

Is God Just?

Why Christ had to die and Why God must punish Sin.

I had a friend who asked me this: He said: After all if God is God, why didn't God just wave his arms and just say: I forgive you all. Why did Jesus have to go through all that suffering and pain? That just doesn't make sense to me.

He then went on to say this: I have trouble believing that a Good and Loving God would be so cruel as to send ANYONE to hell. That's just unacceptable to me.

Anybody here been told that? Anybody here feel that way? I had one religious person say: the god I believe in doesn't have a hell. Thank you very much!

Let me ask you this: Have you ever wondered why Christians make such a big deal about Jesus actually being God? I mean what's so bad with Jesus being a Good Moral Teacher or a prophet or just a very loving guy? Why do Christians make such a big stink about him having to be God? Why can't he be like all the other good teachers? Like Krishna or Mohammed or Buddha?

How about this: Have you ever wondered how someone dying for our sins pays for our sins? I mean how could Jesus pay for our sins by dying? Why all this blood and gore and death?

I had one gal let's call her Madison, say to me: I've done so many bad things in my life that I can't do enough good things to make up for them and get to heaven. How do you answer that?

Today we will focus on these questions as we answer: Is God Just!

- 1. Why death? Why blood? What is Spiritual Death?**
- 2. Why does God have to punish sin? Why can't he just forgive us all and be done with it. He is God after all!**
- 3. Why would God put someone in Hell for doing something wrong?**
- 4. How could a good and loving God put someone in Hell forever and ever just because they did a few small bad things?**
- 5. Why did Jesus have to die? How did His death pay for my sin? How did His death pay for ALL our sin?**
- 6. Why did Christ have to rise from the dead?**
- 7. How come Hitler could go to heaven?**
- 8. But if we have freewill in Heaven won't we sin in Heaven?**

9. How do we change to deserve heaven?

Now you'll see as we go along , we won't deal with them in this exact order and some of the answers we come up with will create even more questions and so we'll end up with a few more questions than we started this. We'll try to answer as many of these as we can with the finer points being left for a good healthy personal discussion.

Notice that we are answering the questions with the Bible as our basis. This is because we are trying to explain to our friends how the Bible comprehensibly addresses these issues. We are trying to show the consistency of the Theology of the Bible. We are not trying to prove the Bible is true at this point. Just that it is consistent.

Normally we would have to first and separately prove the authenticity of the Bible and the accuracy of the information in it before we can get anyone to accept what we say. For after all we shouldn't expect them to blindly believe the Bible. The Bible can be defended both as a Historically accurate document and as a document that has NOT been corrupted over time. But that we'll have to leave to another time.

The Original Covenant

To answer all the questions, let's first start with some background.

Do you remember the story of Adam and Eve? The story of Adam and Eve shows us the cause of all our problems.

Genesis, as you know is the first book in the Bible. In Genesis God creates the Universe, and then creates the earth and then creates Adam and Eve. He creates them as beings with freewill and puts them in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis Chapter 2

¹⁶...the LORD God gave him this warning: "You may freely eat any fruit in the garden
¹⁷except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die."

But you may ask: Why did God give them the opportunity to rebel against him and sin. If he hadn't given them that option we'd all be fine. Isn't it God's fault that we have sin in the world?

Well if you think that you'd be illogical. Here's why I say that. First, did God want beings who freely loved him?

The answer is YES.

Why did he want that?

Well because he already had beings that had no choice but to love him. Like the

Cherubim and Seraphim and many other creatures. He wanted to create a being that truly loved him. And true love cannot be forced. It has to be freely given¹. You know the feeling. Why do you need love, why not program your Laptop to say sweet things to you. Why not create a robot that very lifelike to love you? Because it's not Love!

So only love that is freely given is true love. So God created a being that could freely love him. BUT there's a problem. If you create a being who truly is free, you have to give that being an option to rebel against you or he never had the freedom. For instance, if I say, you are free to go anywhere you want to in the house, oh but all the doors are locked. Are you free to go anywhere in the house? No. You were never free. To be free, you really have to have the option to go anywhere in the house. And if I said, I don't want you to go into the basement because it can hurt you, to have true freedom you have to be able to go into that basement if you so choose.

So the only way God could give Adam the freedom to love him, was if he also gave Adam the freedom AND the opportunity to do something that was unloving to God. God had to give Adam the opportunity to do the worst possible thing and that was he had to give Adam the opportunity to completely rebel against God.

Now this is also tied into a number of other things. When God told Adam not to "sin" by eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that law was given because it had a real consequence. God is not capricious. The consequence is actually recursive. In that by eating of the tree of Knowledge, Adam would fully understand what he did was evil and what the difference was and so he chose the evil option that is rebel against the one and only God and break the bond.

So God says: Don't rebel against me, don't eat of the tree, don't sin or you'll die. But being the geniuses that they were they rebel against God and sin. Then when God shows up they try to blame everyone else.

But do they die that day?

I mean when sunset came did they drop over dead? No what happens.

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

¹ Yes, I am reform, and this does not refute that but there's no space to discuss this but to say that Reform Theology agrees that Adam had true freewill.

Then God kicks them out of the Garden of Eden and Adam has to work hard from then on. This was the first sin by humans and we inherited that sin nature from our parents. Now let me ask you this: What was the reason they were not allowed to eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil?

Obviously the right answer is “Because God said so.”
But the cause of that was: “For you will surely die.”

SO what kind of death was it?

Was God lying when he said they’d die?
No he wasn’t because they did die. Do you know what kind of death they died? Was it physical death?

Physical death is a part of it, but not all of it, because they didn’t die as soon as they ate the fruit, did they?

But the real death was what? Exactly Spiritual death.

That day before sunset, they were banned from the presence of God.

So what is spiritual death?
Anybody know?

Exactly, spiritual death is separation from God.

What is Hell then?

HELL is **eternal** separation from God. Eternal Spiritual death is Hell.

Notice that Adam and Eve were not in Hell right away because they were still physically alive. But had they died without making it right with God, they would have certainly ended up being eternally separated from Him after their death.

But why would someone want to be separated from God?

They would be separated from God if they hated him, if they purposely rebelled against him. If they refused to obey him.

So what exactly was God saying to Adam and Eve? He was saying: if you rebel against me and eat of the tree, the consequences of that rebellion will be separation from me. Which is what? Exactly - Spiritual death.

It's not God being mean, it's not God being unreasonable. It's God saying: If you rebel against me because you don't love me and don't want to spend eternity in my presence, I as a just God, am going to give you what you want. And note that the consequence of rebelling bears fruit, we get hardened against what we have rebelled against and we demand our way and the more we rebel the harder and more demanding we become.

But you may object: That's rather heartless; he allows them to sin then punishes them. No you are missing the rest of the story. Yes he allows them to sin because he has to, but then he provides a way for them to be forgiven of that sin. But we'll get to that later in this talk.

OK what else happened after they sinned? Physical Death came into the world.

What else did God do after they sinned?

He kills animals and clothes them in those animals. That's a symbolic gesture.

Now, fast forward to later. What happened later when Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God, if you remember the story, Cain offered fruits and vegetables (he offered God a salad), God doesn't want to go to Fresh Choice! But Abel offered the finest of his sheep, doing what to it? Killing it.

What happened to Cain? God rejected Cain's sacrifice of fruits and vegetables. Because nothing had died (except perhaps some veggie tale characters).

You see from the beginning, God told us that the consequence of eating from the Tree was death and thus God has required a punishment of physical **and** spiritual death as the consequence of sin. The consequence of their eating of the tree i.e. sinning was death.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death [what kind of death? Spiritual death and Physical Death] but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And the Bible tells us that there is no man who has not sinned.

Romans 3:23. For all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God.

Hebrews 9:22 And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness [of sin].

Then Jesus says this

Matt 26:28 This is my blood shed for the forgiving of sins.

Let's move forward now to the time of Abraham in Gen 22

God asks Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. His real First Born Son. So Abraham takes Isaac and they go up to a mountain called Moriah. On their way there Isaac asks: We have the fire and the wood for the sacrifice. But where is the lamb?

Gen 22:8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, Do you think Abraham knew that this was a prophecy? Because about 2000 years later. God did provide the lamb for the sacrifice for our sins.

Now if you recall the rest of that historical account. Abraham gets ready to sacrifice Isaac and suddenly the Angel of the Lord stops him and provides a Ram stuck in the bushes by its horns. So they sacrifice that Ram and Abraham calls that place, "The Lord will provide."

About a 1000 years later, Solomon would build his temple and altar right on that very spot where Isaac had almost been sacrificed.

22 By the way, lest you think Abraham thought it was fine to sacrifice his son to a false fake god, this was not that case. Remember Abraham had seen God face to face on at least 2 occasions. First during the convent and second during the visit by the three men.

He knew who God was and had experienced God's miracles. In fact in the passage we see that Abraham fully intended to return back to the camp with Isaac. You see Abraham knowing God personally had come to realize that God could easily raise Isaac from the dead and figured that that's what God planned all along.

OK Do you remember when Moses was trying to get Pharaoh to let his people go?
Remember the movie: The prince of Egypt?
Do you remember what the last plague that hit Egypt was?

The death of every FIRST born son. What did the Jews have to do to protect their sons?
Their first borns?

They had to sacrifice a pure spotless lamb and paint its blood across their door posts. Then when the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of death came by, it "passed over" their homes.

Their firstborn sons were saved, and God gave his firstborn son in their place. That blood across the door was a symbol of the blood of whom? The lamb that was to come. And that time of year is called what? The Passover.

Anybody want to guess what time of the year it was when Jesus died?

Exactly, the Passover.

Who was the lamb that was to come? Exactly Jesus Christ. Do you see what God was telling the ancient Israelites?

So you see the original punishment for the very first sin was death and not only physical death but eventual spiritual death. Now if you guys remember over the centuries the Jews kept sacrificing animals for their sins. Just like Noah and Abraham and Abel. But did those sacrifices really pay for the sins?

Absolutely not.

Hebrews 10:1-3

¹*...The sacrifices under the old system were repeated... year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing...*

²*If they could have ... the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time...*

³*But those yearly sacrifices were there instead to **remind** them of their sins year after year.*

So did the sacrifices the Jews were making in the temple good at forgiving their sins? No! Those sacrifices were merely to what? REMIND

the Jews about their sins and the consequences of their rebellion. And through the ages God reminds His people over and over again what is to come and what is to be. And He did this with the physical death of animals, spotless lambs.

Now coming back to our questions. Remember my friend who asked:

If God is God, why didn't God just wave his arms and just say: I forgive you all. Why did Jesus have to go through all that suffering and pain? That just doesn't make sense to me.

So let's look at it closely.

There are really 4 options here.

1. Either God is good and he does not punish evil (which is what my friend's question is)

2. or God is good and he does punish evil (which is what we as Christians are trying to prove)
3. or God is not good and he does punish evil (which is irrelevant)
4. or God is not good and he does not punish evil (which will haunt us later)

We'll toss out the last two for that is not the question although number 4 will be relevant in a few minutes.

Let's take number 1. God is good and he does NOT punish evil.
This sounds good. After all, God we are told is in the business of forgiving sinners.

But hopefully some of you have already seen the problem with this option.

Because this would mean that despite whatever you've done bad in the past you'd be forgiven.

But that sounds good you say.

But that means that if anyone had done anything bad, they would not be punished.

That means no evil people will be punished. That means Hitler who killed 13 million people

Whoops! That means that despite everything that a mass rapist or a murder or a child abuser or the 9-11 attackers had done and never felt sorry for, God would NOT punish that person or their sin. And in fact Hitler and those other evil guys would laugh at all the evil they have done and they would get to live next to us in Heaven forever and enjoy life and all eternity in the luxury of heaven. And God would NOT do a single thing to punish them or what they had done.

Wait just a minute you say. Hitler needs to be punished. Rapists need to be punished. Child abusers need to be punished. What sort of God would God be if he didn't punish someone as evil as Hitler. He wouldn't be a good God. A good God would make sure justice is served.

We just changed our tune didn't we. You see it is precisely because God is JUST AND GOOD that he has to make sure that justice is served. He does so by extracting a punishment for evil. All evil is punished. The price must be paid.

Which is exactly item **4**. God is not good and he does not punish evil. You see if God did not punish evil he'd end up as item 4. God would be bad if he did not punish sin.

It is precisely because God is good that He **has** to punish evil.

Imagine if there was a judge and every time someone brought a murderer or rapist to him and the rapist didn't ever care that he'd killed or hurt someone. And the Judge just said, oh, that's OK I forgive you. You can go. Would we think that was a good judge?

No we'd think that was a what judge? An EVIL judge. A California judge.

OK now that we realize that God has to punish sin. Let's see if we can explain why Jesus had to die?

Of what use was it?

How did he pay for our sins?

How does it all work?

What we have created by sinning against this Almighty God is a debt that needs to be paid. Note if we are not sorry for what we've done wrong then even if the debt is paid, it's meaningless. But once we are sorry, God still HAS to punish SIN. Otherwise he wouldn't be a good God.

We've also seen the punishment for sin i.e. rebellion against God is for man to die spiritually.

Now imagine this, let's say that one fine day Adam here stole half a million dollars and then went on a shopping spree and wasted all that money. Then... he got caught.

What would the first thing he'd need to be forgiven?

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Repentance

Well he would first have to repent. I mean if you go to the Judge and the Judge senses that you don't give a hoot or think that what you did was wrong, he's not going to let you get off without a long sentence.

So without repentance there can be no forgiveness. OK but is repentance enough?

No, you may have repented, but you now have to pay restitution. You have to pay to fix the car, you have to pay back to society for what you did.

Justification

is when you or someone has paid your fines or repaid for your crimes.

Justification is when you have provided justice with what it needs and are free from condemnation.

Remember Justification is only of value after Repentance.

OK say Adam here has repented, but now he needs to be justified. To be justified he has to pay restitution. Let's say it's a million dollars in damages and fines.

But it turns out that Adam does not have a million dollars.

Yet if Adam did NOT have the million dollars he owes, someone really nice could offer to pay that fine and the pay back the money for him.

Let's say that is Joe.

So Joe offers to pay for Adam, thus Joe would provide the **Substitutionary Atonement** for Adam. And if the price for Adam's crime was death and Joe offered his life for it (often done in the ancient days...remember the Greek story of Damon and Pythias?), then Joe himself would BE the substitutionary atonement for Adam.

A Substitutionary Atonement happens when somebody pays the punishment for you. Instead of you paying it yourself.

In other words it's when someone "atones" for you instead of you atoning for yourself. Their sacrifice, justifies you.

So the 1 Million dollars would be the substitutionary atonement from Joe, the person who cared about Adam.

In the same way the wrath of God can be satisfied if after there is repentance, the debt is paid by someone else who is willing to pay for it.

Because then Justice is still served and God is still a Good God.

However, the first problem is what if I was to sin again. Then my penalty once paid would have to be paid again. And what if I sinned again after that. Since I only have 1 death to pay for my first sin, I wouldn't be able to satisfy the second payment. Unless, I could find a way to pay for all my debt, past, present and future?

Secondly, if the person himself were guilty of anything then that person who paid my debt, would now be in a quandary, simply because someone has to pay HIS debt.

Hang on a minute Mr.JoeOh no look at this....turns out that you also drove down the hill, robbed a bank, stole a Mazaratti and did 1/2M worth of damage. Do you have another 1M?

Is there anyone here who has a Million dollars to pay for Mr. Joe.....

Thank you. And your name is?. Peter. But oh no it turns out that you Pete ALSO.....owe a Million dollar penalty. Is there anyone else here who can pay for Pete so he can pay for Joe so he can pay for Adam?

But as we go on down the line we find that 43everyone has sinned. We have to find someone who has never sinned to be able to pay the price.

And if you recall in the old Testament traditions the Lamb had to be a pure and spotless lamb. So who could pay this price?

Exactly! Unless you had a sinless man, i.e. Jesus Christ who had no sin who had never done a crime, who had never rebelled against God. HE could pay for Pete, who could pay for Joe who could pay for Adam. And that's also why Christ had to become a Man because he had to take man's place.

And that's why Christ had to be sinless!

So there we have the first reason why Christ had to be pure. Why Christ HAD to be sinless, why He could not have been a sinner. He could not just be a good man, a wise man, a prophet. He had to be a perfect man. Because if he had been a sinner then he would have had to die to pay for HIS own sins and would not have been able to pay for us. And that's why Christ unlike Mohammed or Buddha or whomever, didn't come to show us the way, he came to BE the way.

But that really only answers one part of the problem. You see if Christ was pure, by paying his life for others, he could have paid for the debt of a single man. He could have only paid for Pete, who paid for Joe, who paid for Adam. So they are all going to hell except for Adam. That's no fun because it only solves the problem for one guy.

So how did Christ then pay for all of mankind who would be saved? And just as important how would he pay for me when I sin the next time.

(For kids) First do you know what the word Infinite means? It means having no end. Greater than anything. Are you infinite? No, none of us are infinite. We are all finite beings.

Now we all have some value. We are worth something. What is your value? Now what is God's value compared to yours? It's infinite isn't it? It's so much more than your value; in fact it's so much more than ALL our values put together. Correct?

So if Christ was a supernatural **infinite** being, in other words if Christ was.... God, then indeed his death would have been sufficient to pay for all mankind who would be saved. Because his value is infinite. Thus his value would not be equal to a single man, but to all mankind for all eternity. And his value would even be greater than what I'd owe even if I kept sinning again and again wouldn't it?

And that's why the death of Christ was a **sufficient atonement** for our sins. The punishment of an infinite being was sufficient to cover the finite debt of a finite number of finite beings.

And this is also why Christ had to be Infinite God and couldn't have just been a perfect man. He had to be an Infinite Perfect Being who had never rebelled against God (himself effectively).

At the Cross

But you ask? Jesus only died physically and he only died for a few days?.

Our Lord didn't pay for our sins in the Grave.

Let's understand what happened at the cross. We know that Christ died physically. But what else happened?

What did Jesus say on the Cross, besides "I am thirsty"?

He said: My God, My God why have you forsaken me.

What was happening right then?

Exactly, he was separated from God the Father and God the Spirit.

Let me ask you a question? What is separation from God?

It is Hell.

You see Jesus was literally experiencing Hell for that time on the Cross. He was in Hell.

But remember he was back in the presence of his Father when he died.

Because he said: It is paid for. It is finished.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

People talk about dying and going to Hell. Jesus went to Hell first, then died.

Note that I'm not saying here that Christ went to Hell after he died where he was reborn as a new man. That by the way is a heresy preached by Oral Roberts and Kenneth Copeland and a few others.

What we are saying is that Jesus experienced the pain of what Hell would be like, because for the first time in his being of all eternity, God the Son experienced separation from God the Father. When Peter talks about Jesus going to free the souls from some sort of Holding place, this is indicating that Jesus went in victory and power.

The finite death of an infinite being could pay the debt for every single finite being!

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Let's go back because we must see that God had a dilemma!

God we hear is Just, but God is also merciful, and God is also love.

But which one to compromise. Should I be just? And destroy everyone? But then I'm not merciful. Or should I be merciful.

But if I am merciful or give grace then I destroy justice. What was the way out of God's dilemma?

It's like the legendary story of Arthur and Camelot.

Arthur the king who is the keeper of the law, has a dilemma - Queen Guinevere has violated the law by committed adultery. The law says she must die. If the law is not upheld then it will be unjust for many have died for their adultery and worse Arthur knows the damage adultery will bring to his nation.

In some versions of the legend, Arthur's evil demonic half-sister Morgana comes to him and laughs saying; "What do you do Arthur, do you destroy the law or do you destroy the one you love!" She loves his plight. He is stuck.

Which ones do you compromise God? Justice or love? Do you destroy the law or destroy all the humans. For you were foolish enough to give them the freedom to love you and they took that freedom and rebelled against you. So now you will have no love and have no mercy.

And God solves this, without compromise.

By sacrificing himself he fulfils all these roles without compromise. He pays the price, justice is satisfied. He pays the price love is satisfied. He pays the price and mercy is granted.

God is not fair. This was never about fairness. It was about justice and love. If God was fair you'd die to pay for your sins, not the innocent Lamb of God.

And finally remember how God asked Abraham to sacrifice HIS true firstborn and only son, well God in the covenant could not ask Abraham for more than he would require of himself. So God in return had to sacrifice HIS firstborn and only son, to pay for the sins of Abraham, his son and all who would believe. Do you see the connection there?

OK here's a question: who did Jesus die to save us from?

Who is the judge in this scenario? Is it *Satan* as the Church lady says it is?

No it's not.

Exactly. The Judge is GOD.

Who is Jesus? Jesus is GOD.

Jesus died to save us from GOD. Or more accurate He died to save us from the justified wrath of God.

Hell forever?

OK next question as we wrap up: You have a friend and he says; Why would God put anyone in Hell forever just because they said a few white lies. Specially, since I'm basically a good person.

Remember Madison that gal who said I can't do enough good things to make up for the bad things I've done? Well I told her that no one goes to heaven for doing any bad things anymore and that you can't make up for the bad things by doing good things. People go to hell for rebelling against God and rejecting him.

What these people who are searching need to know is that it has nothing to do with being good or bad.

Now that Christ has died, it is effectively true that God, doesn't put people in hell for lying.

Let me say that again. God doesn't put anyone in Hell for lying.

God doesn't put anyone in Hell for stealing.
God doesn't put anyone in Hell for murdering.

In fact if we presume that Hitler did not become a Christian in his last moments, then Hitler didn't go to hell because he murdered so many people.

Hitler didn't go to hell because he was a racist.

Hitler didn't go to hell because he hated the children of God (the Jews).

Does anyone here want to guess why Hitler would have gone hell?

Exactly, God puts people in Hell for rebelling against Him. For rejecting Him.

For all the bad things Hitler did, the worst thing Hitler did and the thing that made him worthy of Hell was what?

It was rebellion against God.

And you know what – we have all been guilty of that.

Just like Hitler – we have all been guilty of that rebellion against God at some point in time. But through the grace of the almighty God, He has saved us.

In fact there is an additional very very important point to this: Just as God doesn't put anyone in hell for being bad, he doesn't put anyone in Heaven for being good either. You

can't work your way into heaven. It's as simple as that. Heaven is for people who accept and love God, that is, Jesus Christ, Hell is for those who reject and hate Him and don't want to be with Him. It's very logical. Especially when you rephrase it as so: Living in the presence of God's grace forever is reserved for people who love him. Living in the absence of God's grace forever is reserved for people who hate him and don't like him. It's similar to how you would handle it as a person inviting friends into your home. There is no good or bad involved in the consideration.

So I want to give you an answer to one of the tough statements:

What if someone says: I'm basically good. I haven't killed anyone.

You can answer: It's not a question of good or bad at all. Jesus doesn't put anyone in Hell for being bad or lying. He doesn't put people in heaven for being good. He puts people in Hell for rejecting Him, for rebelling against Him. That's all it takes.

Now you may say: But I'm not rebelling against God. But think about this. God is infinite, you can't break him up into little pieces, you can't have a "little" of God. Either you have all of God or you are having none of him and you are then rebelling against him.

Let me ask you a question. Are you rebelling against God? But more than that. If you rebel against God now, you will not want to spend eternity in His presence. In fact heaven would be hell for those who hate God. Because you'd be in the presence of the almighty God, daily being reminded about who he is and watching everyone praising him and yet you'd despise them and him daily. It would eat you alive.

Let's say you are standing before God at the judgment seat and he asks you. Do you want to spend forever in my presence praising me or do you want to be separated from me.

Those who do not love God at that point will say. I want to be separated from you. And separation from God is what?

It is Hell.

Thank you.

Extra Notes:

Heaven vs. the New Earth.

The Bible doesn't teach that we'll spend eternity in heaven. It says we'll spend eternity on the New Earth. There will be some time in heaven, but we were made to enjoy God on the New Earth.

Just because you have repented that doesn't make you a "Good Person."

To become "good" the Holy Spirit works in your life to Sanctify you. This is called Sanctification. So you have

- a. Repentance
- b. Justification
- c. Sanctification.

Will we have freewill in Heaven/The New Earth?

Of course we will, but because of the Sanctification, because of our "boot camp" here on Earth we will develop a love for Christ such that we will not want to rebel in Heaven. For instance, when I was a kid I wanted to just eat candy. I got sick a few times and decided that too much candy was a bad idea. I'm never tempted to do so now. When I was in college I had friends who went partying every weekend, now when I see them they have no desire to do so. Why? Because they figured it was a rather stupid thing to do. So in the same way we mature and are sanctified, so when we are on the New Earth we WILL have freewill. But we will have been refined in the fire and will freely in love with Christ that we will not desire those things. But had we not had the chance to rebel we could not have matured in those ways.

For more details on why God has given us the law see the book: Jesus Is Involved In Politics at www.J3IP.com

Why wouldn't someone change after seeing how bad it is in hell.

Unfortunately that question will have to be postponed to another day...not because I don't have a possible opinion, but because it may take us a while to go into it. For now assume that there are explicable reasons why this does not happen and do some of your own research into this – think along these lines – this is an attempt of an example: Let's say that you hated the US and believed that you were commanded to destroy it by your blind faith in your fictitious god. Let's say we caught you and put you in prison for life but every day you watched TV from your cell and saw how well things were going for the US and how they were being glorified. After 40 years of this (assuming you didn't age and mature) would you feel more kindly to the US at the end or hate it more? Sure this is a weak example because it has lots of caveats e.g. did we treat you nicely during your imprisonment, did we attempt to befriend you etc. But hopefully you have a gist of some of the reasons why it is quite possible that after a million years, those separated from God because of their hate may hate God more than when they started.

Besides the "wanting to be separate from God, why would God want to punish anyone eternally?"

This can be explained in many ways, but we all agree that the punishment should fit the crime. For instance if you were to betray me and rebel against me. They wouldn't execute you today but if you were to betray the government and rebel against it and become a traitor. They'd execute you.

You see, the person against whom the crime is committed decides the seriousness of the crime. In the old days, if you stole something from a peasant, they probably didn't even care. If you stole something from a merchant they'd beat you. If you stole something from a public official they'd torture you. If you stole something from a Lord, you'd get hanged. But if you stole something from the King, you'd first get beaten then tortured, then hanged then you'd finally have your head chopped off, and they may even come after your family. The more important the person against whom you'd done wrong, the more severe the crime. Now fortunately we nowadays believe that all mankind are equal. So we don't have different crimes for different people unless you live in a Fascist Socialist country (yes all Fascists were Socialists e.g. Hitler, Mussolini, the Romans, Saddam Hussein, Khadafy etc.).

But God is not equal to us. So the penalty for a sin against God is infinitely greater than a penalty against a fellow human.

Continuing with that, you can shoot a dog and they won't give you life in prison (unless you are in San Francisco of course), but if you shoot a man they give you life in prison. So who/what you commit the sin against is also what determines the severity of the punishment. Now follow me on this as well. A finite sin against a finite person is punishable only by a finite punishment.

But would you agree that if it were possible to do, an infinite sin against a finite person should be punishable by an infinite punishment.

Now do you see why a finite sin against an infinite God is punishable by an infinite punishment?

Some people say, why should the fact that someone sins for 90 years result in a punishment of all infinity.

Well the reality is that the amount of time it takes to commit a crime does not relate to the amount of time the punishment should be. For instance, you could take a gun and shoot a man right here in 30 seconds. That punishment would be far more severe than if you spent 5 years embezzling money from a bank.

If a sinner were not punished eternally then God would eternally have to deal with that sinner unless they were regenerated i.e. they'd repented, been justified and been fully sanctified.

You see we aren't sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners. Our very nature before we were saved was of sin.

And as long as we have that nature we will hate God, and as long as we hate God we would rather be in Hell than with Him in Heaven.

Want Biblical evidence of that?

Romans 7:8 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

I am UNABLE to do anything good. It is impossible for me to do anything Good on my own.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Let me repeat that: We aren't sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners. Our very nature before we were saved was of sin. And since all good things come from God, when we are completely devoid of God, nothing good can come anymore and we will hate God more and more each day.

So as long as we have that nature we will hate God, and as long as we hate God we would rather be in Hell without him, than in Heaven with Him. And since we are sinful by nature, if we are separated from God while we hate him, we will hate him more for it is purely his Grace that changes our heart of stone to a heart of flesh. And if we go into eternal separation from God hating God, the longer we are there the more we will hate him. Nothing in us will stop the hate. Nothing in us is capable of turning us around. We will get what we deserve and we will get what we want.

"Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; From hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Ye damned whale."²

As we've said, we don't sin and therefore are sinners. We sin because we are sinners by nature. That's what happened when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. God told them.

² Ahab/Khan to God/Moby Dick/Kirk.

The day you eat of it you will die. What was He said, He was saying we would become infected with the desire to sin. And Adam and Eve would doom their entire race to this disease of hating God as Paul tells us that no one seeks GOD. We all hate him or hated Him in the past if we are saved. We inherited our father's sin nature. Our very nature is to sin and so we sin. Watch a 2 year old and tell me that we don't have a sin nature. Everybody around the 2 year old may be giving and kind. But what's the first thing a two year old does when it has to share a toy. She says: "MINE." It takes years of training to learn kindness and giving. We aren't born with it. We learn to care for others. If God were to continue to let us exist and do our own thing we would continue to sin and if we continued to sin, God would have to continue to punish that sin because he is a good and a just God as we've discussed earlier.

We sin because we are sinners. So any religion that tells you that to get to heaven you have to be good is doomed to what? Failure! Why because it is impossible for us to not sin. We inhabit sin. We are sinful by our very essence. By our very nature. If you go to a church or join a religion and they tell you that you can only get to heaven if you don't do any bad things. You know that they are asking you to do something absolutely impossible. It's against your very nature. You are doomed before you walk out that door.

But there is another option, God could just wave his hand and make us "good". Note that it wouldn't really work if God forced us to be good: because even if we were forced to act good but in our minds we really wanted to rebel against him, that would be sin all over again and heaven would be hell if there were a bunch of people who really wanted to sin but couldn't.

Think about it. If you lived in heaven and really wanted to sin but couldn't. That would be similar to a prison full of pathological murderers wouldn't it? All these people who want to go out and murder people but can't. Imagine that being heaven. So the only true way this would work is if God were to change us from the core, from the very depths of our very being. Make us all non-sinners. Make us all "Good people". Change us. This interesting is also tied to the root word of "baptism".

It is because God is good that he has to punish sin and that too eternally.

You need to be changed from the inside out to be able to live in Heaven/the New Earth for eternity and that can only come through salvation and sanctification.

Isn't it the height of audacity and arrogance to claiming that Jesus is the only way to God?

One of the biggest complaints I get from non-Christ followers is this:

Don't you think it's rather arrogant for you to think that only you Christians know the truth? That only you Christians know the way to eternal life? Why is it that Christians are so exclusive that they condemn everybody else to hell? That is usually followed by the question: Do you think I am going to hell because I don't believe in Jesus.

This question needs to be dealt with kindly. The answer is simply this:

Our faith is based on 4 fundamental premises when it relates to this:

We believe the Bible is accurate

We believe Jesus was telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth

We believe Jesus said He was God

We believe Jesus said He was the **ONLY** way to Salvation.

So now in light of these premises, we have to say that it is **NOT** us that are arrogant. We humbly believe Jesus at this word. If anyone is arrogant in this equation it is going to be Jesus. Do you see that? So now the person who's asking why we are arrogant, can't say that they think that we as Christians arrogant, they have to agree that our exclusive belief system is logically based upon the 4 premises. They can dispute that what we believe is correct, but they cannot presume that we are arrogant. So at the end of the day, the real questions our non-Christ follower friends have to ask is: Why was Christ so arrogant as to believe that He was the **ONLY** way to God? And our answer and I believe His is because: He is the **ONLY** God all the others are frauds. The truth is not always palatable or fair. As the great Dread Pirate Roberts said so wisely: Life is unfair Princess, anyone who tells you otherwise is selling something. {Actually he said "Life is Pain Princess." But I like my version better.}

Logically

But also look at the logical side. If we have all sinned and owe a debt to God and the only way to pay it back is by our own eternal separation from God. Then as we've seen only a "god" can pay that debt besides us. So this is why following Buddha, or Mohammed or good deeds or any **OTHER** way would not work. God has to die for us. Of course someone might say, what about "another" god. But logically only 1 omnipotent God could exist. You can't have 2 beings with absolute power. Think about it, if one being has absolute power then the other being doesn't. So you can **ONLY** have one God (this is also why Christian Theology talks about one God being with 3 persons, not 3 beings. So this is why either it's Jesus or it's Krishna (a Hindu God) or any one of the other "gods". It can't be both or either.

So what we have is:

The person you believe in must be

Pure and sinless
Have never rebelled
Have an infinite value
Be the only God.

This is why Jesus has to be the ONLY way and had to be God. It's logical.

Now the next logical question from your friend will be: Do you think I am going to hell, because I don't believe in Christ?

And that was our friend Bob's question wasn't it. My answer to that is always: My dear friend, if you continue to rebel against Jesus, then when you get to Heaven, you won't like Him and He'll give you exactly what you want at that point. So please do consider not rebelling against Him.

Why did Jesus have to come to earth and get tempted?

Jesus had to suffer all kinds of temptation. Contrary to popular belief it is the person who resist temptation who knows how powerful temptation is because he has had to fight it all the way. The one who has given into temptation will most probably give in to it over and over again and really has no comprehension of how hard it is to resist. Christ in the flesh had to suffer all types of temptation in order to prove himself worthy (not to God but to all the accusers)? Why? Because once he had resisted all temptations no one could point their finger at him and say: You do not understand, or you have no right to judge. Secondly Christ suffered as a result of resisting those temptations. He did good and suffered. Again so that no one could point at him and say that Christ did not go through what they had gone through. Thirdly if Christ had never been tempted like we were, then he really wouldn't qualify as having been pure. Because he never was given a chance to sin. For instance, you couldn't really say that you would never ever do anything bad, if you'd never been given an opportunity to do anything bad.

But having gone through the temptations, having been given many chances to sin and refusing it. Christ was now sinless despite having the opportunity to do so.

(Now this of course raises a new question: Was Jesus capable of sinning given the opportunity....that's a debate for a whole different level and more of a philosophical issue...I'd say no...for God cannot sin. But then one could argue that Jesus didn't really have the opportunity and so on etc....)

Why Christ Had to rise from the dead.

Well as we've know the fundamental crux of Christianity is that Christ rose from the dead. Without that we are all fools. But why is that the fundamental crux of Christianity? We understand why Christ had to die for us. But did he have to physically rise, couldn't

he have just spiritually risen?

God has let Satan duplicate many miracles, but no one has yet been able to rise from the dead. Sure there are many close forgeries, like the voodoo zombies and what not. But no one has been able to raise themselves from the dead. So one of the first reasons is so that Jesus could prove that he was God. Note that one of the signs of the end times will be when Satan duplicates this when the Anti Christ a public figure dies and appears to come back to life.

Christ had to rise because that's first how he proved he was God. That's the first part of it. Secondly Christ rose because God was showing us what our hope would be. It was the promise of things to come. The fact that Christ arose is the promise that we will rise one day. It's the promise of eternal life. That's the multidimensional body we will have.

Thirdly by rising physically Christ proved that he was God over Death and the Grave. Christ also had to rise because his new body was a sort of prototype of our resurrected bodies. The body that Christ had after his resurrection will be like the body that we get after we rise up as well. I say "sort" of prototype because Christ carries the scars of the price he paid for us. Our bodies will be brand new, with no deformities, no diseases no problems.

Word Definitions

Now let's define some words to describe what we know.

propitiate (pru•pish'E•At"),
to make favorably inclined; appease; conciliate. An offering that has been successfully made to appease God, to turn His wrath from us. Christ was the propitiation for us.

impute (im•pyOOt'),
1. to attribute or ascribe
2 Theol.to attribute (righteousness, guilt, etc.) to a person or persons vicariously; credit as derived from another.
Christ's righteousness was imputed to us sinners.

atonement \A*tone"ment\
1. (Literally, a setting at one.) Reconciliation; restoration of friendly relations; agreement; concord. [Archaic]

2. Satisfaction or reparation made by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing of suffering that which will be received in satisfaction for an offense or injury; expiation; amends; -- with for.

Substitutionary Atonement: A substitutionary payment. Reparation given by one who is not the offending party.

Christ was the substitutionary atonement for us. He paid the price for us.

Justification \Jus`ti*fi*ca"tion\,

1. a showing or proving to be just such that the law requires no more from you
2. (Theol.) The act of justifying, or the state of being justified, in respect to God's requirements. Such that God requires no more from you.

Christ substitutionary atonement for us justified us.

Sanctification \Sanc`ti*fi*ca"tion\,

1. The act of making holy; the state of being made holy; the act of God's grace by which the desires and actions of men are purified,

The Amelioration of Hitler

Hebrews 10: 1-23

Heb 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: .. 9 "Here I am, I have come to do your will." 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest (Jesus) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Now he starts to talk about Sanctification- a new concept for us:

Sanctification: *15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: 16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."*

Justification: *17 Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." 18 And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. 19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

Repentance, Justification & Sanctification

Now I earlier mentioned that one of the reasons why God had to punish sin was the example of Hitler. If God were to universally forgive all sin then he'd have to forgive Hitler as well.

But that doesn't let us off the hook because Christians do believe that Hitler could be forgiven. But wait you say, if Hitler could be forgiven then God isn't really punishing sin. No, he is, and that is why Christ had to die, to pay for that sin. But, you say, "that isn't enough for Hitler, even if he repents Hitler must pay." This is where Christians and non-Christians may disagree. You see, there is a condition where I believe that it would be OK to forgive Hitler. What if Hitler were to realize the "enormosity" of the horrible things he had done. What if Hitler had changed deep in his very soul and regretted so terribly what he had done and would have done anything to go back and fix it? What if Hitler was not only willing to suffer the physical penalty of his actions but also before he died did everything in his power to correct as much of the bad things he had done? What if he then became a preacher of non-violence and on his way to prison had an opportunity to escape but instead gave up his life trying to save someone? Specially, when you realize that killing someone is not the worst thing you can do. Rebelling against God is the worst thing you can do.

At some point you'd have to agree that Hitler had changed. But the whole time you'd wonder if he had indeed changed? But you see God would know if Hitler had really changed. If you posit a God, you have to agree that that God can't be fooled.

But there's more to that.

Peter Malkin was an Israeli Mossad Agent. In 1969 he was sent to South America to kidnap Adolf Eichman, a Nazi responsible for the murder of millions of Jews. While they were hiding out after they'd kidnapped Eichman waiting for a way to smuggle him out of the country Malkin got to spend lots of time with Eichman and talk to him. In his book "Eichman in my Hand" Peter Malkin describes how one night after talking to Eichman he breaks down and cries bitterly. Not because of what had happened during the Holocaust

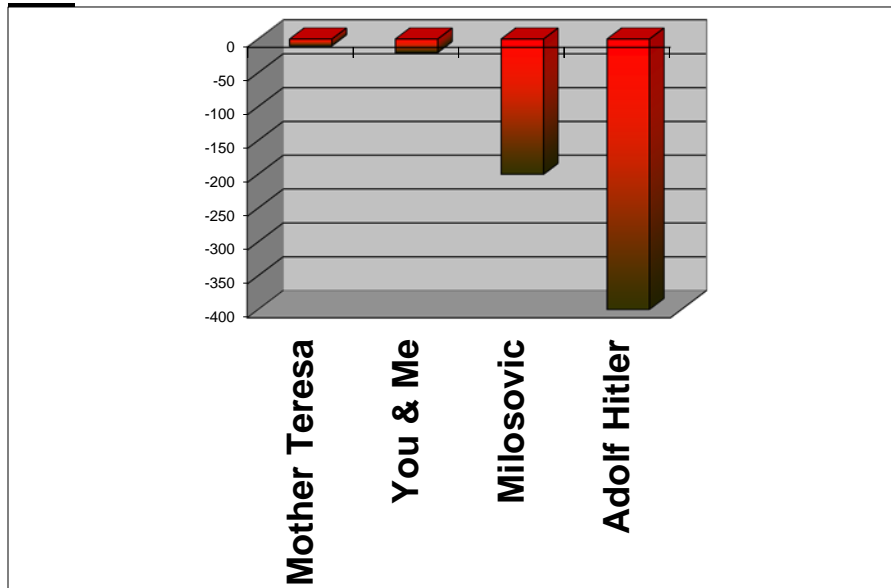
but because he realized that Eichman was a normal man. “He's just like me” said Malkin as he sobbed bitterly.

Another famous Nazi Criminal Hunter is reputed to have once said: “The scariest moment in my life was not the first time I met my Death Camp Doctor, but the second time when I met him when he was on trial in Israel. Because as we went through the trial, for the first time in my life I realized that I too was capable of the dreadful horrors that he'd done.”

You see my point is that we are all capable of this horribleness. We are all inherently capable of sinning and then sinning some more and then justifying what we do and then becoming callous to the evil we do, becoming callous to the pain that we cause, fooling ourselves into believing that others are human or deserve death at our hands. It grows slowly. Hitler didn't start being evil. He was once a sweet little baby and a nice little boy. Just like you and me. What we do in secret is only the first step. What we do when no one can stop us or we believe no one can punish us is the next step. That's when the true horrors of our personalities come out. We are all capable of that if we do not have Christ.

A lot of times we seem to think that there is so much difference between Hitler and us that we forget that we aren't the judge.

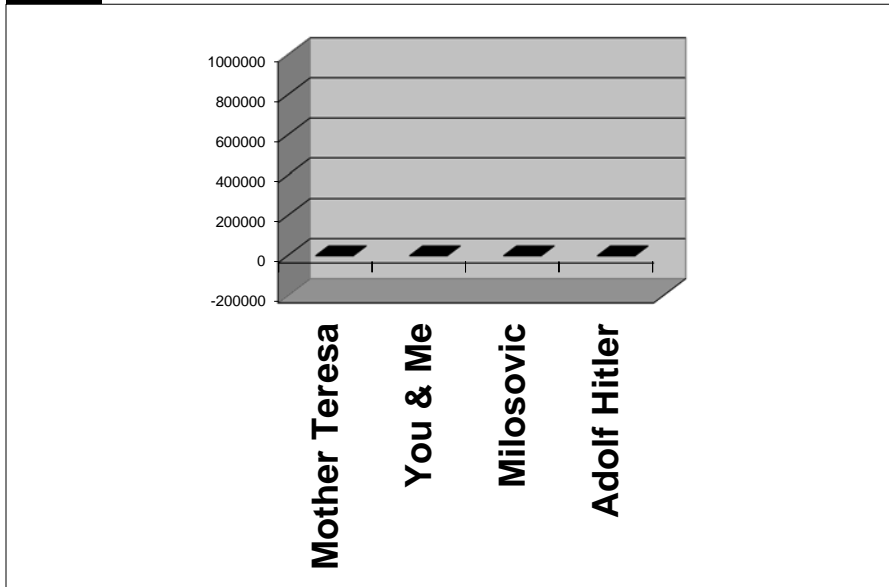
Our View of How bad Hitler is vs. us.



You see the difference between us and Hitler is less than the difference between God and us. It's like driving through a city and seeing the skyscrapers and comparing the differences in sizes vs. a small house. But when we compare ourselves to God that's like looking down from a plane 30,000 feet up. Everything looks like a dot. Notice the scales

on the charts. Our scale is in the 400's, God's scale is in the millions. We can't be good enough.

God's View of How bad Hitler is vs. us.



What am I trying to say? Hitler's story is your story. If God couldn't forgive Hitler neither could he forgive you. Remember at the fundamental core Hitler's crime was not killing Millions of people. His crime was rebelling against God that led to killing millions of people.

So through the payment of the penalty you CAN be forgiven. But wait...the transformation is just as critical a requirement isn't it?

But you may say, "Anyone can pretend to be holy; any one can pretend to be sorry." But that's the beauty of the Gospel. It does not stop at the sacrifice of Jesus. You see you are saved from your past sin, but you are also saved from your future sin. But moreover this salvation package is not just sin, it includes TRANSFORMATION. Which is where Sanctification comes in. Part and parcel of the salvation message is the transformation of you by the God the Holy Spirit. You are sanctified daily. Not only do we get the transformation of righteousness, but also Christ and the believer become one. You see Christ died to pay for our sins and then we die. Our old man is put away, buried, removed and the new man, the new transformation, the new creature resurrects from those ashes to be not only saved, but once being transformed, that new man is imputed righteousness.

In Christ, I died on the cross, and in Him I was resurrected. Thus, his death is not only in my place but WITH me. And his resurrection is not only in my place but with me.

Romans 6:3 *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into*

death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

That is the transformation. Now do you agree that this new creature can be forgiven regardless of what horrible things the old creature had done? And that is our story, regardless of what we have done in our past, our new creature is now redeemed. Of course we all agree, this had better be a new creature or this is all a big mockery. I think we can trust God to know the truth of everyone's heart, don't you?

And now this new creature must learn to live in righteousness. Not that we will ever achieve it in this life, but when we rise from the dead to be with God eternally. And that is exactly what baptism is, we are buried in the grave of water, to rise again in the life and with the Life of the Holy Spirit. We are the new man.

And this is the difference between repentance, justification and sanctification.

Repentance is when you decide that you have sinned and ask God to save you, Justification is that Christ died to save us from Hell. Sanctification is what God does in our lives after we are saved.

Repentance is in our hands. We must initiate it (OK OK through the prompting of the Holy Spirit).

Justification cannot be earned. Christ does it all.

Sanctification is the daily walk of you with God. It's you hand in hand with God.

Remember I said that some Churches teach that you have to be good to go to heaven. Some churches teach that you have to accept Christ and then be good. But as you can see what the Bible says is that the only "Good" comes from the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you.

What can we conclude?

- a) You can never be good enough
- b) You die with Christ and rise with Christ, and after that God sanctifies you.

- c) He works in you to slowly bring you to a maturity of that life with Him.
- d) We will never be perfect until we get into heaven.

We have really on just touched the surface. This is a fascinating topic. I hope this has whetted your appetite for more meat of Theology.

References:

There are numerous good references I can suggest some of them are hard reading. But it's good stuff if you can work your way through it.

1. Tapes or Videos from RC Sproul of Ligonier Ministries.
2. Systematic Theology by Millard Erickson
3. Systematic Theology by Berkov
4. Any book on refuting cults that explain "Justification by Faith."
5. The Institutes by John Calvin.

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NOTES:

Question: God says the wages of sin is death, in Romans 6:23 *Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death.*

So how do we then defend the concept that God doesn't send anyone to hell for a single sin?

Answer: First, God has to punish sin, and the wages of sin is indeed Death. So someone has to die. But that death punishment was paid by Christ. So we know that justice is served. But now that Christ has died and risen again, so the second part of that verse kicks in

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So while the original wages of sin was death, now through Christ we can have eternal Life. In other words, now we have a way to avoid going to hell for a simple white lie or for that matter even for murder, simply because Christ bore the punishment for those sins.

But what then of the person who doesn't accept? Aren't they going to hell for their sins? Actually the truth is that anyone who sins, sins, only because they are a sinner, because their nature is to rebel against God. Thus in effect the punishment of death is due to their sin nature and rebellion. Basically it's all tied together. Find someone who doesn't sin and they won't go to Hell.

Question: But I don't hate God. I'm not rebelling against him.

Answer: You may not “think” you hate God. But notice what I'm asking you to do: I'm asking you to humble yourself before the Almighty God (who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and came in the flesh as Jesus Christ) and say that He deserves ALL your honor, praise, love and in fact your life. Are you willing to do this now and stop living for yourself? If you are then do it now.

Most times why I say this people start to back off. They say: OK I agree, I'm not really willing to submit my entire life to him. Which means they are rebelling against him. Not an outright rebellion but a quiet, “I'll do my own thing” rebellion.

NOTE FROM NEIL:

Dear Reader, I have made every attempt I can to ensure that I have not taught any heretical concepts in this talk. However due to the complex nature of the topic it is quite possible that some slips maybe made. If you encounter anything here that is either new or not in line with the last 20 Centuries of Evangelical Christian and Biblical doctrine, please let me know so that I may correct it. It is not my intention to create any new doctrine but rather teach the original Gospel as preached by the Apostles who learned it directly from our Lord and were inspired by the Holy Spirit to allow them to remember it.