

# Rule of Faith

a.k.a Creeds

The Church, though dispersed through our the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith:

[She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them.

And in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation

And in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord.

And [the Holy Spirit proclaimed] His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father "to gather all things in one," and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, "every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess" to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all.

[So] that He may send "spiritual wickednesses," and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.

# Real Word Hermeneutical Challenges

“If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.” (Isaiah 7:9)

Are Birthday Parties Evil?

“On the third day, which was **Pharaoh’s birthday**, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.” (Genesis 40:20–22)

“But an opportunity came when Herod **on his birthday** gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias’s daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.” And he vowed to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.” And she went out and said to her mother, “For what should I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.”” (Mark 6:21–24)

“For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.” (Romans 4:15)

# God is Love Fallacy

“God is love.” (1 John 4:8)

The fact is that the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse – a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith. Deeper than that, however, is that such a concept stands in total contradiction to the statement that “God is Love”. If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil.

Steve Chalke - The Lost Message of Jesus p. 182

In reality, penal substitution (in contrast to other substitutionary theories) doesn't cohere well with either biblical or Early Church thought. Although penal substitution isn't as old as many people assume (it's not even as old as the pews in many of our church buildings), it is actually built on pre-Christian thought...

The theological problem with penal substitution is that it presents us with a God who is first and foremost concerned with retribution flowing from his wrath against sinners. The only way for his anger to be placated is in receiving recompense from those who have wronged him; and although his great love motivates him to send his Son, his wrath remains the driving force behind the need for the cross. (the redemption of the cross, from Chalke's chapter in the Atonement Debate)

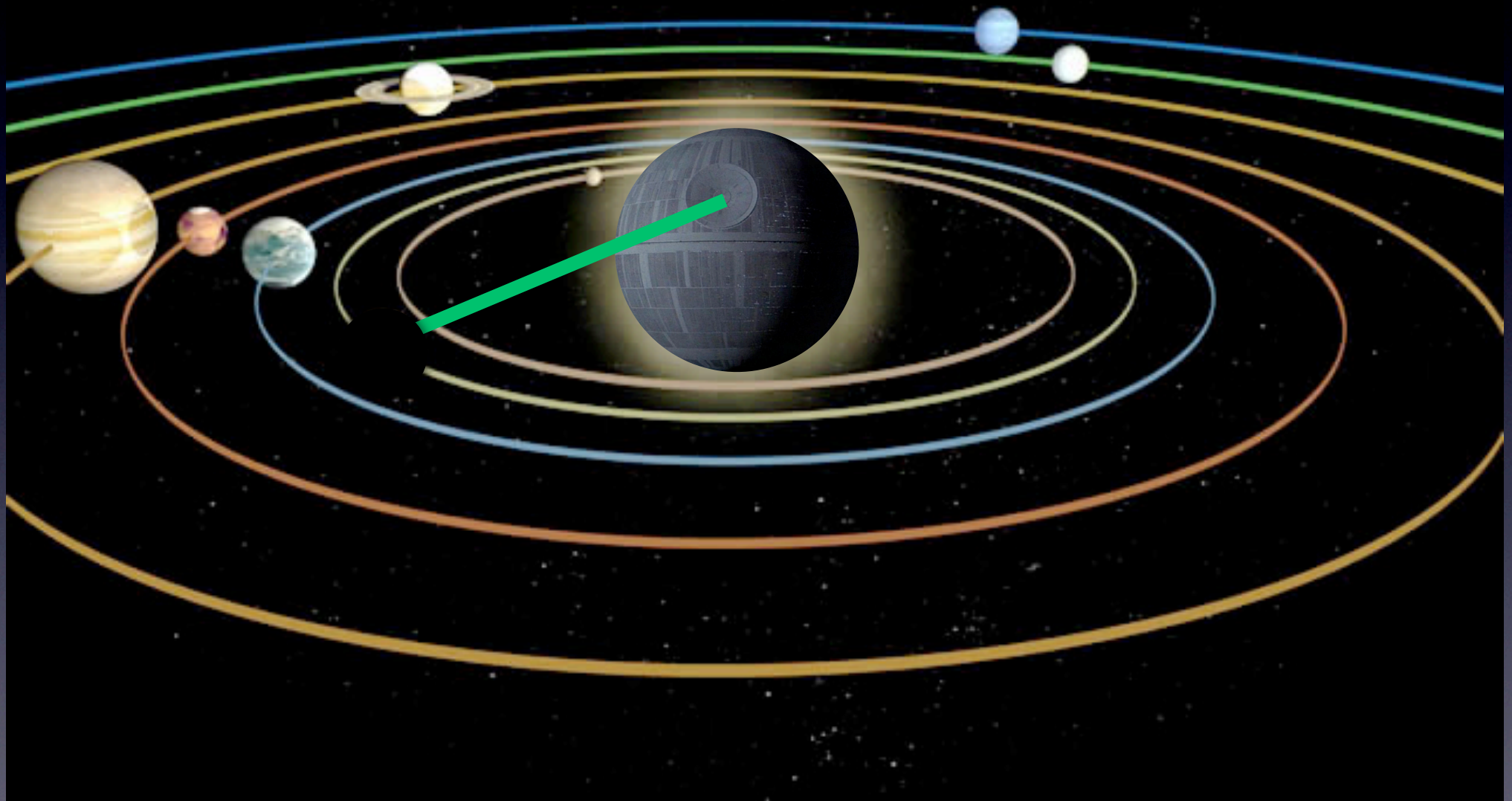
"[W]ouldn't it be inconsistent for God to warn us not to be angry with each other and yet burn with wrath himself [against sin and sinners]?"

"I, for one, believe that God practices what he preaches."

# Conditional Immortality a.k.a. annihilation

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life **and eat, and live forever—**” therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.” (Genesis 3:22–24)

Conditionalist Claim: If God will not permit sinful humans to have immortality then it necessarily follows that the doctrine of eternal torment is false.



Principle #3 - Scripture interprets scripture and the less clear or plain passages of scripture MUST be interpreted in the light of the clearer passages.

1. The Old Testament must be interpreted by the New

3. The incidental must be interpreted by the systematic

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life **and eat, and live forever—**” therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.” (Genesis 3:22–24)

Topic of the text: ??

Clarity RE: Doctrine of Damnation: ??

Are there clearer, didactic texts on Damnation?

“In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.” (Proverbs 12:28) - NIV

Topic of the text: ??

Clarity RE: Doctrine of Damnation: ??

## Grammatical – Basic Principles

Principle #1 - Since the books of the Bible were written by men in certain ordinary, human languages, no interpretation of Scripture is to be accepted which does not agree with the established rules of grammar.

“In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.” (Proverbs 12:28) - NIV

בְּאַרְח־צְדָקָה חַיִּים וְדֶרֶךְ נְתִיבָה אֵל-מָוֶת

“In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is **no death**.” (Proverbs 12:28)

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death **and brought life and immortality** to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,”  
(2 Timothy 1:8–11)

Topic of the text: ??

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Principle #2 - We must assume that a speaker or writer would use his words in that sense in which those to whom he speaks or writes are accustomed to use them. An interpreter's primary and chief aim should be to ascertain the meaning of words according to the meaning in actual popular usage (*usus loquendi*).

“the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and ***immortality*** to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10)

ἀφθαρσία, ας, ἡ the state of not being subject to decay/dissolution/interruption, incorruptibility, immortality

BDAG, 155.

“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ***When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality***, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?””

(I Corinthians 15:50–55)

Topic of the text: ??

Clarity RE: Doctrine of Damnation: ??

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Topic of the text: ??

Clarity RE: Doctrine of Damnation: ??

Are there clearer, didactic texts on Damnation?

# ἀπόλλυμι

1. to cause or experience destruction

a. act. ruin, destroy

b. mid. perish, be ruined

2. to fail to obtain what one expects or anticipates, lose out on, lose

3. to lose someth. that one already has or be separated from a normal connection, lose, be lost

““Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to **destruction**, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”  
(Matthew 7:13–14)

Topic of the text: ??

Clarity RE: Doctrine of Damnation: ??

Are there clearer, didactic texts on Damnation?

ἀπώλεια, ας, ἡ

1. the destruction that one causes, destruction, waste

2. the destruction that one experiences, annihilation both complete and in process, ruin

“ἀπώλεια,” BDAG, 127.

Principle #4 - Every doctrine of Holy Scripture is set forth at some place very clearly, in non-figurative terms, as the main theme of a discourse. Such a passage may be referred to as a *sedes doctrinae*, as the seat or source of a doctrine. All passages dealing with a certain doctrine are to be understood and expounded according to the *sedes doctrinae*.

- ““Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into **eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.**”” (Matthew 25:41–46)

- “And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Revelation 20:9–10)

“And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. **And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever,** and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”” (Revelation 14:9–11)

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:10–15)

# Explanatory Power

## Ignatius of Antioch

"Corrupters of families will not inherit the kingdom of God. And if they who do these things according to the flesh suffer death, how much more if a man corrupt by evil teaching the faith of God for the sake of which Jesus Christ was crucified? A man become so foul will depart into unquenchable fire: and so will anyone who listens to him" (Letter to the Ephesians 16:1–2 [A.D. 110]).

## Second Clement

"If we do the will of Christ, we shall obtain rest; but if not, if we neglect his commandments, nothing will rescue us from eternal punishment" (Second Clement 5:5 [A.D. 150]).

"But when they see how those who have sinned and who have denied Jesus by their words or by their deeds are punished with terrible torture in unquenchable fire, the righteous, who have done good, and who have endured tortures and have hated the luxuries of life, will give glory to their God saying, 'There shall be hope for him that has served God with all his heart!'" (ibid., 17:7).

## Justin Martyr

"No more is it possible for the evildoer, the avaricious, and the treacherous to hide from God than it is for the virtuous. Every man will receive the eternal punishment or reward which his actions deserve. Indeed, if all men recognized this, no one would choose evil even for a short time, knowing that he would incur the eternal sentence of fire. On the contrary, he would take every means to control himself and to adorn himself in virtue, so that he might obtain the good gifts of God and escape the punishments" (First Apology 12 [A.D. 151]).

## Justin Martyr

"We have been taught that only they may aim at immortality who have lived a holy and virtuous life near to God. We believe that they who live wickedly and do not repent will be punished in everlasting fire" (ibid., 21).

"[Jesus] shall come from the heavens in glory with his angelic host, when he shall raise the bodies of all the men who ever lived. Then he will clothe the worthy in immortality; but the wicked, clothed in eternal sensibility, he will commit to the eternal fire, along with the evil demons" (ibid., 52).

## Mathetes

"When you know what is the true life, that of heaven; when you despise the merely apparent death, which is temporal; when you fear the death which is real, and which is reserved for those who will be condemned to the everlasting fire, the fire which will punish even to the end those who are delivered to it, then you will condemn the deceit and error of the world" (Letter to Diognetus 10:7 [A.D. 160]).

## Athenagoras

"[W]e [Christians] are persuaded that when we are removed from this present life we shall live another life, better than the present one. . . . Then we shall abide near God and with God, changeless and free from suffering in the soul . . . or if we fall with the rest [of mankind], a worse one and in fire; for God has not made us as sheep or beasts of burden, a mere incidental work, that we should perish and be annihilated" (Plea for the Christians 31 [A.D. 177]).

## Irenaeus

"[God will] send the spiritual forces of wickedness, and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, and the impious, unjust, lawless, and blasphemous among men into everlasting fire" (Against Heresies 1:10:1 [A.D. 189]).

"The penalty increases for those who do not believe the Word of God and despise his coming. . . . [I]t is not merely temporal, but eternal. To whomsoever the Lord shall say, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire,' they will be damned forever" (ibid., 4:28:2).