

HATHQ Question # 7: Is Hell Fair?

Question # 7: How can a “fair” God justify such an incredibly heavy, severe, terrible and cruel penalty as hell? To torture people in hell, and do so *forever*, is, at the very least, a vast and disproportionately heavy penalty for human sin. I would greatly *fear* such a God and consider Him to be excessively tyrannical and cruel. I would not be attracted to Him at all.

This is a very important Question for four reasons ...

First, our Lord spoke more on the subject of hell than any other subject, showing that it must be a topic of supreme importance to Him (and, should, therefore, also be of extreme importance to us)

Second, it is an issue that skeptics often raise as an objection to belief in God

Third, as Christians we should always strive to understand our great God as much as we possibly can.

Fourth, we want to be able to answer Questions like this, because it can be an honest and sincere question that deserves an answer.

There are really two separate aspects or parts to our Question

The first concerns God Himself – “How can a ‘fair’ God justify such an incredibly heavy, severe, terrible and cruel penalty as hell? To torture people in hell *forever* is, at the very least, a vast and disproportionately heavy penalty for human sin.”

The second concerns our thoughts about God – “I would *greatly fear* a God who would create such a hell and send people to it. I would consider Him to be excessively tyrannical and cruel, and would not be attracted to Him at all.”

So, again, “Is Hell a ‘fair’ and ‘just’ sentence?”

Well, to satisfactorily answer our Question, we first need to determine exactly what “*fair*” means in a legal sense and exactly what we mean by the term “*hell*”.

Being up-to-date Christians, we went to “*LegalBrief AI*” and found that ...

“In legal terms, ‘fair’ means treating everyone equally and making decisions that are reasonable and just for all parties involved.

In normal language you would also say ‘just’ instead of ‘fair’

What does 'fair' mean in legal documents?

The term 'fair' in legal documents refers to a sense of honesty and justice. It means treating everyone involved in a situation with respect and without bias. When something is described as fair, it suggests that there is no deception or selfish intent behind actions or decisions. For example, if a judge makes a fair ruling, it means that the decision is just and considers the rights of all parties involved. Fairness is essential in ensuring that everyone gets a chance to present their side and that outcomes are based on facts rather than favoritism."

OK. So what do we mean by the term "hell"?

Let's answer by using FAQs

What is "hell"?

Hell is the final state of the damned. It is a place of unending conscious torment.

Is hell "real"?

If you use the Bible as your guide, "Yes, hell is 'real'." In fact, our Lord Jesus Christ spoke more on hell than any other subject, constantly warning people about it. The existence of hell is one of the most prominently taught facts of the Bible.

Why is there a hell?

We saw that God is a "just" God by nature. As He is "just", He must punish sin. Hell is that punishment.

Isn't hell a horrible place of torment?

Yes, it is a place of unspeakable horror, both physical and mental. If you wish to know more about it, we would recommend *The Wrath of Almighty God*, a collection of sermons by Jonathan Edwards, subtitled "*On God's Wrath Against Sinners*".

Is there really "fire" in hell?

Many scholars think that the "fire" is real. Other scholars think that "fire" may be a *symbol* of God's fiery indignation that produces a relentless and endless wounding and devouring of conscience. But it really doesn't matter, because, in literature, the use of a symbol, in this case "fire", is always considered to be less severe than the actual reality behind it. One should take no comfort that the "fire" of hell might be just be a symbol instead of real fire.

My God would never do that to people!

Then your God is not the God of the Bible, but a figment of your own imagination.

Is hell eternal? Does it really last forever?

Our Lord Jesus Christ says that it is eternal ...

*“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”
(Jesus Christ, Matthew 25:41)*

Isn't Hell very “severe”!

Yes, hell is very “severe”. There is no denying it.

If fact, the Apostle Paul points out in Romans that God is as “severe” toward the wicked as He is “good” to His children ...

*“Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness.”
(Romans 11:22)*

Just as God's love and mercy have their counterparts in His holy wrath and righteous judgment against sin, so God's “goodness” to those that love Him and come to Him has its counterpart in His “severity” toward those who reject Him.

But, very importantly, our main Question is NOT “Is hell ‘severe’?”

No, our main Question IS, “Is hell TOO ‘severe’?”

In other words ...

“Is hell fair ... Does the punishment fit the crime ... Is hell a ‘just’ sentence?”

We will answer these Questions in three Parts ...

Part I – Presuppositional Considerations

Part II – “Legal” Fairness

Part III – Our Impressions or Fears of Such a God

Part I – Presuppositional Considerations – The Philosophical Argument

Part I considers the seemingly inexplicable inconsistency between a God of love, mercy and grace and a God who would create a horrific hell and send people to it.

Your viewpoint on the issue will, of course, depend a lot on whether you believe in the existence of God and what kind of God He is.

As Christians, we will approach the issue from the Christian viewpoint.

But even as Christians who believe in a “good, fair, and Just” God, the questions still remain

“Is hell fair ... Does the punishment fit the crime ... Is hell a ‘just’ sentence?”

As the nature and stature of God, if He does exist, has a big, though different, bearing on our answer from that of the non-theist, we will take the time to go into it.

As Christians, the First Reason that we would give that “Hell” is a “fair” and “just” punishment is because ...

“We have seen in earlier Papers that God, by His very Nature, Being, and Person, is, and must always be, “just” and “fair” in all of His dealings with men. He is what He is and is immutably and unchangeably so.”

We have seen in earlier Papers that God is immutably “good ... fair ... [and] just” by nature. Because He is God and is immutably “good ... fair ... [and] just” by nature, He must also be the fountainhead and establisher of all standards of justice, fairness, goodness and mercy – and *His* are the standards that we must adhere and defer to, *not ours*.

If God’s “wrath” against sin and His chosen punishment of “hell” for those that reject Him, His law and His free and sincere offer of salvation appear to be too “harsh” and too “severe”, then we must simply accept by faith that just as God Himself is “good, just, and righteous”, His chosen form of punishment for sin must itself also be “good”, “just” and “righteous”, and that we will one day understand and completely agree that it is so.

We do realize that this is a Philosophical reason that does not offer any “Legal” proof as to how, hell itself is “just” and “fair”. We will offer that in Parts 2 and 3.

We would also note in closing that God does not “delight” in sending any of His creatures into hell, but does so because it is the *good, right, and just* thing to do ...

“‘As I live’, says the LORD GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked’”
(Ezekiel 33:11)

Part II – Legal Considerations – Arguments from Reason

Here we directly face the Part of our Questions that concern God Himself

“How can a ‘fair’ God justify such an incredibly heavy, severe, terrible and cruel penalty as hell? To torture people in hell *forever* is, at the very least, a vast and disproportionately heavy penalty for human sin.”

The Second Reason that we would give that “*Hell*” is a “*fair*” and “*just*” punishment is because ...

God’s “*wrath*” is neither arbitrary nor random, but is legally and judicially based.”

God’s “*wrath*” is very specifically directed against “*Covenant breakers*”. God did not just create men and then arbitrarily and randomly assign some of them to hell. No! God had made a legally binding “*Covenant*” (i.e., a legal arrangement or agreement) with Adam, and, through him, with all humanity to come from him by natural generation.

Adam was the legally-constituted federal head (or, representative) of the whole human race to come forth from him, to represent them in the Covenant with God. Adam was created a perfectly upright and holy man, and was the best representative imaginable for mankind (certainly a thousand times better than they themselves would have been or any other man they could have come up with would have been). When Adam fell, all of humanity fell with him and are guilty from conception before a holy God. This is the Doctrine of Original Sin.

The Third Reason that we would give that “*Hell*” is a “*fair*” and “*just*” punishment is because ...

We fully deserve it.

That there is no such thing as an “innocent” man and that all men everywhere are under the condemnation of breaking God’s law is clearly shown and taught in Romans 1:18-32 and 3: 9-18 ...

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:18-32)

Here we see an incredibly damning litany of God’s just charges against all men, charges that fully establish that we “deserve” the penalty that God inflicts on us for them. In Romans 1:18-32, we see, in particular ...

That God’s “wrath” is directed at the “ungodliness” and “unrighteousness” of men

That men “suppress it [the truth about God] in unrighteousness” and “did not like to retain God in their knowledge”

That, according to Paul, men are “*without excuse*” because the “*truth*” they “*suppress*” is “*clearly seen*” and “*understood*” – because God “*has shown it*” to them. The “*truth*” gets through to them.

That even knowing the “*truth*” that He has shown them, men do not “*glorify Him as God*”, but willfully and purposely turn the “*truth*” about God’s nature, “*even His eternal power and Godhead*”, into corruptible, gross, and perverse idols.

Lastly, and perhaps worst of all, men ...

“... knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.”

As if all this were somehow not enough, Paul shortly follows up, in Romans 3:9-18, with yet another litany of devastating charges against mankind and his rebellion against God and His law ...

“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

As it is written:

*‘There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one.’
‘Their throat is an open tomb;
With their tongues they have practiced deceit’;
‘The poison of asps is under their lips;
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’
‘Their feet are swift to shed blood;
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace they have not known.’
‘There is no fear of God before their eyes’.” (Romans 3:9-18)*

One of our big problems is that we simply fail to realize just how sinful “sin” is in the eyes of God

If you want a true picture of just how sinful sin actually is in the eyes of God, then simply look to Jesus Christ on the cross, for it is there that we learn ...

First, that sin is so horrible, hideous, and repulsive in the eyes of God that it took the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, to atone for it

Second, that IF the sinfulness of sin is such that it took the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, to atone for it, then there is no way that a mere man could atone for it on his own.

This being the case, we see that the penalty for sin must be paid for either on Christ on the cross or on the sinner in hell forever.

“That” is how horrible “sin” is in the eyes of a holy God.

For sin not only rejects God, but also shows utter contempt for His law.

The punishment does fit the crime.

The Fourth Reason that we would give that “Hell” is a “fair” and “just” punishment is because ...

Those that do not have the *written* Law of God, have, in addition to the heavenly revelation of Romans 1:18-32 that renders them “*without excuse*”, also have God’s Law “*written in their hearts*” with “*their conscience also bearing witness*” against them ...

“... for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts excusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” (Romans 2:14-16)

The Fifth Reason that we would give that “Hell” is a “fair” and “just” punishment is because ...

God punishes all sin equally. God did not in any way ‘*overlook*’, ‘*excuse*’, ‘*ignore*’, or “*show any leniency*” towards the sins of His redeemed elect children, but exacted the full and total payment for all their sins on His own dearly beloved Son on the cross.

How wonderfully and truthfully Paul writes to all Christians that ...

“... you are not your own ... For you were brought at a great price” (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

We were “bought at” a very “great price” indeed!

[We would note here that God’s sovereign choice to redeem a certain number of “elect” sinners to salvation, with Jesus Christ paying the penalty for their sins on the cross, in no way lessens the guilt of the sinners that He did not choose for salvation.]

And so, hell is “fair” in that all sin is equally and fully paid for – either on Christ on the cross or on sinners in hell forever. Men in hell may be very mad and rage against God for all eternity because His “*mercy*” and “*compassion*” were not extended to them also, but their punishment is “*just*” and “*fair*” nonetheless. They only receive the just rewards of their own free and willful actions, as shown in Romans 1:18-32 and 3:9-18.

The Sixth Reason concerns the “Eternal” nature of hell, which we hold to be “*fair*” and “*just*” for two Reasons ...

First, an “eternal” hell is a “*fair*” and “*just*” punishment because sin against an “*infinite*” God is a sin of “*infinite*” proportions that demands an infinite punishment.

All sin is a gross rebellion that strikes against the Being and majesty of an infinite God.

By necessity, the punishment for an infinite crime must also be of an infinite nature and value, meaning that no finite creature can pay it.

As so adequately stated by the great Puritan, Thomas Boston ...

“It is infinite majesty which sin strikes against; and so it is, in some sort, an infinite evil. Sin rises in its demerit, according to the quality of the party offended ... The infinity of God makes infinite wrath the just demerit of sin.”
(Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, page 152)

“God is infinitely displeased with sin; and when He acts, He must act like Himself, and show His displeasure by proportionable means.”
(Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, page 152)

The Second Reason that an “eternal” hell is a “*fair*” and “*just*” punishment, is that men in hell will never repent, but will keep on cursing and blaspheming God for their punishment, continuously adding new sins on top of old ones.

In hell, men will still be unrepentant and will constantly and continually curse and blaspheme the name of God because of their punishment.

We are given a good example of this truth in Revelation 16, where even at the end times, when the angels pour out the bowls of God's judgmental wrath, men will not repent, but will continue to rage against God and blaspheme His name.

Though men know that it is the end of time and they know it is God Himself who is in charge of these events, they will still not repent, but will only express rage and blasphemy against God for sending them ...

"Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory." (Revelation 16:8-9)

"Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and did not repent of their deeds." (Revelation 16:10-11)

We must also remember that people in hell have had every restraining grace of the hand of God removed from them and are, in hell, able to give full vent to their fury and wrath against God.

Another factor of hell that greatly heightens men's continual rage and blasphemy against Him is their awareness that God is "*immutable*" and does not change. In hell, their knowledge of the immutability of God, i.e., their knowledge that His wrath is eternal and will never lessen or change in any way, will be the most dread and hated knowledge imaginable and will itself be the most punishing burden of all. They will only rage and blaspheme Him all the more for their knowledge of it.

Part III – Our thoughts about God – The Judgmental Question

"I would *greatly fear* a God who would create such a hell and send people to it. I would consider Him to be excessively tyrannical and cruel, and would not be attracted to Him at all."

Most skeptics and even many "Christians" who have either never really read the Bible or who attend very liberal "modern" churches, very often make the following three

statements about the God of the Bible, the God who creates hell and punishes people in it ...

“I would greatly *fear* such a God”

“I would consider Him to be excessively tyrannical and cruel” ... and ...

“I would not be attracted to Him at all.”

[If you think the above assessment of “many” Christians too harsh, then consider that many churches today will not even mention sin or hell in their sermons for fear of scaring people away.]

In answer, let’s first address the issue of “fearing” God

There are two kinds of “fear” of God.

The first type of “fear of God” is the fear of a guilty person before a judge whose law he has grievously broken and who knows that the Lawgiver can and will inflict punishment for it.

This is a fear that has “dread” and “torment” attached to it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ told us of this kind of “fear” ...

“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you fear Him!” (Luke 12:4.5)

Again, this is the fear of a guilty and condemned sinner before a holy and righteous God.

The Christian does not (and should not) have this type of fear.

The second type of “fear of God” is not a tormenting fear or a fear of dread.

No, our second type of “fear of God” is a “fear” born of God’s love for us. It bears no resemblance to the fear listed above. It is, rather, a fear born of God’s “perfect love” for us, a love that “casts out” the fear of dread and torment ...

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts our fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:18-19)

Our second type of “fear of God” is the reassuring fear of a child for a parent whom he knows loves him and will correct and discipline him if necessary for his own good.

Our second type of “fear of God” is the “good” and proper “fear” of a Christian for his God, for his Creator, for his “Father”, and for his Savior.

The writer of Hebrews (most likely Paul) tells us that if, in His wisdom, God sees fit to send disciplines and corrections to you, they are sent in love and are a proof of your adoption by Him as a beloved child ...

“And have you forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons:

*‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.’*

*If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”
(Hebrews 12:5-11)*

It is not a “fear” of punishment. For as stated earlier, God never punishes His children.

No! God is a “just” God and would never punish someone a second time for a sin whose penalty has already been punished and atoned for by Jesus Christ on the cross. God, like any good Father, will use corrective discipline with a child who needs it, but it is always loving discipline that is for the child’s own good. God wants His children to bear the family image, that of their older half-brother, Jesus Christ, and will train them up to it.

Let’s next address the assertion that a God who would create hell and put people in it would be “excessively tyrannical and cruel”

We have freely admitted that hell is “severe”.

But hell can only be termed “tyrannical” and “cruel” if it is unjust, excessive, or arbitrarily imposed.

We have hopefully proven that hell is none of these things, and will answer the assertion of God being “extremely tyrannical and cruel” by repeating, in capsule form, our Six Reasons given above as to why “hell” is a “just” and “fair” punishment and is not “excessively tyrannical or cruel”

Hell is not “excessively tyrannical or cruel, but is a “fair” and “just” punishment because ...

“We have seen in earlier Papers that God, by His very Nature, Being, and Person, is, and must always be, “just” and “fair” in all of His dealings with men. He is what He is and is immutably and unchangeably so.”

God’s “wrath” is neither arbitrary nor random, but is legally and judicially based.”

We fully deserve it.

Those that do not have the written Law of God, have, in addition to the heavenly revelation of Romans 1:18-32 that renders them “without excuse”, also have God’s Law “written in their hearts” with “their conscience also bearing witness” against them ...

God punishes all sin equally. God did not in any way ‘overlook’, ‘excuse’, ‘ignore’, or “show any leniency” towards the sins of His redeemed elect children, but exacted the full and total payment for all their sins on His own dearly beloved Son on the cross.

An “eternal” hell is a “fair” and “just” punishment because sin against an “infinite” God is a sin of “infinite” proportions that demands an infinite punishment and because men in hell will never repent, but will keep on cursing and blaspheming God for their punishment, continuously adding new sins on top of old ones.

The third Assertion, “I would not be attracted to Him at all”, is to be expected...

Natural unregenerate man will never be “attracted” to God at all ...

Indeed, natural unregenerate man does not even “*understand*” the things of God (much less is he “*attracted*” to Him or them), and will consider them to be nothing more than “*foolishness*” ...

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing ...

“For Jews request a sign and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18,22-24)

The natural bent of unregenerate man is toward “*darkness*”, not “*light*” ...

“... and men loved darkness rather than the light” (John 3:19)

“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled” (Titus 1:15)

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (The Apostle Paul, Romans 7:18)

Rather than ever being “*attracted*” to God, natural unregenerate men are “*alienated*” from Him and are “*enemies*” to Him. None “*seek*” after Him

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His son” (Romans 5:8-10)

“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” (Ephesians 4:17-19)

“... you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind” (Colossians 1:21)

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to

be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:5-8)

“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written:

*‘There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one.’
‘Their throat is an open tomb;
with their tongues they have practiced deceit’;
‘The poison of asps is under their lips’;
‘Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’
‘Their feet are swift to shed blood;
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
and the way of peace they have not known.’
‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’” (Romans 3:9-18)*

And so, natural unregenerate man will never be “attracted” to God or the “things” of God and will remain in his unregenerate state unless and until God, in undeserved love and mercy, regenerates his heart (i.e., unless they are “born again”) and gives them the “gifts” of “saving faith” and “repentance unto life”.

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” (John 3:3)

“Then I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them, and take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people and I will be their God”. (Ezekiel 11:19-20)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’” (Acts 11:18)

Thus does the Apostle John so beautifully and truthfully write to his Christian readers ...

“We love Him because He first loved us.” (I John 4:15)

The unregenerate man’s “fear of hell” is but another (in this case, valid) reason for the darkened mind of natural unregenerate man to fear, hate and reject God, and never be “attracted” to Him.

The Conclusion of the matter ...

Is hell “just” and “fair”?

We would say, “Yes, as terrible and horrific as it is, we have to accept hell is “Fair” from two major viewpoints – The lesser Legal viewpoint and the greater Philosophical viewpoint of The Goodness and Trustworthiness of God ...

The Apostle Paul tells us that God is “severe” in His punishment of sin and sinners

“Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness” (Romans 11:22).

But, again, “severity”, in and of itself, is not “unfair” unless it is unjustly, excessively, or arbitrarily imposed.

We must remember that all men stand justly and fairly condemned before God.

Because God is “just”, “righteous”, and “holy”, He cannot simply wink at sin and let it go unpunished. No, He cannot deny His own nature and His own sense of justice. As the Righteous, Holy, and Just One, He must punish sin and the sinner, and execute His just “wrath” against them both.

And so, God is “severe” in His punishment of sin and sinners. But, and again, this is the important point, God is not *unfairly* “severe”. He is not too severe and He treats all equally. We must remember that God is, in Himself, the very fount of perfect wisdom, justice, love and mercy. We can thereby be assured that just as it would not be “good” for God to be too “severe”, it would also not be “good” for Him to be less “severe” than He is

If we think God is too “severe”, it only shows that we do not sufficiently grasp either the holiness of God, who is a “consuming fire” of holiness, or the grossly abominable

nature of our own sin, or both. Again, sin is so heinous and terrible that Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, had to suffer and die to atone for it.

And, in the final analysis, what God does is right and just *whether we think it “too severe” or not.*

What, then, as Christians, should our attitude toward hell be?

As stated above, we, as Christians, should not question God’s judgements, because what God does is *right* and *just* and *fair*, whether we think it too “severe” or not.

We can and should try from “*revealed*” Scripture to understand His ways and why He punishes as He does. We can review and meditate on our six reasons found there as to why hell is fair. But, if, after all that, we remain confused or perplexed about things, we should not judge God by our standards, but, knowing Him to be good, just, righteous, fair, and merciful, we should trust Him, submit to His standard, and with the Psalmist ...

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

As Christians, we should, with Paul, hold our tongues and marvel at ...

“... the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell severity; but toward you, goodness” (Romans 11:22).

We must in faith trust that God is “good” and that all that He does is “good”, “fair”, and “just”.

And, again, we must also always take care to remember the instruction of the Apostle Paul that we are not God’s judges, but He ours ...

“But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God?” (Romans 9:20).

We can but bow our heads and with Paul and reflect on his beautiful doxology ...

“Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

*‘For who has known the mind of the LORD?
Or who has become His counselor?’
‘Or who has first given to Him
And it shall be repaid to him?’*

*For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.
Amen. (Romans 11:33-35)*

As Christians our attitude must be one of submissively and humbly bowing before the will of God in this, and all other, matters, reflecting on the “*revealed*” things that He has given us concerning the matter, in faith and trust knowing and accepting that what He does is good, fair, just, and right.

In Conclusion

“Is God fair?”

Yes, He is.

Is God good and loving?

Yes, He is.

Is God “severe” in the expression of His “wrath” against sinners?

Yes, He is.

Is “hell” then still fair?

Yes, it is.

God is “good”; God is “just”; God is “fair”; God is “love”; God is “merciful” ... and ... God is “severe”.

Just as God’s love and mercy have their counterpart in His holy wrath and righteous judgment against sin, so God’s “*goodness*” to those that love Him and come to Him for salvation has its counterpart in His “*severity*” to those who reject Him and His way of salvation.

Always remember that sin is a terrible thing. Sin is utter contempt of God and a rejection of His law. It would not be a good, just, or righteous thing for God to let it go unpunished. We may marvel at the degree of the severity of the punishment, but we must accept in good faith that it is just and fair that it is so.

[We must also remember that the fact that God, in his goodness and mercy, elected to save some and sent Jesus Christ to pay the full penalty for their sins, does not lessen the guilt of those He did not save or give them any just right of complaint against His mercy to others.]

Soli Deo Gloria