

lake of fire .... The most natural way to understand the reality behind the imagery is that ultimately all enmity and resistance to God will be destroyed. So both the language of destruction and the imagery of fire seem to point to annihilation.

The third argument in favor of the concept of annihilation is the biblical concept of *justice* .... Would there not be a serious disproportion between sins consciously experienced throughout eternity?... I question whether eternal conscious torment is compatible with the biblical revelation of divine justice, unless perhaps (as has been argued) the impenitence of the lost also continues, throughout eternity.

The fourth and last argument relates to those texts which have been used for the basis for universalism. I am not a universalist. The hope of final salvation for everybody is a false hope, since it contradicts the recorded warnings of Jesus that the judgment will involve a separation into two opposite but equally eternal destinies .... The eternal existence of the impenitent in hell would be hard to reconcile with the promises of God's final victory over evil .... It would be easier to hold together the awful reality and the universal reign of God if hell means destruction and the impenitent are no more .... I do not dogmatize about the position to which I have come. I hold it tentatively. But I do plead for frank dialogue among evangelicals on the basis of Scripture. I also believe that the ultimate annihilation of the wicked should at least be accepted as a legitimate, biblically founded alternative to their eternal conscious torment.

Who will go to hell? Do evangelicals believe that hell will be the fate of the bulk of humanity, in which case the gospel does not appear to be good news for the mass of humanity?... What about the final destiny of those who have never heard of Christ, never received a worthy presentation of him and so never had a reasonable opportunity to respond to him? What will be their fate...  
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