
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **How can a loving God send people to hell?**

(1) According to the Bible, hell was not originally made for man.

Matthew 25:41

41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire **prepared for the devil and his angels:**

(2) According to the Bible, it is not God's desire that any man should go to hell.

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish** but that all should come to repentance.

(3) God is so concerned for the welfare of mankind that He went to great personal expense to save men from hell.

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

If hell were not real, God would not have gone to such trouble and expense.

Ezekiel 18:23

23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live?"

This demonstrates that God is indeed loving and concerned for our welfare. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He does not want anyone to perish.

Those who picture God as being a hateful, egotistical, and fiendish deity who takes pleasure in casting people into hell either do not know what the Bible teaches, or else they purposefully ignore what it says and misrepresent the truth.

(4) The invitation for salvation from hell is extended to every man and woman in every nation.

Jesus sent His disciples forth with an urgent task of preaching to everyone the good news of salvation.

Mark 16:15-16

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Everyone in the world is being invited by the Lord and His church to be saved from sin and hell.

Revelation 22:17

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. **Whoever desires**, let him take the water of life freely.

Again, we point out that God is not a severe God. He is not ruthless and heartless. He has gone to every means possible to save men from destruction.

(5) (Take special note of this point) Those who go to hell are not innocent victims.

Many have a distorted view of God. They view God as taking innocent victims, who are as pure and innocent as the wind driven snow, and He heartlessly casts them against their will into eternal hell and then gloats over how powerful He was and how helpless they are. Some view God as mocking in laughter at the helpless condition of poor innocent souls who could not resist an angry, unjust, and cruel Master. My friend, a more distorted view of God could not be possible!

The Bible pictures those who go to hell as rebellious law-breakers. Innocent victims will not be found in hell.

- Not a single infant will be found in hell, because infants are innocent, pure, and free from sin (Matthew 19:14).
- No one born mentally retarded will be found in hell if their mental retardation is so severe they are irresponsible for their actions. These people are guilty of no crime (cf. Mk 5:1-17; Acts 16:16-19).
- People previously guilty of rebellion, but who accepted the divine terms of pardon, will be spared from hell (Exodus 34:7).

Those, then, who find themselves in hell are guilty of rebellion – people who refused to submit to divine authority and insisted on governing their own selves. Hell will be filled with men and women who refused the invitation of heaven and rejected the Savior who died for them. Guilty, convicted, and impenitent law-breakers will populate hell.

FREEWILL

Because God created man with a freewill, hell became a reality. If God made us all robots, and made us all perform His will perfectly we would not be lost; we would not stand in jeopardy; there would be no hell and there would be no one lost, but the minute you demand your right for freedom, the right to choose, then you immediately make yourself responsible for your eternal fate.

A DIFFERENT ANGLE

Let's look at this from a different angle and ask this question: **If God hates for men to go to hell, then why doesn't He save everyone?**

The answer to that question is that not everyone wants to be saved! If being saved means submitting to divine authority, then some don't want salvation!

To illustrate, we are told almost daily of the harmful effects of smoking, drinking, and promiscuous sex. We are warned continuously that practicing such vices carry consequences.

Yet, in spite of these warnings, millions and millions continue in these sins knowing the risks and certain dangers. Who's fault is it when these people contract disease and die? Out of mercy and graciousness we plead with people not to practice these evils, but often the warning goes unheeded.

Likewise, God, out of graciousness and mercy pleads with men and women to obey His word and find life. He Himself provided a way for forgiveness by sending His only begotten Son to die on behalf of lost humanity. Yet, in spite of His gracious warnings and His priceless gift, many still reject the terms of pardon choosing to rule themselves rather than submit to His will.

SUMMARY

In summary, those who reject the Biblical doctrine of hell are adopting a most illogical position:

(1) In denying God's right to punish violators, they deny God's right to rule.

Ruling requires laws and laws require punishment when those laws are violated. Some are saying that God may create mankind and sustain mankind, but He has no right rule over mankind.

(2) By denying God's right to punish violators, man becomes the ruler of God.

This position is saying that man may rule himself, ignore, break, and violate any command which he chooses and God has no recourse. God must be forced to let rebellious men come into heaven and He must provide for them throughout eternity, yet they are not obligated to submit to God, nor be thankful for anything He has done.

Hell, then, is not unreasonable, nor is God unmerciful. For men who continuously reject the generous provisions of God, hell is a fair and equitable sentence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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