

The final state of the unrighteous is described as a lake and a furnace of everlasting fire and sulphur that will never be quenched, and as a gloomy blackness of outer darkness, into which both the soul/spirit and the body will be cast, in which there will be torment and punishment, weeping, gnashing of teeth, and no rest day or night for ever and ever. There is not the slightest hint in these Scriptures that hell may continue for eons but that it finally comes to an end and ceases to exist. Hell is endless, unending, forever! What an awesome conception!

2. The final state of the righteous

The final state of the righteous refers to their state or condition following their resurrection and judgment, and continuing on unendingly.

One problem with the final state of the righteous is peculiar to the Premillennial view. It concerns the time of the beginning of the eternal state relative to the occurrence of the Resurrection. In Premillennialism the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked occur at different times in the eschaton. This problem is further heightened in a Pretribulational Premillennial view, which sees a phase of the Resurrection of the righteous occurring at the Rapture, another phase at Christ's Return at the end of the Tribulation (for the Tribulation saints), and perhaps another phase for any who become believers during the Millennium. In this view the final state of the righteous, since it begins with the Resurrection and Judgment, begins at different times for the various groups of believers.

But aside from this peculiarity, the final state of all believers following the inauguration of the new heavens and new earth is described mainly in the book of Revelation. There are of course other Scriptures which speak of this state, such as John 14:2-3, in which our Lord speaks of "dwelling places" in His Father's house; and II Peter 3:13, in which Peter says that we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. But the bulk of the material is found in the last two chapters of Revelation.

In Revelation 21 and 22 John sees new heavens and a new earth. He also sees the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from the sky to the earth. In the holy city are located the throne of God and the Lamb, the river of the water of life, and the tree of life. Heaven will thus be in earth. The holy city is enormous (1500 miles square); has streets, high walls, twelve gates (which are never closed); and constantly lit with the glory of God. The saved of the earth go in and out and serve Him. He will dwell with them, be their God, and wipe away all tears from their eyes. In that eternal state there will be no more sin, no more crying or sorrowing, no more pain, and no more death. There will be only holiness and light and deep joy and life everlasting!

The Lord Jesus will be there, the saints (great and small) of all ages will be there, and our dear loved ones who have gone on before will be there. And we will see God's face, and serve Him for ever and ever in ways that will please Him. We will be completely delivered from the very presence of sin and totally conformed to the likeness of Christ. What a glorious prospect for every child of God!