

## Another “Gospel” Series

### Hell

5.17.23

#### I. What do progressives think about hell?

##### A. A few quotes

One of the more interesting things folks will say to me is: “I’m not religious or anything, I just hope that being a good person is enough.” To which I always want to say . . . “enough for what?” . . . avoiding the punishment of burning in the eternal fires of some kind of imaginary hell? Nadia Bolz-Weber

“A staggering number of people have been taught that a select few Christians will spend forever in a peaceful, joyous place called heaven, while the rest of humanity spends forever in torment and punishment in hell with no chance for anything better. It’s been clearly communicated to many that this belief is a central truth of the Christian faith and to reject it is, in essence, to reject Jesus. This is misguided and toxic and ultimately subverts the contagious spread of Jesus’s message of love, peace, forgiveness, and joy that our world desperately needs to hear.” Rob Bell

“Jesus certainly did not lay the foundation for an afterlife theology that claims all non-Christians go to hell. This has become a common way of thinking about heaven and hell – ‘Christians go to heaven; non-Christians go to hell’ – but it is not based on anything Jesus ever said!” Brian Zahnd

#### **John Shelby Spong, author, liberal theologian:**

*“(The God of the Bible is) a God I cannot respect, much less worship, a deity whose needs and prejudices are at least as large as my own.” (Rescuing the Bible From Fundamentalism)*

#### **Desmond Tutu, civil rights activist, liberal Anglican cleric:**

*"I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven. No, I would say sorry... I would much rather go to the other place."* (Archbishop Tutu 'would not worship a homophobic God', BBC News)

B. What progressives believe about hell.

They prefer to not believe humanity will not be held accountable.

They believe it is a state of mind.

They want Christians to focus only on the "love parts" in scripture.

They ultimately believe in universalism.

II. General observations about hell.

A. If God does not uphold the law, he is a bad judge.

[Deuteronomy 32:4](#)The Rock—his work is perfect;  
all his ways are just.  
A faithful God, without bias,  
he is righteous and true.

B. Misconceptions about hell. By Alisa Childers

--Correcting Misconception #1

People in Hell Are Repentant

Mat 25:30And throw this good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

--Correcting Misconception #2

The Devil Is in Charge of Hell

[Matthew 25:41](#)"Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!

--Correcting Misconception #3

## Everyone Gets the Same Punishment

[Luke 10](#): "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will go down to Hades. <sup>16</sup> Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

### C. Hell is in 2 locations/phases

"Scripture speaks of two locations as places of torment. Both places are commonly called "hell." Hades is the current place of departed spirits who are not with the Lord, that is, those who never accepted the forgiveness that God offers in Jesus Christ. The second place of torment is Gehenna or the [lake of fire](#), which will be the final place of punishment for those who die in their sins" [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)

## III. What does scripture teach about hell?

### A. Why was hell created?

Hell was created for the Devil and wicked angels.

[Matthew 25:41](#) "Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!'"

### B. Why do people go to hell?

The bottom line is SIN!

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God is perfect.

Heaven is perfect.

Sin cannot exist in heaven.

We are sinners.

God provides a substitute for sin and penalty.

Romans 5:<sup>8</sup> But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. <sup>10</sup> For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup> And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

If we choose not to accept the substitution, we pay in hell.

II Thess 1:5 It is clear evidence of God's righteous judgment that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering, <sup>6</sup> since it is just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you <sup>7</sup> and to give relief to you who are afflicted, along with us. This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels, <sup>8</sup> when he takes vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength <sup>10</sup> on that day when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at by all those who have believed, because our testimony among you was believed.

C. Where is hell?

Most scholars agree hell is "down".

[Luke 10:15](#) And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will go down to Hades.

D. When was hell created?

Most scholars agree hell was created after the 6-day creation event since no sin existed.

E. What will people in hell experience?

“The nature of hell is debated, but three things are made clear. First, hell is eternal. Second, in hell souls are conscious. Third, hell is torment.” Alisa Childers

[Matthew 25:41](#), “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

[Matthew 8:12](#), “But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

[2 Thessalonians 1:6–9](#), “God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”

[Revelation 20:10, 15](#), “And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. . . . Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”

[Romans 2:8](#), “But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.”

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

F. How long are people in hell?

Hell is eternal.

**Matt 25:41** "Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!

G. What kind of bodies will we have in hell?

"The Bible indicates that both believers and non-believers will have resurrected bodies on the last day." [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)

([Daniel 12:1-2](#)) At that time  
Michael, the great prince  
who stands watch over your people, will rise up.  
There will be a time of distress  
such as never has occurred  
since nations came into being until that time.  
But at that time all your people  
who are found written in the book will escape.  
<sup>2</sup> Many who sleep in the dust  
of the earth will awake,  
some to eternal life,  
and some to disgrace and eternal contempt.

Close: On the eve of the cross, Jesus made his decision. He would rather go to hell for you than go to heaven without you.

**Max Lucado**