

Some Scriptures to Consider Regarding the Second Death

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There are quite a number of Scriptures that suggest there is still some type of conscious awareness in the second death, and therefore imply that the second death is more than simply a physical death like the first, which is a “return to dust”.

Revelation 20:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ 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.

How can we say that God and the Torah doesn't prescribe eternal suffering? God prescribes that for Satan, so it may be that those who follow Satan will have the same fate. We see that all the unbelieving dead who are resurrected are thrown in to this same eternal fire. It is a reasonable assumption that they too will then suffer the same punishment – which is to be tormented day and night.

Revelation 20:14–15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This is actually what Yeshua teaches. Yeshua clearly states that “these will go away into eternal punishment”.

Matthew 25:41–46 (ESV)

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘**Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**’ ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ **And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.**”

And Paul refers to “eternal destruction” not simply “destruction”. Why add the word “eternal” to the phrase? Could it be because the destruction is a process which goes on forever?

2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ They will suffer the **punishment of eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

There are also several scriptures talking about that place of eternal fire being a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth”. This doesn't sound like the simple physical death of “returning to dust”.

Matthew 13:40–42 (ESV)

⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, **so will it be at the end of the age.** ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² **and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Matthew 13:49–50 (ESV)

⁴⁹ **So it will be at the end of the age.** The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ **and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Matthew also refers this place of the second death as “the outer darkness”, and again describes it as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth:

Matthew 8:12 (ESV)

¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into **the outer darkness**. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 22:13–14 (ESV)

¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and **cast him into the outer darkness**. In that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 25:30 (ESV)

³⁰ And **cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness**. In that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.’

Luke records Yeshua’s teaching that unbelievers will be **cast out** of the kingdom of God (which seems to refer to being cast into the outer darkness) and yet be still able to see the believers fellowshiping inside the Kingdom of God:

Luke 13:27–28 (ESV)

²⁷ But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ ²⁸ In that place **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out**.

And John says that for the unbeliever “the wrath of God **remains** on him”:

John 3:36 (ESV)

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but **the wrath of God remains on him**.

Also, it doesn’t make sense to say that unbelievers who are dead (having returned to dust) are to be resurrected for judgement to simply be returned to the same condition as before (returned to dust). That’s where they were. Why resurrect them just to say go back to the way you were? It seems more likely that they are resurrected to now receive judgement of a spiritual nature, and that the second death is something more than (different from) the first death.

I am aware of people that argue that if the punishment for sin is eternal punishment, then Yeshua would have to be eternally punished since he paid for our sins. However that is flawed logic. By this same argument we could counter by saying if the punishment of sin is “returning to dust” for all eternity then Yeshua would also need to “return to dust” for all eternity.

The author of Hebrews addressed the role of Yeshua in obtaining salvation for believers:

Hebrews 9:11–15 (ESV)

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

True believers receive the eternal inheritance because Yeshua the Messiah entered once for all into the holy place on our behalf. His death paid for our transgressions. For those who are not purified by the blood of Messiah, eternal punishment awaits – a place of eternal destruction where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and where the wrath of God remains on him. This is what Scriptures teach.