



“A God of Love Wouldn’t Send People to Hell”

Prayer

Introductory Activity

Focus: The logic goes this way: If God is loving, then the concept of eternal suffering for temporal sin is incompatible with his character. That would make God a monstrous God. It *seems* logical, but it is not biblical. Nor is it truly logical, as we shall see. Today, we will explore the dangerous ramifications of this lie and provide a biblical rationale to use as an answer when someone states this lie.

Activity:

The error of universalism says that the biblical teaching of eternal damnation is incompatible with the concept of a loving God. Proponents believe that God will eventually destroy all sin and save all people. A universalist would be very comfortable saying, “We all worship the same God by different names. We are all going to the same place! Hell as a place of eternal suffering does not exist.” Read the Scriptures listed in the passage bank. What misunderstandings about the Christian faith do universalists have?

Passage Bank: John 14:6; Exodus 34:6,7; Acts 4:12; Galatians 5:4; 2 Peter 1:21; John 17:17



No Hell?

1. How does the Bible describe hell?

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

- Recall the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-34). For how long was the servant thrown into jail?

“They will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind” (Isaiah 66:24).

“Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30).

- Your friend asks you, “If hell is real, then where is it?” How would you answer?

2. Why will some go to hell?

Read Matthew 25:41-43.

Revelation 14:10,11—“They, too, will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who

worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

- How is the concept of “no hell and everyone goes to heaven” illogical?

3. How is the concept of “no hell” actually unfair?

Hebrews 10:30—“For we know him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ ”

Isaiah 61:8—“For I, the LORD, love justice: I hate robbery and wrongdoing.”

- Think about it! If there were no hell, what would be the practical implications for your life? (i.e., how would your life and attitude change?)

4. How can we say that hell is evidence of God’s love for us?

Matthew 27:46—“About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’).”

2 Corinthians 5:14,15—“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

- In the sphere of the world, how do authority figures (police officers, those in the military, etc.) get people to obey them?
- What is it about God that motivates us to serve and obey him?

Group Discussion

- Explain how the following passages point to the truth that there will be degrees of torment in hell.

Luke 12:47,48

Matthew 11:20-24

- Why don't people want to believe that God would send people to hell? List as many reasons as you can and then evaluate those reasons.
- Evangelical Christian author Rob Bell wrote in his book *Love Wins*: "Has God created millions of people over tens of thousands of years who are going to spend eternity in anguish? Can God do this, or even allow this, and still claim to be a loving God? Does God punish people for thousands of years with infinite, eternal torment for things they did in their few finite years of life?" (p. 88). In your estimation, what does he believe about hell, and what would you say to him?

Closing Activity

Children's Sermon. How would you explain to kindergartners the truth that a loving God can, does, and will send people to hell? Write a children's sermon on that theme.