

Isaiah 66:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Analysis

The book ends with sobering judgment: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." The righteous witnessing the wicked's judgment is unsettling but scripturally attested. "Their worm shall not die" (tolatam lo tamut) and "their fire be quenched" (isham lo tikhbeh) describe perpetual, unending torment. Jesus quotes this verse (Mark 9:44, 46, 48) describing hell's eternal nature. "An abhorring" (dera'on) means object of horror and disgust—the righteous abhor what sin produces. From a Reformed perspective, this confirms eternal conscious punishment for the wicked. The righteous don't sadistically delight in suffering but recognize God's justice being vindicated. The contrast with verse 23 is stark: some worship eternally while others suffer eternally. This sobering conclusion emphasizes judgment's reality, motivating holiness and evangelism. God's justice, like His mercy, is eternal. The wicked face consequences that never end—a terrible truth requiring compassionate evangelistic response.

Historical Context

The Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) outside Jerusalem, where trash burned perpetually and where children were once sacrificed to Molech, became the

imagery for eternal judgment. Isaiah's audience knew this place. Jesus used the same imagery (Matthew 5:22, 29-30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:33, Mark 9:43-48, Luke 12:5), confirming hell's reality. Throughout church history, eternal judgment has been affirmed despite being unpopular. The vision of Revelation confirms it—the lake of fire where the wicked are tormented forever (Revelation 14:11, 20:10, 15). This difficult truth must not be softened—it's clearly taught in Scripture. The certainty of eternal punishment should drive evangelistic urgency and personal holiness.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How should the doctrine of eternal punishment affect our evangelistic urgency and methods?
2. What does the righteous viewing judgment teach about divine justice being vindicated?
3. How do we balance affirming hell's reality with avoiding harshness or diminishing God's mercy?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצְאוּ	וַיִּבְּרוּ	בְּפִגְרֵי	הָאָדָם יִם
And they shall go forth	and look	upon the carcasses	H376
H3318	H7200	H6297	
הַפֹּשְׁעִים יִם	כִּי יִבְרָא	תּוֹלַעַת מִן	לֹא יָמוּתוּ
that have transgressed	H0	H3588	H3808
H6586		against me for their worm	H4191
		H8438	
וְאֵשׁ	לֹא תִכָּבֵּה	וְיִהְיֶה	וְיִהְיֶה
neither shall their fire	H3808	be quenched	H1961
H784		H3518	and they shall be an abhorring
			H1860
לְכָל	בָּשָׂר:		
H3605	unto all flesh		
	H1320		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 14:11 (Parallel theme): Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

Revelation 21:8 (Parallel theme): But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Daniel 12:2 (Parallel theme): 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.

Isaiah 66:16 (Parallel theme): For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

Isaiah 34:10 (Parallel theme): It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Zechariah 14:12 (Parallel theme): And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

Matthew 3:12 (Parallel theme): Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Isaiah 1:31 (Parallel theme): And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

Isaiah 65:15 (Parallel theme): And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

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