

Jen Hatmaker Rejects Belief in Hell

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Hatmaker claims doing so 'rescued' her belief in God



YouTube/Jen Hatmaker

Hatmaker, a prominent progressive Christian influencer and bestselling author who quit attending church last year, now says she no longer believes in Hell.

In an essay posted on her Substack last week, titled “There You Are. Laying down my belief in hell didn’t cost me my faith — it rescued it,” Hatmaker wrote about her Christian upbringing and growing up believing Hell existed.

"From my first memory, all my ideas about God were tied to punishment," she wrote. "God was offended. God was punitive. God was vengeful. I was terrorized by an arbitrary, blood-thirsty God. We all were."

Hatmaker wrote that after a lengthy period of theological reflection, she had “quietly laid down my belief in a literal hell, and it is the best thing that ever happened to me.”

She described the process as spanning “a couple of years of investigation,” including formative conversations with fellow Christians, among them a lunch conversation roughly a decade ago with a friend she described as “verrrryyyyy prominent in evangelicalism.”

The Wright Report

“Rather than the crushing fear you might think I’d experience, I felt ten million pounds roll immediately off my shoulders. My head and heart came back into alignment, and my belief in God was rescued,” she wrote.

“Now love made sense. Everything about God made sense. I was no longer trying to maintain allegiance to a tyrant who willingly sent most of the world he created to an eternal fiery torment.”

2

Hatmaker asked what “if instead of assigning the darkest, cruelest, most murderous human traits to God, we understood he was the absolute best of every good trait times a million?”

She claimed that a faith without Hell is “purged of judgment, since we no longer get to be excited about sneering at people from heaven while they scream and burn and saying AMEN.”

“Self-importance and self-righteousness don’t make sense anymore,” she continued. “We’d have to purge our faith instruction of fear and shame-based threats. We could finally hang up our very embarrassing tools of evangelizing and proselytizing, and just be good, normal neighbors.”

While drawing this theological conclusion, Hatmaker wrote that she “won’t go into the scholarship, which is massive, or the exegesis, which is thorough and serious,” nor was she going to “list the endless theologians who have interpreted the few scriptures on ‘hell’ through a rigorous cultural and linguistic lens and come to a totally different conclusion.”

In Christian theology, Hell is the place where people who do not accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior go to after they die, to be eternally separated from God.

In an entry about the subject, the apologetics website [Got Questions](https://www.gotquestions.org) noted that the Bible “explicitly teaches that hell is a real place to which the wicked/unbelieving are sent after death” and that “reality of hell was taught by Jesus.”

“The punishment of the wicked in hell is as never-ending as the bliss of the righteous in heaven. Jesus Himself indicates that punishment in hell is just as everlasting as life in heaven (Matthew 25:46),” explained the site.

Got Questions quoted noted pastor and theologian Alistair Begg: “Is Jesus Christ true in what He says? And if we start from that premise, then we simply can’t excise the hard parts out of it. We’ve got to take him at his word. So that the most loving person who has ever lived spoke so straightforwardly about the awfulness of hell.”

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Hatmaker first garnered controversy in Evangelical circles in 2016, when she expressed support for legalizing same-sex marriage. In response to the outcry, Lifeway stopped selling her books.

In 2020, Hatmaker announced that she and her husband, Brandon, were divorcing after 26 years of marriage. This was reportedly in response to her discovering infidelity on his part.

Last September, *Time* magazine published an interview with the popular social media influencer ahead of the release of her latest book in which she acknowledged that she had quit going to church.

“I’m out of the church right now. I don’t know that I will ever go back, and I don’t know that I will never go back,” Hatmaker said. “My lifelong exposure has left me in a place where I know too much. I have been a part of the problem. So I need a break from the machine.”

Michael Gryboski has been a reporter with *The Christian Post* since 2011. He covers politics, church and ministries, court cases, and other issues. He has written extensively on issues like litigation over conservative congregations leaving The Episcopal Church, the longstanding debate within the United Methodist Church over homosexuality, court cases on various social issues, and the evangelical community.

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<https://www.christianpost.com/news/jen-hatmaker-no-longer-believes-in-hell.html>

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