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If you lie do you go to hell

The following article is an opinion piece and reflects the views of only the author and not those of AllOnGeorgia. It has been provided as part of a partnership with AllOnGeorgia and Creation Ministries International. By: Lita Cosner There are a lot of charges brought up against the God of the Bible; perhaps one of the most common is, "If God is supposed to be loving, how could He send people to Hell just because they didn't worship Him?" It's implied that it's deeply unjust for God to judge sin at all, and even worse to do so by sending the sinners to a place of eternal punishment. However, these critics often profess they don't believe in the God they are accusing, and also deny any objective standard of right and wrong anyway. Sometimes believers also struggle with this question, wondering how God could condemn someone who never heard of Jesus and so never had a chance to believe in Him, for example. The question of Hell is not an appealing one even for people who affirm its existence. No one likes the idea of many people suffering judgment in the life to come. But the 'Good News' of the Gospel requires that there be 'Bad News'—salvation in Jesus Christ would not bring glory to God if there were actually nothing to be saved from. So it's important to be able to give an answer, even in the case of a subject that no one particularly likes contemplating. Who goes to Hell? When unbelieving critics talk about Hell, they sometimes speak like it will be full of innocent people (like themselves!). However, the Bible doesn't indicate that innocent people will spend a single moment in Hell. Rather, Hell is God's answer to the fundamental injustice of this life. There are many murderers, rapists, and other people who wreak havoc in the lives of others, who never experience judgment in this life. Everyone knows that it is wrong that these people never be brought to account for what they've done; something in the human heart demands justice. And Hell is God's answer. Randy Alcorn writes: Without Hell, justice would never overtake the unrepentant tyrants responsible for murdering millions. Perpetrators of evil throughout the ages would get away with murder—and rape, and torture, and every evil. Even if we may acknowledge Hell as a necessary and just punishment for evildoers, however, we rarely see ourselves as worthy of Hell. After all, we are not Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Bundy, or Dahmer. God responds, "There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Romans 3:10-12).¹ For the majority of people who are not guilty on the scale of these obviously (even to us) depraved people, it's hard to understand that we deserve punishment, too. But most people have grievances against others—if someone stole from you, or hurt your children, or if you were a victim of something fundamentally unjust, you would want justice; your sense of what is right would demand that the person at fault pay a penalty for wronging you. Every time we break God's law, that's an affront to God, and He demands justice, just as we do imperfectly on a smaller scale. If you've ever said in your heart, "That person should pay for what he did!" then you fundamentally agree with the idea of Hell, because the doctrine of Hell says somebody is going to pay for every sin, eventually. Sin: Rebellion against our loving Creator God didn't create people to go to Hell, and He didn't create people to sin. In fact, the place He made for people originally was perfect. The Garden of Eden had everything Adam and Eve could ever want. It was safe and pleasant, God lovingly provided everything they needed, and they enjoyed a perfect relationship with the Creator. God gave them some simple commands (have children, tend the Garden, and don't eat the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil), and their continuing perfect relationship with God only required them to obey. It was a position that we can only imagine today. Even though Adam and Eve had everything they could ever possibly need, they disobeyed God and ate from the Tree that God had forbidden. Sin immediately broke the perfect fellowship that they had enjoyed with God. They realized that they were sinful, and they were ashamed and aware of their wrongdoing—as is shown by their initial attempts to cover themselves with fig leaves. God is holy, meaning that He is completely separated from anything sinful. And as their Creator, He had the right to judge them when they disobeyed—in fact, His nature and His justice demanded that He respond when they rebelled against Him. He could have instituted the death penalty instantly, and He would have been perfectly just if He had done so. But God is also loving and merciful, so He did not put a premature end to the human race. Adam and Eve had spiritually died, meaning that their relationship to God was broken, but they would continue to physically live long enough to have children, who would inherit their propensity to sin. Even after Adam and Eve sinned, God still loved them and provided for them. He agreed with them that their new sinful state required them to cover themselves; but the fig leaves were inadequate. He killed animals instead and made clothes out of their skins for Adam and Eve. This is the first place in Scripture where anything is killed—and for thousands of years, animals would continue to be killed in an attempt to cover over man's sin, and to delay God's wrath against humanity. God was not willing to leave all of humanity to perish (cf. 2 Peter 3:9), so He promised that Eve would have a descendant who would defeat Satan (Genesis 3:15). This is called the 'prot福音ion' because it's the first hint of the Gospel in Scripture. The rest of the Old Testament can be characterized as God dealing with sin in various ways by judging it or putting off judgment, and getting ready for the descendant of Eve who would deal with the sin problem once and for all. Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden into a world that was now largely hostile to them. And when Genesis tells us that Adam had a son (Seth) "in his image and likeness", it leaves no ambiguity about whether the sinful state was in fact passed on from father to son. Jesus, the loving God incarnate Scripture affirms that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Eve. The only way that humanity could be saved is if there was a single person who was both fully God and fully man, who was related to every single person through Adam—because He could only redeem us if He was related to us, and so would be qualified to be our Kinsman-Redeemer (Isaiah 59:20). In addition, this person would have to live a perfect human life—avoiding every sin and perfectly obeying every command of God's Law. And this is precisely who Jesus was and what He did. It's important to understand that this was the only way that humanity could be saved. We can't save ourselves even by our best efforts; no other god or religion or philosophy can save us. If Jesus had not gone to the cross for us, and if He had not been raised on the third day, we would be completely and totally without hope. When a person repents of their sin and trusts in Christ, God accepts Jesus' sacrifice as payment for that person's sins (Isaiah 53:6), and credits Jesus' righteousness to that person (2 Corinthians 5:21). This brings the person into a right relationship with Him in a legal sense; they have an 'innocent' instead of a 'guilty' sentence (this is called justification). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit indwells that person and starts the process of actually making them righteous (this is called sanctification, and continues until the process is finished after death, and must not be confused with justification). The believer also has a host of privileges as part of being an adopted child of God. Those who rebel against their loving Creator So we see that because of Adam's rebellion, all people are born with a sinful nature which is offensive to God. We're not blameless, because we not only have the sinful nature, but we cooperate with it and enjoy sin. So we are culpable for the sinful things we do. We deserve to go to Hell, every single one of us, but God in His love provides a way out, so that anyone who repents will not be judged for their sin, but rather Jesus' sacrifice pays for it. And He did this without us doing anything to merit it: "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6) and "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). But there are many who don't repent. There are some who never hear the Gospel; there are others who hear it and reject it for any number of reasons. There are those who even descend into conscious hatred of God; they recognize Him and hate Him, much like Satan and the fallen angels. And many of these same ones complain that God is not loving because they chose Hell of their own accord. If Jesus' sacrifice is the only way to salvation, yet someone rejects Jesus, what is God supposed to do with that person? God cannot apply the salvation they've rejected (because remember God gave people the choice to reject Him in the Garden of Eden, and so He won't override that when they actually do). When someone sins and rejects salvation, the only option left is to punish the rebellious creature. Hell: a place for those who reject the loving God It can be hard for the person who loves God to comprehend that there are people who hate God as much as we love Him. That there are people who hate Him so much that if they saw Him finally, they would not embrace Him and turn from their rebellion, but they would shake their fist all the more and damn themselves for eternity. Just as through the Spirit, the believer is finally sanctified after death, something happens to the unbeliever at death that makes him unable to ever repent. He has chosen to hate God and he will hate God for all eternity. Jesus reminded us that some will not believe even if He rose from the dead. The unbeliever cannot inhabit Heaven, because he embodies everything that can never enter Heaven; and to be in the presence of God is not Heaven for him in any case, but the most exquisite torment. He has lost the ability to experience God as anything but terrifying. For such a person, Hell is God giving him what he asked for all along—a place where His presence is not manifested as it is in this life. But this also means that there are none of the blessings and providence that even the unbeliever experiences in this life. The loving God became our Savior The person who goes to Hell must reject Christ, who died so that anyone who repents can be saved. So why would a loving God send someone to Hell? Because that person has chosen in such a way that God has no other choice. The existence and reality of eternal judgment for the person who does not repent is sobering, and no one really wants to contemplate it too deeply. But the person who goes to Hell must reject Christ, who died so that anyone who repents can be saved. So God is not to be blamed when an unrepentant, rebellious creature chooses a destructive path that leads to Hell. In fact, we all deserve hell due to our sin nature that separates us from God, but thank God for Jesus. The good news is that anyone reading this article is still alive, and so if you haven't repented of your sins and trusted in Jesus yet for salvation, there is still time to avoid the terrible fate that awaits those who rebel against the Creator, or to tell your unbelieving friends or family members about the Gospel. If you consider yourself a good person that doesn't need salvation then just consider the following questions: Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever stolen something, committed adultery, blasphemed etc? If you are truly honest with yourself you will find that you have failed to reach God's standard for holiness and entrance into eternity with Him. And if you haven't accepted Jesus as your Savior then you will have to represent yourself in God's 'courtroom' when you die and answer for your sins. But for those who believe, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

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