



Opening Prayer

Introductory Activity

Precursor: The logic goes, "If God is loving, then the concept of eternal suffering for temporal sin is incompatible with his character. That would make God a monstrous God." It seems logical, but it is not biblical...nor is it logical, as we shall see. Today, we will explore the dangerous ramifications of this lie as well as give biblical rationale to answer someone who holds to it.

Activity: The error of universalism says that the biblical teaching of eternal damnation is incompatible with their concept of a loving God. They believe that God will eventually destroy all sin and save all people. A Universalist would be very comfortable saying, "We all worship the same God by different names. We are all going to the same place! Hell as a place of eternal suffering does not exist." Read the following passages. At your tables (or work on your own if you prefer), based on what you read in the passages, jot down what misunderstandings about the Christian faith Universalists have. We'll hear samples.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Exodus 34:6,7

⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

Acts 4:12

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Galatians 5:4

⁴ You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

2 Peter 1:21

²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

John 17:17

¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

No Hell?

1. How does the Bible describe hell? Read the following and formulate an answer.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

Recall the parable of the Unmerciful Servant. For how long was the servant thrown into jail?

*"In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should p_____ b_____
a_____ he o_____." (Matthew 18:34)*

And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind. (Isaiah 66:24)

"And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:30 - Parable of the Talents)

Your friend asks you, "If hell is real, then where is it?" How would you answer?

2. Why will some go to hell? Read the following and formulate an answer.

⁴¹"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'" (Matthew 25:41-43)

They, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name. (Revelation 14:10,11)

How is the concept of "no hell and everyone goes to heaven" illogical?

3. How is the concept of “no hell” unfair? Use the following passages to help answer this.

For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” (Hebrews 10:30)

“For I, the LORD, love justice: I hate robbery and wrongdoing.” (Isaiah 61:8a)

Think about it! If there were no hell, what would be the practical implications for your life? (i.e. how would your life and attitude change?)

4. How can we say that hell is evidence of God’s love for us?

About three in the afternoon Jesus Christ out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) (Matthew 27:46)

For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. (2 Corinthians 5:14,15)

In the world, how do authority figures (police officers, those in the military, etc.) get people to obey them? What is it about God that motivates us to serve and obey him?

Group Discussion

5. Are there degrees of torment in hell? Explain. (See Luke 12:47,48 & Matthew 11:20-24)

“The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. ⁴⁸ But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” (Luke 12:47,48)

²⁰ Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. ²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. ¹ For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.” (Matthew 11:20-24)

6. Why don't people want to believe that God would send people to hell? List as many reasons as you can and then evaluate those reasons.

7. Evangelical Christian author, Rob Bell, wrote in his book "Love Wins:" "Has God created millions of people over tens of thousands of years who are going to spend eternity in anguish? Can God do this, or even allow this, and still claim to be a loving God? Does God punish people for thousands of years with infinite, eternal torment for things they did in their few finite years of life?" (p. 88) Watch a video clip where he tries to defend his viewpoint. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agRu8SZRMME>) In your estimation, what does he believe about hell and what would you say to him?

Closing Activity

Children's Sermon: How would you explain the truth that a loving God can, does, and will send people to hell to Kindergartners? Write a children's sermon on that theme. Feel free to work with your tablemates!

Closing Prayer

Lord, on you I cast my burden- sink it in the deepest sea!
Let me know your gracious pardon, cleanse me from iniquity.
Let your Spirit leave me never, make me only yours forever. Amen.

Christian Worship 653:4

All Bible passages are from [The New International Version](#). (2011). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Passages for Lesson 6

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⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

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