



Series: On the Table
Title: How does hell exist if God is love?
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“How could a loving God send people to hell? Every other question pales in comparison...harder by far than believing in miracles or prophecies, or that the God who made us has the right to tell us what to do with our bodies.” (Rebecca McLaughlin, Confronting Christianity)

Dear friends, don't overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:8-9)

Question 1: What do we mean when we say, "God is love"?

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; faithful love and truth go before you. (Psalm 89:14)

“Anger isn't the opposite of love. Hate is, and the final form of hate is indifference...God's wrath is not a cranky explosion, but his settled opposition to the cancer... which is eating out the insides of the human race he loves with his whole being.” (Rebecca Manley Pippert, Hope Has Its Reasons)

Question 2: What do we mean when we say, "hell"?

...the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:41)

...outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 8:12)

Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!' (Matthew 25:41)

“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it.” (C.S Lewis, The Great Divorce)

God is love. And His love expresses itself through justice in dealing with evil and gentleness in delivering us toward our desires.

“It takes a sinner an eternity in hell to satisfy the wrath of God or it takes Jesus six hours on the cross.” (Augustine)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23-24)

Reflection Question:

How does the reality of hell impact the way you understand the love and justice of God?