

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS AND JUST, SO HE MUST PUNISH SIN, THE PUNISHMENT IS DEATH

God is a perfect God. He cannot wrap his perfect arms around my imperfection. God is also just, which means that he cannot let our sin go unpunished. Why not?

EXAMPLE #1:

Suppose a man murdered my spouse. He is caught, goes to trial, and is convicted. There is no doubt that this man is the murderer. Witnesses saw him do it, his fingerprints are all over the murder weapon, he admits to doing it, etc. Suppose in the sentencing phase of the trial, the judge says: "Well, this is only his first murder. And, he has lived a pretty good life otherwise. And, other people have done worse." So, the judge gives no punishment and simply says, "You are free. Don't murder again."

Q. How will I as the victim in this crime feel about this judge?

A. Terrible. He is a bad judge. He is unjust. By his actions, he actually participated in or enabled the crime. God is not like this. He is a perfect judge, who will judge justly. He will punish sins.

EXAMPLE #2:

A man walks into a convenience store with no cash. He picks out some food, shoves it into his coat and walks out. This is his first crime and he is surprised about how easy it is. So, the next day he returns and steals again. Once again, he does not get caught. The man returns a third day, and a fourth, and a fifth, etc. He never is caught. After two weeks of stealing every day, this man has a pang of conscience. He says to himself, "This is wrong. I don't want to do this anymore."

So the following day he returns to the convenience store and finds the owner and admits to him the amount that he has stolen. He then says to the store owner, "I promise that I won't do it again." He then proceeds to try to leave. But will the store owner simply allow the criminal to leave without paying the debt? No, of course not. Feelings of sorrow and a pledge to do better do not alleviate the fact that there is a debt that needs to be paid.

So it is with us and God. Our feelings of sorrow and our pledges to do better don't remove the debt that our past sins have built up. We still owe for our previous crimes. Furthermore, despite all our pledges to the contrary, we will sin again.

WHY DEATH IS THE NATURAL OUTCOME OF SIN:

Suppose we cut a branch away from a tree and then inspected the branch asking whether it was dead or alive. At first, the branch may look very much alive (full of green leaves, pliable, full of sap). However, what will happen to the branch if left for a few weeks or a few months? The leaves will fall off, the sap will run out, the branch will become brittle, and eventually it will be nothing except a dead stick. John 15 reveals that this is exactly what is happening to each of us. Sin separates us from the source of life (God), and so death is the natural outcome of this separation.