

Letters From a Skeptic
Lesson 11: Eternal Separation from God

“There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12



“He is a fair and just God. People don’t go to hell ‘by accident.’”

Correspondence 24: “Do all non-Christians go to Hell?”

Father <pp. 188-189>

1. *“People will believe in other books so long as it’s part of their upbringing and culture”*
2. *“These are the sorts of things heaven and hell hang on”*
3. *“How can heathen children go to hell just because they weren’t born into a Christian home?”*
4. *“I have always found the Christian doctrine of hell, and the belief that all non-believers are going there, to be one of the most ludicrous aspects aspect of the entire religion”*
5. *“Maybe you can straighten out some of this”*

Son <pp. 189-193> (to save time, touch on important points rather quickly)

1. *“There is a lot of disagreement...So if you’re looking for absolute certainty in resolving the issue, you’re probably going to be disappointed”*
2. *“Work from the known to the unknown”*
3. *“[the Bible may] transcend my own rationality”*
4. *“[we] have to trust that God will do the wise and just thing”*
5. *God is revealed in Christ. However God may appear at time, He cannot be other than He is in Jesus Christ*
6. *“There is no salvation outside Jesus Christ” (see Acts 4:12 above)*
7. *“some people who did not know Jesus personally or consciously, but who were nevertheless saved”*
8. *“He is a fair and just God. People don’t go to hell ‘by accident’”*
9. *“Your only concern should be that you are not among those who reject Christ of their own free will”*
10. *“Let hell be God’s problem, not your problem.”*

Correspondence 25: “How could an all-loving God torture people in an eternal hell?”

Father <pp. 194-195>

1. *“What is the purpose of punishing someone eternally?”*
2. *“So this is sheer vengeance, pure retribution, unadulterated anger, with no motive other than pure divine delight of inflicting horrifying pain on a person!”*

3. *"I don't see how heaven can go as heaven while hell is burning down below. Think what it would be like if one of your kids didn't 'make it'"*
4. *"The character of God is on trial in my life, and this is very relevant evidence which needs to be considered"*

Son <pp. 196-201>

1. *"I believe even when I don't understand"*
"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." -Heb 11:1
2. *"Hardly anyone takes all the talk about hell being a place of fire and brimstone literally"*
3. *"Hell is a very bad place. [It's] everything which is opposite of what God wants for humanity"*
4. *"People put themselves in hell"*
5. *"It's where they want themselves to be, not where God wants them to be"*
6. *"If hell is eternally locked, it's locked from the inside"*
7. *"The punishment is 'eternal' because it has eternal effects, not because it is endured eternally"*
"they... shall be as though they had not been." -Obadiah 16
8. *"In this view, God's judgment and mercy converge on the same act"*
9. *"This position... would not place you outside of a Bible-believing faith. It is, I believe, a viable option"*
10. *"The most important thing about hell, Dad, is not in understanding it or explaining it: it's to avoid it!"*

Homework: Read Correspondence 26.