

**What does "Where their worm dieth not ..." in Mark 9:44, 46, 48 mean? These verses show the final physical characteristics of a soul in the lake of fire.**

In eternity, the souls of all lost people will take on the physical properties of their father, the devil (Jn. 8:44). The devil looks like a serpent according to Rev. 12:9. So, in eternity, the souls of the lost will lose their former physical appearance of a man and take on the appearance of a small snake, a worm, as they are cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). After all, they looked like a microscopic worm (Job 25:6) as they passed from their father to their mother at the moment of conception. I guess you would call this de-evolution.

Before the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, the souls of all dead people went to one of two places. The saved went to Abraham's bosom and the lost went to Hell. You learn this from Lk. 16:19-31. Notice that the souls had the physical characteristics of the bodies from which they came. They had eyes and sight (v.23), feeling (v.23), speech (v.24), fingers (v.24), tongues (v.24), and memory (v.27-28).

Following the resurrection of Jesus, the souls of the saved were released from Abraham's bosom and taken to Heaven (Eph. 4:8-10). But the souls of the lost remained in Hell. And they will stay there until the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Rev. 20). Then, following Christ's reign, Hell will deliver up the dead that are in it to be judged at the White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:13). Hell will be cast into the lake of fire and the souls of the lost will be cast in right behind it (Rev. 20:15; 21:4).

As those souls are heading into the lake of fire, they will no longer look like the bodies of the men they once inhabited, rather they will look like a worm. And those worms will never die in that fire and that fire will never go out (Is. 66:24). As Mark said, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," (Mk. 9:44, 46, 48). Notice how the modern translations entirely remove two of these references to the lake of fire. I wonder what they are afraid of?

Now, do you want to see something interesting? We know that when Christ died, he took our place as a substitute. 2 Cor. 5:21 says, "He became sin for us." When this happened on the cross, he was literally lifted up as "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," (Jn. 3:14; Num. 21:8 [incidentally, this is pictured as an insignia in doctors' offices today]). That is, Jesus became the worm that we should have become. That's why in the Psalm about Christ dying on the cross, we read "I am a worm, and no man," (Ps. 22:6). His soul took on the physical appearance of a lost man's soul. He went to hell for us (Eph. 4:9, Rom. 10:7).

Now, while the souls of the lost end up looking like worms, the souls of those who are saved after the resurrection of Jesus end up looking like Jesus. That is, we take on the physical appearance of our Savior (1 Jn. 3:1-3; Rom. 8:29). We are literally, "conformed to his image." And so, each of us has to decide whether we would like to wind up as a worm in the lake of fire or as a beautiful child of God, having the image of His glory. Your choice.

