

Searching the Scriptures / 21 / Why Do We Deserve To Suffer In Hell? / Part 1

In our Bible study today we want to examine why human beings deserve to suffer Hell. This is not a new question, but one that has been asked down throughout the ages. The only reliable and trustworthy answer comes from the One who set up both the Law that man has violated and the subsequent penalty imposed upon the offenders. It is helpful to understand that what we are looking at is a LEGAL MATTER. Our discussion will center around the following four points:

- 1. Sin is the Transgression of the Law of God (the Bible).**
- 2. All Sin Must Be Punished – It is the Law.**
- 3. The Punishment is Equal to the Crime.**
- 4. We Have to Pay the Penalty, Unless We Find a Substitute to Take Our Place.**

Sin is the Transgression of the Law of God (the Bible)

We find this statement in Eze 18:4, *“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* God had set up a testing program for Man in the Garden of Eden, which Man failed. God had declared that if Man were to sin, he would have to die. The death that God was talking about was not only physical death (which did result, however, as the evidence of man’s sin) – but something far worse, something unimaginable – eternal death in Hell.

1 John 3:4 reveals this fact, *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”* So here we find a definition for sin – it is the transgression (or violation) of the law. What law is that? The law of the United States of America? The law of a particular state? Is it referring to a city or county law? No, a much higher law is in view – THE LAW OF GOD, WHICH IS THE HOLY BIBLE. Psa 78:5 tells us, *“For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.”*

And how important is God’s Law? In Mat 5:18 we read, *“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”*

All Sin Must Be Punished – It is the Law

Sin as we have just learned is the transgression of the Law. It is a LEGAL affair, and must be handled in a legal manner – in other words, there has to be a PENALTY. Rom 3:19-20 explains why this is so: *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* 1 Cor 15:56 also attests, *“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.”*

Furthermore, we find this jarring truth in Rom 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* There is no alternative or plea-bargaining available – the Law has to be upheld by the Judge, if He is indeed a righteous Ruler. We know of course from Isa 45:21, *“Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the*

LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.” God is absolutely just and righteous both in character and in everything He does.

The Punishment is Equal to the Crime

It has been said that the punishment is always equal to the crime. If the punishment is to be abandoned in the Lake of Fire forever can you think of how terrible the crime must have been. It is easy to lose sight of the reality that all sin is first and foremost against God, as read in Psa 51:4, *“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”*

We cannot begin to understand the depth of our sin and how our rebellion is such an affront to God Almighty, our Creator. Num 14:18 states, *“The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.”*

We Have to Pay the Penalty, Unless We Find a Substitute to Take Our Place

We have to suffer the penalty of Hell that we deserve, unless we can find Someone to take our place. How and where would we find a Substitute?

Imagine this scenario: You or I step outside our home and stoop down to find an ant on the ground. Would you or I be so foolish as to suffer eternal damnation in Hell for that poor ant? None of us would do such a thing! Yet, what God has done for His children is so much greater than even this simplistic analogy.

In fact, we cannot begin to comprehend this type of sacrifice, this type of commitment, this type of LOVE. Yet we read in Psa 86:13, *“For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.”* What does this mean? It means that the Lord Jesus came to *“give His life a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45) – not for everybody, but for His people, as we read in 2 Cor 5:21, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

Jesus had to become sin for a specific group of people known as the Elect or His sheep, and then he had to endure the equivalent of spending an eternity in Hell in order to pay for their sin. What He suffered is recorded in symbolic language in Jon 2:2, *“And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.”*

May God have mercy on us as we cry to Him to deliver us from the just punishment we deserve. May he grant us Life from above, according to His Holy Will.