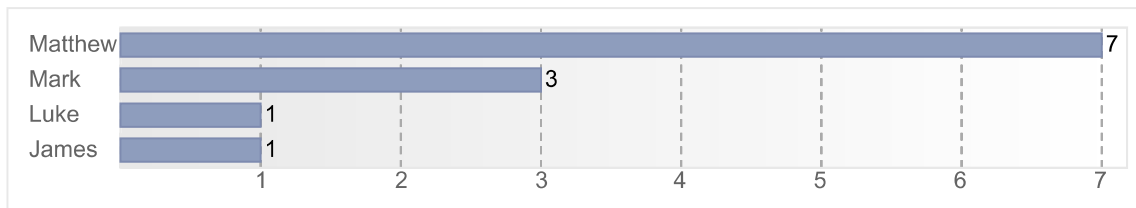


Eternal Punishment According to Mark, Luke and John
Resources: Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment, chapter four.

The chart below displays the New Testament's usage of **γέεννα**.



1. Like Matthew, the other gospels speak about **γέεννα** as **an eternal place**.

1.1. **Mark 9:42-48**: But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to **γέεννα**, into the **fire that shall never be quenched** -- 44 where **'Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'** 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into **γέεννα**, into the **fire that shall never be quenched** -- 46 where **'Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'** 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into **γέεννα** fire -- 48 where **'Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'**

1.1.1. The NU omits the end of v. 45 and all of v. 46.

1.1.2. Mark repeats the phrases “fire not quenched” and “worm not dying.”

1.1.2.1. The **Three possible interpretations of the worm which never dies call for special consideration**. **1.** The worm constantly receives fresh food from the bodies of dead apostates brought there. But the author can hardly be assuming that there would forever be apostates in Jerusalem. **2.** The worm does not die until it has completed its work and the bones as well as the flesh of the dead are consumed, so that all hope of restoration to life is extinguished. The expression thus denotes total destruction. **3.** The worm describes a process of unending bodily corruption which the soul of the dead person experiences as pain, cf. Is. 50:11: **הַצָּמְמָה** place of torment. In the NT the word occurs only in Mk. 9:[44, 46,] 48 in a quotation from Is. 66:24, though a present is used instead of the LXX future: **οπου σκώληξ ατν οτελευτ**. The quotation goes with **γέεννα** and is designed to characterize eschatological **γέεννα**. Since we find in contemporary Judaism both the idea of the annihilation of the damned and also that of their unceasing punishment, both interpretations are possible here, too, according to the wording. Exegetes refer the non-dying of the worm either to full destruction, the definitive loss of life, or to unremitting corruption, eternal torment. In view of **τπου πρ τ σβεστον** in v. 43 the latter interpretation is to be preferred. There is no suggestion that the worm and fire are to be related separately to soul and body along the line of gnawings of conscience and physical pain. In the first instance both terms describe the

destruction of corpses and they are then used figuratively for the punishment of **γέεννα** which affects the whole man.¹

1.1.3. The usage of “worm not dying” along with “fire not quenched” would indicate Jesus intended His readers to understand an **eternal existence and not annihilationism**.

1.2. **Luke 12:4-5:**

1.2.1. "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into **γέεννα**; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

1.2.1.1. Luke clearly teaches life after this life.

1.2.1.2. Luke implies that **γέεννα** is something to be avoided.

2. **Luke 16:19-31 describes in general the afterlife.**

2.1. First, **γέεννα** is not used by Luke in these verses.

2.1.1. Jesus told the story using the word “Hades” instead.

2.1.1.1. Hades is best understood as the intermediate state between death and the final place for saints and sinners.

2.1.1.1.1. Revelation 20:13-14 helps explain the role of Hades in the New Testament.

2.2. Because Luke uses “Hades” and not **γέεννα** and **many of the points are unfounded biblically**, it is best not to press the details too far regarding the final state of the wicked.

2.2.1. It would seem strange to presume there is **prayer in heaven** (prayer to father Abraham, representing God).

2.2.2. Likewise, we cannot say that those in hell will **see those in heaven** that all poor **people are saved** that people will **travel between heaven and hell**, and that **Abraham will speak for God** in the afterlife.

2.3. Since it is unbiblical to teach each point of Jesus’ teaching, it is best to use this teaching to discuss **general points about the afterlife**.

2.3.1. There is a **clear separation** between those who follow God and those who do not and the two will never meet.

¹*Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964–c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (7:455). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- 2.3.2. There is conscience existence following death.
- 2.3.3. For the Christians there is a conscience existence with God immediately following death.
- 2.3.4. One's decisions in this life determine the final state in the next life, without an opportunity to change one's decisions. The rich man stresses that his brothers need to make their decision in this life with the implication the next will be too late.
- 2.3.5. The Bible contains all the information one needs to sufficiently prepare for the next life.
 - 2.3.5.1. Even someone coming back from the dead, will not persuade a determined heart against Jesus.
 - 2.3.5.1.1. The chief priests wanted to kill Lazarus rather than believe in Jesus who raised him from the dead, John 12:10.
 - 2.3.5.1.2. Jesus returned from the dead and criticized His followers for not accepting the Bible to guide them. In other words, the message from the afterlife is believe the Bible, Luke 24:25-26.
 - 2.3.5.1.3. The Bible does not indicate that King Saul repented of His rebellion against God when Samuel visited him from the dead, 1 Samuel 27:3-25.

3. Luke teaches that γέεννα will have degrees of suffering.

- 3.1. Luke 10:13-15: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.
- 3.2. Luke 12:42-48: 42 And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. 45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with **many stripes**. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be **beaten with few**. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.