

Saved



Will the lost suffer eternal conscious torment or be annihilated in hell?

Part 2

2026March22 Dan Fisher - Saved (Pt 8B): ECT vs
Annihilation



ABANDON ALL HOPE
YE WHO ENTER HERE

More than 150,000 people die every day –
that's more than 4.5 million every month

ABANDON ALL HOPE
YE WHO ENTER HERE

We are saved from sin and hell



“Jesus was a hellfire preacher. The existence of hell wasn’t something He questioned, debated, or defended, and He certainly didn’t apologize for it. Jesus viewed hell as a real place. When Jesus talked about hell, His purpose was always to warn, not to raise questions or plant doubts. Consider the graphic words He used to portray hell – they clearly aren’t meant to provide comfort, but to frighten. According to Jesus, hell is a place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Hell is a fiery furnace of unquenchable fires. Hell is a place of spiritual and bodily destruction where there are endless torments.” John MacArthur

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Annihilation

The human soul is not immortal, only the saved live eternally; the lost eventually cease to exist

The lost go to hell primarily because of the sins they commit

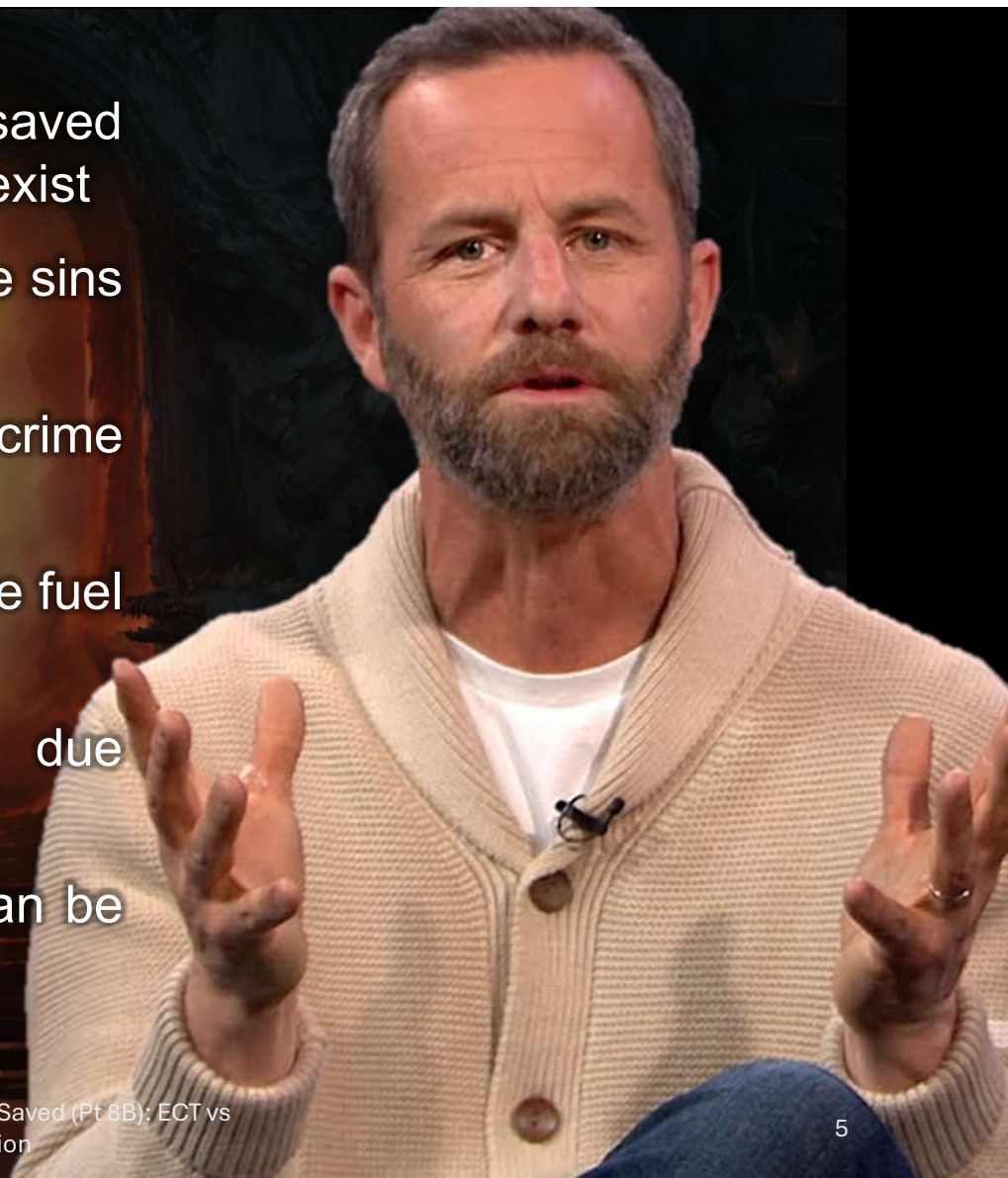
Eternal conscious torment does not fit the crime and is cruel and unusual

The fires of hell are “unquenchable” but the fuel (the lost) is not

Every lost person will receive their due punishment and then be annihilated

God keeps people alive in hell so they can be tormented forever

ECT contradicts God’s character





“God is not a megalomaniacal person in the sky who all He wants to do is punish sin!” James Cameron



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“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.” **Mt 10:28**



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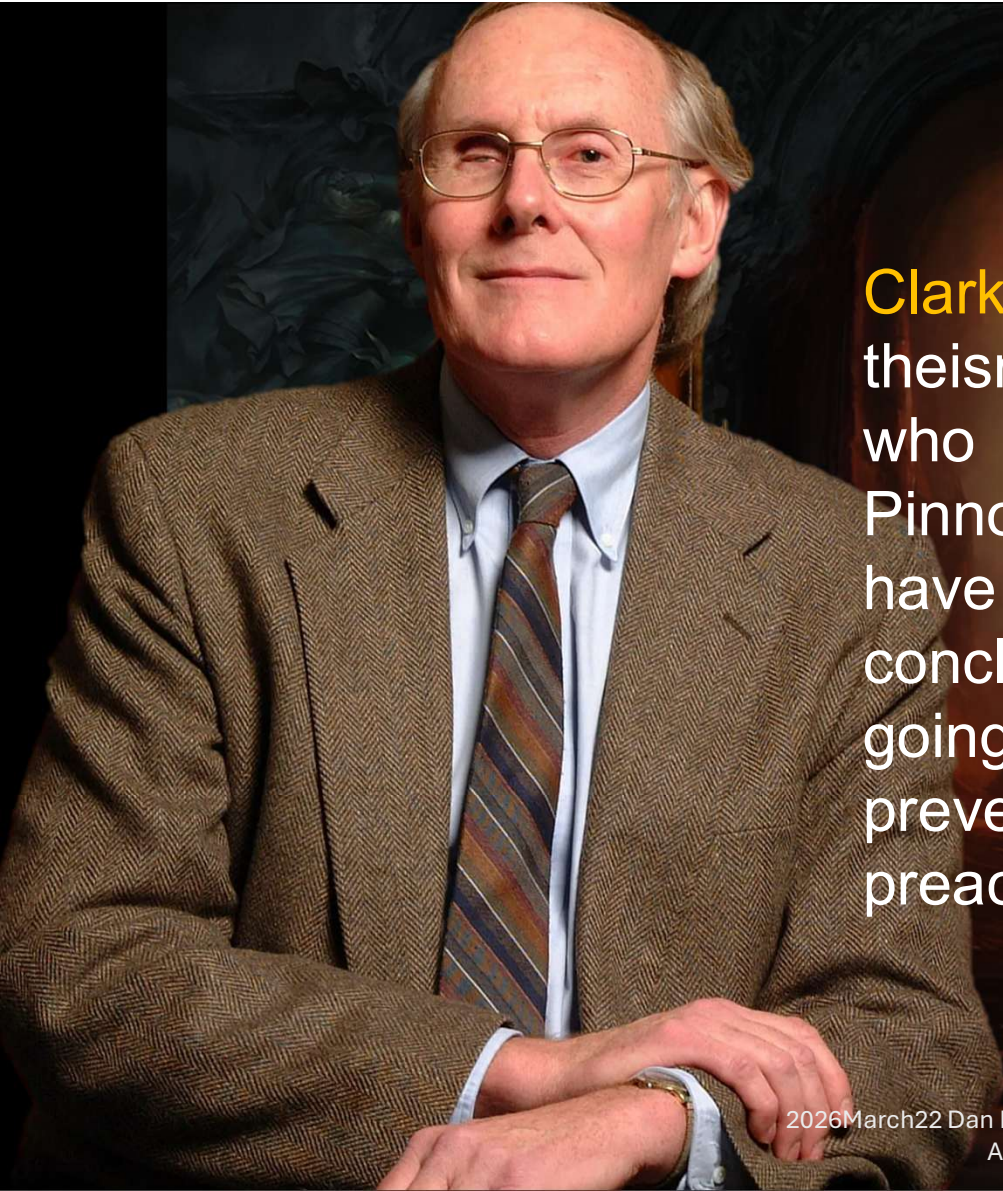
Conditional immortality is the belief that the soul is not inherently immortal and that it was not part of the make-up of the soul after the fall of Adam. Immortality is a gift granted to the saved only.

Conditional immortality naturally leads to **annihilation** – the belief that at death, after an appropriate time/amount of suffering, the unbeliever is eventually annihilated and ceases to exist.

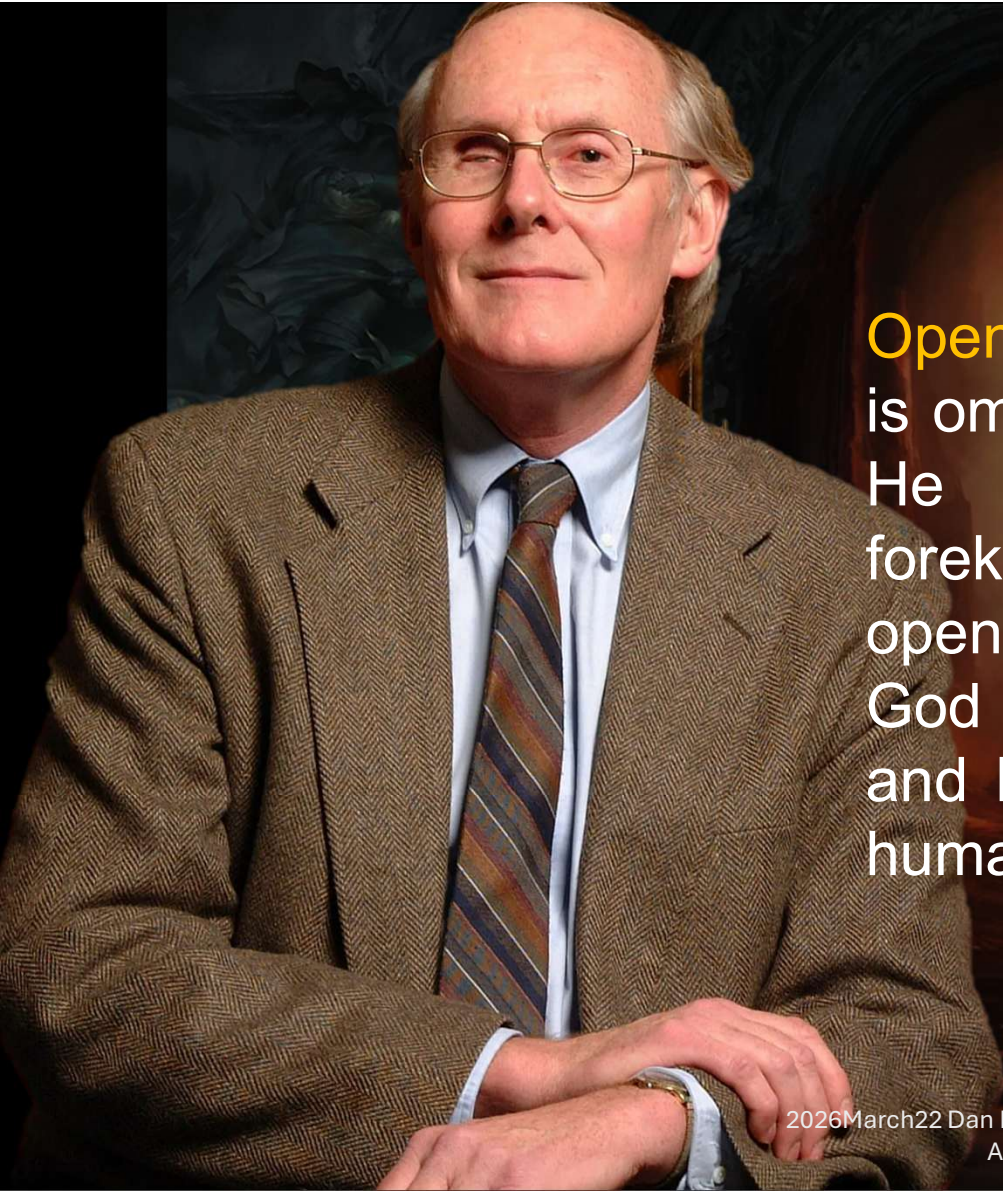


Many who embrace conditional immortality and annihilationism, do so mostly for emotional reasons.

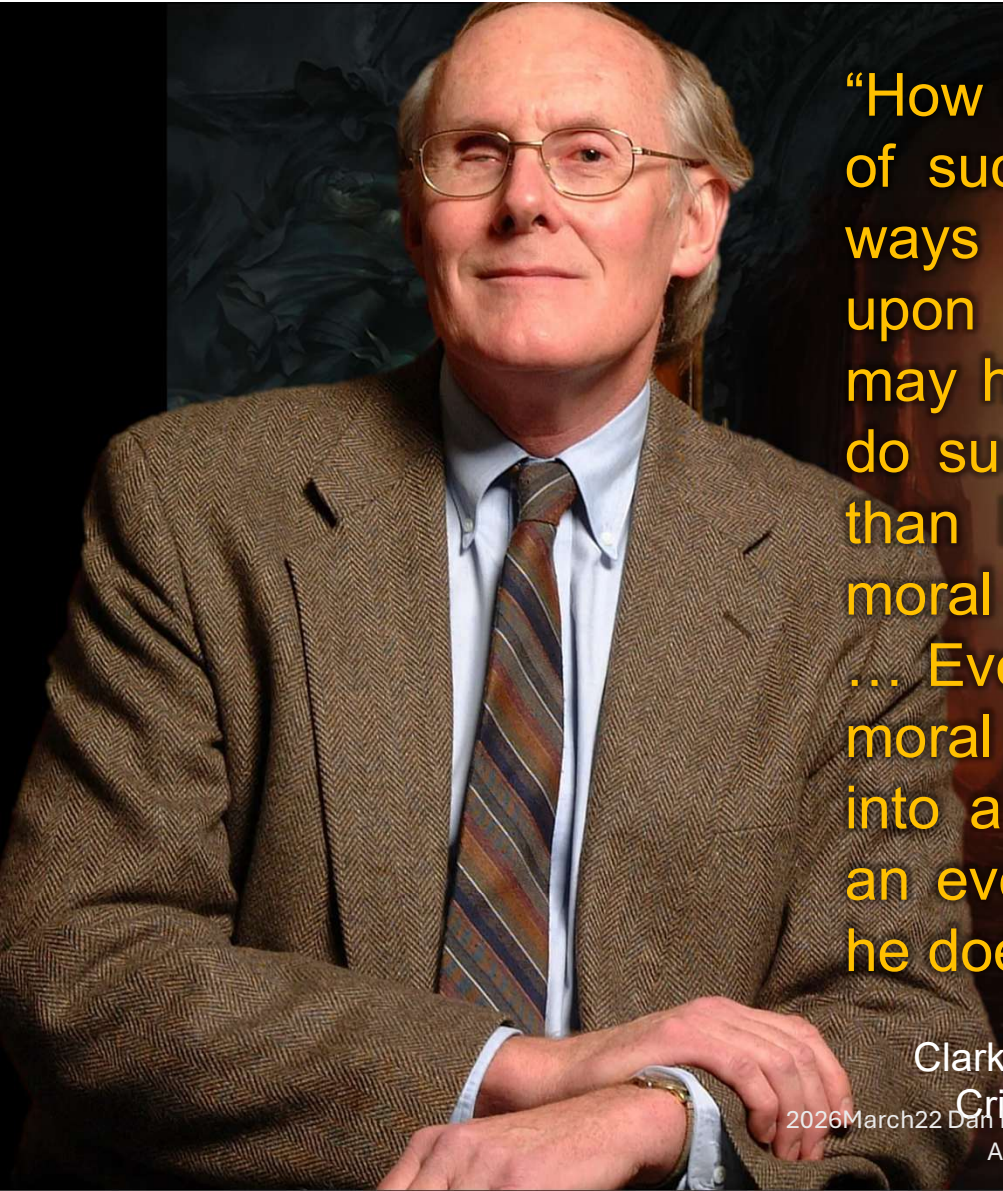
Emotion-based theology is incredibly dangerous. How someone “feels” about a particular doctrine is irrelevant. The primary question is does Scripture teach it or not?



Clark Pinnock, leader of the “open theism” movement, had a family member who experienced a horrible tragedy. Pinnock struggled with how God could have allowed that to happen. He concluded God did not know it was going to happen or He would have prevented it. Consequently, he began preaching/teaching “open theism.”



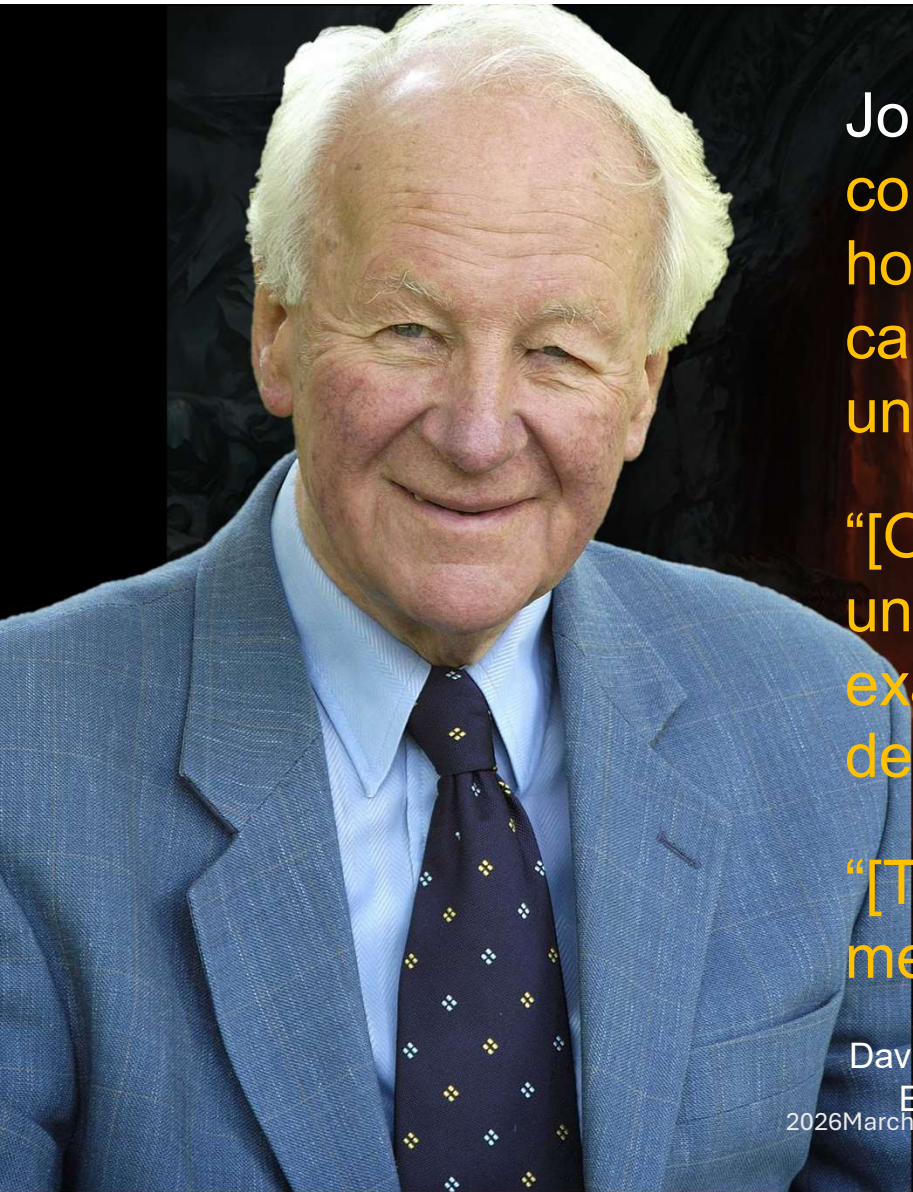
Open theism teaches that, although God is omniscient and knows all possibilities, He does not possess exhaustive foreknowledge of future events. Thus, open theists believe in such things as God experiencing the passage of time and His changing His plans to adapt to human prayers and actions.



“How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness whose ways include inflicting everlasting torture upon his creatures, however sinful they may have been? Surely a God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God, at least by any ordinary moral standards, and by the gospel itself. ... Everlasting torment is intolerable from a moral point of view because it makes God into a bloodthirsty monster who maintains an everlasting Auschwitz for victims whom he does not even allow to die.”

Clark Pinnock, "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent,"
Criswell Theological Review 4 (Spring 1990):246-47.

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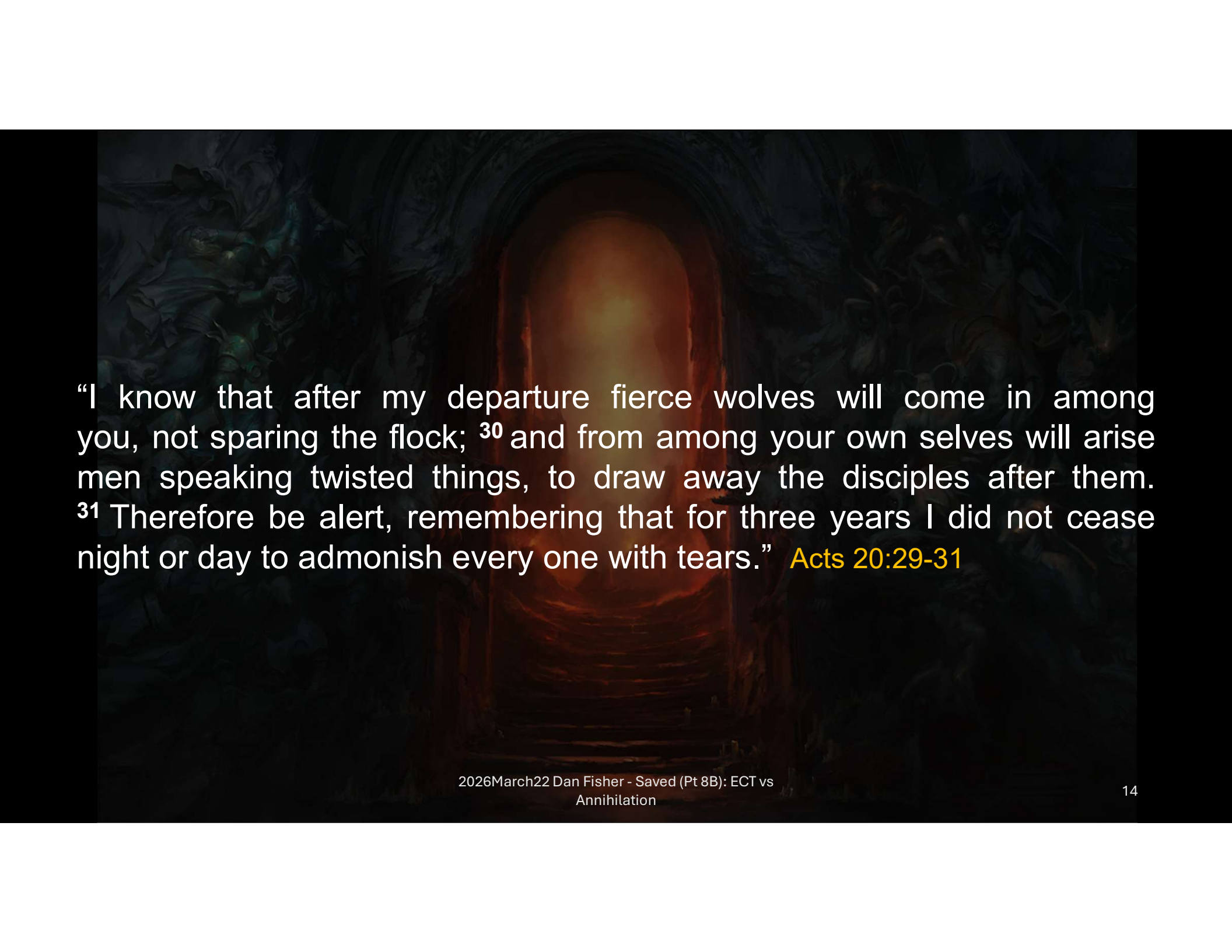


John Stott: “Well, emotionally, I find the concept intolerable and do not understand how people can live with it without either cauterizing their feelings or cracking under the strain.”

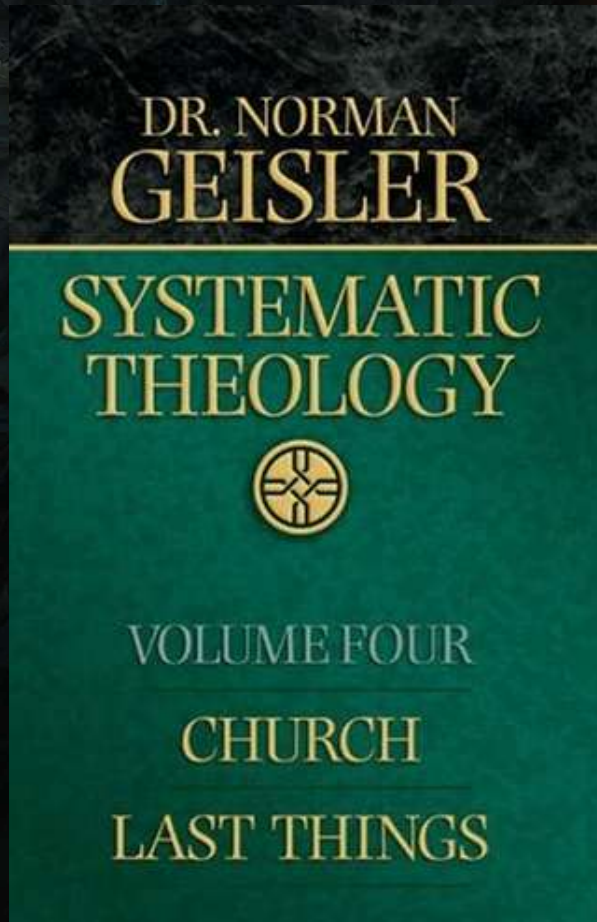
“[Our emotions] are a fluctuating, unreliable guide to truth and must not be exalted to a place of supreme authority in determining it.”

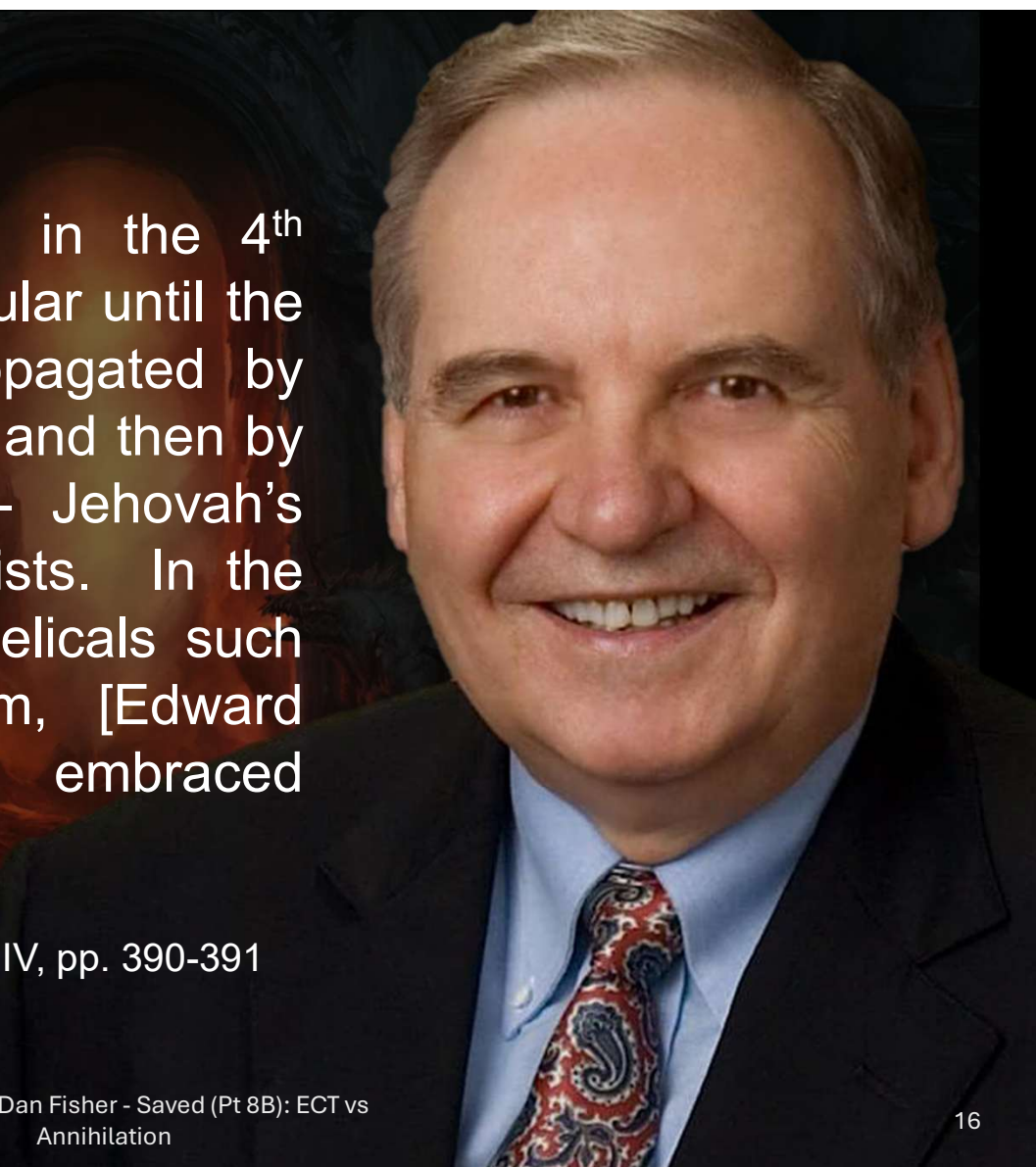
“[The issue is] not what does my heart tell me, but what does God’s word say?”

David L. Edwards and John R. W. Stott, *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 312-20.



“I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.” **Acts 20:29-31**



A portrait of Dr. Norman Geisler, a middle-aged man with light hair, smiling, wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a red and blue paisley tie. The background is dark and slightly blurred.

“Annihilationism was embraced in the 4th century but did not become popular until the 19th century, when it was propagated by Congregationalist Edward White and then by the Seventh Day Adventists – Jehovah’s Witnesses are also annihilationists. In the mid 20th cent, prominent evangelicals such as John Stott, John Wenham, [Edward Fudge], and Clark Pinnock embraced annihilation/conditionalism.”

Dr. Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol IV, pp. 390-391



Dr. Ron Rhodes

Pres of Reasoning from the Scriptures Min
Assoc Editor of *Christian Research Journal*

“[T]his movement away from the traditional doctrine of hell is part and parcel of a larger evangelical ‘megashift’ away from other standard orthodox teachings — such as the substitutionary atonement, sin, and judgment — in favor of so-called ‘new-model’ views. In other words, the rejection of eternal punishment is but one incident in the larger campaign to construct a kinder, gentler theology.”

“Is Annihilationism Biblical?” Pt. 1

<https://www.ronrhodes.org/is-annihilationism-biblical>

A simple reading of Scripture communicates eternal conscious torment

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” **Dan 12:2**

“In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” **Mt 8:12**

“to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ ⁴⁹ For everyone will be salted with fire.” **Mk 9:48**

“I am tormented in this flame.” **Lk 16:24**

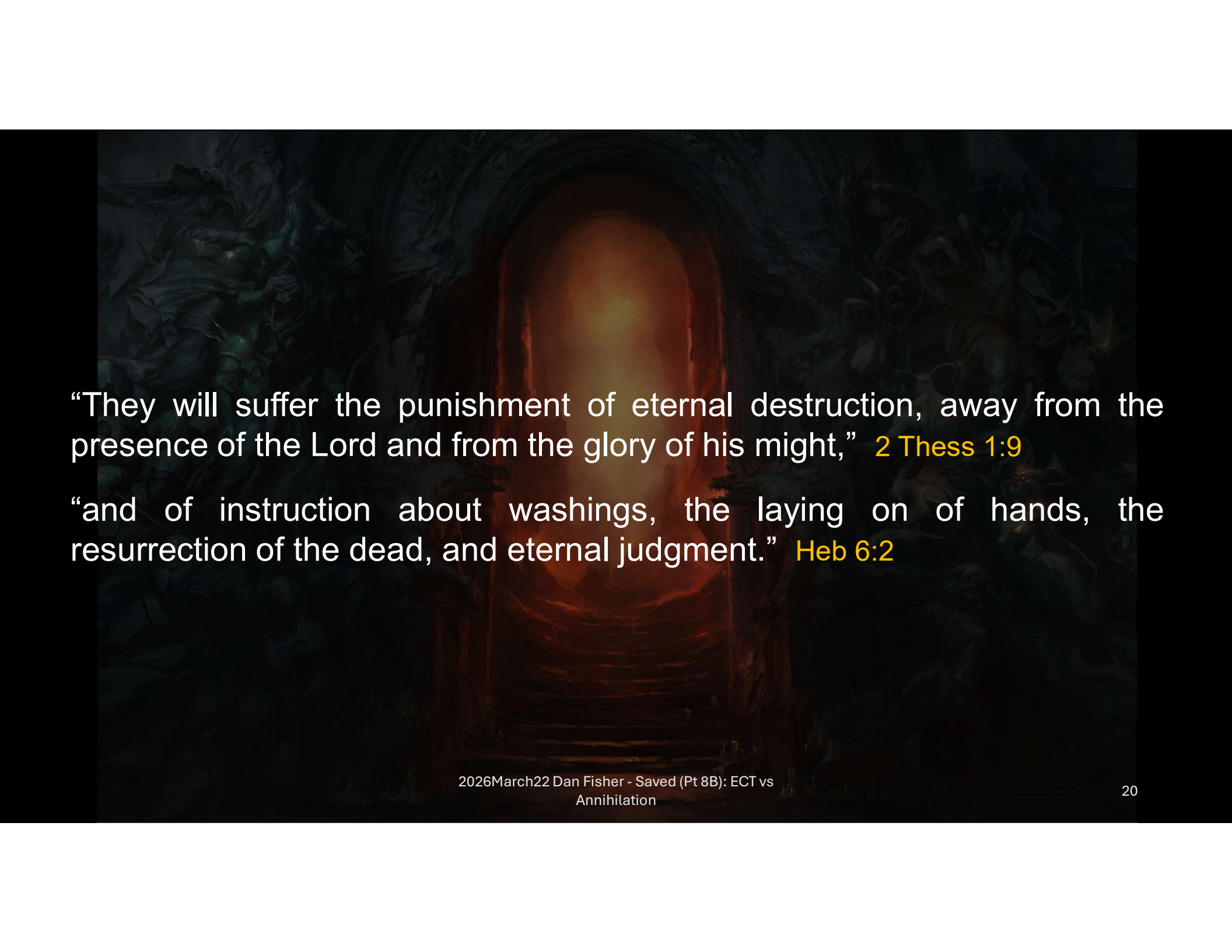
“Without the explicit and reiterated statements of God Incarnate [Jesus], it is doubtful whether so awful a truth [ECT] would have such a conspicuous place as it always has had in the creed of Christendom. ... Neither the Christian Ministry, nor the Christian church, are responsible for the doctrine of eternal perdition. It is given in charge to the ministry, and to the Church, by the Lord Christ Himself, in His last commission, as a truth to be preached to every creature.”

The Doctrine of Endless Punishment (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886; reprint, Minneapolis: Klock 7 Klock, 1980), 12; Preface, V.

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William G.T. Shedd
19th cent. Theologian



“They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,” **2 Thess 1:9**

“and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.” **Heb 6:2**



Annihilationists force common, modern understandings of words onto Scripture

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death, perish, destroy/destruction, consume, burn



“Hell is an eternal barbeque” – poisoning the well

“Will they turn down the BBQ for a little ole grandma?”

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- We must be careful not to alter God's character as it is revealed in Scripture

“God made man in His image – man returned the favor.”

If we take one attribute of God and enlarge it and take another and shrink it – we get a skewed view of God



- We must be careful not to “add to” or “take away” from Scripture

“You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you.” Deut 4:2; 12:32

“Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.”

Prov 30:6



“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” **Rev 22:18-19**



- We must be careful not to trivialize sin and its consequences

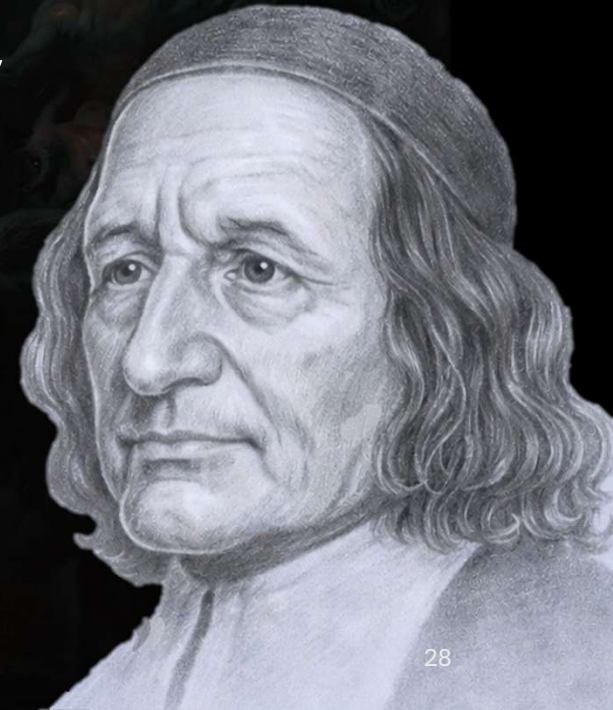


“He’s a merciful God and not just hung up on justice.” James Cameron



The severity of sin increases with the entity sinned against
Sin is an offense against God Almighty

**“There are no little sins because there is
no little God.”** Puritan Thomas Brooks





“How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?” **Heb 10:29**



Punishment?
But is it conscious punishment?



And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” **Mt 25:46**

“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. ¹¹ 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.” **Rev 14:10-11**



Dr. Alan W. Gomes

**Prof of Systematic & Historical Theology
Talbot School of Theology**

“A punishment [such as torment] that is not felt is not a punishment. Torment, by its very nature, demands a sentient (i.e., feeling) subject to experience it. A rock or a tree cannot be ‘tormented.’ How much less could a nonentity — such as an annihilated devil, beast, false prophet, or sinner — experience torment?”

“Evangelicals and the Annihilation of Hell,” (pt. 2), *Christian Research Journal*, Summer 1991, p. 11.

John Gerstner, theologian, church historian:

“[O]ne can exist and not be punished; but no one can be punished and not exist. Annihilation means the obliteration of existence and anything that pertains to existence, such as punishment. Annihilation avoids punishment, rather than encountering it.”

“The Bible and Hell,” part 1, p. 38



Dr. Ron Rhodes

Pres of Reasoning from the Scriptures Min
Assoc Editor of *Christian Research Journal*

“[I]f actual suffering is lacking, then so is punishment. Let us be clear on this: punishment entails suffering. And suffering necessarily entails consciousness. ... torment cannot, by definition, be anything but conscious torment. ... By its very nature, being tormented requires consciousness.



... one cannot deny that for one who is suffering excruciating pain, the extinction of his or her consciousness would actually be a blessing – not a punishment. Any honest seeker after truth must admit that one cannot define ‘eternal punishment’ as an extinction of consciousness.”

Dr. Ron Rhodes

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“Is Annihilationism Biblical?”

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“When God made the human soul, God made it in His own image, and our souls could never cease to exist, any more than God could cease to exist. Our souls will go on – endless, timeless, dateless, and measureless. When the sun, moon, and stars have grown cold, our souls will still be in existence. There was a time when we were not. There never will be a time when we are not. Our souls will exist forever, either in Heaven or in Hell. He endured the pains of Hell so that we might have the blessings of heaven. Your sin will be pardoned in Christ or punished in Hell.”

Adrian Rogers

