

## How Can I Be Held Responsible If I did Not Choose To Be Born?



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Why did God create me and subject me to the possibility of going to hell for not pleasing Him when I never consented to being born? How can He hold me responsible for something in which I did not choose to be involved?

While most people may not have ever thought to ask this question, some have, especially when confronted with the concept of divine judgment and the possibility of going to hell. Notice that the question has in it a tone of hostility towards God. It does not express a regret for having received the amazing gift of life but it resists the inherent accountability to live one's life as the Creator determines is best. The questioner seems to ask why he cannot do as he pleases with impunity. It's as though he actually asks, "Why doesn't God just leave me alone and let me live my life the way I want to?"

### **The question is based on ignorance and selfishness.**

Selfishness is easy to understand. Every person would prefer to have everything his own way all of the time without repercussions. Selfishness is the synonym for sin for it will ultimately result in sin if left unrestrained. Selfishness is not easily remedied because to do so is to limit the self, which smarts.

Ignorance is easily cured with education, *if* a person is open to it. Volition always dominates the human soul and is also linked to selfish motives, which can jeopardize true education. In this post, we will attempt to educate the soul who asks the question that is our present subject.

### **Human understanding about life is limited.**

The question we presented at the outset betrays a very shallow understanding of human life on earth. It represents life as being totally egocentric, as though all that matters is the personal human perspective. That would be fine if the individual was his own Maker or if his origin was otherwise independent of God. But, since human life is granted by a divine Creator, it involves purpose that only God fully understands (Proverbs 20:24; Jeremiah 10:23). Therefore, God's will for the human race and for the individual must be wisely sought and considered by each person (Acts 17:27-28a).

It should be natural for us as intelligent creatures to want to understand our origin and purpose. The twin philosophical questions, "How did I get here?" and "Why am I here?", confront every thinking person. You could say that, from an anthropological standpoint, they are the mother of religion. The philosophical questions, however, do

not tend to surface in the hot pursuit of carnal pleasure. A lower drive prevails in those moments, which doesn't care for religious or philosophical interference.

Fortunately, the Bible reveals the purpose of God in creating human beings and also tells us how to live. It is, as it were, a blueprint by the Architect of life for fulfillment and joy of living (John 15:11; 10:10; 13:17). The commandments of God contain promises related to life's duration and experiences (e.g., Ephesians 6:2; Deuteronomy 28; Psalms 19:7-11; Acts 2:38-39). The Bible's greatest promise relates to eternal life (1John 2:25). That requires the understanding of human probation. Life on earth is actually a test which tries our worthiness to live eternally with God. It is this concept of probation that the questioner chides. But he is so blinded by his sin that he cannot see the massive and gracious opportunity he has to know and live with God blissfully forever.

### **Ignorance of the destructive nature of sin**

Sin can be defined as living amiss from the Creator's design for human life. It is a kind of insanity because it is a temporary defiance of God Himself and will be met with complete and final eradication by God (1John 3:8). There is no future in sin. Therefore, there is no future for the sinner, at least not a promising one. If he does not bow in repentance and submission to God, he will be destroyed in hell. God uses one of two means to put away every person's sin— either the sacrifice of Himself on the cross or eternal punishment in hell.

Even from an earthly perspective, sin is destructive for the individual and others whom he affects. God's revealed purpose for mankind is for our individual and societal good. He withholds no good thing from any person (Psalms 84:11). The only thing He prohibits is that which is harmful to us. Since sin is amiss from God, it is, consequently, harmful— both to the individual and to society as a whole (Proverbs 14:34). For example, family breakdown weakens society. But even one sinner does enormous damage (Ecclesiastes 9:18b). Not only is sin self-destructive but, since no one lives his life separately from others, it negatively affects others as well. This truth is graphically illustrated in the story of Jonah where all the problems at sea to the mariners was due to Jonah. Sin always affects those in close relation to us. How many persons have been heartbroken due to a family member's sin? The questioner of our topic apparently doesn't understand the significance of his behavior, both as relates to himself and to others.

### **The reason God granted us life.**

The questioner fails to grasp the superlative act of human creation. God wanted to share the greatest thing imaginable— personhood, something He alone possessed. He made us eternal, relational beings much like Himself— in fact, in His very image (Genesis 1:26-27). This act of granting personhood is so good and gracious that it is unfathomable. It, perhaps more than anything, shows how generous and unselfish God is. He even went to Calvary to sustain it. Each human life, therefore, is a dramatic expression of the will of God to grant personhood. It involves individual freedom and

self-actualization. Since God made us in His image, He possessed us with abilities and capacities for creativity and every kind of construction. And, being in relation to Him offers meaning and satisfaction to life beyond mere utility (Psalms 16:11).

But, because our lives are derivative, they can only be fully realized in connection to God Himself (John 15:4-7; Acts 17:28). As C.S. Lewis said, God is the only food in the universe. We are sustained by Him and we thrive in Him. His Word, by which we are bound to Him, is described by James as the perfect law of liberty. Not only does it liberate those who obey it, but pours blessing upon them (James 1:25).

Our lives are so integrated with God that hell itself is a kind of compliment. It shows that God did not create us for any reason but for Himself (Colossians 1:16). He said He loves us jealously (Deuteronomy 4:23-24; 6:14-15) and hell confirms it.

### **The law of the eternal fitness of things.**

But, what about the reference in our topic question to our not being involved in God's decision to make us?

Granted, creation of a human being is a very serious thing. It produces a personality and soul that will live forever somewhere. If every person eventually or automatically went to heaven, there would be no controversy about God creating us apart from our consent, for no one would eternally suffer. But, in the present state of affairs, one of the places of eternal abode is hell, in which case, as acknowledged by Jesus, it would have been better for the persons going there to have not been born (Matthew 26:24). That fact prompts the question, "Was God justified in creating us without our permission when such an awful possibility exists?"

I believe the answer to that question takes the following form:

The Bible reveals a truth with which surely no one would squabble. There is no law against doing good (Galatians 5:23b). God could, therefore, not be impugned for sharing life and personhood. It is personal, specific and all encompassing. Nothing more exciting or dramatic exists! It is also coupled with living in His presence, which is surpassingly wonderful and is that for which we long (1Peter 1:7-9). It is the greatest of all imaginable gifts. And, it was unattainable apart from creation. Therefore, God was justified in creating human life because what He gave us is supremely good and gracious. And, it is never wrong to be good and gracious. It was eternally fit for God to do so and many will forever praise Him for it. May we all strive to be in that number.

### **But, inherent in creating intelligent life with free will is the possibility of rebellion against God, which results in eternal condemnation in hell.**

From this chain of reasoning involving free will, someone may charge that God exposed the people He created to the possibility of hell. We cannot deny that. But, if the consequence of hell is the result of free will, that proves it is a choice, and not coercion. No one has to choose it. And though sin is inevitable to fallen creatures,

they are still not without hope in escaping hell. Jesus came to earth to cancel the condemnation of hell to those who will believe the Gospel and obey the plan of salvation. By going to the cross, Jesus literally took our hell. After Calvary, no one can blame anyone but himself for going to hell for he effectually chooses it for himself if he rejects or neglects the great salvation Jesus purchased for him (Hebrews 2:3). Those who go to hell do so in spite of Calvary. Choosing our eternal destination is what makes free will the most serious endowment we possess.

### **Should God, in view of faulty human choice, have decided against creating human beings?**

God graciously chose to create human beings, for which many will be eternally grateful. But some would argue that, because so many people would be lost (Matthew 7:13-14), God should have aborted His mission to create our race. That choice, by the way, would have eliminated the possibility of all the righteous people from the foundation of the world being able to enjoy their God. The wicked, who refuse to live God's way, would have prevailed against all those who want God and love God. It would have been an incalculable injustice to allow the wicked to deprive the righteous of their eternal good. God, in His wisdom, apparently judged that the eternal suffering of the damned should not preclude the eternal joy of the redeemed that He had planned for them (1Corinthians 2:9; Ephesians 2:7). Had God, on the basis of keeping the ungodly from a possible hell, refrained from the creation of mankind, the plan of God regarding His image-bearing creature would have been thwarted. Sin would have, effectually, conquered God. It would not have been appropriate that the wicked should so overrule the grace and sovereignty of God.

The precedent for such a decision by God was in the creation of the angels. God foreknew that about a third of them, if we interpret the Scriptures correctly (Revelation 12:3-4), would be eternally lost and suffer the torment of eternal punishment (Matthew 8:29; Jude 6). Even though this reality loomed, God chose to proceed with the creation of angels for His glory and for the good of those who would choose well and enjoy the life God gave them.

### **No human being has to be lost.**

While the lost state of man is inherited from Adam and Eve, it doesn't have to be our end. God has arranged for every person to be converted. Each covenant and dispensation of God throughout redemptive history was graciously designed for the salvation of our race. Creating mankind with free will did expose every person to the possibility of hell. But God covered that possibility to the extent that no person needed to be lost. He brought redemption (Genesis 3:15). In doing so, Jesus assumed, not the guilt, but the punishment of every person's sins. In the face of redemption, no one should be lost. In fact, every person who will be lost will be so by a deliberate choice of sin over salvation.

**The profound human role in the creation of fellow humans.**

I think the topic question, “How can I be held responsible if I didn’t ask to be born?”, is to be more directly raised to our parents, who knew full well of the process of procreation and were more directly responsible for bringing us into the world than even God. Indeed, God created the potential for the mass of humanity but the actual proliferation of mankind has been through procreation, which is the free choice of human beings (Genesis 1:26). We choose to bring other human beings into the world. Humans, therefore, are responsible for creating humans. The hostile questioner of our topic should more appropriately ask his parents why they brought him into the world. But I think few parents have ever been asked this question.

And not only did our parents bring us into the world but they, in most cases, held us accountable to their teaching, scolding and disciplining us when necessary. And, all of this was for our good, whether we liked it or not at the time. But, as we mature, we tend to look back and give them honor for it (Hebrews 12:9). If our parents held us to a family and societal code of manners and ethics, how much more should God have the right to tell us how to live when the plan for the human race was His Own.

**Most people are in agreement with God’s decision to create human life.**

The fact that most people by far choose to live out their lives and die naturally, most of whom also bring children into the world, testifies to the goodness and righteousness of God in creating our original parents with the potential of populating the world. It glorifies God in granting life to our race. Even after the Fall, Adam and Eve choose to bring human life into the world. And, though we all know life in a fallen world is hard and presents many challenges (John 16:33), yet the world continues to increase in population, bearing witness to the fact that most human beings consider life, as conceived by God, as good. And who doesn’t get excited when another child is born?

**Life is all about choices.**

We stated at the outset that the hostile questioner was really asking, “Why doesn’t God just leave me alone and let me live my life the way I want to?” How many teenagers have thought the same thing of their parents? But it’s not likely to happen because the parents love them too much. And, what’s really interesting is that those same teenagers, often within a period of only a few years, themselves bring children into the world and begin to assume the same caring roles as their parents! If loving parents are not inclined to overlook proper instruction and discipline of a child, how can it be expected that God will?

But, on a deeper level, that question about being left alone by God involves a choice—a choice to be rid of God. And that is more or less what hell is— a place where God is not. When a person rejects God, he rejects all the mercy and grace of God, though he may never think the process through. He may think he can reject God and still have all the provisions of God, dispensing only with His frown and justice. The person therein reveals his ignorance. Hell is a place devoid of the gracious provisions of God. His

perfect justice is all that is present there. Hence, the choice to be rid of God is a choice for hell itself.

**The greatest privilege of man is to know his God.**

Why would a person not want to know his Creator? Why would he not want to know his parents? In both cases, he can expect to experience love and kindness, especially in the case of knowing God (Psalms 40:5; 27:10).