

Men's Discipleship

False Religions: Seventh Day Adventist Part 6

SDA Final Judgment & Hell (Annihilationism)

1) What Adventists teach

SDA Narrative. After Christ's visible return and a thousand-year "millennium" in heaven, the wicked are raised, judgment is publicly reviewed, and "fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth... [so] the universe will... be freed of sin and sinners forever." [Adventista Institucional](#)

Historic SDA (Ellen G. White).

- "The wicked are at last **destroyed, root and branch**—Satan the root, his followers the branches." [media2.egwwritings.org](#)
- "The fire that consumes the wicked **purifies the earth... No eternally burning hell** will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin." [media2.egwwritings.org+1](#)
- Of the lost: they become "**as though they had not been.**" [media2.egwwritings.org](#)

Contemporary SDA statements.

- Official belief #27 (world divisions echo the same wording): "The unrighteous... [are] resurrected... but **fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth.**" [Adventista Institucional+2nadadventist.org+2](#)
- Biblical Research Institute describes annihilationism as the view in which "the **wicked cease to exist** after God's judgment... There is **no eternal torment** in Hell." [adventistbiblicalresearch.org](#)
- Ministry/Adventist articles defend conditional immortality and deny "eternal conscious torment." [Ministry Magazine+1](#)

Texts commonly cited by SDAs. Mal 4:1–3 ("stubble... ashes"), Ezek 28:18–19 ("I made a fire... it consumed you... you shall be no more"), Matt 10:28 ("destroy both soul and body in Gehenna"), Rom 6:23 ("wages of sin is death"), Obad 16 ("as though they had not been"), Rev 20 ("second death").

2) How this differs from classic Protestant confessional theology

Westminster Confession of Faith (1647). At the last day the wicked "**shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction** from the presence of the Lord." [A Puritan's Mind](#)

1689 London Baptist Confession. The wicked “shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction.” [The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith](#)

Puritan & classical voices (samples).

- Thomas Watson: “The **torments of hell abide for ever.**” [jeffriddle.net](#)
- Jonathan Edwards: on “**the eternity of hell torments.**” [Veritas et Lux](#)
- Thomas Boston underscores the reality and severity of hell’s torment. [A Puritan's Mind](#)

Texts emphasized in the Protestant reading. Matt 25:46 (“**eternal punishment**” // “eternal life”), Mark 9:48 (“**their worm does not die... fire is not quenched**”), 2 Thess 1:9 (“**eternal destruction**... away from the presence of the Lord”), Rev 14:11 (“**smoke of their torment** goes up forever and ever”), Rev 20:10 (“tormented **day and night forever and ever**”).

a) Mark 9:48 Exegesis of the text itself

- “**Their worm**” (ὁ σκόληξ αὐτῶν) — the pronoun *their* personalizes the image. It’s not just “worms” generally; it’s **the worm belonging to the impenitent (someone unrepentant)**, often taken to signify the **gnawing of one’s own guilt/accusing conscience**.
- “**Does not die**” / “**unquenchable fire**” — the paired negatives (“does not die,” “is not quenched”) point to **ongoingness**, not a process that ends in extinction.
- **Jesus applies Isaiah’s imagery to Gehenna** — moving from the corpses of Isaiah’s vision to **final judgment**, intensifying it into **everlasting ruin**.

b) Canonical/backing passages

- **Matthew 25:46** — “eternal (αἰώνιον) punishment” is **parallel** with “eternal life”; the same adjective grounds the duration of both.
- **Revelation 14:10–11** — “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night.”
- **Revelation 20:10, 14–15** — the devil, beast, false prophet (and all in the lake of fire) are “tormented day and night forever and ever.”
- **Daniel 12:2** — “everlasting contempt” (Heb. *dera’ôn*), suggesting an **unending state of shame**.
- **Luke 16:25** (rich man and Lazarus) — memory and regret figure centrally, often read as **conscience remembering**.

- **Romans 2:15** — conscience “accusing” is seen as a foretaste of **final inward accusation**.

c) Linguistic/logical considerations

- **“Unquenchable”** (ἄσβεστος) — in biblical usage means a fire that **cannot be put out**; it burns **so long as there is fuel**, which in this reading is the person under judicial wrath.
- **Symmetry argument** — if “eternal life” is truly everlasting, **the parallel “eternal punishment” is too** (same adjective, same sentence, Matt 25:46).
- **Personal pronoun** (“their worm”) + **present participle imagery** strengthens the case for **personal, continuing experience**, not mere annihilation.

d) Historical Protestant/Confessional witnesses

- **Westminster Confession of Faith 33.2** (and **1689 Baptist Confession 32–33**) teach a **final judgment** where the wicked are consigned to **everlasting torments**.
- **Calvin** (on Mark 9:48/Isa 66): the undying worm signifies **the stings of conscience** that “*gnaw the wicked without end*.”
- **Turretin**: argues from Matt 25:46 and Rev 14/20 that the **punishment’s duration equals the saints’ blessedness**.
- **Jonathan Edwards**, “The Eternity of Hell Torments”: conscience will “*for ever*” recall one’s sins, fueling **unceasing remorse**.

e) Why “conscience” specifically?

- The **personal pronoun** (“their worm”) + **accusatory role of conscience** (Rom 2:15) **memory/regret** (Luke 16) gives theological warrant to say the undying “worm” is **the inward self-accusation and remorse that never ceases—a torment within**, alongside the external image of fire.

Classical & scholastic witnesses

- **Augustine, City of God 21.9** — God’s word about “**the everlasting punishment of the damned**” will surely come to pass; Jesus thrice repeats “**their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched**.” [New Advent](#)
 - **Thomas Aquinas, ST Suppl. 97.2** — “the worm... is the remorse of conscience.” [New Advent+1](#)
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Reformed scholastic

- **Francis Turretin, *Institutes*** (summary excerpt) — hell’s punishments are adumbrated by “**the gnawing worm**” and “**perpetually burning fire**”; annihilation is denied since Scripture depicts **unspeakable torments of soul and body... forever**. [A Puritan's Mind](#)
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Puritan & Reformed divines

- **Jonathan Edwards, “The Eternity of Hell’s Torments” (1739)** — “The misery of the wicked in hell will be absolutely eternal.” (on Matt 25:46) [Bible Bulletin Board](#)
 - **Richard Baxter, *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest*** — “This word, **everlasting**, contains the perfection of **their torment** and our glory.” [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#)
 - **Thomas Boston, “The Doctrine of Hell”** — “The worm of a bad conscience will neither die nor sleep in hell.” [A Puritan's Mind](#)
 - **Thomas Goodwin, *The Vanity of Thoughts*** — “Your **thoughts**... follow them to hell and torment them even worse there. **Your thoughts are the greatest executioners there, even ‘the worm that never dies.’**” [Eternal Life Ministries](#)
 - **A. A. Hodge, on WCF 33** — summarizes the section where the wicked are “**cast into eternal torments**,” with proofs including **Mark 9:48**. [Confessional Collective](#)
 - **Matthew Henry (commentary on Mark 9:48)** — “**Remorse of conscience and keen self-reflection are this never-dying worm.**” [Christianity.com](#)
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Key biblical pillars behind the reading

- **Duration symmetry:** “*eternal punishment*” || “*eternal life*” (same adjective, Matt 25:46).
 - **Unending torment:** “*no rest, day or night... forever and ever*” (Rev 14:11); the lake of fire is “*day and night forever and ever*” (Rev 20:10).
 - **Shame/contumely:** “*everlasting contempt*” (Dan 12:2).
 - **Personal memory/remorse motif:** Luke 16:25 (“Son, **remember**...”).
 - **Conscience as accuser:** Rom 2:15.
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Rebuttal column (brief answers to annihilationist readings)

Objection	Protestant reply (with anchors)
“ Unquenchable just means ‘very hot’ until it burns out.”	In Scripture, unquenchable = not able to be extinguished (Mark 9:43–48; cf. Rev 14:11); the imagery depicts a fire that isn’t put out , not one that quickly dies.
“Isaiah 66 shows corpses , not conscious persons.”	Jesus reapplies Isaiah’s language to final judgment (Mark 9:48), and later texts explicitly teach ongoing torment (Matt 25:46; Rev 14:11; 20:10).

Objection	Protestant reply (with anchors)
“ Death means non-existence.”	Biblically, “death” often means relational separation and ruin under wrath (Eph 2:1; Rev 20:10,14–15), not cessation of being.
“ Worm is only a metaphor, so not real suffering.”	Classical and scholastic exegesis treats “worm” as remorse of conscience —an internal, personal torment that never ceases (Aquinas; Henry; Goodwin; Boston). A Puritan's Mind+3New Advent+3Christianity.com+3
“Everlasting punishment is unjust.”	Confessions and divines argue the duration of punishment matches the gravity of sin against an infinitely holy God , and Scripture pairs the eternity of punishment with the eternity of life (Matt 25:46; Turretin; Edwards). A Puritan's Mind+1

3) Side-by-side: final judgment & hell

Topic	SDA (Annihilationism / Conditional Immortality)	Classic Protestant/Reformed
Final sequence	After a millennium, the wicked are raised, judgment is reviewed, fire consumes the wicked; the earth is purified, and the universe is free of sin/sinners. “Fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth.” Adventista Institucional	Single last judgment; the wicked are consigned to eternal conscious punishment . WCF: “cast into eternal torments... everlasting destruction .” A Puritan's Mind
Nature of hell	Terminal : punishment ends in the second death (non-existence). EGW: “destroyed, root and branch .” “ No eternally burning hell .” media2.egwwritings.org+1	Endless : hell is everlasting, conscious, just retribution proportionate to guilt. LBCF: “ everlasting torments .” The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith
Duration	Finite suffering culminating in annihilation; many Adventist writers still affirm degrees of punishment before extinction. Ellen White Info	Infinite duration; often also degrees of punishment within an eternal state. (e.g., Luke 12:47–48 in Reformed exegesis.)
Rationale	Guards God’s goodness/justice; immortality is God’s gift to the redeemed only; “wicked cease to exist... no eternal torment .” adventistbiblicalresearch.org	Upholds Christ’s own “ eternal punishment ” language (Matt 25:46) in parity with “eternal life”; confessional consensus of WCF/1689; classic Protestant tradition. A Puritan's Mind+1
Earth’s fate	Fire purifies the earth; new earth follows; “ No eternally burning hell .” media2.egwwritings.org	New heavens/new earth; hell remains as the final estate of the impenitent. (Rev 20:10; classic confessional reading.)

4) Narrative summary (Protestant critique of the SDA position)

From a classic Protestant vantage point (Westminster, 1689, Puritan and Reformed writers), the Adventist doctrine errs at three key points:

1. **Duration & nature of punishment.** Christ's own wording places "**eternal punishment**" in parallel with "eternal life" (Matt 25:46), and the confessional reading insists this is **endless conscious retribution**—not extinction. Mark 9:48; Rev 14:11; 20:10 are read straightforwardly as **unending**. [A Puritan's Mind+1](#)
2. **Doctrine of man & immortality.** Protestant theology grants the soul's continued conscious existence after death and at judgment; Adventist **conditional immortality** (a prerequisite for annihilation) is rejected as a **systemic premise** not taught in the confessions, which instead affirm the **immediate** and **enduring** post-mortem states and a never-ending hell. [A Puritan's Mind+1](#)
3. **Public justice of God.** Classic Protestant writers argue that **divine holiness** and the **infinite demerit** of sin against an infinite God warrant everlasting punishment; hence the confessional language "**eternal torments... everlasting destruction.**" (See also Puritan elaborations like Watson/Edwards.) [jeffriddle.net+1](#)