

A word study shows that this refers to a “test” or “trial” wherein a touchstone is used to see if gold is genuine or false. As Roman justice degenerated their “trial” of prisoners degraded to torment, but the foundational meaning is “tested.”

A couple other language insights from Revelation 20:10 bring one to see the Champion holding less weight. For one, the phrase “day and night” represents diligence and zeal within Scripture: **“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night”** (Psa. 1:2). Also, an ellipsis (purposeful hole to be filled from the context) has been inappropriately filled. **“Are also”** is improper, foreign, and misleading. Ellipses need to be completed with words from the verse’s immediate context. “Were thrown” is contextual.

How does this verse weigh-in? Through God's judgment Satan is thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone. Satan is tossed into this fire (alive?) where the beast and the false prophet were thrown (Rev. 19:20). Satan is burned to death and becomes ashes and ceases to exist (Ezek. 28). God judges (sets the record straight) through a vigorously diligent (day and night) test (not torment) of these beings and what they did for the eons of the eons. (Since *aion* carries the idea of outflow, this test pertains to the outflows of the outflows, i.e. the results of his outflows. [The wording here is a future tense because Revelation is a futuristic book taking place beyond the Day of the Lord.]) Ever since the beginning of time, Satan has been flowing out lies to the world. Most of these have had huge results, all negative. God will set the record straight to reveal every detail of Satan's rebellion. Mankind will be much wiser for this thorough touchstone test and learn the consequences of even the slightest rebellion.

Our “Champion” verse of “eternal conscious torment” does not stand out as commonly promoted. The Champion only stands on the rest of the Word, and those studies must be done for accurate understanding. Careful analysis showed the fundamentals would not allow the Champion to keep the title. We are wise to not label God with abominations. Once beaten, Mike Tyson never attained invincible status again. Revelation 20:10 must also surrender invincibility itself to the context of the Bible rather than as a single verse hyped-up by a preconceived view.

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Isaiah 55:10

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The Champion: Revelation 20:10

By Andrew Brown

Mike Tyson was the most feared boxer of his time; just a look from him could almost claim the victory over his opponents. Revelation 20:10 is a similar “Champion” passage expected to conquer (and convince) all who look upon it and question the doctrine of eternal torment. **“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever”** (Rev. 20:10 NASB throughout). Satan appears to be tormented forever in Hell. Is this passage the perfect knockout to any debate?

Ezekiel 28:19 rises up as a “Challenger” to this interpretation of Revelation 20:10. Thousands of years before Revelation was written, Ezekiel predicted the end of Satan: **“Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you....and you will cease to be forever”** (Ezek. 28:18-19). This passage is doubtlessly referring to Satan, the “king of Tyre,” who was in **“Eden, the garden of God”** (Ezek. 28:13). Fire will consume Satan turning him into ashes on the earth. This is a portrait of destruction rather than “eternal torment.” Will Satan “cease to be” or “be tormented . . . forever”? This apparent conflict begs the analysis of our Champion to see if he is truly invincible.

Is the interpretation of Revelation 20:10 sound? As context Revelation 20:14 tells: **“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”** This should cause us to scratch our heads. Men have translated Hades “hell” elsewhere, but here “hell” ends in the Lake of Fire. Is Hades “hell”? Is the lake of fire “hell”? How can “hell” be tossed into “hell”? Poor Bible study and a lack of defining key words has led to these bizarre questions being necessary. The Greek words *hades*, *gehenna*, *tartaroo*, along with the Lake of Fire have all been inpreed

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translated or interpreted as being “hell” in the New Testament. Differentiation of these words is vital to the eternal torment topic. (Also the Hebrew *sheol*.) The first weakness of the Champion is that the original words are not defined by Scripture.

After Bible students have come to understand the different “hell” terms, they may accurately conclude *gehenna*, the burning trash dump of Jerusalem, was symbolic for the lake of fire. Many supporters of the Champion make up imaginary details regarding hell. But truth must be found in the facts of Scripture and not the invented fairy tales of tradition. **“But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell [*Gehenna*]; yes, I tell you, fear Him!”** (Luke 12:5). Here God throws people into *gehenna* “after He has killed.” The punishment of *gehenna* (or the lake of fire) happens after one is dead! This resembles the book of Joshua: **“Afterward Joshua . . . put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until evening”** (Josh. 10:26). Joshua killed and then hung them (to mar their reputations). One will notice the beast and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire “alive” (Rev. 19:20). This is an exception to the rule. Nevertheless, the outcome of these beings is death in the lake (there is no mention of soul or spirit here).

The Bible also establishes the example of eternal fire. **“Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them . . . are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire”** (Jude 1:7). Sodom and Gomorrah are *the example of eternal fire*! The location of Sodom is known and is not still burning today. Eternal fire, according to the Bible, is NOT one that burns forever! The people of Sodom were killed, and the fire ceased. **“Our God is a consuming fire”** (Heb. 12:29), and He consumed the wicked. God did not preserve them alive for torment.

God’s mind must stay before us for His thoughts are higher than ours. God spoke His mind regarding Israel’s idol worship of Molech, wherein they would pass their children through the fire. God adamantly reveals passing live people through flames does not coincide with His ideas. **“They built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin”** (Jer. 32:35; also see Jer. 7:31, 19:5). How could passing people through the fire never have entered God’s mind if He was actively tormenting people at this point? God calls this abhorrent practice an abomination. This should make us reconsider before saying God torments the wicked eternally.

We must allow God’s Word to decide the punishment for the wicked.

Since God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), this punishment should be straightforward from the beginning. God is just, fair, and righteous. In the garden, God plainly told Adam that *he would die* if he disobeyed His word by eating the fruit. Death is defined as a *return*: **“Until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken; for you are dust and to dust you will return”** (Gen. 3:19). Death is always the punishment for sin. **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Rom. 6:23). The wages are not torment but death. The Old Testament will be searched in vain to find any clear teaching on eternal torment. The Old Testament teaches the destruction of the wicked. **“The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away”** (Psa. 1:4), **“For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish”** (Psa. 1:6). Dozens of similar verses can be found. The Lord has described the end of wickedness, not its continuance. How can hell exist when God makes all things new in the New Heavens and New Earth (Rev. 21:1, 5)? How can there be hell when **“there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away”** (Rev. 21:4)? Many weaknesses are present in our Champion; why is he given such fame?

As we measure our Champion verse, a huge weakness appears in the phrase “for ever and ever.” Plural nouns are being translated into an adverbial clause “forever and ever.” The Greek phrase “*aionas eis aionon*” contains two plural nouns. It is ludicrous to say, but plural nouns cannot be translated by an adverbial clause! The Greek word *aion* does not mean forever or ever. There are numerous passages where an *aion* (or Heb.-*olam*) ends. Terror or laughter would result if *aion* were consistently translated with the idea of forever. Satan would be described as the “god of this forever.” **“In whose case the god of this world [*Gk.- aion*] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving”** (2 Cor. 4:4). There are many difficult passages with this word *aion*. These must be wrestled with in study to accurately answer, “What does *aion* mean?” before one can speak knowledgeably about the plural forms, or the differences between the various Scriptural *aion* phrases. Our Champion has erroneously altered his measurements to mean “forever and ever” ignoring the original language tense and plurality.

More inconsistencies exist with the Greek word *basanizo*, translated “tormented.” It also needs careful consideration. God’s use of this word implies a different translation. Matthew 14:24 uses the word pertaining to waves “tormenting” a boat. Clearly the boat was being tested by the waves. *Basanizo* also refers to the testing trials of various diseases (Matt. 4:24) and the condition of the centurion’s paralyzed slave (Matt. 8:29).