

ETERNAL DESTRUCTION :

the End of Evil  
in the words of the  
New Testament.

Concordance Study

by

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1984

## FOREWORD

'Grace has been evidenced through the appearing of our Saviour Messiah Jesus who has both nullified death, and shed light on life and immunity to decay through the gospel' (2 Tim 1.10)

'We see Jesus ... He shared the same realities as us that through death he might nullify the one who has the force of death ... and might release all who, by fear of death, have been kept in slavery all their lives' (Heb 2.14)

'I worship the God of our fathers ..., having a hope toward God ... that there will be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust' (Acts 24.15)

'All who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done things that are good into a resurrection of life, and those that have done things that are base into a resurrection of judgment' (John 5.29)

'If anyone keeps my word he will in no way see eternal death ... He will in no way taste eternal death' (John 8.51,52)

'It is necessary for what is subject to decay to put on immunity to decay, and for what is subject to death to put on immunity to death' (1 Cor 15.53)

'They received the message with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so' (Acts 17.11)

## INTRODUCTION

This concordance study attempts to bring together New Testament references to the final destiny of all that is antagonistic to God and his kingdom. A few are included that are doubtful, since the verse may well refer to some reality before the judgment, or (as in some of Jesus' parables) God may not be referred to as the one who is meting out punishment.

The compilers will warmly welcome responses from those using the studies. Should any material be omitted as not related to the theme? Should some be rendered differently since the translation given is inadequate? Have texts been ignored that should be included?

### Study aids:

- a) Concordances. The best for study purposes are those compiled by the Christian Brethren scholar, George Wigram, 'The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance' and 'The Englishman's Greek Concordance' (Bagster/Zondervan); J B Smith's is excellent but only New Testament; Young's or Strong's (unabridged) can provide the same information but it is scattered under the various words that render it into English. Avoid Cruden and modern versions whose value is merely in locating a word in English translation.
- b) Commentaries. Those that are especially useful set out to get at what the writers intended. Detect the presuppositions at work and make allowance for these (and for your own).
- c) Dictionaries and lexicons. For those who can't yet handle Greek, the 'Dictionary of NT Theology' (3 vols), edited by Colin Brown (Paternoster) gives access to good scholarship. 'A Critical Lexicon' by E W Bullinger (Bagster/Zondervan) has much that's useful. For those who read Greek, the 'Theological Dictionary of the NT' edited by Kittel and Friedrich (Eerdmans) is a major authority. So too, is the 'Greek-English Lexicon of the NT', edited by Bauer and brought into English by Arndt and Gingrich (Univ. of Chicago).
- d) Translations. The New International Version (NIV) is recommended for these studies; the NIV Interlinear (Bagster/Zondervan) is specially useful. But other "formal correspondence" versions (such as the RV, RSV, NASB) will serve almost as well; the Jerusalem Bible, the 'New English Bible' and the 'Good News Bible' have creative renderings where meaning is unclear; established individual translations such as Weymouth should not be ignored.

### Using the Study:

- a) Only references to the final destiny of those in opposition to God are given here. What happens between death and resurrection is another study.

- b) Each Greek word is given with its range of meaning. One from the spectrum has been used consistently to render the same word. This is for purposes of comparison, not to suggest the 'best' translation or that uniformity is desirable.
- c) References to other uses of the word are given to indicate its force in other contexts.
- d) Occasional notes of interest are added.
- e) Appendix A compares NT language with that of Plato, Epicurus and the Sadducees.
- f) Appendix B explores whether 'endless torment' is used of the final destiny of those outside of Christ.
- g) In the next edition it is hoped to include in an appendix the occurrences of each word in the study as used in the Greek OT (the LXX or Septuagint).

### Questions to consider

- a) Will evil exist forever in evil persons? Is evil as eternal as God?
- b) Will unbelievers, after judgment, be alive forever, or dead forever? Will they experience a "loss of life" or a "life of loss"? Do believers and unbelievers alike have eternal life - the former in joy and the latter in suffering?
- c) Do all humans have "immortality" from the moment of conception? If not, from when? Is it a gift God has already given to all? Or a gift God will give at the resurrection and only to those "in Christ"? What difference does it make to our reading of these verses if no one but the Lord is yet immortal?
- d) Is the "lake of fire" a picture of preservation or of destruction? Is 'eternal destruction' the same as 'eternal destroying'? Is it an event with eternal results, or a process that is unending? (Cf. eternal salvation, eternal redemption, eternal judgment). Is 'eternal punishment' an 'eternal punishing'? Is it an event or a process?
- e) Can what is already 'immortal' meaningfully be said to experience death and second death? Can what is 'indestructible' meaningfully be said to be 'destroyed'? Can what cannot be destroyed be said to be endlessly being destroyed?
- f) Are 'eternal punishment' and 'eternal destruction' even synonyms for 'capital punishment'? Do they suggest 'life'?
- g) Is an 'eternal fire' one that burns eternally or one which destroys totally and permanently? In what sense are Sodom and Gomorrah an "example of eternal fire"?
- h) If 'death' and 'hades' are 'destroyed' in the lake of fire, are they maintained in active existence or eradicated altogether? What, then, of all else that is destroyed in the same fire?
- i) How will God become "all in all" and "every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord"? Will the unbelieving somehow and sometime be won over by God's love? Or will they be eradicated like 'death' when God makes "all things new"?
- j) In what sense did Jesus the Messiah meet the consequences of sin on the cross? In what sense did he suffer the punishment that awaits those who reject his atonement for them? If he endured 'eternal punishment' and 'eternal destruction', was it an event that would have been eternal or permanent had not 'God raised him and highly exalted him'? Can it be in some sense an endless process of dying without dying? Was death for him a "loss of life" or a "life of loss"?
- k) If, as Paul says, resurrection is the Christian hope beyond death, did he not believe he was already immortal? Why did the early church need to be encouraged by the resurrection to hope for their dead ones if they were already immortal?

- l) Are the dead really asleep till Christ returns? Was Lazarus brought out of sleep or out of active life in heaven? Was Jesus asleep? Does the Bible ascribe sleep to beings (souls) and to named persons, or to bodies? If asleep, how can the dead be prayed to or prayed through or talked with via mediums? Are all the 'saints', including the Lord's mother, still asleep till the resurrection?
  
- m) Is there Biblical evidence of wakeful life after death before the resurrection? Is there such evidence of judgment and punishment before the resurrection? Does the resurrection follow the return of the Messiah or follow an individual's death?

1a EXTERMINATION, destruction, execution, death penalty  
(olethros, from ollumi and related to ap-ollumi)

- 1 Thes 5.3      The day of the Lord ... is coming ... Then extermination comes upon them, sudden as birth pangs.
- 2 Thes 1.9      It is a matter of justice with God to repay ... at the revealing of the Lord Jesus ... giving, in a fire of flame, just reparation to those not acknowledging God .. They will pay just penalty, eternal(permanent) extermination from the face of the Lord.
- 1 Tim 6.9      Those intent on being rich fall into ... many cravings that are mindless and harmful to others and which cause the persons to sink into extermination and destruction.

(Cf 'olothreuo' exterminate, Heb 11.28; 'olothreutes', exterminator, 1 Cor 10.10. {For extermination of 'flesh', as non-Kingdom values and living, see 1 Cor 5.5}. The Codex Alexandrinus has 'exoethreusis' instead of 'anathema' in Gal 1.8,9. and LXX has 'exoethreuma' for 'anathema' in 1 Sam 15.21.)

Note: 2 Thes 1.9 'from the face', see Lev 10.2 and Isa 2.10,19,21. (LXX omitting 'phobou', probably 'proceeding from' but if 'excluding from' can anything but 'extinction of being' exclude from God's presence?)

1b EXTERMINATE TOTALLY, destroy utterly, execute  
(exoethreuo)

- Acts 5.3      Repent ... that (God) may send the Messiah Jesus ... whom it is necessary for heaven to retain till times for the reconstitution of all things. Of these (times/things) God has spoken from an age through the mouth of his holy prophets. Moses said, the Lord will raise up a Prophet for you ... Every being (soul) who does not heed that Prophet will be totally exterminated from among the people. (from Deut 18.19)

Note: This word (exoethreuo) occurs almost 220 times in the LXX. 87 of these are as a translation of 'karat'. Karat means 'cut off, cut down', and when what is 'cut off' is a 'nephesh' (soul, being), karat means 'eliminate, exterminate, destroy by capital punishment'; it is this use that is translated in the LXX by 'exoethreuo' (e.g., Gen 17.14; Ex 12.15,19; Lev 17.4,9; Ps 37.9,22,28,34; Dan 9.26) Note that it is the 'being' that is exterminated, not the 'well being' and not just the body.

2a DESTRUCTION  
(apoleia)

- Matt 7.13      Wide is the entrance leading away into destruction and many are those going in through it.
- Acts...8.20      Your money be for destruction with you!

- Lk 13.3,5 Unless you change your attitudes, you will all be destroyed in the same way
- 17.27 The flood came and destroyed all. Similarly ...  
29 in the days of Lot ... it rained fire and sulphur from the sky and destroyed all. It will be the same on the day the Son of Man is revealed.
- Jn 20.16 He will come and will destroy these land workers.  
3.16 For thus has God loved the created order so as he has given the only Son in order that everyone believing into him may not be destroyed but have life eternal.
- 10.10 The thief does not come except that he may steal and slaughter and destroy. I have come that they may have life.
- 10.28 I give them life eternal and they shall not by any means be destroyed eternally (or 'into the age').
- Ro 2.12 For those ... seeking freedom from decay (will be) eternal life but for those ... giving obedience to injustice, (will be) outrage and anger ... As many as have sinned without law, will be destroyed also without law.
- 14.15 Do not, by what you eat, destroy that person for whom the Messiah died.
- 1 Co 1.18 The message of the cross is nonsense to those (who are) being destroyed (to be destroyed).  
15.18 If dead persons are not to be raised ... then those, who have fallen asleep in the Messiah, have been destroyed.
- 2 Co 2.15 To God we are an aroma of the Messiah. Among those being destroyed (to be destroyed), we are a stench that comes from death and leads to death; among those being saved, we are a smell that comes from life and leads to life.  
4.3 If our gospel remains hidden, it remains hidden among those (who are) being destroyed (to be destroyed).
- 2 Thes 2.10 The lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord Jesus will use up completely ... and nullify ... In accord with Satan's activity, the presence of (the lawless one) will be in all power ... and in every deception that belongs to injustice. It will be for those who are being destroyed (to be destroyed) because they have not accepted love of the truth with a view to them being saved.
- Heb 1.11 Lord, ... the heavens will be destroyed but you remain throughout ... your years will not cease. (from Ps 102.25,27)
- Jas 4.12 One there is who is giver of law and bringer of justice, the one able to preserve (save) and to destroy.
- 2 Pet 3.9 The Lord is ... not wishing any persons to be destroyed but all to come into change of mind (heart and allegiance).

Note: Lk 9.56. The last sentence is omitted in most early MSS. (Cf. Mat 2.13; 8.25; 9.17; 12.14; 18.11,14; 22.7; 26.52; 27.20; Mk 1.24; 2.22; 3.6; 4.38; 9.22; 11.18; Lk 4.34; 5.37; 6.9; 8.24; 9.24,25; 11.51; 13.33; 15.17; 17.33; 19.47; 21.18; Jn 3.15; 6.12,27; 11.50; 17.12; 18.14; Act 5.37; Rom 6.6; 1 Co 1.19; 8.11; 10.9,10;



- Rom 9.22 With much patience God has tolerated the objects of his outrage, ready as they are for destruction.
- Phil 1.28 This is an indication of destruction for them but of salvation for you.
- 3.19 Many are walking about ... as enemies of the cross of the Messiah. Their end (will be) destruction ... But we await the Lord Jesus, the Messiah who will restructure the body of our low status to have the same form as the body of his glory ( or 'as his glorious body'. Cf. 1 Jn 3.2; 1 Co 15.49; Col 3.4)
- 2 Thes 2.3 The day of the Lord will not come till first ... the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son (heir) of destruction, setting himself in opposition (to God) and raising himself above everything called God.
- 1 Ti 6.9 Those intent on being rich fall into ... many cravings ... which cause the persons to sink into extermination and destruction.
- Heb 10.39 We are not for giving up (lowering sail) leading to destruction, but for faithfulness leading to retention of being(soul).
- 2 Pet 2.1,3 There will be false teachers among you who will surreptitiously introduce divisions of destruction (destructive divisions) ... bringing speedy destruction upon themselves ... Their destruction is not nodding off to sleep.
- 3.7 The new heavens and earth are ... preserved for the day of judgment, the day of destruction by fire of those who have no regard (for God).
- 3.16 In all the letters ... are some things hard to understand which the undisciplined (untrained) and insecure are twisting ... to their own destruction
- Rev 17.8 The beast ... is about to go up out of the great deep (abyss) and withdraw into destruction.
- 17.11 The beast ... is withdrawing into destruction

(Cf. Jn 17.12; Act 25.16; Mat 26.8; Mk 14.4)

2b DESTROY completely  
(apollumi)

- Mat 5.29 It is in your interest that one of your members be destroyed and your whole body not be put into Hinnom Valley.
- 10.28 Do not be afraid of those killing the body but not able to kill the being (soul). Rather fear the one who is able to destroy both being and body in Hinnom Valley.
- 21.41 As for bad men, he will destroy them badly.
- 22.7 The king ... destroyed those murderers.
- Mk 12.9 He will come and destroy the land workers.
- Lk 9.56 Do you want us to tell fire ... to use them up completely? He ... rebuked them ... The Son of Man has come not destroy the beings (souls) of persons but to save (them).

2 Co 4.9; Jas 1.11; 1 Pet 1.7; 2 Pet 3.6; Jude 5;) apollumi = apokteino (in Mt 10.28), = apothnesko (in Jn 11.50); in Jn 18.14, Cod. Alexandrinus has apollumi where other Mss have apothnesko. Mt 27.20 'The chief priests ... persuaded the mob that they should ... destroy Jesus'. (Cf. sun-apollumi, Heb 11.31)

In the gospels apollumi has a further meaning, 'lose': a coin (Lk 15.8,9); a reward (Mt 10.42; Mk 9.41; 2 Jn 8); sheep (Mt 10.6; 15.24; Lk 15.4,6; 19.10); disciples (Jn 6.39; 18.9); a son (Lk 15.24,32); life (Mt 10.39; 16.25; Mk 8.35; Lk 17.33; Jn 12.25).

To the one suffering the loss (not to the person or thing that is lost), what is lost is as good as destroyed, might in fact be destroyed, might as well be destroyed, since not available to the loser. The father of the son returned can say "My son was dead ... My son was lost ... " "I lose' equals 'I destroy in relation to myself' so that the thing relatively to me, no longer exists" (R F Weymouth in 'English Independent' Mar, 1870.)

"apollumi, as applied to persons is clearly our common ... 'destroy' ... My ... position (... the settled conclusion at which an inductive process, carried on for many years, has landed me ...) can be overthrown only by adducing from all Greek literature at least one passage in which the meaning of 'apollumi' shall be clearly, unambiguously, unmistakably ... not what we mean by 'destroy'." (Ibid)

Does Weymouth's challenge still stand? Note, too, it is the person who is destroyed, not his happiness or usefulness.

2c DESTROYER  
(Apolluon)

Rev 9.11 And the fifth agent... opened the shaft of the great deep (abyss) ... and locusts came out ... Over them they have a king, the agent of the great deep, whose name in Hebrew is Destruction (Abaddon) and whose name in Greek is Destroyer (Apolluon).

Abaddon is always translated by 'apoleia' in the LXX (Job 26.6; 28.22; 31.12; Ps 88.11; Prov 15.1; 27.20).

3a ANA-THEMA, set apart for destruction by God  
(ana-thema)

Ro 9.3 I have been praying for me to be anathema, separated from the Messiah, instead of my brothers, my relatives according to flesh.

1 Co 16.22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be anathema.

Gal 1.8 If ... an angel out of heaven should evangelize contrary to what we have evangelized to you, let him be anathema.

1.9 If anyone evangelizes you contrary to what you have received let him be anathema.

Act 23.14 The Judaeans anathematized themselves ... Going to the chief priests and elders, they said, 'We have anathematized ourselves by an anathema, to taste of nothing till we have killed Paul.'