44:10

¶ And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. 11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.

Ezekiel 44:15

¶ But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: 16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. . . 22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.

Proverbs 3:1

¶ My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: 2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. 11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

But what when the punishment is executed or the reward is enjoyed? Destroy soul and body

Job 4:20

They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

Job 6:18

The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

Job 20:7

Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

Job 34:15

All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

Psalm 102:26

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: 27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. 28 The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

Psalm 49:10

For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. 11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. 12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. 13 This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah. 14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. 15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah. 16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; 17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. 18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself. 19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. 20 Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

Psalm 73:27

For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

Matthew 10:28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.