

*One Minute After You Die:
Hell
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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

1 Cor 3:13-15

13 But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. 15 But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

Romans 4:5

But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners.

1 Timothy 2:3-4

3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (NIV)

Romans 5:18 -19

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

19 Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

Romans 11:32

For God has imprisoned everyone in disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone.

Colossians 1:19 - 20

19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, 20 and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

Mark 9:47 - 48

And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where "the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched." (NIV)

Matthew 10:28

"Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- If you asked 10 different people their beliefs about hell, you might get 10 different responses. Some of the responses might range from, not believing in it, to only the really bad people go there, to it is eternal conscious torment for unbelievers. Why is there so much disparity of belief on the subject of hell?

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Did you grow up believing in the doctrine of purgatory? What is your understanding of purgatory?
- Troy mentioned 2 reasons why he believes purgatory is not a biblical option. Discuss his reasons. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Explain the difference between universalism and Christian universalism. Is Christian universalism an oxymoron?
- Read Colossians 1:19-20. Christian universalists might cite this Scripture to support their argument. What would you say in response?
- The traditional view of hell is often called "eternal conscious torment." Do you believe those 3 words characterize hell? Why or why not?
- Read Mark 9:47-48. Why does the worm not die? Is that verse teaching that hell is eternal torment for unbelievers?

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- Do you agree with this statement by Denny Burk, "This view of God's judgment (eternal conscious torment) is not a cause for embarrassment for Christians, but will ultimately become a source of joy and praise for the saints as they witness the infinite goodness and justice of God."
- What do proponents of Conditional Immortality or Annihilationism believe?
- Read Matthew 10:28. What did Jesus mean when he said God can destroy a soul in hell? What does destroy mean in this verse?
- Discuss the Annihilationist argument that an eternity of torment is not commensurate with a lifetime of sin.
- Is anything that was taught in Troy's sermon causing you to question your current ideas about hell? How and why? On what scriptures are you basing your ideas and questions?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to sharing your faith this week with someone whom you know is unchurched.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- God, we know that our time on this earth is short. Help is to have a burden for the lost who are in our lives. Give us courage to share our faith with others and to live our lives shining Your light a dark world. In Jesus Name - Amen

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "What is conditional immortality?"

Answer: Please note, as a ministry, GotQuestions.org rejects conditional immortality / conditionalism / annihilationism. We truly and fully believe that hell will be eternal conscious punishment for all who die without faith in Jesus Christ. However, we believe that conditional immortality is a valid viewpoint that a Christian can hold. In no sense is conditional immortality heresy and in no sense should conditionalists be shunned as not being brothers and sisters in Christ. We thought it would be worthwhile to have an article that positively presents conditional immortality, as it is always good for our viewpoints to be challenged, motivating us to further search the Scriptures to make sure our beliefs are biblically sound.

Conditional immortality or conditionalism, for short, is the idea that not everyone will be raised immortal—only the saved will live forever. Conditional immortality as a label became popular in the nineteenth century for its ability to more holistically describe a view many Christians know as annihilationism.

Traditionally, most Christians have believed that those who die in unbelief will ultimately be raised immortal and live forever in hell to suffer mental and physical torment for eternity as punishment for their sins. Conditionalists, however, believe that God will grant immortality and eternal life only to those who meet the condition of saving faith in Christ. Everyone else—the unsaved—will suffer a second, irreversible death, perishing forever and ceasing to consciously exist.

Conditionalists believe the Bible teaches that human beings have been mortal ever since the Fall. In his fallen condition, man is incapable of living forever and doomed to die unless the Lord intervenes by giving him immortality. In Genesis 3:22–23, God evicts Adam and Eve from the garden so that they could not “take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” But in Revelation 22:2 access to the tree of life is restored—but only for the inhabitants of New Jerusalem. Proponents of conditional immortality believe the lost will indeed be resurrected, but to judgment, not to life (John 5:29). Only those covered by the blood of Christ will be raised immortal, unable to die any more (Luke 20:35–36); only those who are being made fit to “inherit the kingdom of God” will be made imperishable and immortal (1 Corinthians 15:50, 53). Thus, immortality and enduring life are conditioned upon salvation. The lost will not live forever, according to conditionalists.

Integral to all orthodox views of the atonement is the idea of substitution. In atoning for our sins, Jesus took our place, suffering what we would have otherwise suffered. Conditionalists argue that it stands to reason, then, that what Christ bore on our behalf is the fate that awaits those who refuse His gift. The biblical testimony is that Christ’s substitutionary atoning work consisted in His death. Paul says that “Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6) and that His death is “of first importance” (1 Corinthians 15:3). The fact of Christ’s substitutionary, bodily death is also taught by Peter (1 Peter 3:18) and the author of Hebrews (Hebrews 10:10). Conditionalists argue that therefore the risen lost must literally die a second time: if in dying Jesus took our place, how can it be said that the penalty for unbelief is eternal life in hell? If Jesus died in the place of sinners, then the fate that awaits those who reject Him is death, not life.

Conditionalists point further to the many passages in the Bible that promise death and destruction to the wicked. God “gave His only Son” not so that believers should escape eternal torment but so that they “should not perish” (John 3:16). Paul says, “The wages of sin is death”—not living forever in torment (Romans 6:23). Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:28 to fear God who “can destroy both soul and body in hell.” He says in Matthew 7:13–14 that the narrow and difficult path leads to “life,” while the wide and easy path leads to “destruction.” In Jesus’ parable of the wheat and the tares, the weeds are “burned up” or “consumed” (Matthew 13:30) by fire, which Jesus interprets as meaning that the unrighteous will be thrown into a fiery furnace (verses 40–42). This is an allusion to Malachi 4:1–3, which promises that the wicked will be reduced by fire to ashes beneath the feet of the righteous. Peter says that, in condemning Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by burning them to ashes, He “made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:6). The residents of Sodom and Gomorrah were incinerated. Therefore, the ungodly will not live forever in ruin; they will be utterly destroyed.

There are other texts that are often cited as challenges to conditional immortality, but which conditionalists contend are better support for their view. For example, Isaiah 66:24 speaks of unquenchable fire and undying worms that consume “corpses.” Proponents of conditional immortality point out that corpses are dead, not living, and that elsewhere in Scripture inextinguishable fire and unstoppable scavengers completely consume (Ezekiel 20:47–48; Jeremiah 17:27; Amos 5:6; Deuteronomy 28:26; Jeremiah 7:33). Further, Isaiah says these corpses will be “abhorrent” (NET) to the living righteous, the same word used of the wicked in Daniel 12:2, which promises that only the righteous will be granted eternal life. The same promise is made in Matthew 25:46, where “eternal punishment” must therefore be eternal capital punishment. Conditionalists believe this conclusion is confirmed by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, which says that the punishment of the wicked will be “eternal destruction.” They argue that “eternal punishment” and “eternal destruction” do not imply ongoing activity any more than “eternal salvation” and “eternal redemption” imply ongoing saving or redeeming in Hebrews 5:9 and 9:12. Conditionalists also contend that the eternal torment in the lake of fire in Revelation 20:10 is not literal but imagery that John and God interpret as a symbol for the “second death” (Revelation 20:14; 21:8).

Traditionalists and conditionalists need not divide as brothers and sisters in Christ over this issue. Whether the eternal destiny of those who die in unbelief is eternal conscious punishment or a destruction that lasts for eternity, it is a fate to dread. The message of the gospel is the same, no matter which understanding of hell is correct: Jesus saves!