

# “A GOD OF LOVE WOULDN’T SEND PEOPLE TO HELL”

## Prayer Requests

### 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 below. After each group of passages, identify what misunderstandings about the Christian faith Universalists have?

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

*Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

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*Exodus 34:6,7 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”*

*Galatians 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.*

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*2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

*John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

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## No Hell?

### 1) How does the Bible describe hell?

*2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power*

*Isaiah 66:24 “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.”*

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

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

### 2) Why will some go to hell?

*Matthew 25:41-43 “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. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’*

*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) Knowing that hell is real, how does that highlight God’s love for us?

5) Is the teaching of hell meant to get us to obey God?

*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.”*

## Discussion

- 1) Agree or Disagree: The idea that God would not send people to hell is a relatively new thought among society today.

**Also they teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; he will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end.**

**They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils.**

**They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.** (*Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession: Of Christ's Return to Judgment*)

- 2) 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.
- 3) 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?
- 4) How might you explain to kindergarteners the truth that a loving God can, does, and will send people to hell?

## Closing Prayer

God of glory, eternal King, help us, we pray, to recognize the signs of the end times around us and to live each day with the realization that it could be our last day. Move us to hate what is evil and to cling to what is good. Keep us zealous in your service, joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, and holding to Jesus in faith so that when that when our last day comes we are among those received into your heavenly glory. Amen.