

# Annihilationism

## *some questions and answers*

by: John Ritchie

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1. Does death, in Ezekiel 18:20, where the words are, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” mean extinction?

No; neither there nor anywhere else, where it is used in Scripture. Annihilationists say that the judgment of sin is the death of the soul. But Scripture never so speaks. Nor does it speak of the death of the body. It is the man who dies, not his body or his soul. The word in Ezekiel 18:20, is the person—the individual—not the father for the son, but the person who sins, he shall die. The word “soul” is so used in 1 Peter 3:20; 4:19.

2. What do the words, “shall not see life,” in John 3:36, mean?

If he never sees life, must he not be exterminated? Existence and life are not synonymous. All have the former—saint and sinner alike; only the saints have “life,” as the word is here and elsewhere used (see John 17:3; Rom. 6:23). Eternal life is the possession of the believer now, and in the future. The unbeliever “hath not life” (1 John 5:12) now; and of him it is said that he “shall not see life” hereafter. Yet he exists without it, as we know. That he shall continue to exist while never seeing it, is equally sure, as the closing words of the verse, “The wrath of God abides on him,” solemnly

tell. Wrath cannot “abide” upon a nonentity. Endless existence is common to all men and angels; eternal life is the present possession of believers only (John 5:24). Immortality, which applies to a condition of life in the future, they look for (Rom. 2:7), and will “put on”, (1 Cor. 15:53) at the coming of the Lord.

3. How was the word spoken to Adam, in Genesis 2:17, “Thou shalt surely die,” fulfilled?

Not by natural death, for he lived 930 years. Nor was it “extinction of his being,” as Annihilationists say, for neither “in the day” Adam ate of the tree did his being become extinct, nor is it now. Nor did the promise of redemption suspend or postpone the sentence. When Adam sinned, the threatened death came upon him that day. His near relationship to God was broken. He was severed from His presence by sin; such is death in its deepest sense (see Eph. 2:1; 4:18). Yet he existed, as sinners still exist “without God”; so Romans 5:12-13, clearly tells us. And if, while now without life in Christ, fallen angels and sinful men exist, so, in the disembodied and the eternal states; they shall exist, as Scripture fully shows (see 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:10; Luke 16:23; Rev. 20:15).

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