

*Many young Christians left their belief in the Bible because they couldn't accept that God will punish the unbeliever forever in hell, while God according to Bible is a loving God! How could you explain this to those young Christians?*

God is perfectly just (Deut. 32:4) so the punishment that he deems appropriate for each individual who will not humble themselves before him is right and good (2 Chr. 7:14, 15).

There are varying degrees of punishment in hell (Lk 12:48, Mt 23:14) but all who go there deserve to be there. John MacArthur said: "When he sends you to hell for the sin that you wished to hold to yourself, he will be a just God."

Hell was not made for people; rather, it was made for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). Adrian Rogers said, "If you go there, you are an intruder."

God is merciful (Ps. 25:6). It is not his will that any should perish (2 Pe 3:9). He has done all that he can to save each person (Ro 5:8); but, his spirit will not always strive with man (Ge 6:3). One day an individual's call to life may be his last (Jer 50:27). Only God knows when that last call to salvation will be so each person is encouraged to receive Christ without delay: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Co 6:2, KJV). No one is guaranteed a tomorrow: today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts (Heb 3:15A).

Man can barely appreciate the exceeding sinfulness of sin so it is no wonder that he cannot always agree with God that his punishment for evildoers is appropriate. God is holy (Is 6:3). He dwells in unapproachable light (1 Ti 6:16). The bible says: You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness (Hab 1:13). If God were to let sinners into heaven, that would make heaven hell. The cross proves what God thinks of sin (Is 53:10, Mt 26:39; Lk 22:42; Jn 12:27; Ac 2:23). He poured out his wrath on his innocent son (2 Co 5:19). Every sin must be paid for by the sinner himself, or at the cross of Calvary (Heb. 2:17).

If a man punches his neighbor, he may get into some trouble. If he punches an officer of the law, he will get into trouble and he may spend a night in jail. If he punches the President of the United States, he will get into even more trouble and his incarceration will be for an extended period of time. If a man offends a perfect, holy, eternal being—the creator of the heavens and the earth—his punishment is severe (2 Thess 1:9) and everlasting (Mt 25:46).

The chief end of man, as the Westminster Confession puts it, is "...to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." Man has one shot at fulfilling his purpose. He is born. He makes a choice to accept or reject God and he dies. God has determined his preappointed times and the boundaries of his dwelling so that he might seek the Lord in the hope that he might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any man (Ac 17:26-28).

Man was created to live forever—somewhere (Ge 9:6). He will live forever with God in a body fit for heaven (Phil 3:21) or forever without God (Matt. 8:12) in a body fit for hell (Mt 5:29, 30) depending on his choice to respond to God's love. J. Vernon McGee said: "The greatest sin is sinning against love."

God is love but he is also wrath (Zech. 7:12). Adrian Rogers said: "If you take part of the truth, and try to make that part of the truth, all of the truth, then that part of the truth becomes an untruth." Jesus

spoke of hell more than any other person in the bible—he was a hellfire preacher. He warned men to repent or they will perish (Lk 13:3).

Those who believe that God's wrath is inappropriate usually have not been the victims of evildoers (Eccl 10:2, Jn 10:10). God loves his children very much (Jer 31:3). He cares about how they are treated. Jesus was asked: What is the greatest commandment in the law? He replied:

'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Mt 22:37–40

When his children are mistreated, he takes note and he will make all things right. Departed saints ask: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Re 6:10. The apostle Paul wrote: it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you (2 Thess 1:6). The Lord has stored up wrath for his enemies (Ro 2:5–8) but he is merciful (Is 54:7) and longsuffering (2 Pe 3:9) preferring men repent of their sin (Ps. 51:10–13). It is his goodness that leads men to repentance (Rom. 2:4).