

As Hell was becoming for many no more than a swear word, sin was also an accepted way of life...If people can ignore what the Bible calls sin, they quite logically discount what it says about the reality of Hell.

- Dr. Billy Graham.

The pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit has opened its mouth under them...O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in.

- Jonathan Edwards

A hard look at this doctrine of Hell should first change our view of sin. Most believers do not take sin as seriously as God does.

- John Thomas

The safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts...the long, dull, monotonous years of middle-aged prosperity or middle-aged adventure is excellent campaigning weather—FOR THE DEVIL!

- Dr. Charles Swindoll

Satan continues his efforts to make sin less offensive, heaven less appealing, Hell less horrific and the Gospel less urgent. Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices. The Word of God leaves no doubt about the existence or nature of Hell. With clarity and authority, God has told us everything we need to know about Hell, and how to avoid it through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Dr. John MacArthur

3. Specific words that NT used to describe Hell.

These three words in the original language of the NT translate the word "Hell" in our English translations:

Tartarus – Used only in 2 Peter 2:4 to describe where the most vile and wicked demons are imprisoned because of a sin described in Jude 6 where they abandoned their God-intended purpose.

Hades – Where a lost person's soul ends up when they pass from their life. (Luke 16:22-24). Hades is described as a temporary holding cell when a criminal is held until they are sentenced—in this case, at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Gehenna – This is the final place of punishment for those who never experience the love and forgiveness of God made available through the cross. It is a terrible, terrible fate for sinners. (Jesus used the trash heap south of Jerusalem—the *Valley of Hinnon*— where the trash was burned as a vivid picture of Hell. It is our Lord's favorite descriptor of Hell.)

4. Jesus taught some specific truths about Hell.

A. Hell is an actual place.

Luke 16:23, NIV -²³ *In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side...²⁷ "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family...²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'"*

Revelation 20:15, NIV -¹⁵ *Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.*

B. Hell is a place of horrendous suffering.

Luke 16:24, NIV -²⁴ *So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'*

Matthew 22:13, NIV -¹³ *"... into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

C. Hell is _____.

Luke 16:26, NIV -²⁶ *And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'*

Revelation 20:10, NIV -¹⁰ *And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

4. So, what should we keep in mind when considering this question: "Does a Loving God send good people to Hell?"

A. Don't assume that God is just as tolerant of sin as our society is—He isn't!

Psalms 50:21, NIV -²¹ *When you did these things and I kept silent, you thought I was exactly like you. But I now arraign you and set my accusations before you.*

B. Don't assume that God's only attribute is "Love"—it isn't.

Habakkuk 1:13, NLT -¹³ *But You are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery? Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they?*

Isaiah 6:3, NASB95 -³ *And one [Angel] called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.”*

Our God is holy and He will not compromise His holiness for anybody, anytime.

C. Don't assume that “we” are not really that bad—because we are.

Romans 3:23, NASB95 -²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*

Jeremiah 17:9, NLT -⁹ *“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?*

D. Thought: If there was no place called “Hell,” why did Jesus die and what does Jesus save us from?

John 3:16, NASB95 -¹⁶ *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

5. Is there any consolation for us regarding those already in Hell?

A. Their *Hell* will never veto our *Heaven*.

In heaven, we will see that God clearly revealed himself to every person and gave them the opportunity to respond Him. (cf., Romans 1:18-2:16; 1 John 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9; Matthew 7:13.)

B. There may be different levels of punishment in Hell.

Matthew 10:15, NASB95 -¹⁵ *“Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.*

NOTE: Hell is like a “lake of fire” in Rev. 19:20 but like an “outer darkness” in Matthew 8:12.

C. Our God is *just* and can be trusted to do what is right.

Romans 9:14, NASB95 -¹⁴ *There is no injustice with God...*

D. In one sense, God doesn't send anyone to Hell; we send ourselves there. (cf., Hebrews 10:29; Romans 3:10; 2 Thess. 1:8.)

6. A final thought about Hell.

Jesus wants all people to be saved from Hell and He came and died that you might be saved from Hell. (cf., 2 Peter 3:9 • John 3:16-18 • Romans 10:9-10)

TOUGH QUESTIONS and **Straight Answers** by Pastor Joe K. Taylor

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Here's
the **TOUGH QUESTION:**

Does a Loving God Really Send Good People to Hell?

Here's
the **STRAIGHT ANSWER:**

1. The Short Answer:

Simply Put: Yes!

“Good” is a relative term; we are all sinners.

God does not want ANYBODY to go to Hell, in fact, He provided the ‘one way’ for sinful men to be saved.

2. Introduction to the issue:

- 30% of the 1,850 verses in the New Testament that record the words of Jesus deal with the subject of eternal judgement and Hell.
- Jesus had more to say about Hell than He did Heaven.
- Stats: A 1990 survey revealed that only half of theology faculty in the US believe that Hell exists; half of all seminary students believe it is in “poor taste” to tell unbelievers that Hell is their destination if they reject Christ; 60% of Americans believe there is a Hell “of some type,” but only 4% believe they will end up there. [Source: Gallup Poll (1990) in *US News and World Report* (Mar. 25 1991)]
- If it does exist, shouldn't we speak of it honestly and accurately?