

A Loving God Would Never Torture People in Hell

Or

Doctrine of Eternal Damnation

Or

Is Hell True Justice

Part 1

What is Justice?

- Punishment for crimes.
- “Mandatory Sentence” – Removes ability of judge to give final sentence in some cases
 - Positives – Prevents from being too lenient
 - Negative – Automatic sentence can be too hard
 - E.g. Mother for drug charges – minor offence → 6 years gaol
- Ironic – The law designed to enforce justice threatened to hinder it instead. You may wonder sometimes does the punishment fit the crime?

Some may question God...

- They are outraged at the Christian teaching about hell – is it mandatory sentence to the extreme?
- What kind of God enjoys seeing His creatures being tortured forever? Is it justice?
- How do we approach the topic of Hell?

Question: What is an example of something that we might like to do but is not necessary right?

Sometimes telling people about a truth about something wrong they are doing is hard, as they may not want to hear it. When people respond to Hell they base it on their feelings or emotions.

People should put aside emotions and assess Hell based on if it is morally right or not. Not if they like or dislike it. We must look at the issue of Hell on a moral basis.

It is important to understand God hates Hell and He hates people going there. Ezek 33:11

How could a loving God, just because you don't do what He says or obey Him, will torture you forever?

Several problems with that question

- God does not torture people in Hell
- God is not a child that is only concerned with His rules, and if you don't obey them then you are doom. God is the most generous, loving, wonderful, attractive being in the cosmos.
- If mankind continuously chooses to reject God and everything He has to offer then we deserve what we have asked for all our lives...separation from Him...that is Hell.
- Though God is loving he is a just, moral and pure being, God's decisions are based on who He is and not on rules/laws.
- Laws are not a mechanism to enter into heaven, they are standards/benchmarks to show we all have a sinful nature.

So, What is Hell?

- It is a natural consequence of a life that has been lived in a certain direction.
- Hell is a separation or banishment from the most beautiful being in the world – God
- Hell is punishment, but not punishing. It is a place of shame, anguish and regret.
- People in hell will deeply grieve all they have lost.

Why did God create Hell?

- Hell was not in God's original creation. When God created everything, he said that it was good. Gen 1:31
- He had to create it after the fall of man, e.g. Create jails in a new land.
- Has to put those who reject him somewhere.

What will Hell be like (Flames, Worms, Gnashing of Teeth???)

Luke 16:19-31 The Rich man and Lazarus

Flames?

- Yes, the Bible has a tendency to talk about flames. But, the flames are a figure of speech.
- Not trying to soften Hell, but need to be Biblically accurate
- Flames are figurative, if we try to make it literal, it would make no sense
- E.g. Hell is described as utter darkness, and yet there are flames. Flames would light things up
- Also, we are told Christ is going to return surrounded by flames and he's going to have a big sword coming out of His mouth. But nobody thinks Christ won't be able to talk because he will be choking on a sword. The figure of sword stands for the Word of God in judgement. The flames stand of Christ coming in judgment.
- In Heb 12:29, God is call a consuming fire. Yet nobody thinks of God as a cosmic Bunsen burner. It is imagery to say he is a God of judgement.
- Therefore, flames in Hell symbol that Hell is a result of God's judgment against those that reject Him.

Worms?

Mark 9:48

- Is Hell a place where worms constantly eat peoples flesh?
- In Jesus' day thousands of animals were sacrificed every week in the Temple. There was a sewerage system for the fat and blood to flow outside, where it gathered in a pool. There were worms constantly ingesting that. It was a very ugly place.
- When Jesus was teaching he used it as a metaphor of saying Hell is a worse place then that.

Gnashing of teeth?

Luke 13:28

- Does this refer to people reacting to the pain of torture?
- It is meant to describe a state of anger or realization of great loss. If you've been around people who are self-absorbed, self-centred and highly narcissistic, they get angry when they don't get their way.
- Gnashing of teeth is an expression of the type of personality of people who will belong in hell.

So, is Hell really all that bad?

It would be a mistake to think that way.

It is a place of utter heartbreak. A loss of everything. The worst possible situation that could happen to anyone.

The self-absorbed, self-centred and highly narcissistic people belong there...because for these people even Heaven would be Hell.

Have you ever been around somebody who was unbelievably good looking, extremely attractive, and a lot smarter than you are? So when you are in a social situation they want to hear that person and not you!

Now suppose you are kept in a room with that person 24/7 for 30 years...it would be difficult. Now multiply that ten thousand times and that is what God is like. He is real smart. He's very attractive. He's a lot more morally pure than we are.

So, if you don't fall passionately in love with him and are forced to be around him it would be utterly uncomfortable, especially for eternity.

Our relationship, daily experiences and growth in Christ is preparing us to be with him for eternity. If people are not preparing to live in Heaven...then with their choices (separated from God) they are preparing to live in Hell. An existence where they are the centre of the universe and not God.

Therefore, Hell is not only a sentence but a choice that has started in this life on Earth, day by day.

Next Week – Part 2

Questions to think about until then...

- How can God send children to Hell?
- Why does everyone suffer the same in Hell?
- Why are people punished infinitely for finite crimes?
- Couldn't God force everyone to go to heaven?
- Why doesn't God just snuff people out?
- How can Hell exist along side Heaven?
- Why didn't God create only those he knew would follow Him?
- Why doesn't God give people a second chance?
- Isn't reincarnation more rational than Hell?