

Dear Pastor,

I am a Christian who had a powerful, supernatural born again experience some time ago, have had some profound prayers answered, and had two miraculous lifesaving incidents that many people have witnessed which I won't describe here.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and rose again on the Third Day. I also believe that many of the miracles performed by the Holy Spirit in Kathryn Kuhlman's, Benny Hinn's and many others' ministries are real (I believe in Divine healing).

But I am troubled by the doctrine of endless torment (or "eternal hell"). I have spent quite a bit of time thinking and studying on the matter, and have developed some questions that I hope someone who is better versed in the Scriptures than I am can answer for me.

I am sending this letter to numerous pastors in order to consider what is likely to be a wide variety of answers. I hope you will take the time to address these for me. I will consider your responses seriously.

1) The first thing I did when confronted with this doctrine was to put the term "endless" in perspective. It has been 20 centuries since Jesus was here, and scientists estimate that the earth has been here for four billion years.

But when we think of endless torment, we are not considering 20 centuries or four billion years, but even an absurdly huge number like 900 trillion millenniums times ten to the 50,000<sup>th</sup> power would be just the very beginning, because of when we speak of endless, we are literally speaking of an infinite amount of centuries or millenniums, and any number, no matter how large, is infinitesimally small compared to infinity. This is a mathematical fact.

So then, considering that eternal hell is truly *endless* torment, it becomes the most disturbing thought we can possibly entertain. Even the torturous hells the Jews experienced in World War II cannot compare to endless torment, since their suffering ended when they died (unless we imagine the unconverted ones then proceeded to an eternal hell).

So my first question is, if our all-powerful (Ephesians 1:11), all knowing (1 John 3:20) God who not only loves but is defined as love (1 John 4:8) know ahead of time that some particular person is going to ignore the rule to come to Jesus to have his sins forgiven, why not give this person a break and not bother making him? I mean, why bring someone into existence when you know before he is born that the unthinkable fate of endless torment awaits him?

I have spoken to some preachers on this, and they usually mention something of "free will". Of this I have two things to say:

a) Could you please show me where the Bible specifically says that God created us with a free will, because I cannot find it, and would have difficulty arguing that we are "completely free moral agents" after reading Romans 9:16- 9:21 (KJ), Proverbs 21:1, Philippians 2:13, Exodus 7:3, John 6:65, Romans 8:20 and many more.

b) So what if we have free will? The fact remains that our all-powerful, all-knowing God of love brought hundreds of millions, perhaps billions (actually one is too many) of precious human beings into existence knowing that before they were born they would suffer endless centuries of torment.

## 2) Who controls the devil?

I don't claim to be a biblical scholar, but I know of some verses that indicate that God is sovereign. The most powerful of these is Ephesians 1:11, where Paul, speaking of God, says: "Who worketh *all things* after the counsel of His own will."

Additionally, in the second chapter of Job, God tells Satan exactly what he can do and cannot do, and Satan obeys. Finally, Revelation 20:10 says that the devil is cast into the lake of fire.

Now, it seems to me that if the book of Revelation was written 2,000 years ago, then the devil must not control his own destiny, else how could his ultimate fate be known beforehand?

I consider this line of thought to be of paramount importance, because God is indeed sovereign and controls the devil, then the idea that hundreds of millions, perhaps billions of precious human beings are going to be tormented for infinite centuries by a devil that God controls is preposterous.

## 3) Is God everywhere?

I have heard the term "omnipresent" in reference to God, and Ephesians 4:6, where Paul says that God is "above all, and *through all*, and in you all" does seem to collaborate this.

But then I wonder, does this include eternal hell? If God is *through all*, does this mean that He is going to accompany the hundreds of millions, perhaps billions of precious human beings in eternal hell to be tormented for infinite centuries by the devil that He controls?

## 4) Was Jesus successful at the cross?

Colossians 2:15 says: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of the triumphing over them in it." And Hebrews 2:14 says "...that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Finally 1 John 3:8 says, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

These verses and Jesus' resurrection make it clear that Jesus defeated the devil, but it seems to me that the devil wins if he gets to torment hundreds of millions, if not billions of precious human beings endlessly.

## 5) Was there an eternal hell before Jesus?

My first inclination is that of course there was no eternal hell before Jesus, because it hardly

seems fair to make a rule that one must come to Jesus for forgiveness in order to avoid eternal hell, and condemn all the people that died before Jesus' time to endless torment, since they didn't have the chance to do this.

But if it is correct that there was no eternal hell before Jesus, this means that accompanying His arrival came the possibility that someone will reject His offer of salvation and be tormented endlessly. And I wonder, how is this "good news"?

These are the logical problems I have with the doctrine of endless torment, or eternal hell. But in the course of studying and thinking about this subject, I ran into numerous verses that also seem to contradict this concept, and I would like to share them with you, to see what your thoughts are. There are many of them, so please bear with me.

1) 1Tim 2:3,4 (KJ): For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior,  
Who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.

This seems to say it all, but I have spoken with Christians who point out that some of the newer translations change this verse so that it reads "desires all men to be saved", leaving the possibility, I suppose, that God desires everyone to be saved, but somehow won't be able to accomplish it.

But if we combine these newer translations with Ephesians 1:11 ("...Who worketh *all things* after the counsel of His own will") we are left with the thought, "if God desires all men to be saved and worketh *all things* after this counsel of His own will", what conclusion do we draw?

2) 2Pet 3:9 (KJ): The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Once again, the newer translations change this to read "not *desiring* that any should perish", but all we have to do is combine this verse with Ephesians 1:11 and ask ourselves what the outcome will be.

3) 1Cor 15:22-23: For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.  
But *every man* in his own order.....

This is clear. Note that it says, "in Christ shall all", not just "all in Christ".

4) Col 1:20: And, having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile *all things* unto Himself; by Him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Does the reconciliation of all things exclude eternal hell?

5) 2Cor 5:19: To say, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them...

Does the reconciling of the world exclude eternal hell?

6) Acts 3:21: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of *all things*...

Does the restitution of all things exclude eternal hell?

7) 1Tim 4:10: Because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior if *all men*, specially of those who believe.

If all men aren't to be saved, why doesn't Paul say 'only if they believe', or 'once they believe', or 'after they believe', etc? Why does He say, '*specially* of those who believe'?

8) John 1:29: Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Did Jesus really take away the sin of the world? If so, why is there eternal hell?

9) John 1:9: That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

This is a difficult verse for me, unless I imagine that God is not finished with us when we physically die. I think of Hitler as an example of someone who was probably not enlightened before he physically died.

10) Luke 3:6: And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Is it true? Will *all flesh* see the salvation of God?

More and more I believe that Ephesians 1:11 may be the most important verse in the Bible. As stated above, Paul says that God "worketh *all things* after the counsel of His own will", which tells me that God controls everything, or is sovereign.

But this is difficult to imagine when we take note of all the evil, sickness, and tragedy in the world. Is God in charge of the good *and the evil* in the world? The Bible seems to seem to say so. Look at these verses a knowledgeable person showed me:

1) Isaiah 45:7: (KJ): "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace, and *create evil*: I the Lord do all these things."

Some of the newer translations change the world evil to "calamity" or something similar, but it is easy to check that the word "evil" is indeed the Hebrew word for evil, so the KJV is correct.

2) Amos 3:6: (KJ): "...shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

Again, the KJV is correct.

3) Isaiah 54:16 (KJ) "...I have created the waster to destroy?"

These are confounding verses until we conclude that God truly is sovereign, and therefore takes responsibility for the good *and the evil* in the world. What made it easier for me to accept this concept was to ask the question, "Would we rather have a God who is in charge of everything and therefore takes responsibility for the good and the evil in the world, or a God that *isn't in control*? Which is preferable?"

I assume that by now you have concluded that there are some sound logical arguments that Scriptural support to at least be able to argue intelligently that a place of endless torment does not exist. But what do we do with the verses like Mark 3:29, where Jesus speaks of "eternal damnation", or Revelation 20:10, where we see that the lake of fire burns "forever and ever?"

The answer I have been taught lies in the original Greek. Take, for example, Matthew 28:20, where in the KJV Jesus is recorded as saying: "...I am always with you, even unto the end of the *world*."

Most newer translations have corrected this error and replaced the word "world" with the correct word "age". This is Strong's Greek #165, "aion", which literally means an age, a period of time.

It is of the utmost importance that this Greek word is the term used in Revelation 20:10, so that in a literal translation, the lake of fire in this verse burns until the "ages of the ages", perhaps a very long period of time, but not "for ever and ever." The error of recording age-related items as "for ever" is oft repeated in the KJ and many other translations, and this is one major reason the doctrine of endless torment persists.

The second crucial point is that each and every time terms like "eternal" and "everlasting" are used in the KJV of the New Testament, Strong's Greek #166 "aionios" is used, which comes from #165 (age), and is the adjective form of this word, meaning "pertaining to the age" (contrary to the definition given in Strong's). So, whenever Jesus and the New Testament authors speak of "eternal" or "everlasting" life or damnation, they are really speaking of life or damnation "pertaining to the age".\*

The whole point is that 1 Corinthians 15: 22-24 says "in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order", so it is not a question of *if* a particular person will be made alive, only which *age* it will take place.

Once the concept of endless torment is challenged, we are left to wonder what happens to someone when they die. Concerning this, I would like to alert you to one passage that plainly states that reincarnation occurs, and another that strongly suggests it.

The first is Matthew 17:10-13, where Jesus says that Elijah came back as John the Baptist. I have shown this passage to several traditional Christians, and most say that this is not what this passage is talking about, but cannot tell me what it means. The more I read it the more I conclude that there is no other way to interpret it. What is your conclusion?

The other passage is Luke 9:18-20, where Peter gave his famous confession that Jesus was the

Christ of God. But before this, Jesus asked the disciples who they thought that He was, and “they said, ‘John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.’”

So there the apostles were, suggesting openly to Jesus that reincarnation occurs, and Jesus didn’t correct them, saying something like ‘oh, that is silly, a man only lives once and never comes back’, but doesn’t comment on it, like their answers were perfectly reasonable!

I am aware that many Christians dismiss reincarnation because of Hebrews 9:27, which says, “And it is appointed unto men once to die, and then the judgement.” But this verse does not preclude reincarnation, because first of all, it doesn’t say what the judgment is (i.e., it doesn’t say the judgment is either heaven or hell), and secondly, why can’t a man love once and be judged, and then come back again as someone else to live once and be judged?

As foreign as this idea is to traditional Christian thought, it is perfectly reasonable once the idea of endless torment is discarded.

Pastor, I am very aware that the information you have just read probably contradicts not only what you have believed your entire life and what you teach your congregation, but attempts to refute what has been one of the basic tenets of Christianity since at least the dark ages, and maybe more.

I am also aware that the belief in eternal hell has created a sense of urgency for missionaries all over the world to do their part in fulfilling the ‘Great Commission’.

Further, I am not ignorant of the fact that God has seen fit to allow the doctrine of endless torment to be an integral part of the spreading of His Word for many centuries, and has worked mightily in countless people that believed this doctrine.

Lastly, I realize that widespread acceptance of the beliefs set forth in this letter may inspire complacency leading to a dramatic decrease in church attendance, and include many people to take the ‘devil may care’ attitude and love according to the flesh, no longer frightened of burning forever. In a worst case scenario, the entire moral fabric of Western civilization could disintegrate, and a collapse similar to what happened in Rome could occur.

But let me propose a different outcome. Suppose that what you have just read is true, and recall that Jesus said, ‘For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed, nor has anything been secret, but that it should come to light.’ (Mark 4:22).

Then this information become known to the masses, regardless of the ferocity of the opposition to it. Now keep in mind that there have been many people over the centuries who despite living in the doctrine of endless torment, have been so anointed that thousands of profound miracles have occurred through their ministries.

Now try to imagine the *power* that some *chosen* people will exhibit when they preach of a God that is indeed *sovereign* and loves so much that no, not one will be permanently lost in His

perfect, infallible plan to have His Christ glorified in humanity (Gal 1:15-16). Just how *anointed* will some of these people be, how much of the power of God will flow through them, and how many people that are hungry for the True God will flock to them?

I often think of Ephesians 3:20, which says that God “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us”, and wonder if now, as we are in the dawning of the Third Day\*\* when the Great Commission is nearly complete and the doctrine of endless torment is no longer needed, if there won't be a new generation of preachers through whom the love and power of God will flow so mightily so as to make the wonders we have seen to date seem paltry.

I can tell you that there are multitudes of Christians out of the congregations that are aware of these Truths and know the Bible at least as well as the most prominent traditional Christians, who are waiting for the opportunity to share this information with the masses. Many are ex-pastors who have lost churches and suffered scorn and humiliation for attempting to convey these Truths to their particular congregation.

So, I leave you with a hypothetical question:

Would you be willing to allow the members of your congregation to see this letter and then deal with the questions that will arise? This is the challenge you face, now that you have read this letter.

In Him,

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\*Surprisingly few Christians know that Jesus defined eternal life in John 17:3, and that this definition has to do with knowing God and Jesus, not living forever:  
“And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou has sent.” (NAS)

\*\*This is the beginning of the third millennium since Jesus, “a thousand years is as a day to the Lord” (2Pet 3:8), and Jesus rose very early in the morning of the Third Day (Luke 24:1 and 24:7).