

Why Would God Send People to Hell?

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John 3:1-21

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Synopsis:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son; and whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”
Many have memorized this verse from childhood

How could such a loving God send some to hell?

We will learn from John’s Gospel that God so loves the world that he sends God the Son to save and not to judge. We have a choice to live in salvation or judgment. The truth is God doesn’t send anyone to hell. We choose to go.

I.

Heaven or Hell?

John 3:9 How can these things be?

Hear this all the time:

I don’t like a God of judgment!

I like a God of love!

How could a God of love send some to hell?

American Idol: Preliminary try outs

-Early season tryouts

-Panel of judges

-Contestants, some awful, some not

-Panel decides: you’re going; you’re not

-Bye! Bye!

Heaven and Hell in popular culture

-Tryouts

-Judge

- Some awful, some not
- Judge decides: you're going; you're not
- Bye! Bye! God waves as we scream "Have mercy!"
e.g. Gandalf falling with the Balrog

*Does the Bible say God sends some to hell and some to heaven?

II.

Heaven and Hell in John

John 3:1 There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus

Set Scene: John 2

- Jesus in Jerusalem for Passover
- Turns over the sellers' tables
- Talks about temple
- Talks about trust

That night a teacher visits: OPEN BIBLE

READ story and slowly go through

Watch closely

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| V2 Nicodemus | = good teacher |
| V3 Jesus | = born <i>above</i> ? |
| V4 Nicodemus | = born <i>again</i> ? |
| V5-8 Jesus | = explains not born again, but above |
| V9 Nicodemus | = clueless |
| V10 Jesus | = teacher? |

Here comes the meat: Vv 11-21

- Life and death (heaven and hell) vv 11-12
- Son of Man = Jesus on cross, snake (Num 21)
- Eternal life = not immortality; *zoe aionon* (life of ages)
- Salvation not judgment (condemn is *krino*)
- Choice: light or darkness

SUM:

God has chosen in love to save/rescue us (not judge/condemn) from death to life (of the ages); we now choose death or life.

III.

Heaven and Hell for Us

John 3:19 People loved darkness rather than light

Heaven and Hell: Do we even use these terms?

Keller's Book makes 5 points:

1. Judgment is offensive to us: Social location
E.g. Arab World vs. West (turn the cheek)
*Why aren't we offended at a forgiving God?
2. Love and judgment aren't opposites
E.g. raising kids; Psalm 145:17-20
3. Hell is our choice for destruction
E.g. alcohol, drugs, pornography; stupid destructive, self-centered behavior
Satan in Paradise Lost:
"Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven"
4. Christians think wrong thinking/behavior have consequences
E.g. Everyone thinks certain behavior is wrong; we think certain behavior has continuing effects; what goes round comes round
5. God of love is a biblical concept (not other religions), Where did we get that God is love?
 - not Islam = god is judge
 - not Buddhism = no personal god
 - not Hinduism = impersonal process

Here's the Choice:

God loves us

God sends the Son

God dies for us to restore the world to rights

We have a choice

Great Divorce: READ p. 73 Two kinds of people

There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says in the end, “Thy will be done.” All that are in hell choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no hell.

Choose Life not Death