

# Eternal Life Is Not Worse Than Death

In the modern era there seems to be a common belief that living forever would be a terrible thing. There are quite a few people who claim that they would never want to live forever because that's a fate which is worse than death. Since this belief is so widespread, I'd like to take some time and address it from a Biblical standpoint.

First of all, the Bible teaches that everyone will live forever – both the righteous *and* the wicked. This is taught in both the Old and New Testaments. As the book of Daniel explains, the righteous will be given the gift of everlasting life while the wicked are given everlasting torment:

**Daniel 12:2:** “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

The apostle Paul also taught that both the just *and* the unjust will be raised from the dead:

**Acts 24:15:** “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”

For the unjust, eternal life will indeed be a fate worse than death. That's because on Judgment Day the wicked will be raised from the dead – and then thrown into the lake of fire and tormented forever, with no hope of release:

**Revelation 20:15:** “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into

the lake of fire.”

Jesus made it clear that the torment of the wicked will last *forever*. They will be eternally tortured by being burned alive in a fire that's never quenched, and they will also be eaten by worms. The wicked won't even have the hope of dying and ending their pain that way:

**Mark 9:43-44:** “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.”

However, the Bible doesn't call this “everlasting life” (even though these tormented people can never die). Instead it calls it the “second death”:

**Revelation 20:14:** “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

The gift of everlasting life is *entirely* different. The Bible tells us that those who repent of their sins and believe on Him won't experience the second death:

**Revelation 20:6:** “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

This passage tells us that those who are raised from the dead *before* Judgment Day, in the first resurrection, will never experience the second death. Since they were included in the

resurrection of the righteous (instead of the resurrection of the wicked), they will inherit everlasting life instead of everlasting torment. Jesus repeatedly promised that those who repent of their sins and believe in Him will receive everlasting life:

**Matthew 19:29:** “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

**Luke 18:30:** “Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

**John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

**John 3:36:** “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

**John 4:14:** “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

**John 5:24:** “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

**John 6:40:** “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

**John 6:47:** “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

**John 11:25-26:** “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

There are quite a few people who believe that everlasting life would be an awful thing to have. Now, it's true that living forever in *this* world – with all of its pain and suffering and war and disease and poverty – would be a terrible thing. However, that's *not* what God promised! Instead He told us that the righteous will live forever in a *new* world, where there will never be any of the things that makes life in this world so difficult:

**Revelation 21:1-5:** “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the

former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

In this new heaven and earth (which will be created after Judgment Day) there will never be death, sorrow, crying, or pain. All of the evil that makes life so hard will be gone *forever* and will never return. There will never again be war, or suffering, or disease. That means our fate is *not* to live forever in a world that's full of agony! Instead it's to live forever in a *much* better world.

There are some people who teach that even if the world was perfect and you could have everything you ever wanted, eventually life would become boring. Since the universe is finite, people who lived forever would eventually run out of things to do and would be tormented by endless boredom.

However, that's not what God promised! As you can see from Revelation 21, God Himself is going to live with mankind in the new heaven and earth that He will create. This is very important because *God is infinite*. It's impossible to ever exhaust Him! If we live forever with Him then we'll never grow bored, because even eternity isn't long enough to bridge the infinite gap between God and man. God has also promised that His kingdom will continue to grow *forever*. It will never stop and become stagnant:

**Isaiah 9:6-7:** “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will

perform this.”

Furthermore, what God has promised Christians isn't endless boredom and frustration. Instead it's everlasting joy:

**Psalm 16:11:** “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

It's true that for the wicked, the prospect of everlasting life is horrifying. The wicked will be tormented by fire and worms day and night forever, with no hope of relief. That's why it's so important to repent and believe in Jesus now, while there's still time. For the wicked everlasting life really *is* worse than death. It's literally an eternity of unbearable torture.

However, for the righteous it's very different. The righteous will live forever in a perfect world, in the presence of an infinite God who cares about them and loves them. They will live in a world that has no pain or suffering or death or war or disease, and they will live in that world *forever*. God will give the righteous the fullness of joy and everlasting pleasures – and they will never exhaust the universe or run out of things to do because the kingdom of God will never stop growing. That's the staggering promise of everlasting life, which God has made to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.