



II Timothy 2:9

The Gospel Catholic

The Sole purpose of this publication is to promote God's message of Salvation through faith alone in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Additional free literature is available upon request.

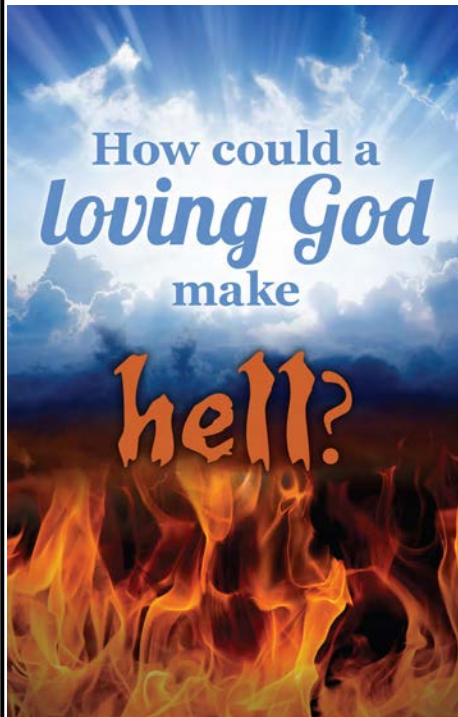
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How Could A Loving God Make Hell?

By Missionary Manny Rodriguez

If God loves us, why did He make hell?

Is hell a real place of eternal fire and brimstone where the condemned suffer forever as punishment from God?

The Bible says in 1 John 4:8 that "God is love." So, if God loves us, how can a God of love make such a horrible place for humanity? It doesn't seem to make sense for God to condemn His own creation.

That is why some have speculated that the doctrine of hell is a falsehood fabricated by charlatans with the purpose of scaring others and (through fear) convincing them to follow their teachings, to attend their churches, and to give money to their ministries. Is this so?

What does the Word of God say?

The Bible is the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16) and there is nothing more authoritative than God's Word (John 17:17). We are interested in what the Bible says. Let's allow the Word of God to reconcile in our minds these two ideas that seem contradictory: eternal damnation and a God who loves us.

Hell exists

The word "hell" is mentioned 54 times in the Bible (King James Version). Jesus preached about hell more than anyone else in the Bible. In the New Testament there are 162 references about hell. **"How Could a Loving God Make Hell?" continued on page 2**

“How Could a Loving God Make Hell?, Continued from page 1 Although they do not all necessarily mention the word "hell", they *are* references to hell. More than 70 of these references were spoken by Jesus Christ himself.

Hell is a place of eternal fire. In the following passage, Jesus tells us the story of someone who went to hell: Luke 16: 19-31, *“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”*



Christ said in Mark 9:43-48 that the suffering in hell is so severe that it would be better to live life with one hand, one foot, or one eye rather than enter hell with our whole body and burn forever. We see in the Bible that hell is a place of extreme pain, torment, suffering, without mercy, without consolation, and without love. There is no place worse than hell!

Is there evidence of hell?

The Bible teaches that hell is located in the heart of the earth. (Compare Psalm 16:10 with Matthew 12:40). Scientifically, this makes sense because we know there is fire within the earth. This is what we see in the news every time they announce a volcano eruption. When we see a photo of a volcano spitting out lava and sulfur we are witnessing the fires of hell itself.

False religions try to eliminate the truth of hell

There are religious people who do not believe in hell. They cannot understand how a God of love can make such a horrible place. **“How Could a Loving God Make Hell?”**, **Continued on page 3**

“How Could a Loving God Make Hell?”, Continued from page 2 So instead of accepting what the Bible says they invent false interpretations. For example, many believe in annihilation, which is teaching that the condemned soul will be eliminated instead of suffering for all eternity. But this is false. The Bible says in Revelation 14:11, *"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."*

Why did God create “Hell”?

Now that we have seen that hell exists according to the Bible, we return to the original question. How is it possible for God to condemn us but love us at the same time? The truth is that GOD DID NOT MAKE HELL FOR HUMANITY. Jesus will say to the condemned in Matthew 25:41, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"*. Notice that hell was not prepared for man. Hell was prepared for the devil and the angels that rebelled against God!

It was never God's desire for us to be condemned in hell. When He completed His creation of man the Bible says that *"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."* (Genesis 1:31) God put man in the garden of Eden. What God prepared for man was paradise, not hell. God wanted fellowship with man, not condemnation.

The problem of sin

The problem is that despite all the blessings of paradise that God prepared for man, man disobeyed the commandment of God. This sin of disobedience caused separation between God and man.

God is holy. And because of His holiness sin cannot endure in His presence. God loves us and wants to have constant fellowship with us, but He cannot when there is sin. It is like the relationship of a father and his son. A good father loves his son. But when the son is in rebellion against his father, they cannot have the companionship that the father desires because there is a problem harming their relationship. Our sins prevent us from having a good relationship with God.

The love of God

That is why Christ died on the cross. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to the world to provide for us the way of salvation. Christ loved us so much that He willingly gave His life on the cross for our sins.

Romans 5:8, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* In the Old Testament the Jews brought calves, goats, or lambs to the temple for priests to sacrifice. This was the way the Jews received the forgiveness of their sins in ancient times. But Christ became *"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."* (John 1:29) Christ provided a perfect sacrifice so effective that He could atone for our sins once and for all. (Hebrews 10:10-12) **“How Could a Loving God Make Hell?”, Continued on page 4**

"How Could a Loving God Make Hell?", Continued from page 3

If you are ready to turn your back on your sins by accepting the sacrifice of Christ by faith in Him alone, Jesus will forgive you and cleanse you of your sins by His precious blood. This is salvation. Romans 5:9 *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*

Hell is the manifestation of God's wrath against rebellion and sin. However, when someone receives Christ as their Savior, the wrath of God is pacified and by His love and mercy He rescues them from the damnation of hell.

Unfortunately, there are many who reject the love that the Lord demonstrated toward us on the cross, deciding rather to live in their sins instead of letting God change their lives. These people, when they die, will go to hell, not because it is what God wants, but because there IS NO OTHER OPTION! They cannot have fellowship with God unless they are washed by the blood of Christ. And because they cannot have fellowship with God they cannot enter heaven, because sin cannot remain in the holy paradise of God.

So the condemnation of man is not God's fault. If you go to hell, it will be your fault because God has done all He can to save you from your sins and rescue you from hell. Do not go to hell! God loves you. Receive Christ as your Savior and let Him change your life. Do it right now! 2 Corinthians 6:2b *"...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* Romans 10:13 *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

Editor's Note: This tract is currently available in English and Spanish. We will be mailing copies to our various tract depots. Contact us today for your copies!



Mother's Vocation And God's Grace

By Donna Spader Shire (Formerly Sister Madonna Therese)

Of the sixteen children born to my parents, two became priests and I became a nun. From earliest childhood we were taught that the Catholic Church was the only true church and that in order to one day gain eternal life in heaven, we must be good and do good. My mother's greatest desire was to have at least one of her daughters dedicated to be a nun. I was chosen to be that daughter. I attended parochial high school and, immediately following graduation in 1960, entered the convent of the School Sisters of St. Francis in Milwaukee, WI.

Life in the convent was severe and strict. We were taught about the saints of the church and church doctrine, but not the Scriptures. I received my first Bible after ten years in the convent. It was not put into my hands by the Catholic Church, but by a group of charismatics. **"Mother's Vocation and God's Grace", Continued on page 5**

“Mother’s Vocation and God’s Grace”, Continued from page 4

My Brother Shares

My younger brother had come to know the Lord through a crusade. He had left engineering school and was attending Moody Bible Institute. He came to visit me often and shared his new-found faith. Through Ephesians 2:8-9 he tried to convince me that salvation is a free gift which can only be obtained by trusting Christ alone and that our good deeds do not save us, as is stated so clearly in Scripture, *“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he has saved us”* (Titus 3:5). It was obvious that my brother had the assurance of eternal life that I so desperately desired, but I could not believe that my church had misled me in such an important issue.

The Convent and Empty Religion

For five years I searched to find peace and happiness on my own. I tried yoga, transcendental meditation, Silva mind control, tongues and prophesying. Each seemed to satisfy me for a time, but in the end, left a spiritual void. After fifteen years in the convent, and still not finding the peace with God for which I had longed, I began seriously to question my life as a religious. I had entered the convent believing that there I could be “good” enough. However, I found that even in a convent the nuns sin just as women do in the world.

Change of Habits

In 1975 I wrote to the Pope and received his permission to be released from my vows. In leaving the convent I felt as though I had failed myself, my family, and my church. Rather than returning home, I went to the East coast to live with a friend who was also an ex-nun. The two of us chose to make up for all our years of cloistered life by trying everything that the world had to offer. It did not take long to see that the worldly life has nothing to offer, either.

Direct Prayer

One evening when I returned to our apartment, I found my friend in real trouble. She had been drinking and smoking marijuana and was in a rage. She seemed to want to end her life completely. I became frightened. The more I tried to calm her down, the more violent and angry she became. Finally, in desperation, I grabbed her and began praying. I believe that this was the first time I had ever prayed directly to God, bypassing the “Blessed Mother” and “Saints”. In doing so, God heard my prayer and immediately she calmed down.

Amazing Grace

We decided that night to find out the truth about God. We knelt down and sincerely asked Him for help and forgiveness.

“Mother’s Vocation and God’s Grace”, Continued on page 6

“Mother’s Vocation and God’s Grace”, Continued from page 5 We asked Him to straighten out the mess we had made of our lives for like the prophet Isaiah, we saw that our righteousness was as filthy rags. We were not familiar with terms such as “saved” and “born again”, but from that moment I began to experience for the first time in my life, His peace that “passes understanding”. From that time on there was an obvious change in my heart and life. The Word of God became a light unto my path, heart and life, where before it had been confusing. Verses took on new meaning, such as, *“in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”* (Ephesians 1:7). *“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* *“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”* (Romans 5:8,10)

Since my conversion to Jesus Christ, God has blessed me in many ways. I attended a Bible school in England where I received very sound doctrinal teaching. I was given a trip to the Holy Land, where I had the joy of walking where my Lord walked centuries ago and where I received a better perspective of Scripture. I have been a counselor with a family agency, have married (a widowed man), and am not only a wife, but a mother of five and a grandmother of ten.

Each day, whether in good or difficult circumstance, like Isaiah, I can say, *“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels”* (Isaiah 61:10).

Perhaps you too have concluded that a religious life can not earn salvation. If you want to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, believe in Him and His death, burial and resurrection which paid your sin debt in full and receive the gift of salvation that He freely offers by grace through faith. *“And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen”* (1 John 5:20-21).

Knowing that eternal life is in Christ and Him alone; looking to and praying to all others is idolatry. Obey God’s warning in Scripture. *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”*

“Mother’s Vocation and God’s Grace”, Concluded on top of page 7

“Mother’s Vocation and God’s Grace”, Continued from page 6 And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:8-10). All that is necessary to secure your salvation is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a completion in Him, so as to leave nothing wanting. There is no necessity therefore that you should look to religious life or the Catholic church as if there were a deficiency in our Savior, as if He were unable to save you. He is waiting for you to trust Him, and then indeed in Him you will be complete! Do it now; you will forever thank Him!-Donna Spader Shire



Dear Reader,

Thank you so much for your interest in this edition of “***The Gospel Catholic***”. Our space is short, so I will update you briefly.

Ministry

We printed over 112,000 tracts last year and are prayerfully aiming to print 200,000 this year. Our “Treasures for Tracts” project is off to a fine start. We currently have 13 boxes in churches and conferences. If you would like a treasure chest to collect change for printing of tracts, please let us know! Rachel and I will send one to you at our expense.

We continue to get great reports of the tract depot in El Paso, TX. Tracts have been taken into Mexico by various missionaries and pastors as well as being distributed in the West Texas/New Mexico region.

The tract that we published in this newsletter was one that was written by a missionary to Puerto Rico. Bro. Manny Rodriguez has personally overseen our tract depot there. He wrote the tract to answer the question, “How could a loving God create hell?”. We have printed this tract in English and Spanish and hope to get it in Portuguese shortly. We have mailed 1,500 in English and 1,000 in Spanish already. Pray for the souls who will read it!

Personal

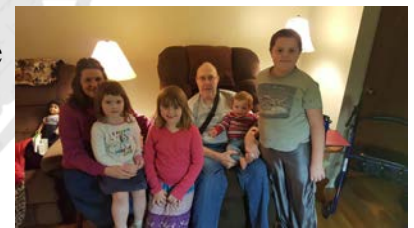
Thank you for the prayers for my father-in-law, Pastor Gary Freeman (pictured). We have received word from the Dr. that the cancer is untreatable and he has been given months to live.

While the news is extremely difficult for all involved, we are thankful for the years he has had to continue as pastor since he was first diagnosed. Please be in prayer for the family and his church during this time. One of the greatest things about being a Christian is the promised home in Heaven that can ONLY be had because of the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 14:1-6). We don’t have to fear an arbitrary time in purgatory, and neither do you.

Our family is well, otherwise. We have settled into our house and my travel schedule is about to pick up considerably. If your pastor would like me to come to your church, please have him contact me directly. In my six years as Director, I have been blessed to be in 27 states and territories and over 75 churches and conferences. I **LOVE** to hear the testimonies of God’s people and it reminds me constantly, “To God be the glory, great things He hath done, so loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, and opened the life gates that ALL may go in.” God bless!

Yours for the Kingdom,

Mark T. Reno, Director



The Gospel of Grace

God's Word, the Bible, Tells We Need To Be Saved

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." *Matthew 18:11*

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." *Romans 3:23*

"Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." *John 3:3*

Even Religious Works Cannot Bring Salvation

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." *Titus 3:5*

"...not of works, lest any man should boast." *Ephesians 2:9*

"... all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." *Isaiah 64:6*

" This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." *John 6:29*

Jesus Christ – God Himself – Has Provided Everything For Our Salvation

"Who (Jesus) His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree..." *1 Peter 2:24*

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." *John 14:6*

We Must Accept Christ To Be Saved

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." *John 3:16*

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed...." *John 3:18*

"...and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." *John 6:37*

We Are Saved By Faith Alone

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Romans 3:28 "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Galatians 2:16.

"For by Grace are ye Saved through Faith"

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