



CWRm

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“If God is love, why would he allow a place like hell?”

Q *If God is love, why would he allow a place like hell? For those people who reject God and go their own way, why can't they just die the first death and never come back? Why is there a need for a second punishable death? I think a lot of people are scared of God because he will punish ungodly people. Can you please explain?*

A Your first question is the telling question of course—allow me to restate it in the imperative. Since God is love, he does not allow for the place that humans often imagine and fear called “hell.” The hell of eternal, conscious torment is as far from the love of God as east is from west. The hell that has God participating in eternal torture by sending people there for never-ending torment is totally antithetical to all that we know of God.

Both cannot be right and true: 1) that God is love, and 2) that God will condemn anyone to eternal torture who rejects him.

“Hell,” of course, is a word that is used in the Bible—but it always has a specific meaning within a context, and it never implies that God uses it as a torture chamber.

Concerning your second thought/question—the people who reject God—why isn't the “first death” enough? Perhaps it is. The Bible speaks of a judgment, but again, like hell itself, judgment is not necessarily reduced to a future event that takes place after a person dies.

Judgment is not necessarily

something that God imposes, but it is the consequences he allows for and consents to—consequences humans bring upon themselves, through their own choices and behaviors.

Yes, you are absolutely correct—many people are terrified of a God of wrath, the God they believe is just waiting for the opportunity to “take them out” and “teach them a lesson.” That god is not the one, true God. That is the same “god” humans believed in long before Jesus—a pagan god who is angry, vengeful and delights in seeing people “get what’s coming to them.”

God has been and is horribly

misunderstood. When Christ-less religion continues to proclaim that misunderstanding, it causes enormous grief.

The one true God is all about inviting us to embrace his grace. God loves us because of who he is, rather than taking delight in punishing us for who we are or how we fall short and disappoint him!

This is truly a message that the world at large needs, and we here at CWR/PTM are doing all we can, using the resources we have, and the support that you and so many others provide, to get that message out there. □

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