

Eternal Punishment II

*Second lesson following the teaching notes from "An Introductory Teaching: Eternal Punishment."
Selected commentary on some of the biblical precepts previously given in the first lesson.*

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

Revelation 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The Minus Factors

Negative aspect of banishment: Matt. 22:13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus warned of the fate awaiting those Jews who rejected him in spite of their special privileges and said that the "... children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness:" (Matthew 8:12) Matt. 25:46 also

Job 21:14, 15 – some will say, "Good I want nothing to do with God." They should be grateful that God wants something to do with them. People are not living without God regardless how they treat Him. (Acts 17:25; Psalm 104:14-15; Matt 5:45). No more "common grace." Sinners can ignore God and still get enjoyment out of life because God provides them with natural resources, energy, intelligence, and senses to do so. He also provides food, drink clothing, company, friendship, sport, music, art, laughter, happiness – all of these, and hundreds of other things that contribute to man's well-being. In this life nobody is forsaken by God, but in hell all those life giving and life enhancing links are gone.

No Help; No Hope

Matthew 25:41 – Gone are friendship, fellowship, and relationships. It is not good to be alone (Gen 2:18). God sets the lonely person in families (Psalm 68:6). The family unit is God's idea, which includes all the blessings that flow through a loving family relationship. It is one of God's greatest gifts. No earthly ties are greater than those involving husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister. In hell, no relationship of any kind will exist.

Luke 16:24; Rom 14:12 - The rich man's concerns point to a sense of isolation. In hell, there will be no companionship, no love, no sympathy, no kindness, no pity, no help, and no comfort. All of hell is solitary confinement.

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Deprivation- All who die are without earthly pleasures and possessions. The righteous will enjoy eternal pleasures at God's right hand (Psalm 16:11); including a treasure that is unlimited (Luke 12:33). The wicked will be destitute. The wicked are people of this world whose reward is in this life (Psalm 17:14), which infers that they have no reward in the life to come. There will be no good things in hell, and the hardest hit will be those who had more than their share of good things on earth.

No Hope (Proverbs 11:7; 24:19-20)

Torment, Agony, Pressure

A biblical word for the positive aspects of the sinners' punishment in hell will be *torment* (Luke 16:23-28). John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, emphasized "The damned shall suffer an end without an end, a death without a death, a decay without decay... they shall have punishment without pit, misery without mercy, sorrow without succor, crying without comfort, torment without ease." (Brooks, *Works* vol.1; 137).

A second biblical word for the suffering of the wicked in hell is *agony*, which means pain, anguish, and distress. Godless nations under God's judgement will writhe in agony (Zech 9:5; 12:10). Rom 9:2. All of the wicked person's senses in hell will convey the agony in sign, sound, taste, touch, smell, and the body, soul, mind, and conscience will feel it.

Duet 28:55; Romans 2:8-9 the word trouble or tribulation includes the idea of pressure, oppression, and affliction while the main idea of the word distress is the anguish caused by being pressed or crushed into a confined space. The greatest pressure is the inescapable sense of God's sovereign power bearing down on the wicked.

No Laughing Matter

Matthew 8:12; 13; 42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 15:30; Luke 13:28.

What does the expression "weeping and gnashing of teeth" mean? Weeping indicates more than tears (which can sometimes be connected with laughter). The word weeping means to wail, not merely with tears, but with every outward expression of grief. The weeping of the wicked in hell will be triggered by all the factors present in hell; the environment, the company, the remorse, the torment and agony, the shame and contempt and the never ending sense of God's anger. The tears of the wicked will be those of inconsolable, never ending wretchedness, and utter everlasting hopelessness.

Job 16:9-10; Acts 7:54 – "gnashing of teeth" is a way to express anger or realization of a great loss. An expression of rage at realizing that one has made a huge mistake or one who has a personality which is self-absorbed, self-centered, and highly narcissistic,

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that gets angry when they don't get their way. The wicked in hell will be angry at the things which gave them pleasure on earth, but now give them pain in hell, angry at the sins that wrecked their lives, angry at themselves for being who they are; angry at Satan and his minions for producing the temptations which led them into sin; and even while compelled to acknowledge His glory and goodness, angry at God for condemning them to their dreadful fate.

One poet wrote "The world! It is a wilderness, where tears are hung on every tree." (T. Hood, "Ode to Melancholy"). Think of all the tears that must have been shed by sixty billion human beings over thousands of years.

War alone has caused an unimaginable amount of suffering, sorrow and tears. 250,000 British soldiers were killed in 100 days during the 1917 Battle of Passchendaele. Can we calculate the grief pressed out of human lives as a result of that one battle? The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC is inscribed with 57,939 American servicemen's names, with an average age of eighteen, who died in conflict. How many tears have been shed over Vietnam and all the other wars in human history?

What of all the tears shed in concentration camps and torture chambers, or those caused by accident or injury, slavery and family separations, sickness and disease, violence and bloodshed? What of the tears caused by rumor and gossip, lies and libel, poverty and neglect, tension and depression? If we could quantify all the agony involved, it would still fall infinitely short of "the weeping and gnashing of teeth." Ralph Venning wrote, "The punishment that sinners must undergo will be such a state of misery that all the miseries of this life are not to be compared with it... The gripings and grindings of all the diseases and torments that men can or do suffer in this life are like flea bites to it... Hell would be a kind of paradise if it were no worse than the worst of this world." (*Plague of Plagues*; 79)

An organization called Shelter once ran a poster campaign for the homeless with a slogan: "Homelessness is hell." The writer Malcolm Muggeridge once described Calcutta, with over a million people sleeping rough in its dirty streets, as "the nearest place to hell on earth" (*Condemned For Ever*, 35). These things and other genuine atrocities are horrific, but they never will begin to match the biblical picture. It has been said that somethings "hurt like hell"; **nothing hurts like hell!**

In consideration of the emotion and tears of the sinner's weeping, the cries will be to no avail. Thomas Brooks expresses, "Could every... sinner weep a whole ocean, yet all those oceans together would never extinguish one spark of eternal fire." (Brooks, *Works*, vol.6; 208)

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The Undying Worm

Isa 48:22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

The thought of a worm gnawing away at a person's body forever is so revolting that some people use this as an excuse to throw out the whole idea of hell. That would ignore the fact that the bible *uses figurative and symbolic* language to express abstract concepts.

William Penn (1644-1718) was imprisoned in the Tower of London; he was reported to have said, "My prison shall be my grave before I will budge a jot, for I owe my conscience to no man. Right is right even if everyone is against it; and wrong is wrong, even if everyone is for it." A timely proverb, "A quiet conscience sleeps in thunder."

A guilty conscience has the opposite effect. It nags the mind, unbalances the judgement, blurs the vision and cripples initiative. In hell the sinner's conscience will be more active and alert than its most sensitive time on earth. No longer will the conscience be "seared" (1 Tim 4:2) or "past feeling" (Eph 4:19). The wicked will have a capacity for suffering far beyond any they had on earth. As John Flavel wrote, "Conscience, which should have been the sinner's curb on earth, becomes the whip that must lash his soul in hell. Neither is there any faculty or power belonging to the soul of man so fit and able to do it as his own conscience. That, which is the seat and center of all guilt, now becomes the seat and center of all torments." (*Works*, Banner of Truth Trust, vol. 3; 137-138)

Shame and Contempt

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

No instrument known to man can measure the pain caused by guilt; and no human mind can imagine the agony caused in hell by an accusing conscience which has total recall and is impossible to silence.

Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. NIV
Every sinful word, thought, and deed, all the pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, selfishness, dishonesty, and impurity, every neglected opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel, every failure to help those in need, all these will be infinitely replayed, endlessly remembered, and the cause of endless remorse.

The sinner's ultimate shame: realizing they have failed in the one purpose for which they were created, which was to bring glory to God by obedience to his will. By their sinful, self-centered lives they told lies about God, slandered and libeled their Creator

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(Rom 3:23). They will be forced to admit that although God had given them “life and breath and all things” (Acts 17:25) they wasted his charity by living for themselves.

Contempt translates to the Hebrew word *deraon*. It is used in Isaiah 66:24 where he says that those condemned to hell “shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” Sinners will have company but no sympathy. Everyone there will be loathed by everyone else. Those that dwell in hell will be caught in a vicious cycle of accusation and guilt, recrimination, and regret, “shame and everlasting contempt.”

What Of The Fire?

This is an *interesting question*. There are places in scripture where a literal meaning is possible, but others where a symbolic meaning can only be the true one. If or since when Jesus spoke of a “worm” in hell, he was using a metaphor; would it be out of the realm of possibility that He should speak in the same breath of “fire” in a similar way. Any figure of speech has a literal point. The type of flame is a direct result of the source fuel for the fire. I believe the fires of Hell will affect the sinner externally (in a literal sense) and internally (which is described in a figurative sense).

The bible speaks in Rev 14:10; “the wine of the wrath of God” which is figurative language. Surely John is not saying that God’s anger is either liquid or alcoholic. To answer the question before us let us consider this. We have seen that fire is the most pervasive element in hell; then what is the single greatest factor that makes hell to be hell? The answer is the presence of God (Ex 3:1-3; Heb12:29).

The bible teaches that God is everywhere (Jer. 23:23-24; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7-8). Job 26:6 “The realm of the dead is naked before God; Destruction lies uncovered.” Here the word “dead” is Sheol and “Destruction” is the same word as “Abyss” in Revelation. When Isaiah speaks that “its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood;” he adds, “the breath of the Lord, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze” (Isaiah 30:33; NIV). What Isaiah is expressing is that God causes hell to ignite by the “breath” of His own holy presence.

In the New Testament, John envisions the fate of the ungodly, he states they will “be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:10). “The Lamb” is the Lord Jesus Christ (He is given this description over thirty times in Revelation), John is stating that the Son of God, the Judge of all mankind, is present when the ungodly are punished.

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Together And Separate

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Let me introduce a concept while tackling a seemingly contradicting line of thought. The essence of hell is relational. Christianity expresses that people are the most valuable things in the entire creation. If people are important, then personal relationships matter and hell is largely relational. In the Bible, hell is separation from the most glorious being in the universe, God Himself. Hell is exclusion from anything that matters, from all value, and also from those who have come to know and love Him.

Now in the Day of Judgement Jesus will say, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41) This statement, Paul's writing to the church at Thessalonica (2 Thess 1:8-9), and various other parables of Jesus, point to them who are condemned being forever separated from God's presence. How can the wicked be in His presence and separated from Him as well?

An illustration would be oil and water. These two items can never mix, even when shaken together in the same container. An observer commented, "I know a couple who have been married for over thirty years, but for the last twenty they have had no physical or spiritual relationship. Their home is full of bitterness and anger. At times their arguments have flared into violence... Even when things are quiet, there is not a spark of love anywhere in that home. They hate each other. They live in each other's presence but could not be more separated were they a thousand miles apart." We tend to think of separation in terms of distance, however, the bible speaks of it in terms of relationship. In hell the sinner will not be separated from God in the sense that he will not see Him or know of his existence; instead he will live forever in his awesome presence. Legitimately sinners in hell are separated from God, but this separation is in terms of being alienated from Him. God will not have changed His mind about the sinner, nor is the sinner's mind changed about Him; the final state is that they hate each other (Psalm 5:4-6; 11:5-6; Rom 1:28, 30). The sinner will have greater knowledge than he did on earth; there will be no atheists in hell, and all that denied the deity of Christ will have to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:9-11). The sinner will also have a greater knowledge of himself. Henry Blocher states, "All creatures will share in God's abhorrence of sin and evil; the sinner will hate himself, he will appreciate the value of his life and see as God does. Hell is nothing but full knowledge of the truth, remorse in agreement with God."

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Righteous Anger

What is the link between “fire” and God’s presence in hell? For this answer the bible focuses on God’s character. “The Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deut 4:24). Nahum leaves direction as to what God’s fire means, “...his fury [wrath] is poured out like fire...” (Nahum 1:6), while another says it is like a “refiner’s fire” (Malachi 3:20). Jeremiah states, “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire because of the evil you have done burn with no one to quench it.” (Jer. 4:4). It appears that the fire of hell is the inexpressibly and unrestrained wrath of God poured out upon sinners.

1. God’s anger is personal and measured. Psalm 103:8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.; and “He does not willingly bring affliction” (Lam 3:33). God’s anger is not a detached moral mechanism, but has feeling. His anger is a personal quality, without which God would cease to be fully virtuous and His love would degenerate into sentimentality.

2. God’s anger is pure. It is never to be confused with human anger, which is often irrational, bitter, or “over the top”. God never ‘loses His cool.’ His anger is never flawed like man’s fallen characteristics. It is completely righteous and consistent, “the controlled and permanent opposition of God’s holy nature to all sin.” (Eyril Davies, *Wrath of God*; 7).

3. God’s anger is powerful. Ps 90:11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. His anger is beyond our understanding, and is terrifying in its intensity.

4. God’s anger is permanent. It has been operational throughout human history. The bible speaks about it in both future and present tense. Ro 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Mt 3:7b “... O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” This is when God’s anger will not be tempered with mercy but poured out with all of its fury. We are told that the wicked “shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation” (Rev 14:10; NKJV). On earth God’s anger is diluted with mercy and patience (2 Pet 3:9); David says in Psalm 103:10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities (NKJV); in hell all that will change. God’s anger will be poured out at “full strength” which is something greater than any human being could experience or imagine.

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Just Punishment

Isa 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity...

Hosea 9:7 The days of punishment are coming; the days of reckoning are at hand. NIV

Mark 12:40b "... These men will be punished most severely."

Mt 25:46; Rom 13:4; He. 10:29; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 7

Punishment is a concept that follows throughout the Bible and through all the stages of God's dealings with the wicked. He punishes them in some measure during their earthly lives, in their disembodied intermediate state, and forever in hell. God is not aiming at their good but at His glory. The time for correction and discipline will be over. The priority is that God's justice is satisfied, His majesty vindicated.

Some suggest that we are not totally or mainly responsible for our behavior. The claim is that our characters are predetermined by our environment, family background, upbringing, economic situation, genetic make-up and other factors of which we have no control. Therefore, the idea that follows is that wrong doers are to be viewed as patients; not sinners or criminals; wrong behavior is to be viewed as an illness, not sin; and the remedy to be sought is in terms of treatment, not punishment.

Conceding that behavior is influenced by certain background factors in one's life, these things do not determine how we behave. We are responsible beings, not robots; people not puppets. Made "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27). All have sinned (Rom 3:23) and we all will stand before God's judgement seat (Rom 14:10). The bible's attention is focused on God not man. Life is not about bringing happiness and comfort to humans, but about bringing glory to God. People are sinners by nature, by choice and by desire. Jesus located the source of sin not in circumstances or social background, but in the human heart. "For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside..." (Mark 7:21-23) NIV. We will face God as guilty sinners, not as helpless victims of our circumstances.

"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, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished..." (Exodus 34:6-7) NIV. The "smallest" sin is rebellion against our Creator. Every time we sin we are shaking our fists in God's face and defying his right to rule our lives. Unrepentant sinners will receive just punishment. W.G.T. Shedd says, "If there was no hell in Scripture, we should be compelled to invent one" (*Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, 145).

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Just What They Asked For?

Hell is the dreadful destiny of the sinners' own choice. C.S. Lewis wrote, "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." (*Great Divorce*, 66-67)

De 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life*, that both thou and thy seed may live: (Psalm 78:33)

A person's character is not formed by decisions all at once, but by thousands of little choices they make every day without even knowing about it. Each day we are preparing to be with God and his people and valuing the things He values, or choosing not to engage with those things. People may not consciously reject heaven and choose hell instead, but they do choose not to care about the kinds of values that will be present in heaven every day.

Remember God is the most generous, loving, wonderful, attractive being in the cosmos. He has made us with free will and he has made us for a purpose: to relate lovingly to him and to others. We are not accidents, we're not modified monkeys, and we're not random mistakes. And if we fail over and over again to live for the purpose for which we were made-a purpose, by the way, which would allow us to flourish more than living any other way - then God, will have absolutely no choice but to give us what we've asked for all along in our lives, which is separation from him.

Joh 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (Mt 23:37-38)

There are no regulations that compel people to be proud or selfish! More so there are no sanctions against acknowledging that God has claim over our lives, no man made laws that make it impossible to worship God, thank Him for His goodness, obey His word or pray for His help. They choose to live their own lives, set their own standards, "do their own thing"; as Jesus put it they choose "darkness rather than light." (Rom 1:28; 2:5).

Some minor comment concerning children and the subject of hell: concerning the afterlife, our personalities reflect an adult situation. It was an adult, mature man Adam that exercised free will choice concerning whether or not to obey God's law. By this inference it would be difficult to see children in hell. No one will be in hell simply because all they needed was a little more time and they died prematurely. Secondly,

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in the bible texts where children are used in regard to the afterlife, they are used as pictures of being saved. There does not appear to be a case where children are used as figures of speech for damnation. For example, in 2 Samuel 12:23, David seems to express the truth that his child would be in heaven and that he would join him someday.

Children being punished or not in hell may be a complex question where we are left to mainly trust God. "God will judge the world in righteousness" (Psalm 9:8); "Gods judgement... is based on truth" (Romans 2:2). The glory of God's character will ensure the perfection of His judgement. There is no problem that will baffle God's wisdom, righteousness, justice, and love. As Abraham once asked, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"(Genesis 18:25).

The Punishment And The Crime

God's justice is proportional.

Mt 10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Jesus makes it clear that rejection of the gospel is more serious than the sexual immorality which characterized Sodom and Gomorrah. Social morality will not lessen the impact of God's judgement.

Mt 11:21-24 Here again there will be different degrees of punishment inflicted on the day of judgement. Larry Dixon says, "Capernaum was Jesus headquarters on the north shore of Galilee. Its townspeople could see and hear Jesus almost any time they wished. But they didn't bother" (*Other Side of the Good News*,127)

Lu 12:47-48 The greater our privileges, the greater our responsibilities, and the greater our guilt if we neglect them. An unrepentant sinner brought up in a Christian home will be in a worse position than someone who never had that privilege.

Mark 12:38-40; Rev 18:6-7

1. Hell is a place of justice, where sinners will be punished in the light of God's perfect standards. Not one soul will be in hell that does not deserve to be, and no one's hell will be darker or deeper than what is right. God allows people to shape their own character by the thousands of choices they make, He will also allow them to suffer the natural consequences of the character that they have chosen to have.

2. Alan Gomes has pointed out, "the nature of the *object* against which the sin is committed, as well as the nature of the sin itself, must be taken in account when

determining the degree of heinousness” (“Evangelicals and the Annihilation of Hell, Part II”, CRJ 13, Summer 1991) God’s justice will ensure that the punishment fits the crime, but everyone in hell will be a moral and spiritual criminal, and every sin committed will be treated as a massive offense against the majesty and authority of their Creator. The most heinous thing a person can do in this life is to mock, dishonor, and refuse to love the person that we absolutely owe everything to, God Himself. There are no “little sins” because there is no little God to sin against!

3. Romans 2:5 *But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.* (NIV) If a person is to remain unconverted, the sooner he dies the better, every further sin he commits will make things that much worse for him in eternity. Johnathan Edwards put it, “The longer sinners live, the more wrath they accumulate.”

Mr 9:42 *“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.* (NKJV) To lead a young saint astray, either by example or direct suggestion is serious sin and will add greatly to the sinner’s punishment. It would have been better for the sinner to have drowned then and there, then to have committed that particular sin.

God Is Too Good For This To Be True

How can a God of love send people to hell? This has been a persistent raised argument against the thought that there is an existence of hell. A loving God would never put persons into everlasting torment. This would make God a blood thirsty monster who maintains a torture camp for victims that He does not allow to die. This may seem plausible, what does the bible say.

Theological view – To call God “a God of love” is definitely scriptural. The love of God is not a fluctuating emotion but part and parcel to His very nature. John says that: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). “God is love” is the truth; however, it is not the only truth. Because of the language construction of John’s words in the original text, saying that “God is love” is not the same thing as saying that “Love is God”. Love is an attribute of God, a specific part of his essence, but it is not the definition of God. There is much more to God than love, and it would be careless to argue against anyone going to hell by citing one of God’s attributes and assuming that in determining people’s eternal destiny that this is the only attribute that impacts the situation.

I am not sure one could say that love is God’s dominant attribute. The attribute of God, that appears to stand out more in scripture than His others, is His holiness. In the Hebrew language, emphasis is sometimes given to a quality by repeating the word used to define it. This concept appears twice declaring God’s holiness (Isaiah 6:3; Rev 4:8).

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The bible reveals many other attributes of God; however, to focus here on His holiness is supported because it is the attribute of God that presumes His founded aversion to sin. Isaiah has an immediate reaction to the vision of God's holiness: "...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." (Isaiah 6:5). Isaiah tells us through his speech that a holy God cannot tolerate sin in any way, shape or form. Habakkuk says, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil, you cannot tolerate wrong" (Hab 1:13). Josh 24:19-20

This is the consistent biblical position. His perfect holiness is totally intolerant of sin. Anything that falls short of His own perfection is an abomination to Him. God is both loving and holy; these are the facts, and He always acts in character. He can only love in ways that are consistent to the type of being He is and there is a moral exactitude about the love of God. If he failed to demand holiness and to punish sin, he would cease to be God.

Again "How can a God of love send people to hell?" The question stated using the word "people" gives the impression that God faces a morality-neutral situation and then makes an arbitrary decision to send some people to the agony of hell. However, the starting position of men is not neutral, but in opposed rebellion to God. He has become a sinner and aroused God's righteous anger. God sends sinners to hell, not people. The bible says, "God is love" it does not say "God is hate" or "God is anger." Instead, it teaches that God responds in holy hatred and righteous anger only when people reject His amazing and undeserved love, and even then tempers His response with patience, mercy, and grace for as long as he determines.

A Philosophical View – "A Loving God Would Never Torture People In Hell."

Hell is God's great compliment to the reality of human freedom and the dignity of human choice. G. K. Chesterton, Christian

Let us define eternal punishment or hell in the truth of a relationship perspective. For starters, I will refer back to a previous point expressed in this teaching: God is the most generous, loving, wonderful, attractive being in the universe. He has made us with free will and he has made us for a purpose: to relate lovingly to him and to others. We are not accidents, we're not modified monkeys, and we're not random mistakes. And if we fail over and over again to live for the purpose for which we were made; a purpose, which would allow us to flourish more than living any other way, then God will have absolutely no choice but to give us what we've asked for all along in our lives, which is separation from him. That would be hell!

Point two: It's wrong to think God is simply a loving being, especially if you mean 'loving' in the sense that most individuals use that word today. Yes, God is a compassionate being, but he's also a just, moral, and pure being. God's decisions are not based on today's soft sentimentalism. In this modern era, people seem to reflect only on the softer

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virtues like love and tenderness, while they've forgotten the hard virtues of holiness, righteousness, and justice.

Point three: The conversation of hell evokes a visceral response. Some people react strongly against the simple idea of it. They tend to evaluate whether it's appropriate based on their feelings or their level of emotional offense against it. The basis of their evaluation should be whether hell is a morally just or morally right state of affairs, not whether they like or dislike the concept. Some people say adultery is pleasurable, but most people would agree it's wrong. And often doing the right thing isn't pleasurable. Telling someone a hard truth that they need to hear, or firing someone who isn't doing a good job, can be very unpleasant. One must understand that if the God of Christianity is real, he hates hell and he hates people going there. The Bible is very clear: God says he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).

In the Bible, hell is separation or banishment from the most beautiful being in the world-God himself. It is exclusion from anything that matters, from all value, not only from God but also from those who have come to know and love him. Hell is a natural consequence of a life that has been lived in a certain direction. By the way we live our lives we're either preparing ourselves for being in God's presence and enjoying him for eternity, or we're preparing ourselves for an existence where we try to make ourselves the center of the universe and we have no interest in being with God or the people who love him.

Someone might ask, "Couldn't God force everyone to go to heaven?" I say that would be immoral. The Bible states that men and women are created in the image of God. No other earthly entity possesses this express unique design. In knowing this, it raises the question of worth. There are two views concerning worth or value; intrinsic value and instrumental value. Something that has intrinsic value is valuable and good in and of itself; something that has instrumental value is valuable as a means to an end. For example, saving lives is intrinsically good. Driving on the right side of the street is an instrumental value; it's just good because it helps keep order. If society decided that everyone should drive on the left side that would be okay. The goal is to preserve order and save lives.

When people are treated as instrumentally valuable, or only as a means to an end, they are dehumanized, which is morally wrong. When people are treated as things they become only a means to an end. We can only respect people by treating them as having intrinsic value.

When a person is forced to do something against their free choice they have been dehumanized. This would state that the good of what you want to do is more valuable than respecting their choices, and so you're treating people as a means to an

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end by requiring them to do something they don't want. This is what it would be like if God forced everyone to go to heaven.

Since God has given all free will there is no guarantee that everybody is going to choose to cooperate with him. The option of forcing everyone to go to heaven is immoral, because it's dehumanizing; it strips them of the dignity of making their own decision; it denies them their freedom of choice; and it treats them as a means to an end.

God develops a person's character by working alongside with them, and those who do evil or cultivate false beliefs start a slide away from God that ultimately ends in hell. God respects human freedom. In fact, it would be unloving, a type of divine rape, to force people to accept heaven and God, if they did not desire it or Him. When God allows people to say 'no' to Him, He actually respects and dignifies them.