THE STORY...

Abraham knew that his nephew was making a big mistake when Lot chose to move his family to Sodom. The cities of the lower Jordan valley were beautiful and lush, but they were also very corrupt. “But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.” Genesis 13:13. Finally, God decided to destroy these sinful cities for their abominations, but first He sent two angels to Sodom to rescue Lot and his family.

Before entering Sodom, these angels took on the appearance of two wayfaring men. Lot saw the two handsome strangers when they first entered the gates, and knowing that the streets of that wicked city were far from safe at night, he urged them to find refuge in his home. But wicked men were watching, and that evening they gathered about Lot’s door and insisted that he bring out his guests so they might abuse them. Lot tried in vain to reason with the men of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Lord sent His angels to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.” Genesis 19:24.

When will the wicked be destroyed in hellfire?

2 Peter 2:9 The Lord knows how to … reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of vengeance.

John 12:48 The word that I have spoken will judge him in the

Matthew 13:40-42 So it will be at the end of this age, The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather … those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire.

NOTE: In the above texts, the Bible clearly states that the wicked will be cast into the fire in the day of judgment at the end of the world—not when they die. This obviously means that no one is in hell now. It is only fair that no one should be punished until his case has been decided in the judgment. People are rewarded or punished at the Second Coming, and not before (Revelation 20:12).

If the wicked who have died are not in hell yet, where are they?

John 5:28, 29 The hour is coming in the which all who are … the dead will hear His voice, and come forth; … those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Job 21:30, 32 The wicked are reserved for the day of doom; … Yet he shall be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before!

NOTE: The Bible assures us that the wicked who have died are reserved in the grave until the resurrection at the end of the world. They will hear Jesus’ voice calling them and will come forth from the grave, not from hellfire.

What is the reward, or punishment, of sin?

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is ______________, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NOTE: The punishment for sin is not everlasting life in hellfire, but the exact opposite—death. We all die the first death (Hebrews 9:27), but the Bible says that the death the wicked will die in hell is the second death (Revelation 21:8). From the first death, all are raised for punishment or reward; but there is no resurrection from the second death. It is final. In addition, if the punishment for sin is everlasting torment in hellfire, then Jesus did not pay the penalty.

5. What are the only two choices for all men?

John 3:16 “That whoever believes in Him should not ______________, but have _______________.

NOTE: The concepts of limbo and purgatory are not found in Scripture. The Bible teaches only two choices—eternal life or eternal death (Deuteronomy 30:15).

6. What will happen to the wicked in hellfire?

Psalm 37:10, 20 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; … But the wicked shall ______________, and into smoke they shall ______________. Malachi 4:1, 3 The day is coming, burning like an oven, … all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall ______________ them ______________, … You shall trample the wicked. For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.

NOTE: The wicked in hell will go up in smoke. Only ashes will remain.

7. Where will hellfire be located?

Revelation 20:9 They went up on the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints … And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

2 Peter 3:10 The elements will melt with fervent heat, both the ______________ and the works that are in it will be burned up.

NOTE: Hellfire will be here on earth, because it will be the earth on fire.

8. Will the devil be in charge of hellfire?

Revelation 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, ______________ into the lake of fire and brimstone.

NOTE: Not Far from being in charge of hellfire, the devil will be cast into the fire. It will finally turn him to “ashes upon the earth,” and God says of Satan, “Shall be no more forever.” Ezekiel 28:18, 19.

9. Will the fires of hell ever go out?

Isaiah 47:14 It shall ______________ be a ______________ to be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before!

NOTE: After sin, sinners, and everything on earth is destroyed, the fire will go out. It will not burn throughout the ages. An eternal hell of torment would make it impossible to ever get rid of sin. God’s plan is to isolate sin and destroy it, not perpetuate it. Revelation 21:5 says, “Behold, I make all things new.”

10. Are both soul and body destroyed in hell?

Matthew 10:28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and ______________ in hell.

NOTE: Many believe that the soul never dies, but twice God says, “The soul who sins shall die.” Ezekiel 18:4, 20. So according to Scripture, the wicked will be destroyed in hellfire—both soul and body.
11. For whom will hellfire be kindled?
Matthew 25:41
Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

NOTE: The purpose of the fire is to destroy Satan, his evil angels, and sin. If I refuse to turn loose of the plague of sin, I will have to be destroyed with it, because if sin is not destroyed, it would again contaminate the universe.

12. How does the Bible refer to God’s destruction of the wicked?
Isaiah 28:21
For the Lord will be angry … That He may do His work, His awesome work, And bring to pass His act, His

NOTE: God can’t stand the thought of destroying those He loves. “The Lord is not … willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9. He is constantly saying to them, “Turn, turn from your evil way! For why should you die?” Ezekiel 33:11. Destroying people is so foreign to God’s ways that hellfire is called His “unusual act.” God leaves nothing out in His desire to save people. Before they are destroyed, every wicked person will admit that God has been fair (Romans 14:11).

13. Doesn’t the Bible phrase “unquenchable fire” indicate that the fire never goes out?
Matthew 3:12
He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will

 NOTE: No! Unquenchable fire cannot be put out. However, when it has burned everything up, it goes out. For example, Jeremiah 17:27 warns that if God’s people were not faithful, He would kindle a fire in Jerusalem that “shall not be quenched.” And the Scriptures declare that this prophecy has already been fulfilled. “They burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, … to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.” 2 Chronicles 36:19, 21. That fire could not be put out until it had consumed everything; then it went out. It is not burning today, even though the Bible calls it “unquenchable.”

14. Doesn’t the phrase “everlasting fire” mean “unending”?
Jude 7
As Sodom and Gomorrah, … are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of …

NOTE: We must let the Bible explain itself. We can see in this verse that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed with everlasting fire as an example of hell, but those cities are not still burning. They were turned into ashes (2 Peter 2:6), which is what eternal fire does. It is eternal in its consequences.

15. When Revelation 20:10 states that the wicked will be tormented “for ever and ever,” doesn’t that indicate endless time?
Jonah 2:6
The earth with its bars closed behind me _______________.

NOTE: No. Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17), yet he said “forever.” I’m sure that it felt like forever! The Greek word translated “forever” in Revelation 20:10 is “aion,” from which we get our word “eon.” It often represents an unspecified period of time, limited or unlimited. The word “forever” are used 56 times in the Bible referring to something already ended. In one instance, “forever” describes the life of a faithful slave (Ecclesiastes 21:6), and in another place “forever” means 10 generations (Deuteronomy 23:3). With man, “forever” often means “as long as he lives” (1 Samuel 1:22, 28).

16. After sin and sinners are destroyed, what will Jesus do for His people?
2 Peter 3:13
Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Revelation 21:4
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be _______________ more _______________ for the former things have passed away.

NOTE: On the ashes of this purified world, God will create new heavens and a new earth. He promises joy, peace, and indescribable happiness for all living creatures throughout eternity.

17. Will the sin problem ever rise again?
Nahum 1:9
Affliction will not _______________ up a second time.

NOTE: No! The promise is specific. Sin will never rise again.

Isaiah 65:17
For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and _______________ _______________ in which

ens and a _______________ in which

righteousness dwells.

NOTE: On the ashes of this purified world, God will create new heavens and a new earth. He promises joy, peace, and indescribable happiness for all living creatures throughout eternity.

18. What penetrating question does Job ask?
Job 4:17
Can a mortal be more _______________ than God?

NOTE: If your son became a hardened murderer, would you feel that he should be punished? You probably would! But would you want him to burn alive in a fire, in terrible agony, for even one day? Of course not. You could not stand that. Neither could the loving Lord stand to see His children so tortured. That would be worse than the very worst of all war atrocities. Is God like that? No indeed! An eternal hell of torment would be unbearable for God and diametrically against His character of love and justice.

YOUR RESPONSE

More than anything, Jesus wants you to dwell in His glorious new kingdom. He longs for you to occupy the mansion He has prepared for you. Will you decide now to accept His offer?

ANSWER: _______________