

WHY MUST SOME PEOPLE GO TO HELL?

1 Peter 3:9 ... "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Whether you like it or not, hell exists and there is a coming judgment. But, would it not be kinder if God let unbelievers die in peace instead of living for eternity in hell? In our human minds that would seem to be a logical and compassionate end for people who reject God. In fact, it is that logic – man's logic – that causes many people to want to believe that God is lying, and when they die without accepting Christ as their Savior, they will just cease to exist. Unfortunately, for those who reject God that is not the way it works.

Look first at heaven, which is described as a place of perfection: no sin, sickness, sadness, anger, crime, or hate; nothing but total and unlimited joy, peace and happiness. Sounds ideal, does it not? It is ideal. It is perfect. Now let us consider men and women who have not repented of their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior. They live in darkness, under the influence of satan, the enemy of God. Many inflict pain on their fellow human beings, create mayhem and chaos, live by their own rules, and totally reject God. God offers each of us access to heaven, but most people reject it. Obviously, heaven would not be desirable if God allowed unsaved people into it; it would not be a place of perfection, but a place just like earth today where all manner of sin exists because God gives man free-will.

Next, we consider the consequences of disobedience. Most countries have laws to make it safe for honest people. However, many people start rejecting authority as children. As they grow older the scale of their misbehavior enlarges so that they begin to hurt others and steal or destroy property. The legal system then inflicts punishment and, perhaps, sends them to prison. In severe instances, criminals might be sentenced to life in prison or executed for extreme crimes.

Our justice system helps maintain a sense of peace and order in our communities by removing criminals who disobey the law and sending them to prison, just as hell ensures that heaven will be a place of peace and order by sending unrepentant people to hell. The threat of going to prison is also a deterrent to help convince people not to disobey the law, just like hell is a deterrent for sinners. If man thought he could disobey the laws of the land without being punished, more men would be lawless. Many more people would be raped and killed. If man thought he could disobey God and die peacefully without paying for his sins, more men would disobey God. The threat of going to hell and suffering forever, is intended to convince people to obey God before it is too late.

God could easily have planned for unbelievers to simply die and cease to exist; dust to dust, earth to earth. But he chose to promise them an eternal home in hell as a way of convincing them to change their ways and choose heaven instead. God does not make empty threats or trick us into doing the right thing like some parents do with their children. He has created hell for unbelievers and he must be truthful and send them there. If hell wasn't scary, many more people would choose it over obedience to God.

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