

The common arguments in favor for endless hell refuted

I will not go in the detail at every occasion also it's not my intention in the first place to defend universalism, at some occasions I leave the question just open whether it defends more likely annihilationism or universalism.

I. The “fiery hell” in the New Testament – where their worm does not die?

Mark 9:43-49

*And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: **Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.** And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: **Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.** And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: **Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.** For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. (King James Bible)*

Actually the phrases in bold type are frequently used to defend the traditional doctrine of hell, for everybody who has no idea which Greek word has been translated with *hell*, especially the *worms* create some questions, but the solution is simple if we interpret it literally:

*And if thine eye may cause thee to stumble, cast it out; it is better for thee one-eyed to enter into the reign of God, than having two eyes, to be cast to the **Gehenna** of the fire - where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched (Young's Literal Translation)*

Gehenna is actually **a valley outside Jerusalem** which can be proven by both the Vulgate, an ancient Latin Translation; and the LXX, an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament:

Mark 9:47

καὶ ἐὰν ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς σου σκανδαλίζη σε, ἔκβαλε αὐτόν· καλὸν σέ ἐστιν μονόφθαλμον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν **γέενναν**

*quod si oculus tuus scandalizat te eice eum bonum est tibi luscum introire in regnum Dei quam duos oculos habentem mitti in **gehennam** ignis*

Joshua 18:16

καὶ καταβήσεται τὰ ὄρια ἐπὶ μέρους τοῦ ὄρους, ὃ ἐστὶν κατὰ πρόσωπον νάπης Ονναμ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐκ μέρους Εμεκραφαῖν ἀπὸ βορρᾶ, καὶ καταβήσεται **Γαιεννα** ἐπὶ νότου Ιεβουσαι ἀπὸ λιβδὸς καὶ καταβήσεται ἐπὶ πηγὴν Ρωγηλ

*descenditque in partem montis qui respicit vallem filiorum Ennom et est contra septentrionalem plagam in extrema parte vallis Rafaim descenditque **Gehennom** id est vallis Ennom iuxta latus Iebusei ad austrum et pervenit ad fontem Rogel*

Γαιεννα and Γεεννα are of course the same word, the Septuagint (LXX) also has Γαιβεβενομ in 2Chron. 28:3 and Γαι-βαναι-εννομ in 2Chron. 33:6 these are all **Greek transcriptions** of Hebrew words meaning the **Valley of (the son of) Hinnom**.

The Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) is several times mentioned in the Old Testament:

Joshua 15:8

Then it ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom along the southern slope of the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem). From there it climbed to the top of the hill west of the Hinnom Valley at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim.

Joshua 18:6

The boundary went down to the foot of the hill facing the Valley of Ben Hinnom, north of the Valley of Rephaim. It continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of the Jebusite city and so to En Rogel.

2. Kings 23:10

He desecrated Topheth, which was in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, so no-one could use it to sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire to Molech.

2. Chron. 28:3

He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations that the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

2. Chron. 33:6

He sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practised sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

Nehemiah 11:30

So they were living all the way from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

Jeremiah 31:40 might also refer to Gehenna:

And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

Also Isaiah 30:33

Tophet has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of burning sulphur, sets it ablaze.

Well it's spoken here of Tophet (or Gehenna) as a place of fiery judgment but here is hardly thought of endless infernal punishment beyond the grave or physical death.

Jeremiah 7:30-33 (Young's Literal Translation)

*For the sons of Judah Have done the evil thing in Mine eyes, An affirmation of Jehovah, They have set their abominations in the house On which My name is called - to defile it, And have built the high places of Tophet, That [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom, **To burn their sons and their daughters with fire, Which I did not command, Nor did it come up on My heart.** Therefore, lo, days are coming, An affirmation of Jehovah, And it is not said any more, 'The Tophet,' And 'Valley of the son of Hinnom,' But '**Valley of the slaughter,**' And they have buried in Tophet - without place. And the carcass of this people hath been **for food** To a fowl of the heavens, **and to a beast of the earth,** And there is none troubling.*

3 Points to consider:

- It **never came in God's heart to burn these children** (LXX and Vulgate support this translation), keep this in mind when I examine the first appearance of Gehenna in the NT
- It is said that it will be called the "*Valley of slaughter*", not the "*Valley of endless torment*" as modern mainstream Christianity suggests.
- It mentions **carcasses of men as food for the animals – aren't worms animals?** Keep this in mind both for Mark 9:43-49 and Isaiah 66:24 which I examine later.

Jeremiah 19 and Jeremiah 32:34.35 also mention this.

Let's now have a look on Isaiah 66:24 (KJV)

*And they shall go forth, and look **upon the carcasses** of the men that have transgressed against me: **for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched;** and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*

Jesus in Mark 9:43-49 most probably quoted this verse; the older manuscripts have *the worm that shall not die* only in verse 48. It is quite obvious that Isaiah spoke about corpses, worms do not torment corpses but devour them, the same with fire, fire does not torment dead bodies but consume them, what actually happened in the literal topographic Gehenna.

Isaiah 66:24 presents us a picture of an executed death sentence about transgressors, Jesus when quoting this verse might very likely meant something similar.

THEREFORE DOES MARK 9:43-49 IN NO WAY SUPPORT THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS TORMENT BUT RATHER THE IDEA OF EXTINCTION or annihilation and also that Jesus spoke more probably about the literal Gehenna and not a fiery netherworld.

The Greek Text does actually not say that their worm will not die but not come to an end:

ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.
opou o skōlēx autōn ou teleuta kai to pyr ou sbennutai
where their worm does not come to an end and their fire is not quenched

The Septuagint also does not have "to die" in Isaiah 66:24 but: σκωληξ αυτων ου τελευτησει, skōlēx autōn ou teleutēsei, *not come to an end* like Mark 9:48.

Worms that *don't come to an end* neither life eternally and torment living corpses nor do they never come do an end, also does *unquenchable fire* not burn without any end, **but as long as it has food it is unquenchable** after this is it goes out from alone, beside this did Isaiah spoke of corpses, dead people; and Jesus obviously quoted this verse and must have had something similar in mind.

Gehenna occurs first in the New Testament in Chapter 5 of Matthew (3x, most translations translate it with “hell”, some transcript it as Gehenna)

Matthew 5 ends with these words (v44-48):

*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; **That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:** for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.***

See Jeremiah:

*And have built the high places of Tophet, That [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom (Gehenna), **to burn their sons and their daughters with fire, which I did not command, nor did it come up on My heart.***

Jesus calls those who He threatens with Gehenna God's children (as He calls God their Father), therefore it's very unlikely that He meant with Gehenna a place of endless doom in the context, no honest man might seriously dispute this, especially when we read what is written in Jeremiah.

Gehenna occurs in the New Testament in:

Matthew 5:22, 29, 30

Matthew 10:28

Matthew 18:9

Matthew 23:15, 33

Mark 9:43-49 (3x)

Luke 12:5

James 3:6

Actually Jesus did NOT mention Gehenna more than at half a dozen occasions, it's not wrong to say that in the rest of the New Testament it does not appear (James 3:6 seems quite slight) – if Gehenna was intended to mean such a terrible fate, why this silence, why do John, Peter, Jude, Paul never mention it? Not to mention the OT where it is nothing but a literal valley.

This was an exhaustive comment on Gehenna, but Gehenna is one of the most important terms, as it is the only word still translated hell in more literal and accurate translations than the KJV as for example the Darby Translation.

II. Hell in the Old Testament and the King James Bible

For me being German (I curiously prefer to write in English about this topic) the idea that people earnestly believe the KJV is inerrant is a ridiculous and grotesque thought. But I understand that people prefer a certain translation due to church tradition, in Germany it's similar, most people read Luther and see his translation as a kind of authority, but of course nobody claims this translation is inerrant which would be ridiculous, Darby (Elberfelder in Germany) is also a respected translation here. I will prove from the KJV and some other translations that hell (Sheol) in the Old Testament is neither a place of torment nor endless and that there is no such doctrine as "eternal torment" in the Torah and Prophets and.

Jonah 2:2-7 (KJV)

*And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; **out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.** For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. **I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever:** yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.*

according to the KJV:

Jonah was IN HELL (2:2)

He WAS THERE FOREVER (2:6)

Yet he was DELIVERED AFTER 3 DAYS (2:10, 1:17)

If you claim the KJV is inerrant and believe in the traditional Catholic doctrine of hell how do you explain that Jonah was forever in hell and yet delivered after 3 days?

Of course Jonah was not in the torture chamber of a fiery netherworld called hell but in Sheol, which is no place of torment according to the Bible.

It would go far to examine all occurrences of Sheol in the Old Testament, there is a page which already did this: <http://www.sheol-know.org/>

But however some verses I will examine, quoting the KJV, Darby, the Catholic Douay Rheims Translation, the Septuagint, the Vulgate and the Luther Bible from 1545, the old German word for hell is almost the same as in English "Helle", "Hoelle" in modern German.

Sheol occurs 7 times in the Torah; however I will look upon three other verses first:

1 Samuel 2:6

*The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: **he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.** (KJV)
*Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive; **he bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up.** (Darby)
*The Lord killeth and maketh alive, **he bringeth down to hell, and bringeth back again.**
(Douay Rheims Bible, Catholic)***

Κυριος θανατοι και ζωογονει καταγει εις αδου και αναγει (Septuagint)
Kyrios thanatoi kai zōogonei, katagei eis adou (=hades) kai anagei

*Dominus mortificat et vivificat **deducit ad infernum et reducit** (Vulgate)*

Inferno is the Latin word for hell.

*Der HERR tödtet / vnd macht lebendig / **Füret in die Helle vnd wider er aus.** (Luther 1545)*

Sheol (hell), God delivers from this place

Ecclesiastes 9:10

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, **in the grave,** whither thou goest. (KJV)*

*Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, **in Sheol,** whither thou goest. (Darby)*

*Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be **in hell,** whither thou art hastening. (Douay Rheims)*

παντα οσα αν ευρη η χειρ σου του ποιησαι ως η δυναμις σου ποιησον οτι ουκ εστιν ποιημα και λογισμος και γνωσις και σοφια εν αδη οπου συ πορευη εκει (LXX)
panta osa eurê ê cheir sou tou poiêsai ôs ê dynamis sou poiêson oti ouk estin poiêma kai logismos kai gnôsis kai sophia en adê (=hades) opou su poreuê ekei

*quodcumque potest manus tua facere instanter operare quia nec opus nec ratio nec scientia nec sapientia erunt **apud inferos** quo tu properas (Vulgate)*

Inferos = hell

*Alles was dir furhanden kompt zu thun / das thu frisch / Denn **in der Helle** da du hin ferest / ist weder werck / kunst / vernunfft noch weisheit. (Luther 1545)*

The original Luther Bible was much more honest than the KJV was, the modern revised Luther Bible from 1912 is like the KJV, the Luther Bible from 1984 has almost banished hell out of the Old Testament, of course Sheol in this verse is not the type of hell as modern mainstream Christianity teaches, rather a place of rest than of torment or punishment.

Job 14:13

O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! (KJV)

Oh that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol, that thou wouldest keep me secret until thine anger be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me (Darby)

Who will grant me this, that thou mayst protect me in hell, and hide me till thy wrath pass, and appoint me a time when thou wilt remember me? (Douay Rheims)

ει γαρ οφελον εν αδη με εφυλαξας εκρυψας δε με εως αν παυσηται σου η οργη και ταξη μοι χρονον εν ω μνειαν μου ποιηση (Septuagint)
ei gar ophelon en adê (=hades) me ephylaxas ekrypsas de me eōs paustêtai sou ê orgê kai taxê moi chronon en ō mneian mou poise

quis mihi hoc tribuat ut in inferno protegas me ut abscondas me donec pertranseat furor tuus et constituas mihi tempus in quo recorderis mei (Vulgate)

AH / das du mich in der Helle verdecktest / vnd verbergest bis dein zorn sich lege / vnd setzest mir ein ziel / das du an mich denckest. (Luther 1545)

The idea that Job wanted to go to a place of never-ending torment, what we call hell is ridiculous, Job wanted to rest in Sheol, Hades in Greek.

Job 3:13-19 is also interesting:

*For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. **There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.** There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. **The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.***

The apocryphal Book of Sirach supports this view (though I give this book no authority but it shows the Jewish opinion at that time), Sirach 41:1-4 (KJV)

*O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things: yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat! O death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy, and unto him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and is vexed with all things, and to him that despaireth, and hath lost patience! **Fear not the sentence of death**, remember them that have been before thee, and that come after; for this is the sentence of the Lord over all flesh. And why art thou against the pleasure of the most High? **there is no inquisition in the grave (Greek: Hades)**, whether thou have lived ten, or an hundred, or a thousand years.*

I will now examine Sheol in the Torah; I will only quote the Darby Translation here:

Gen. 37:34.35

And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, and said, For I will go down to my son into Sheol mourning.

Gen. 42:37.38

And Reuben spoke to his father, saying, Slay my two sons if I bring him not back to thee: give him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. But he said, My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he alone is left; and if mischief should befall him by the way in which ye go, then would ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to Sheol.

Gen. 44:29-21

And if ye take this one also from me, and mischief should befall him, ye will bring down my grey hairs with misery to Sheol. And now, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us, seeing that his life is bound up with his life, it will come to pass when he sees that the lad is not there, that he will die; and thy servants will bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol.

Jacob obviously expected to go to Sheol when he dies, he also expected Joseph to be there. I think the KJV has here always *grave*, Luther has *pit*, the Septuagint *Hades*, the Vulgate *Inferno*, Douay Rheims has *hell*.

The next two occurrences are Numbers 16:28-33:

And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that Jehovah has sent me to do all these deeds, for they are not out of my own heart: if these men die as all men die, and are visited with the visitation of all men, Jehovah has not sent me; but if Jehovah make a new thing, and the ground open its mouth, and swallow them up, and all that they have, and they go down alive into Sheol, then ye shall know that these men have despised Jehovah. And it came to pass when he had ended speaking all these words, that the ground clave apart that was under them. And the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that belonged to Korah, and all their property. And they went down, they and all that they had, alive into Sheol, and the earth covered them; and they perished from among the congregation.

The KJV does amazingly translate with *pit* here, this verse would have been the best to claim Sheol is a kind of hell, however Sheol is four times mentioned before in connection with Jacob. The last occurrence of Sheol in the Torah is Deuteronomy 32:22:

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, And it shall burn into the lowest Sheol, and shall consume the earth and its produce, And set fire to the foundations of the mountains.

It mentions fire but nothing is here said about torment or punishment for the inhabitants of Sheol; it's the first rendering of hell in the KJV after Hebrew *sheol* was 4x rendered *grave* in connection with Jacob and 2x *pit* in connection with Korah.

III. it is claimed Hades is not Sheol

As we have seen, Sheol can hardly be claimed to be a fiery netherworld, therefore some people admit Sheol is actually no place of torment but claim Hades to be such a place; I've quoted the LXX, so according to the LXX Hades is the rendering of Sheol and therefore the same, but I'll show it from the Scriptures, again the Darby Translation (Darby believed in everlasting punishment, he went also so far to have corrupted the translation of 1Tim. 4:10, therefore no one can call his translation biased in this matter, at least he was far more honest than the translators of the KJV in regarding that matter).

Acts 2:24-32

*Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death, inasmuch as it was not possible that he should be held by its power; for David says as to him, I foresaw the Lord continually before me, because he is at my right hand that I may not be moved. Therefore has my heart rejoiced and my tongue exulted; yea more, my flesh also shall dwell in hope, **for thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, nor wilt thou give thy gracious one to see corruption.** Thou hast made known to me [the] paths of life, thou wilt fill me with joy with thy countenance.*

*Brethren, let it be allowed to speak with freedom to you concerning the patriarch David, that he has both died and been buried, and his monument is amongst us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath, of the fruit of his loins to set upon his throne; he, seeing [it] before, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither has he been left in Hades nor his flesh seen corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all *we* are witnesses.*

This is obviously a quote of Psalm 16:10

For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol, neither wilt thou allow thy Holy One to see corruption.

So Sheol and Hades are most likely one and the same place and as Sheol is no place of torment according to the Bible, Hades is hardly such place as well, Gehenna is literally the Valley of Hinnom as shown, everything else is speculation.

Some Jews, most probably the Pharisees and the Essenes maybe believed in netherworld punishment, as this is not taught in the Hebrew Bible I guess they got the concept from the Greek Orphic; the Sadducees seem to have rejected such doctrines as NOT taught in the Torah, it would go to much in detail but Paul warns about Jewish myths:

Titus 1:14

Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

IV. The rich man and Lazarus – Luke 16:19-31

Of course you can interpret it either literal or allegorical; you can interpret it allegorical and still defend the doctrine of endless torment using this verse, or you can interpret it in a way that has nothing to do with an afterlife; I give only a few points to consider:

The rich man was in Hades (Hebrew Sheol), not in Gehenna, Hades is not endless:

Revelation 20:13: *And the sea gave up the dead which [were] in it, and death and Hades (Hell in the KJV) gave up the dead which [were] in them; and they were judged each according to their works* (Darby Translation)

According to the Bible *Hades* (hell in the KJV) will deliver its dead, so also the rich man if he was actually there. Reasons why this story is most probably a parable:

- Abraham's bosom is never mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, but only in extra biblical Jewish sources; Jesus rebuked them for their traditions, see Mark 7:13
- Sheol/Hades (*grave, pit, hell* in the KJV) is nowhere else in the Bible described as a place of torment or punishment after death which I'll show later
- dead people carried away by angels is nowhere else in the Bible described
- Abraham can't send people back to life, the story implies he was able to do it if he had wanted but that he had only refused to do so – not that he was unable to do
- people in a kind of paradise after death, before Christ 's resurrection, undermines His death and resurrection
- the story is very symbolic, the other stories in the context before were parables as well

V. Immortal Soul / Immortal Spirit

There is no such thing as an immortal soul or spirit in the Bible, everybody who claims otherwise has not a single verse to support his doctrine but contradicts Scripture:

1 Timothy 6:15,16 *Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; **Who only hath immortality**, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

Some evangelicals do indeed reject the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as a pagan doctrine, but do however claim men have an immortal spirit, this is quite ridiculous because it's just the same doctrine only with other terms used. I think J. N. Darby did this, he refuted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as an unbiblical pagan doctrine but hold the opinion the spirit of men is immortal - never to cease, which is exactly the same in my opinion.

VI. Eternal punishment / eternal sin / eternal destruction ?

I make this part short, I guess there have dozen of books been written about this matter, books defending the classic Catholic doctrine of hell, others defending annihilation, others universalism. All I will do here regarding this matter is to prove Strong's definition wrong by the Scripture.

αιωνιος [aiōnios] (Strong number 166); Strong's definition:

1. **without beginning and end**, that which always has been and always will be
2. **without beginning**
3. **without end**, never to cease, everlasting

Romans 16:25.26

...κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν μυστηρίου χρόνοις αἰωνίοις σεσιγημένου, ²⁶ φανερωθέντος δὲ νῦν διὰ τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν κατ' ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ αἰωνίου θεοῦ ...

...kata apokalypsin mysteriou **chronois aiōniois** sestigēmenou, ²⁶ phanerōthentos de nun dia te graphōn prophētikōn kai epitagēn tou aiōniou Theou ...

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, and the proclaiming of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery **having been kept unvoiced during eternal times**, ²⁶ **but now has been made plain, and by prophetic Scriptures**, according to the commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith to all the nations; (Green's Literal Translation)*

The aeonian/eternal times obviously had an end:

3. — **without end**, never to cease, everlasting

Titus 1:2

*...on hope of eternal life which the God who does not lie promised **before the eternal times**...*

2 Timothy 1:9.10

*...the One having saved us and having called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus **before eternal times**, ¹⁰ but now revealed through the appearance of our Savior, Jesus Christ, indeed making death of no effect, bringing life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel,...*

Before eternal/aeonian times: 2. — **without beginning**

If it are the same eternal times from Romans 16:25:

1. — **without beginning and end**, that which always has been and always will be

There is no need to be a Greek scholar a theologian to prove such definitions wrong.
Once again:

αιωνιος [aiōnios] (Strong number 166); Strong's definition:

1. ~~without beginning and end, that which always has been and always will be~~
2. ~~without beginning~~
3. ~~without end, never to cease, everlasting~~

All his definitions are proven wrong by the Bible, *eonian times* having both beginning and end; there is another interesting verse, though it is not so clear there:

Philemon 15

Τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη πρὸς ὥραν, ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχης,
Taga gar dia touto echōrīsthē pros ōran, ina aiōnion auton apechēs,

*For perhaps for this he was separated for an hour, **that you might receive him eternally**; ¹⁶ no longer as a slave, but beyond a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, and how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.*

I think eternally/eonian here refers probably to life time, like in Exodus 21:6 and Deuteronomy 15:17, of course it can also mean that this connection continues in the future life. There is however one verse which might seem problematic:

2. Corinthians 4:18

μὴ σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα· τὰ γὰρ βλεπόμενα πρόσκαιρα, τὰ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια.

mê skopountōn êmōn ta blepomena alla ta mê blepomena ta gar blepomena proskairā,
ta de mê blepomena aiōnia.

...while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen [are] for a time, but those that are not seen eternal. (Darby)

*For tho thingis that ben seyn, ben but durynge **for a schort tyme**; but tho thingis that ben not seyn, ben euerlastyngē. (Wycliffe Bible)*

One might suppose here is contrasted time in general with timeless eternity in a possibly Platonic sense, but that's not 100% correct and I think a forced upon interpretation. *Proskairōs* is not time itself, this would be *chronos*, but rather a (shorter) period as far as I know, you can contrast strict opposites or things that are related to each other, you can contrast a lake with a desert and you can contrast a lake with an ocean; many say here is contrasted time with timeless eternity, but you can also contrast something which lasts only a short present period with something that is yet future and will last for ages. I think this verse proofs in no way that *aiōnios* should be understood as endless, because this verse does not say so. It might be the perfect definition of Hebrew *olam* which means something like hidden time: *Things that are seen last only for a (short present) period, but things yet future, not seen yet and with unavowed end are olam/eonian*. This might be a possible interpretation without any relation to a supposed endlessness or timeless eternity.

VII. Revelation 20:10

*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the **lake of fire and brimstone**, where the beast and the false prophet are, **and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.** (KJV)*

I openly admit this verse does not work with the doctrine of annihilation taught by Jehovah Witnesses or Seven Day Adventists; however it does not support the doctrine of hell regarding humans!

Some claim as the devil will be cast in the lake of fire and be tormented there forever and ever, therefore people casted in the lake fire will suffer the same fate, **but the Bible does neither say nor imply this, actually the opposite in my view:**

First a look on Revelation 19:19-21

*And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. **And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet** that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. **These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse**, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

Here does John emphasize that the beast and the false prophet were cast alive in the lake of fire, **but human beings were slain with the sword (humans unlike the devil also killed in 20:9)!**

Revelation 20:13-15

*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death.** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

When the devil or the beast and the false prophet were thrown in the lake of fire, WE READ NO WORD ABOUT A SECOND DEATH, but HOWEVER WHEN **HUMAN BEINGS** are thrown in there, it says **SECOND DEATH**. If we suppose the lake of fire is a literal lake of fire as fundamentalists do, this has a deep logic: The devil or any angelic being would not die by fire I guess, because they are not mortals, however mortal men (men are mortal according to the bible) would surely die if thrown in a literal lake of fire, if not kept alive in a miraculous manner. Also hell (Hades) and death will not be endlessly tormented in the lake of fire, at least I never heard anybody to claim so. In my opinion it's quite logic that the devil receives a harsher punishment than any mortal being, that the devil being no mortal will suffer torment in a lake of fire while mortal beings suffer death there of course, if taken literal.

VIII. Will any being actually be tormented forever and ever without any end?

Again Revelation 20:10:

καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ θείου ὄπου καὶ τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

kai o diabolos o planōn autous eblêthê eis tēn limnēn tou pyros kai theiou opou kai to thērion kai o pseudoprophētēs kai basanisthēsontai êmeras kai nuktos *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*.

*et diabolus qui seducebat eos missus est in stagnum ignis et sulphuris ubi et bestia et pseudoprophetes et cruciabuntur die ac nocte **in saecula saeculorum*** (Vulgate)

*where bothe the beeste and fals prophetis schulen be turmentid dai and niyt, **in to worldis of worldis***. (Wycliffe Bible)

*And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where [are] both the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night **for the ages of ages***. (Darby)

*and the Devil, who is leading them astray, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where [are] the beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night -- **to the ages of the ages***. (Young's Literal)

*And the Devil leading them astray was thrown into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet were . And they were tormented day and night **to the ages of the ages***. (Green's Literal)

FOREVER AND EVER IS NOT TRUE TO THE GREEK, it's literally *ages of the ages*, *ages of ages* is a Hebrew idiom, like *song of songs*, *Lord of Lords*, *day of days* etc., there is no hint that it shall mean everlasting without any end.

Many translations have it correct, e.g. the Vulgate; German Bibles translate “*von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit*”, from Eternity to Eternity – which makes literally no sense, neither in German nor in English.

IX. Revelation 14 – tormented day and night?

This is very exhaustive explained here: <http://www.jewishnotgreek.com/>

X. a question that can never be answered satisfyingly

Why should God everlastingly torment any human being?

Some arguments in favor for it are:

- a) God's Holiness makes infinite punishment necessary
- b) Human free will makes it necessary, people choose hell
- c) The torments of hell are self inflicted
- d) The Bible teaches it (as they claim), as God is just, everlasting torment is just
- e) God predestinated men for hell, for His joy and the joy of the righteous to watch this spectacle (maybe according to Augustine, Calvin)
- f) Men are utterly wicked and deserve it

I will begin to refute them:

a) The Bible doesn't say that God's Holiness makes infinite punishment necessary but actually the opposite; see **Psalm 103:9** and **Isaiah 57:16**. I see no sane reason why God's Holiness would force him to everlastingly torment offenders, everlasting extinction is also an infinite punishment. The classic doctrine of hell says nothing else that God will force sinners to everlastingly exist as sinners and possibly blaspheme Him forever and ever – how would this serve God's Holiness or even justice?

Leviticus 10:1.2 might be an example what happens to people who offend God's Holiness:

*And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. **And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.***

I know that this verse has no eschatological context, but it implies that those who offend God's Holiness and can't stay in His presence, will rather be literally destroyed than tormented.

b) This a stupid argument, no one can or would choose hell (everlasting torment) if he has the choice, but to have the choice men would need to know for sure that there is both paradise and hell, they would need to know how paradise would be like and how hell would be like, only then would they have a fair choice. On the other hand, if men had a free will, **why shouldn't they be allowed to simply choose death?**

Deuteronomy 30:19

*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that **I have set before you life and death**, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:*

The Bible does nowhere mention a choice between heaven and hell, but between life and death, death is no miserable everlasting life as it is written: *And I find **more bitter than death the woman**, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands* (Ecclesiastes 7:26), I can hardly imagine any woman more bitter than an everlasting life in misery.

c) This argument is solely based on the doctrine of immortal soul, it is claimed mortal men can never ever cease to exist, therefore create immortal sinners their own hell in the afterlife; as it is unscriptural philosophy, I see no reason to go into detail her. The Bible says God will judge, not that judgment is self-inflicted – the later I think is kind of New-Age philosophy.

d) If the Bible teaches everlasting torment - is the matter examined here, this argument could only make sense if the Bible would actually teach it and even then it would be an unsatisfying argument.

e) This can only be called a lie:

Ezekiel 18:23,30

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

***For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth**, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

If God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, how much less would He have pleasure in the everlasting misery of them? The believers shall be like their Father in heaven (Mt. 5:48).

f) Even if men were so utterly wicked, that they deserve any doom and penalty imaginable, or better to say unimaginable, this is still no reason why God, being Love and good should actually inflict it.

For example if we had the chance to torture Hitler, Stalin or anybody similar for years or decades, they might possibly deserve it, but even if, who of us would actually do it?

I wouldn't do it and I guess very few people would do it, torturing a man like Hitler for decades, wouldn't make this one's worse than Hitler?

After all, men are God's creation and He said it was very good (Genesis 1:31), why should God create a creature so abominable that it deserves everlasting doom or allow His once good creature to become so abominable that He is forced to inflict endless doom on them as an adequate and deserved punishment, this makes absolutely no sense.