

“Why Is There a Hell?”

I was in a discussion about heaven and hell. My agnostic friend looks at free will and states that if God truly loves all humans unconditionally, then that kind of negates any concept of hell.

I know from a Biblical and Christian standard you can lay down the facts but is there an earthly standard/concept that can explain why there is in fact hell and heaven? Or can you not separate the two—Christianity—heaven and hell—and does the freewill factor have anything to do with it?

I think your friend's understanding of God is skewed. I was really helped by the way C.S. Lewis explained heaven and hell. A prominent disciple of his, Peter Kreeft, wrote this on his website (www.peterkreeft.com/topics/hell.htm):

Heaven and hell may be the very same objective place – namely God's love, experienced oppositely by opposite souls, just as the same opera or rock concert can be heavenly for you and hellish for the reluctant guest at your side. The fires of hell may be made of the very love of God, experienced as torture by those who hate him: the very light of God's truth, hated and fled from in vain by those who love darkness. Imagine a man in hell—no, a ghost—endlessly chasing his own shadow, as the light of God shines endlessly behind him. If he would only turn and face the light, he would be saved. But he refuses to—forever.

Dr. Kreeft (one of my favorite authors) also says this in the same essay:

Hell follows from two other doctrines: heaven and free will. If there is a heaven, there can be a not-heaven. And if there is free will, we can act on it and abuse it. Those who deny hell must also deny either heaven (as does Western

secularism) or free will (as does Eastern pantheism).

You might want to check out this essay to help you think through the issue of hell.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin

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