

How Can A Loving God Send People To Hell? For the week of May 5, 2024

Reflection

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?

2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

Be ready to discuss the following quotes.

"Some have taught or implied that hell is forced on the *condemned*, that they are thrown into hell against their will. This would go contrary to the fundamental reason for hell's existence: our free choice and God respecting it. The *condemned* in hell do not *enjoy* hell, but they do *will* it, by willing egotism instead of love, self instead of God, sin instead of repentance. There can be no heaven without self-giving love. The thing the *condemned* wish for—happiness on their own selfish terms—is impossible even for God to give. It does not exist. It cannot exist. If hell is chosen freely, the problem then becomes not one of reconciling hell with God's love but reconciling hell with human sanity. Who would freely prefer hell to heaven unless they were insane? The answer is that all of us do at one time or another. Every sin reflects that preference."¹

"The Biblical picture (*of hell*) is that sin separates us from the presence of God, which is the source of all joy and indeed of all love, wisdom, or good things of any sort. Since we were originally created for God's immediate presence, only before his face will we thrive, flourish, and achieve our highest potential. If we were to lose his presence totally, that would be hell – the loss of our capability for giving or receiving love or joy." Tim Keller "The Reason for God" pg. 79
"Hell is, as Lewis says, 'the greatest monument to human freedom.' As Romans 1:24 say, God 'gave them up to ... their desires.' All God does in the end with people is give them what they most want, including freedom from himself. What could be more fair than that? Lewis writes: 'There are only two kinds of people – those who say, 'Thy will be done' to God or those to whom God in the end says, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell choose it. Without that self-choice it wouldn't be hell. No soul that seriously and consistently desires joy will ever miss it.'" – Tim Keller "The Reason for God" pg. 82

3. **Does God send people to hell? Why or why not?** (Rom 3:23; Rom 5:12, 18; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:1; James 1:15)

¹ Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, [*Pocket Handbook of Christian Apologetics*](#), The IVP Pocket Reference Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 109–110.

4. **What is God's desire for His created people?** (Ezek 18:23; 1 Tim 2:3-4; 2 Pete 3:9)

5. **What has a loving God done?** (Gen 3:15; Rom 3:21-26; Rom 5:8; John 3:16; 1 John 2:2)

Hopefully we can begin to see that the question of the world is truly backwards, "How can a loving God send people to hell"? The script needs to be flipped, "Why did a loving God sacrifice His own Son for a sinful world so that all who believe will be saved?" Because mankind is in sin and headed to hell, a loving God made a way out of hell.