

# Damned!

## A Study on the Doctrine of Hell

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As of 9/06/20

### Introduction

*“... every person who has ever lived... will eventually be in heaven... Love wins”*

Rob Bell

*“We are each our own devil, and we make this world our hell.”*

Oscar Wilde

*“Maybe this world is another planet’s hell.”*

Aldous Huxley

*“To terrify children with the image of hell, and to consider women an inferior creation—is not good for the world”*

Christopher Hitchens

*“I would prefer an intelligent hell to a stupid paradise.”*

Blaise Pascal

*“[T]he infliction of cruelty with a good conscience is a delight to moralists. That is why they invented Hell.”*

Bertrand Russell

*“The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”*

Samuel Johnson

*“You won’t burn in hell. But be nice anyway.”*

Ricky Gervais

*“I don't believe in an afterlife, so I don't have to spend my whole life fearing hell, or fearing heaven even more. For whatever the tortures of hell, I think the boredom of heaven would be even worse.”*

Isaac Asimov

*“I am an Agnostic because I am not afraid to think. I am not afraid of any god in the universe who would send me or any other man or woman to hell. If there were such a being, he would not be a god; he would be a devil.”*

Clarence Darrow

*“I don’t believe in hell because I believe that God is love”*

Oprah Winfrey

*“To accept what the Bible teaches about hell requires us to believe that ¾ of the population of the world is going to be there.”*

Penn Jillette

*“One of the most interesting Realities about Hell is that the only ones, who are afraid of it (genuine believers)- will never go there.”*

Blair Bradley

## **Hell is Taught in the Bible**

The concept of “Hell” is taught in the Bible. Moses taught it in the Old Testament. And so did David, Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah, and Habakkuk. In the New Testament, the Apostles Matthew (Levi), Peter and John actually used the *word*, while Paul clearly taught the *concept* of Hell. And other New Testament writers like James and Dr. Luke taught about Hell as well. But what is interesting to many people is that Jesus Himself taught about Hell very clearly and repeatedly. In fact, some of the most vivid and frightening portraits of Hell were “painted” by the incarnate God, Who is God’s Love personified.

So, if you believe the Bible is “the Word of God”- then you are *required* to believe in Hell. However, if your view of the Bible is that it is “a Word *about* God”- you can pretty much take Hell for what it is- or you might simply choose to just ignore it; or even make up your own personal “designer” theology about it. But trusting in the Inspiration; Inerrancy; and the Infallibility of the sixty-six Books that make up the “Scriptures” is *supposed* to mean that *whatever* the Bible teaches about Hell- you are to accept as true. Yet the Doctrine of Hell is so disturbing to so many- that even among those who say they accept the full inspiration of all sixty-six Books- there are many, who can’t seem to bring themselves to accept everything about this Doctrine.

For example, one of the most widely read and followed heretics of our day, Rob Bell, uses the following logic when trying to comprehend the Issue of Hell:

“Really? Gandhi’s in Hell? He is? We have confirmation of this? Somebody knows this? Without a doubt? And that somebody decided to take on the responsibility of letting the rest of us know?”<sup>1</sup>

So, I hope you can see that there is a huge difference in giving “lip service” to the idea that Hell exists and actually believing it is true. But even among those who say they believe in Hell- very few would go so far as to actually defend it and say that Hell is right; it is a correct and proper response by God to our Sin. And of those who do say this- their logic would go something like this:

- Hell is real; it exists
- God created Hell for the devil and his angels (demons) (**Matthew 25:41**)
- Hell is everlasting Torment
- All lost people go to Hell

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<sup>1</sup> Rob Bell; *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived*; HarperOne; Reprint July 24, 2012; Preface

... which is a pretty good logic. But when confronted with specifics- most people seem to hesitate. For example, go through this logic with me:

- Coveting is a Sin
- Those who covet are sinning
- Therefore, if I covet someone's car for five seconds- my Punishment is...

... Eternal Damnation? Really? I burn in Hell forever because I coveted my neighbors car? Now keep in mind- I didn't actually "do" anything. I sinned *internally* in my own mind- but I never acted out on that lust. So, nothing actually happened. And God will put me in the Lake of Fire forever? For that? Really?

Now I would suggest that most thinking people- even those in the Church- would consider that to be a gigantic *over- reaction*. Everlasting Punishment for five seconds of lusting? That just seems out of place.

### **The Punishment Must Fit the Crime**

So, the real Questions are, "*Isn't Eternal Damnation too much Punishment? Doesn't Hell make God look bad?*" Or, "*How could a Good and loving God send people to Hell forever?*"

#### **Matthew 25:31-46**

**31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.**

**32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;**

**33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.**

**34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

**35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;**

**36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'**

**37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink?**

**38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?**

**39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'**

**40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'**

**41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;**

**42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *nothing* to drink;**

**43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'**

**44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'**

**45 "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'**

**46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."**

#### The Revelation 14:9-13

**9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,**

**10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.**

**11 "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."**

**12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.**

**13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."**

Many read, **"These will go away into eternal punishment"** and **"he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night,"** ... and reflexively say, *"That's not how it's supposed to go."* They shake their heads and say, *"How is that a Good Story?"* And there are many, who would use that difficulty and agree with Rob Bell, when he says,

"Telling a story about a God who inflicts unrelenting punishment on people because they didn't do or say or believe the correct things in a brief window of time called life isn't a very good story." (*Love Wins*, 110)

For Bell and company, the lack of a "and they lived happily ever after" just doesn't sit right. Even the concept of total "Annihilation"<sup>2</sup>, to them, seems like a terrible ending. A God that would punish humans for an Eternity is *devastating, crushing, unbearable, traumatizing, terrifying, cruel, wrong, untenable, unacceptable, awful, unlovable*. Hear it from Bell, this kind of God is a being that,

"... no amount of good music or coffee can cover."

The Challenge, then, is not to merely prove the *existence* of Hell from one's

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<sup>2</sup> Annihilation is the heresy that teaches that lost people simply are burned up into ashes when they die.

exegesis of Scripture, but to answer why God's Story is *better* than the one we would have written- because it is. So, we must try to *reason* with the heart, because Jesus taught us an extraordinary Truth when He said that the mind will *misunderstand* what the heart detests:

**John 8:43**

**Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is because you cannot hear My word.***

... where we should understand the last part of this verse to say,

**... It is because you cannot BEAR to hear My word.**

So, ultimately people CANNOT hear what Jesus says because they CANNOT bring themselves to believe that what Jesus says is Truth. But why can't they? It isn't because they don't KNOW the Truth. No, it is because they don't LOVE the Truth.

**2Thessalonians 2:7-12**

**7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.

**8** Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

**9** *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

**10** and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

**11** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

**12** in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

### **Four Truths About Hell**

We should not come to the Subject of Hell lightly. We are talking about a real Hell for real people for a real Eternity. We are talking about a place where it would have been better for people to never have been born than to enter. It is a place of Fire. And Punishment. And Banishment. And Outer Darkness. It is a Curse. And it is Destruction. And Anguish. It is the Second Death. Hell is a place where worms feast; and strong men weep; and teeth gnash. These four letters (HELL) describe an *unending* Punishment- that is truly terrifying. So, how should we understand Hell?

### **First, We Grieve**

The Bible gives us examples about how believers are to view Hell. Look at how the Apostle Paul considered the lostness of his kinsmen, and how Jesus lamented the unbelief of Israel.

### Romans 9:1-5

**1** I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

**2** that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

**3** For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

**4** who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises,

**5** whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

### Luke 13:34-35

**34** "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!* How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen *gathers* her brood under her wings, and you would not *have it!*

**35** "Behold, your house is left to you *desolate*; and I say to you, you will not see Me until *the time comes* when you say, '**BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!**'"

... even the Old Testament Prophets mourned over those who are lost

### Ezekiel 18:31&32

**31** "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?

**32** "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord God. "Therefore, repent and live."

These examples teach us that we must not lay aside our love for the lost in discussing Eternal Damnation being an appropriate Punishment for their Sin.

## 1. Who Will Be in Hell?

The first consideration is clarifying what sort of creature will be under God's Wrath forever. Consider the little old lady, who has shown herself to be a selfless, gentle, patient, forgiving, and amiable neighbor may have a quaint funeral. Yet the person eulogized is NOT the person she truly was; nor who she will show herself to be in Eternity to come. God has hidden her from us. And at death, the Bible teaches that God will repossesses all borrowed Virtue; the full torrent of her wicked heart will be unleashed; and she will be fully given over to her Sin.

### Romans 1:24&25

**24** Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

**25** For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Now many would be thinking, “*This is insane! Why would God cast a little old lady, who never hurt anyone, into Hell forever!*” So, why would God cast a little old lady into Hell forever?

This example speaks for millions of people who simply don’t feel comfortable with Hell or with the Cross of Christ. And I would state the problem like this:

When God is small and Man is large- Hell will be abhorrent- even absurd-  
and the Cross will be foolishness.

The most telling thing about our reaction to this example is that most people’s conception of Evil can never be big enough to make sense of Hell or the Cross of Christ, because most people define Evil only in relation to what harms us- rather than what belittles God. And that is why most people would say, “*I have a difficult time seeing myself as being wicked and utterly depraved.*”

And then we would define Evil like something like this:

“*There is great Evil in the world, such as War, Rape, Murder, Racism, Oppression, etc. But the majority of the world doesn’t need God to see these things as Evil or make a change.*”

So, what are the great Evils in the world, according to most people? And the Answer is: War, Rape, Murder, Racism, and Oppression.

Now, to be sure- all of these are ways that Man harms Man. You don’t even need God in the picture in order to call those things, “Evil.” And that is why most people don’t seem to have a category for Evil as the dishonoring, demeaning, disparaging, insulting, and belittling of God. That usually never comes into our minds.

So, let’s do a thought experiment. Suppose there is no God, and one of us is a super-successful Adolf Hitler. And as a super-successful Adolf Hitler- we are able not only to kill all the Jews in the world, but all the other non-Aryans. Everybody in Africa, we kill. Everybody in China, we kill. Everybody in India, we kill. Everybody in South America, we kill. So, we succeed in orchestrating the murder of about seven billion people.

And the question is, “*Would we deserve Eternal Punishment in Hell?*” And my Answer is, “*No, we wouldn’t.*” And I say that for two Reasons. First, if there’s no God, and we are simply complex chemical and material animals, then there’s no such thing as Right and Wrong anyway. There is no such thing as Merit or Blameworthiness. They’re simply different chemical reactions.

But second and more importantly for my point, we wouldn’t deserve an *infinitely* long Punishment because seven billion murders are still *finite*. And a *finite* number of *finite* Crimes NEVER deserves an *infinite* Punishment. In other words, when God is left out- there’s simply no way to have an *infinite* Crime deserving of an *infinite* Punishment like Hell- or the Cross. They would *both* be Unjust. So, there is simply no way to comprehend either Hell or the Cross correctly- without *first* comprehending God. And that means that those who either deny Hell or who minimize it to resemble something it certainly is NOT- don’t understand Who God is.

And this is *why* God has spoken to us in the Bible. We will never understand the depth of our sinfulness without God telling us what the Problem is- which He has very clearly. But,

outside of Scripture- nobody would ever come up with this Truth on our own. We must learn it from the Bible. And what God has said is this:

**The essence of Evil- what makes Evil to be “*Evil*”- is NOT Harm done to Man, but Indignities done to God. Now Harm to Man is terrible. But it is meant to merely be a vivid Parable of the outrage of failing to honor God; failing to glorify God; failing to thank God- as God.**

The Bible reveals God to be the wisest; the most beautiful; the strongest; the kindest; and the most important Being in the Universe. The God of the Bible is truly “glorious”. Every Attribute of God is extended to its full zenith. Every Quality- is perfect. Every area of God’s Nature- is without fault or flaw. Perfect Love united with perfect Beauty; combined with perfect Power; existing within perfect Wisdom. So, how should this glorious; all powerful; all knowing; all seeing; God act? How should He live?

But the Bible goes on to say that this glorious God also created everything that exists- all by Himself. But God didn’t merely make everything- He created rocks and mountains and grass and bees and turnips and fleas and sub-atomic particles and black holes and galaxies to reflect His Own pristine Qualities and Attributes back to Himself. And that is why 1,000 years before Jesus was born, King David said,

**Psalm 19:1**

**The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.**

And so, the Bible teaches that God does everything that He does- for one of three reasons:

1. For My Glory
2. For My Name’s Sake
3. So, they will know there is none like Me in all the earth

... and then, this glorious God made Man.

**Genesis 2:7**

**Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.**

... then God gave Man an assignment to labor and placed *restrictions* on his behavior

**Genesis 2:15-17**

**15** Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

**16** The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

**17** but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not <sup>1</sup>eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."



... then God made Woman.

#### Genesis 2:18-25

**18** Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

**19** Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought *them* to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

**20** The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

**21** So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

**22** The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

**23** The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

**24** For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

**25** And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

... and then Man fell

#### Genesis 3:1-6

**1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

**2** The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

**3** but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

**4** The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!

**5** "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and **A**you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

**6** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

... and then both the Man and Woman *responded* to being fallen.

#### Genesis 3:7-11

**7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

**8** They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

**9** Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

**10** He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

**11** And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

... then the "blame-game" began- which resulted in the Curse

**Genesis 3:12-24**

**12** The man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

**13** Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

**14** The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;

**15** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

**16** To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."

**17** Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

**18** "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

**19** By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

**20** Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living.

**21** The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

**22** Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" —

**23** therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

**24** So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Nature of these fallen human beings is now sinful; rebellious; and fallen. Mankind no longer desires to love and obey God- but to reject God and insult Him to His Face.

## **Genesis 6:5**

**Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

So, just what are the characteristics of this fallen Humanity?

## **Romans 1:18-32**

**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,**

**19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.**

**20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.**

**21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**

**22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,**

**23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.**

**24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.**

**25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

**26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,**

**27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.**

**28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,**

**29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips,**

**30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,**

**31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;**

**32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

## **Ephesians 1:23**

**Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.**

... but why is God so angry?

## **What Sin Is**

One of the problems in people trying to reconcile Hell with God being pure Love- is that they do not understand the Reality of Sin- of just what Sin really is. The Apostle Paul said,

**Romans 3:23**  
**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

Now why did Paul say this? Why didn't he say, "*For all have sinned and fall short of God's Righteousness; or God's perfect Standard of Holiness; or God's Purity?*" Why say that Sin causes us to fall short of God's *Glory*? The Answer to this reveals what Sin really is and why God is so angry about it.

## **What is the "Glory of God"?**

So, just what is, "God's *Glory*"? How do we define that? We already know what God's *Holiness* is- and from that we can extrapolate a good working definition of God's *Glory*.

So, when we say that God is "holy"- what do we mean? The word, "Holy" refers to God's "set apartness"; His "otherness". The great God of the Universe is unlike anything and everything that He made. So, God is "set apart"; "other"; "different"; "better"; and "higher"; and "more important" than anything else in all the Universe. But just what makes God to be "unique" and "set apart" from everything else? The *summation* of all His Qualities and Attributes. So, God's "Holiness" is the *totality* of all His unique and perfect Characteristics. Holiness is Who God is.

Okay, but what is God's *Glory*? God's *Glory* is when one or more of His perfect and unique Attributes or Characteristics is demonstrated or shown or manifested. So, when a part of God's Holiness shines forth (like the rays of the sun)- that radiance; that beauty; and that magnificence- is God's *Glory*.

For example, when a wicked sinner is saved- the radiance and beauty and importance and significance and magnificence of God's *Grace* is seen; it is shown; it has been manifested. And when it is seen- people marvel and give God praise and thanks. And the result of seeing that portion of God's *Glory* is- they then honor; adore; and worship- God.

And when that happens- God is in His rightful Place. Now our praise and magnification of God does not *cause* God to be in His rightful Place. God is always in His rightful Place- as God- regardless of whether we see it or not. But we usually don't understand God as being in His rightful place- until His *Glory* is seen or displayed.

And so, that is why God does what He does: so we will see His *Glory*; and marvel at it. And as we marvel at Who God is and what God has done- God is correctly understood as being the glorious and wonderful God that He is. And that marveling at God; that wonderment after God- is called, "Worship".

So, God does all that He does for one reason: "*For My Glory!*" So, whether that is creating a super-nova or a subatomic particle; whether it is saving an unworthy rebel or judging an unrepentant sinner- everything that God does- He does for the same reason: So, that He alone will be glorified.

Yet that Worship won't happen- unless two things happen first:

1. God first, displays or shows His Glory (a portion of His holy Character and Nature)
2. We "see" or "behold" that Glory

... and that is *why* God all that He does. God, *first*, "shows" or "displays" a portion of His Own holy Character and Nature (i.e. God's Love; God's Beauty; God's Wisdom; God's Grace, etc.)- which is His Glory- in the earth. And then, God sovereignly "opens our eyes"; He "unveils our faces"- so we may "see" or "behold" His Glory. And then, we *respond* to seeing that Glory- with Worship!

But Sin stops all that from happening. So, Sin is NOT seeing; NOT beholding God's Glory; and it is NOT marveling at it. Sin is NOT responding to the demonstration of Who God is- by worshipping Him.

Yet God is *constantly* displaying His Glory throughout the Universe. Since it is God's Passion to be glorified- He never stops showing a portion of Who He is- every day- all the time. So, it isn't that God *withheld* the demonstration of Who He is from us. That would make God culpable in our refusal to Worship Him. Rather, it is our unwillingness to respond to the showing of His Holiness- that is the Problem. And so, Sin is our refusal to marvel at God in His Glory.

But why don't we marvel at God? What don't we respond to God's demonstration of His Glory with Worship? We can't see it. But why can't we see the demonstration or the showing of part of God's Holiness? Ultimately, it is because we don't want to.

But why wouldn't we want to praise something that is infinitely *deserving* of praise? Why would we not love something that is *perfectly* lovable? Why would we not enjoy something that is *infinitely* enjoyable? We have made an exchange. We have made a swap. We have "set our affections" on things that are made and things that are passing away. We have exchanged the Glory of God- for something else.

### **Romans 1:18-25**

**18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

**19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

**20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

**21** For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

**22** Professing to be wise, they became fools,

**23** and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

**24** Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

**25** For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Now, notice that this is not talking about people, who don't know about God. This is describing people who know all about God- but who don't *love* God. And because they see no Value; no Benefit; no Importance; no Beauty; no Worth; no Purpose in God- they attach Value to something else- *anything* else. So, Paul said they,

1. **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures**
2. **they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**

So, Sin is the great God of the Universe displaying His Glory- and we exchange that- for wooden or metal trinkets. We look full face into the most important thing to God- His Glory- and we say, "*No thanks, I'd rather have something else.*" You simply can't insult God any more than that. So, Sin is NOT that we all become mass murders or child molesters. No, Sin is the *belittling* of God's Glory. It is us NOT *valuing* what means the most to God. Sin is us *insulting* or rejecting or ignoring what God is most passionate about- His Glory. And that is why Paul said,

### **Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**

When we "fall short" of God's Glory- it ISN'T that we almost made it but fell just a wee bit short. No, it is that we *trampled under-foot*- that which is MOST precious to God- His Glory. So, belittling or marginalizing or ignoring or NOT admiring God's Glory is what Sin really is. And that is so very insulting to God. "*How dare the creatures of the dust- to ignore my Glory! How dare they! They do NOT love Me? They do NOT marvel at My Glory! I made them; I allow them breath; I provide everything they need to live- and they are going to ignore Me? They think so little of what I am most concerned about- that they exchange it for things that I created? How dare they!*"

... and that is why God is so angry.

So, how can we fix this? We can't. But God can. How? By sovereignly *opening* our eyes- so we may behold God in His Glory! By sovereignly and forcefully *unveiling our eyes*- so we may delight in seeing Him!

### **2Corinthians 3:7-4:6**

**7** But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was,

**8** how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?

**9** For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

**10** For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses *it*.

**11** For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.

- 12** Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech,  
**13** and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.  
**14** But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.  
**15** But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;  
**16** but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.  
**17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.  
**18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.  
**4:1** Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,  
**2** but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.  
**3** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,  
**4** in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.  
**5** For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.  
**6** For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

We must understand that the intrinsic hatred of God, the impatience, the lustful thoughts, the greed, the slander, and the viciousness that make up the fallen human nature in small children- will never stay dormant. It will develop and grow until it eventually stampedes out from the heart and into words; actions; and intents. The Evil that periodically shows itself in "seed form" in little children- will grow to become dense forests. The Light of "Common Grace" will fade from them and they will eventually be given over to the Darkness which they love, "by nature".

### **John 3:19-21**

- 19** This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.  
**20** For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.  
**21** But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

### **Ephesians 2:3**

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

... and this is why Sin, fully enthroned- eventually dehumanizes.

And we can testify to watching this Ungodliness ripen in our own life span. Little Adolf, sleeping in his crib, eventually becomes Hitler. Jezebel casts aside her dolls to become the slayer of Prophets. Yet these examples don't compare with the change to be seen when hearts, that have become fully hardened, come to face the Master they hate.

### **Genesis 6:3**

**Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."**

In the time frame immediately after the Fall- God shortened our life span to 120 years. And we have to recognize that, *part* of the reason God did this- was to *prevent* the full ripening; and the complete manifestation of the Evil that we already had inside us. So, while it is true that the citizens of Heaven are their most fallen on the earth- the citizens of Hell are their most human.

The Apostle John casts a glimmer of Light upon the "Tormented" in the **Book of the Revelation**. And what we see- is terrifying. The damned creatures will *still* hate God; they will *continue* to curse the Name of the Lord; they will *still* blaspheme the Holy Spirit- Who eternally dwells within the redeemed. But they will NOT repent! And they will *continue* to do all this- *forever*- even while suffering the Pain of Divine Damnation!

### **The Revelation 16:8-11**

**8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.**

**9 Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.**

**10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain,**

**11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.**

Between gnawing themselves in anguish, they still move their chewed tongues to curse our God. "*Immortal horrors,*" C.S. Lewis rightly called them. Preferring to be scorched than saved- they will share the Fate of their Father, the devil. What Fellowship shall children of Light share with these creatures when both are seen as they truly will be?

### **What Hell Says About God**

Some, like Bell, believe that God cannot be glorified in Hell.

"The belief that untold masses of people suffering forever doesn't bring God glory. Restoration brings God glory; eternal torment doesn't. Reconciliation brings God glory; endless anguish doesn't. Renewal and return cause God's greatness to shine through the universe; never-ending punishment doesn't"<sup>3</sup>

Behold the "wisdom of Man"- in all its glory. To which the Apostle Paul responds,

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<sup>3</sup> Rob Bell; *Love Wins*; p. 108



## **Romans 9:22-24**

**22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?**

**23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,**

**24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.**

Hell, like everything else in all of Creation, tells of the Glory of God. So, while Bell, and others like him, say it doesn't- God says it most certainly does. This is the difference between those who believe the inspired Scriptures and those who use their own human logic. And for those, who do believe- we have come to the reasoned conclusion that the Almighty is not embarrassed by Hell. God's righteous Vengeance against those who gleefully exchanged His Glory for created things; and who then clearly and constantly rejected God throughout their entire lifetimes- will not be conducted in some back alley.

The Bible teaches that God "*reveals*" His Wrath (**Romans 1:18**); and He "*makes known*" His Deeds among the peoples (**1Chronicles 16:8**). Why? In order to communicate the full Richness and the Excellency of His Glory to His children.

So, contrary to how we might write Redemption's story- the Lake of Fire warms us with the reminder that our God is powerful, righteously severe, and abundantly merciful toward His Own.

Heaven will not be Heaven, in God's perfect Plan, without the reminder of God's righteous Condemnation- which eternally exposes the Scars of Christ. And when we see this- we become sobered and amazed. But we also become thankful for God's Mercy to us.

The Unredeemed hate all of this. And so, they begin to gnash their teeth- even *before* they enter into Hell. Starting with Man as the "end of all things", they simply will not allow God the Right of His Deity to say,

## **Romans 9:15**

**I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion**

But they also show how presumptuous the creature can be- when they tell God that He **MUST** save all men. And they are offended- not by the notion that God would have Mercy on *some*- but that He won't show Blood-bought Mercy to all.

## **What Hell Says About Jesus**

In all our discussions about Hell- we must remember that God the Son knows it better than anyone else ever will- *including* those who will be submerged in it forever. A thousand lifetimes later (being no closer to the End than when they started), the damned will not be any closer to saying those words that were upon the Savior's Lips in the Gospels: "**It is finished!**" (**John 19:30**). With all the Torment they experience, those, who will never see Heaven, remain but near the *surface* of that burning Lake which Christ, out of Love for His people, plunged to the *bottom*.

When Paul, the Apostle, who experienced unceasing anguish for his unsaved kinsmen (**Romans 9:1-3**); and who labored for their Salvation (**Romans 10:1-4**); considered the refusal of the creature to his Lord's "Hell-assuming Love", he wrote,

## **1Corinthians 16:22a**

**If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed...**

In other words, when Paul considered the refused Amnesty put forth by God the Father through Jesus Christ (Who did not merely stoop to one Knee to ask- but stooped to the Grave itself)- he said, it was correct and proper for such a one to be eternally damned.

Did the King of Glory travel from the Celestial Throne to a beastly stable; to the garbage dump of a Cross to submerge under the Fire of God's Wrath- only to be rejected by creatures of the dust, who prefer their lusts, appetites, and Self to Him? What should the Result be- when a world scrolls past the King of Glory- for lives of pornography and ESPN? Only *Hell*. Through the Prophet, God called to His Own people and said,

## **Jeremiah 2:12&13**

**12 “Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,” declares the Lord.**

**13 “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.**

Hell testifies loudly that preferring *anything* to Jesus- is what is truly terrifying- not Hell.

## **What We Learn from Children's Stories**

Perhaps we should pay more attention to our children's stories. The Pattern is familiar: The pristine Kingdom falls, the land is cursed, Evil gains the upper hand. But all this simply sets the stage for the Hero to defy the Curse; and, at great cost to Himself (Self-sacrifice), conquer the dragon- ushering in the last State of the Kingdom that *surpasses* the first: the Light shining best for those who have seen great Darkness.

But we need to remember how all those stories end: the witch; or the monster; or the evil king and his henchmen- all stand completely vanquished and forever banished from the Kingdom. And yet, we never witness a child cry or mourn for them. Instead, they are thrilled. And they ask us, “*Read it again!*” Why is this? Because, instinctively, we know the “rightness” of the villains being punished- forever. So, why don't we respond the same way with Hell? Because we don't like the fact that we- and all those we love- are by nature, the Villains of this true-life Story.

Both Old and New Testament writers exalt in something peculiar to our modern ears: “God, the invincible Man of War- slays His enemies and triumphs!” But modern Man (made more in the image of Secular Humanism than the Holy One of Israel), stops and wonders, “*Moses rejoicing and singing about God's drowning of Pharaoh's army in the sea? That isn't right.*” (**Exodus 15**). But when we read the Scriptures- our minds are reset. Our spiritual ancestors *celebrated* God's Holiness; His Power; and His Love- to save His people from their Sins and to utterly vanquish all of God's enemies. And even though we might want to cut the Egyptians some slack- Scripture is clear: The pagan Egyptians deemed God to be *completely* unlovable and unworthy of Worship. And they were destroyed.

So, is that heartless and unfeeling? Let's see. Will we not be able to *enjoy* Heaven while others that we knew- burn in Hell? The Bible says we will. How? I'm not sure. But God's Book teaches us that the Eternal Death of the Wicked defines the very *best* of *Romances*- not Tragedies. Because inspired Scripture teaches that, one day, the Lake of Fire will be filled; the

evil warlord and all his minions will be conquered; and those saved by God's Grace will celebrate our King's Victory over those who cursed His Son's Name and devoured His people!

When we truly consider the Story of Eternity- we must silence the carnal protest that throws God in the dock- so that we may give His Defense before our "felt sensibilities." Without question, God, not Man, is the Potter. And Man, not God, is the clay. God is "all-wise"- while we are "all-foolish"- apart from Him. He is the Judge of the whole world. He is the sole Creator and Owner of all that is made- *including* all of us. God's Power is absolute and breathtaking. And frightening. And yet, God is Good. He is Kind, and Merciful, and Tender. And God is Love- pure, undefiled, Love. But that's not all God is. God is also Righteous. Perfectly and entirely Righteous. And so, this Good; and Kind; and Merciful; and Tender; and Righteous God- Who is Love- will surely do Right. But Right does not only speak of Heaven. It also *includes* Hell.

In casting unrepentant, guilty, sinners into Everlasting Punishment- God communicates three things:

1. The full range and scope of God the Father's Power and Glory
2. The full Worthiness of God the Son
3. The perfect Harmony of this Purpose and Plan as brought about by God the Holy Spirit

... of which the Redeemed will not detect a single flaw.

So, let us begin this Study of all that the Holy Bible teaches about Hell, so that we may know God correctly and worship Him fully.

Amen.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.