

Questions About Hellfire from a Muslim

By Pastor Ed Anderson

SO HOW DO YOU SEE PROFESSED CHRISTIAN GROUPS THAT TEACHES ETERNAL SUFFERING FOR UNREPENTANT SINNERS IN A HELLFIRE??? JOHN 8:31; JOHN 18:37; 2JOHN 9,10.

Answer:

This is a very important question—and one that many sincere, Bible-believing Christians have wrestled with for centuries. The idea that God would torment sinners consciously for all eternity in hellfire is indeed taught by many, but it deserves a closer look through the lens of Scripture and the character of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Let's explore this together with compassion, clarity, and biblical truth.

God's Character: Love and Justice in Harmony

The Bible says that "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and He takes "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11). His judgments are just, fair, and proportionate. Eternal torment contradicts that character. Would a loving God torture someone forever for sins committed in a brief lifetime?

Instead, Scripture teaches that:

"The wages of sin is death" — not eternal life in torment — "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
(Romans 6:23)

Eternal life is a gift only to the righteous—not to the wicked in a state of torment. Nowhere in the Bible do we read that sinners are given "eternal life in hell."

What Does the Bible Really Say About Hellfire?

Yes, the Bible speaks of hellfire (Greek: Gehenna), the lake of fire, and eternal destruction—but these terms must be rightly understood.

Let's clarify a few key verses:

1. Malachi 4:1,3 –

“The day comes that shall burn as an oven... and all the proud... shall be stubble... the day that comes shall burn them up, saith the Lord... and ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.”

Burned up and turned to ashes—not endlessly burning.

2. Matthew 10:28 –

“Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Not torment forever—but destroy. That’s total annihilation.

3. Revelation 20:14–15 –

“This is the second death.”

The lake of fire is not eternal life in misery—it is the final death from which there is no resurrection.

4. Psalm 37:10, 20 –

“The wicked shall perish... they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”

What About “Eternal Fire” and “Forever”?

Some point to phrases like “eternal fire” or “the smoke of their torment ascends forever” (e.g., Matthew 25:46; Revelation 14:11). But here’s what we must understand:

- Jude 7 says Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of “eternal fire”—yet those cities are not burning today. The results of the fire are eternal—not the burning process itself.

- The word “forever” in the Bible can mean as long as something lasts, not necessarily unending time.

Example: Jonah was in the belly of the fish “forever” (Jonah 2:6)—but it was only 3 days.

God’s Final Judgment: Merciful and Just

God’s final judgment on the wicked is not eternal torment, but a merciful act of destruction, called the “second death” (Revelation 21:8). It is final, irreversible, but not cruel or endless suffering. This view is often called “conditional immortality”—only those who are in Christ receive eternal life.

A Message of Hope, Not Fear

Jesus said:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32)

The doctrine of eternal torment drives people by fear. But the truth of God’s character draws us by love. The true gospel is not about escaping hell—it’s about being restored to a relationship with a loving Father.

A Call to Study More Deeply

You referenced John 8:31, 18:37, and 2 John 9–10—all of which speak about abiding in Christ, walking in truth, and not going beyond what Jesus taught. That’s why it’s so important to base our beliefs about judgment and hell on what Jesus actually said, and to let the whole of Scripture interpret itself.

Final Thought

So to your question: How do we see groups that teach eternal torment? — We see many sincere believers who love Jesus and are doing their best with what they’ve been taught. But the picture of a God who tortures forever is inconsistent with the character of Christ, the plain teaching of Scripture, and the hope of the gospel.

We are all called to “test everything and hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Let’s be people of the Word, and let love and truth go hand in hand.