

*Some colleagues of mine consider hell cruel and unusual but I am okay with the concept since there is also heaven, if the ratio of people in heaven and hell is about equal. What I am asking is some situations make it easier to be saved (such as having Christian parents) while others make it harder. An example in the Bible would be Job - he was essentially punished for being a good man of God and then his family and friends all tried to teach him things that were anti-Biblical. I am struggling to understand why God, who according to Romans 2:11 is not a respecter of persons, would allow this to happen and then punish people with an eternal punishment.*

Hell is not cruel and unusual punishment. God determines the proper punishment for men who rebel against him (Is 63:10). He is perfectly just (Deut. 32:4). Those who disagree with God do not appreciate the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Though they may not be offended by wickedness, God is (Eccl 10:2, Jn 10:10). Offending a: holy, perfect and eternal being requires an eternal punishment (Mt 25:41, 46, 2 Thess 1:9).

God cannot respond to the rejection of his Son any other way. He has done all he can for each individual (Ro 5:8). One is *in* Christ's righteousness or he is not (1 Cor 1:30). If any man approaches a holy God without Christ's covering, he will be rejected by him forever (Is 61:10).

In the Old Testament a priest would enter into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle with a rope and bell attached to him. Should he die inside, others would have to pull his body out because they were not permitted to enter the most sacred place themselves. No one will approach God without a proper covering (Ex 28:33-35, 39:25-26, Re 21:27). Christ is the Great High Priest (Heb 4:14-16).

In the parable of the Ten Virgins (Mt 25:1-13) five virgins had oil (symbolic of the Holy Spirit) and were prepared to meet the bridegroom (Christ). The other five were not prepared. Each person must be indwelt by the Holy Spirit before death or he will not enter into heaven's gate.

Jesus is coming. Men must be prepared for his return (Eze 33:6).

Most people will *not* go to heaven. Jesus said:

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Mt 7:13-14).

Still, many will be at his Great Banquet (Mt 22:2).

It is not easy to be saved. Jesus made it clear: "difficult is the way which leads to life" (Mt 7:14). It will be a knock-down, drag-out brawl if any man will enter into heaven. The word *Israel* means struggle (Ge 32:22-32). Each person will struggle and those who overcome will go to be with the Lord (Re 3:5).

Job was not a good man (Ps 53:3, Ro 3:12). Only God is good (Ps 31:19). Job believed he was a good man and God had to sit him down to teach him something (Jb 38:1-42:6). Job never got answers as to why he suffered as he did. Some answers to men's questions will not be answered on this side of the grave.

When the apostle Paul states that God is no respecter of persons (Ro 2:11), he means that because God is just, he is impartial. God allows bad things to happen to so-called good people. Jesus said:

He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Mt 5:45).

Satan made the case to God that men follow him because they are given a hedge of protection. Should that hedge be removed, men would curse him (Jb 1:10-11). Sometimes God allows people to suffer great loss. Some certainly will curse him; but, others will not. Job praised God: The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away (Jb 1:21A) blessed be the name of the Lord (Jb 1:21B).

Satan cannot make the argument that men serve God only for what they get from him. Men serve him because they love him (Mt 22:37).

The apostle Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Jn 6:68. Some will trust the Lord in difficulties but others will not (Col 2:5). Christians come to the conclusion that though they may suffer, they will continue to walk with him (2 Tim 1:12).

When God sends men to hell, they get that for which they asked. Hell was not created for man. Hell was created for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41). When men are cast into the Lake of Fire (Re 19:20), it is because they have rejected the light of truth (Jn 1:9).