

## **HELL-FIRE**

### *A Necessary Reality Demanded by Divine Love and Reason*

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The Apostle Paul reasoned and persuaded with sinners. (Acts 17:2, 17:17, 18:4, 18:19, Acts 24:25) God He does not discourage reasoning nor does He forbid reasoning. But God actually encourages reasoning. (Isaiah 1:18) Christians are to renew their minds (Ephesians 4:23), not remove their minds! True reason establishes the faith, it does not destroy it. Only an unreasonable faith fears reason, but true biblical faith does not fear reason, for God is a reasonable God and true reason is derived His Divine Intelligence.

The bible says that God is a good Governor with a good Government. (Ps 67:4, Ps 22:28, Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 2:6) And it is absolutely vital to understand that in the government of God, God is guided by His infinite Intelligence (Job 12:13, Proverbs 3:19-20, Proverbs 8:12, 22-30) and by His benevolent [loving] nature. (1John 4:8, 1John 4:16) God has a good and loving reason for everything He does; He is never malicious or unreasonable in any of His dealings. The judge of all the earth will do right! (Genesis 18:25)

So does the Divine Intelligence and the Divine Nature require the existence of hell? Is the existence of hell reasonable and loving? If God's Divine Intelligence and Nature did not demand the existence of hell, then God would not have created it. But since the Divine Word declares that hell does exist, and that it was God who created it, and that God is wise and loving, then the Loving Nature of God and the Infinite Intelligence of God requires hell to exist; God cannot have it any other way without violating His own Intelligence and Nature. Hell is in fact one of the most reasonable and loving doctrines in the entire bible!

The existence of moral good in the universe requires the existence of God's Moral Government in the universe; without it, there would be nothing but complete moral anarchy, chaos, and disaster! And government requires law. And every law must have precepts and every precept must have sanctions. Law without precept is no law, and precept without sanction is mere advice. Because God is reasonable and loving both the precepts of God's moral laws and the sanctions of God's moral laws are reasonable and loving. God's entire Moral Government is reasonable and loving!

Jesus taught that the reason, or spirit of God's law, was to do that which was good to the well-being of His people. (Luke 6:9) Jesus said that what was good was well-being and what was evil was ill-being. (Luke 16:25) God does what is good to those who are made in His image because He values them. (Matthew 14:36, Luke 12:7) God hates sin because God loves people. If God did not love people, He would have no reason to hate sin. God is pleased at the well-being of His creation (Genesis 1:31, Genesis 4:7, Isaiah 42:21) but God is grieved at the ill-being of His creation! (Genesis 6:5-6, Matthew 23:37, John 11:33) A truly good King loves his people; how much more so the King of Kings! (1Timothy 6:15, Revelations 17:14, Revelations 19:16)

The purpose of Government is to protect the well-being of the community; to promote its welfare. Every good government, that seeks to protect the community from harm and to promote its well-being, outlaws what is harmful (precepts), then publicly punish (sanctions) those who are a threat to the well-being of the community; isolating in prison those who cannot be trusted in the community. Every good government establishes jails and prisons, these are absolutely necessary. And every good judge sends to those places of punishment and isolation those who break good laws. The community would not be safe otherwise.

Because God wants to protect His creation that He loves and wants to promote the well-being of the universe, His precepts and sanctions are designed to secure that end. Because God genuinely cares about the welfare of His creation, because God seeks the well-being of the people that He has created and loves, especially and specifically those made in His image, He outlaws all that is harmful (lying, stealing, adultery, murder, all manner of sin and selfishness, etc) and commands what is good and beneficial (love – genuinely caring for one another).

What is harmful is forbidden, what is good is commanded. “Jesus said, thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness.” (Matthew 19:18) Jesus also commanded, “Thou shalt love...” (Matthew 19:19, 22:37-39, Mark 12:30, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27) And the Inspired Apostle wrote, “For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Romans 13:9)

Consider family government, how loving parents command their children not to play in the road. The parents do not make this command arbitrarily, or simply to make their children miserable, but rather because they love their children and want the best for them. God is our loving Creator, and He commands us not to play in sin. God does not do this arbitrarily or simply to make us miserable, but rather because God loves and cares about us. God wants the best for us, but sinning against ourselves, against each other, and against God destructive and harmful, sin is not good for us or for others, sin does not please or glorify God in the least! And so our Creator forbids all sin because He is loving and reasonable, His laws have the public interest in mind.

It is important to understand that the law does not determine what is good and what is evil (it is not arbitrary), but rather the law declares what is good and what is evil; the law does not originate what is good and what is evil but rather it reveals what is good and what is evil. (Romans 5:13) The moral law of God is not arbitrary, but it is good and right! (Romans 7:12)

The precepts of God’s moral laws are good, and to uphold the precepts He has established proper sanctions. God’s government is good and God’s judgment is just, He punishes with isolation those who are harmful (sinners). That eternal prison and

punishment of isolation is called “outer darkness” (Matt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30) which is a place of eternal “torment”. (Matt 8:29, Luke 16:28, Rev 14:11). Hell is such a horrific place that it is described as a lake of fire (Revelations 21:8), it is described as a furnace of fire (Matthew 13:42, 13:50), where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth! (Matthew 8:12, Matthew 22:13, Matthew 24:51, Matthew 25:30, Luke 13:28, Revelations 18:15, Revelations 18:19) Such descriptions can only give us a glimpse of the agony and torment souls will experience eternally in hell.

The existence of this eternal prison in the universal called hell is not rooted in any maliciousness in God, or because God is sadistic. Rather, the existence of hell is grounded in the benevolence of God, because God loves His creation and wants to protect it from those who are willing, because of their selfishness, to harm it; to isolate those who are willing to disregard the value of others in their selfish pursuit of their own happiness and pleasure. God protects the creation that He loves from such sinners and criminals as that!

And the punishment is just, the punishment fits the crime. Instead of loving God supremely and neighbor equally (Matthew 22:37-38, Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27), they sought their own happiness supremely! They choose selfishness over love! Instead of seeking to please God and to help their fellow man, they sought to please and help themselves! Sinners are willing to trample upon the well-being of others in pursuit of their own pleasure, and so they will eternally experience ill-being and misery, because that is what they were willing to let others suffer! (Luke 16:25) They will experience the opposite of what they were pursuing; they will experience precisely what they caused others to experience: misery and ill-being!

But let it be understood that God has created no individual specifically for hell, for hell was not created for man. But hell was originally created for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41), because the devil and his angels were the first to disobey God, and thus become a threat to the creation that He loves. The devil selfishly wanted to be His own God (Isaiah 14:12-14) and so does every sinner, and that is why sinners reject God’s government. (Luke 19:14). Those enemies of God who reject the reigning of God for their life will be slain on Judgment Day (Luke 19:27) by Jesus – the judge of all! (Romans 2:16, 2Timothy 4:1)

And so those who choose of their own will to join the selfish rebellion started by the devil will share in the devil’s fate of everlasting fire - eternal torment. (Matt 3:10, Matt 7:19, Matt 18:8) And God’s justice is revealed by this, so God is glorified even in this (Job 21:30, Proverbs 16:4, Romans 9:22), though God takes no personal pleasure in the death of the wicked but that they turn and live. (Ezekiel 18:32, 33:11)

God will not let sin into Heaven. (Revelations 22:15) And the moral condition that you die in will be the moral condition that you wake up in. (Revelations 22:11) Death cannot change your will, only you can ultimately do that. We absolutely must choose to live godly, righteous, and holy in this present world! (2Corinthians 1:12, Galatians 1:4, Titus 2:12, 1John 4:17) And so Heaven is the “inheritance of the saints” only (Ephesians 1:18,

Colossians 1:12) but the inheritance of the ungodly and sinners is hell-fire. (2Peter 2:4-7)  
The righteous will be saved on judgment day, not the ungodly and sinners. (1Peter 4:18)

Heaven will be Heaven because there will be no sin there, because there will be nothing but love there. The citizens of Heaven will not be lying to each other, stealing from each other, hurting and harming one another, they will not blaspheme God and grieve the heart of God, they will not dishonor God, but they will love and value one another and they will love and value God, they will honor and glorify God! And that is precisely why it is Heaven! And God's will is for that to occur now "on earth as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10)

And so there is an eternal prison in the universe because God is loving and wise. His Benevolence and Intelligence demands the existence of hell. If it were not demanded by His Divine Nature and by His Divine Intelligence, hell would not exist. But hell must exist if God is loving and wise! A loving and wise Governor would not have it any other way. Only an ignorant or evil ruler, who does not care at all about his subjects, would have no laws and no punishments; would issue no precepts and no sanctions in order to protect that community that he oversees. But our Great and Glorious God is not ignorant but wise (1Timothy 1:17, Jude 1:25), not evil but holy (Matthew 5:48, James 1:17); and so He deeply cares about His people. (John 3:16, 1John 4:9)

God is loving not selfish, God cares and is not cruel, God is reasonable and not tyrannical, and that is precisely why hell is a reality for those who continue to sin and refuse to repent and obey God. (Luke 13:3, Romans 6:23, 1Corinthians 6:9-10, Hebrews 5:9, Revelations 21:8)

All have voluntarily chosen to sin against themselves, to sin against their neighbor, and to sin against God. (Romans 3:10-23). All have done what they knew was wrong (Romans 2:15), and thereby justly deserves punishment!

God is good and merciful and ready to forgive sin! (Psalms 86:5) But if God is going to forgive sin, if God is going to set aside our punishment of hell-fire and turn from His wrath, God's government requires bloodshed to take the place of our punishment – there is no forgiveness of our sins without blood shed. (Hebrews 9:22). But if there is a blood offering, to take the place of our punishment of hell, God can then set aside our punishment of hell and can turn away from His wrath; God can then actually forgive us our sins and pardon our debts!

The blood offering, which makes the salvation of all men possible, is the finished work of Christ! (John 19:30) Christ died to atone for the sins of the whole world. (John 3:16, 1John 2:2) The atonement of Christ was a substituted for our punishment (Galatians 3:13), declaring the righteousness of God (Romans 3:25), thus enabling God to justly forgive us our sins (Romans 3:26) and to pardon our debt (Matthew 6:12, Matthew 18:27, Luke 7:42).

Because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, making Himself a sin offering

(1Corinthians 15:3, 2Corinthians 5:21), giving His own body (Luke 22:19) and blood (Matthew 26:28) for everyone, God is now able to set aside our punishment, to turn from His wrath. (Psalms 78:38) Christ is our Passover lamb (1Corinthians 5:7) so that the wrath of God can pass over us instead of being poured out on us. (Exodus 12:13)

And our loving God offers this gracious offer of forgiveness to all men upon condition of repentance and faith. (Luke 13:3, John 3:18) Because God wants all men to be saved (2Peter 3:9), God calls all men to repent! (Acts 17:30-31) That is why all of Heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents! (Luke 15:7-10) Because God will not pardon any rebel (Hebrews 2:2, 1Corinthians 6:9), but saves only those who wave the white flags of surrender and make a decision to no longer sin against God, to no longer sin against neighbor, and to no longer sin against self. (Hebrews 5:9).

God has grace and mercy for every sin that you turn away from, forgiving every sin that you repent of! Because Christ has died for all, God can forgive everyone, God can turn from His just wrath and none have to go down to eternal hell-fire. But to be saved, you must surrender your whole life to Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23, Luke 14:26) - you must give your whole heart to God. (Joel 2:13) You must receive Christ as your Lord and Savior in order to be saved! (John 1:12, Romans 10:9-10)

Only those who obey the gospel are saved (Romans 6:17), but those who obey not the gospel must be damned (2Thesalonians 1:8, 1Peter 4:17). And the gospel requires that you repent and believe (Mark 1:15, Luke 24:47), those are the necessary conditions of forgiveness and reconciliation. God chooses to save those who respond to His call. (Matthew 20:16, Luke 14:23), only those who persevere and are faithful unto the end are saved from God's wrath at last. (Matthew 10:22, Revelations 17:14)

God will not force you against your will to be saved (Luke 13:34), it must be from your own heart (Acts 8:37, Romans 6:17, Romans 10:9-10), God puts the decision in your hands and even begs you to be reconciled unto Him! (2Corinthians 5:20) Will you respond to God's gracious invitation? "Flee from the wrath to come"! (Matthew 3:7, Luke 3:7)