

***blind faith?***  
**“Hell? Bad News/Good News”**  
**June 26, 2011**

*In your heart set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an **answer** (apologetic) to everyone who **asks** you to give the **reason** for the **hope** that you have. But do this with **gentleness** and **respect**, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV)*

**Today’s Question:** How could a good & loving God send someone to eternal punishment in hell?

**A. Perceptions & Misinformation on “hell”**

1. Myth: Funny & cartoonish, unreal and unbelievable.
2. Just a swear word – place to tell people to go!
3. Horror topic – certainly not real.
4. Fun / Cool – better than boring life in heaven.
5. Christians glad evil deserve it.

**B. “Hell” in New Testament (Greek)**

1. *Gehenna* – Jesus uses this word 11 times; Referred to valley outside Jerusalem used as a garbage dump where waist burned continually during Jesus’ life. Came to mean final punishment of those who reject God.
2. *Hades* (Hebrew *Sheol*) – temporary grave of the dead; neutral vs. *Gehenna*

**C. TEXT: Matthew 25:14-46**

**D. Bad News: What did Jesus believe & teach?**

1. Purpose: Hell prepared for the Devil and his angels (41)
  - a. Heaven prepared for us – (34) Jn. 14:2
2. Eternal: forever (41) – Jude 1:7
  - a. Punishment: Fire – (41) NOT literal fire.
  - b. Annihilation? Perish? *Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* Matt. 10:28

3. Outer darkness (Mt. 25:30) – separated from God’s presence & grace: No relationship with God or his grace.
4. Weeping & gnashing of teeth
  - a. No repentance, no reform! God gave them over – Rom. 1
    - i. Seems to intensify blasphemy – Rev. 16:9
    - ii. Luke 16 – rich man did not ask for God or mercy, asked for a drink!
5. Behavior is a sign of belief – changed lives! Even demons believe! Ja. 2:19

**E. GOOD NEWS:** *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”* John 3:16-17

**\*\*** No one paid a higher price in order to prevent this for you!

1. God does not want anyone to perish but ALL to come to repentance – 2 Pet 3:9
2. God takes *“no pleasure in the death of the wicked.”* Ez. 33:11

**F. Application:**

1. How does this information inform your faith?
2. Are you secure in your eternal future? Why or why not?
3. Who are you loving, serving, and praying the Holy Spirit draws them to know the salvation of God’s great Son?

*The essence of Hell is separation from God. He doesn’t do it TO us...we can choose it ourselves. The Cross is the place where broken-hearted people have come for two thousand years. You can choose to be separate from God, if you want. But if you want Hell, you will have to walk all the way around the Cross.* Max Lucado

**Additional Resources:**

*10 Most Common Objections to Christianity* by Alex McFarland  
*Letters From A Skeptic* by Dr. Gregory A. Boyd  
*When Skeptics Ask* by Norman L. Geisler  
*Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis