

New City Catechism Class

Week 28

Q28: What happens after death to those not united to Christ by faith?

A28: At the Day of Judgment they will receive the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them. They will be cast out from the favorable presence of God, into hell, to be justly and grievously punished, forever.

John 3:16–18, 36

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. . . . Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Discuss the question:

- What kind of a responses would you expect if you asked this question in various contexts (at work, school, with extended family)?
- What are some common objections to the Biblical teaching of hell being a real, conscious, eternal punishment?
- Why is this such a difficult topic for many?
- How is this question essential to the gospel?
- What is significant about the phrase “those not united to Christ by faith? (Matt 7:21-23)

Discuss the Scripture:

- What was God’s motivation for sending His only Son (vs 16)? ...
- In what way does God love the world in this text?
- Why is John 3:16 so well-known and so popular, even among those who may not be believers?
- Why didn’t God send Jesus to condemn the world?
- In what way is the world already condemned? (vs 17-18)
- Why is believing in the name of the only Son of God the only way to escape condemnation?
- Looking at vs 36, what is the connection between obedience and believing?

Discuss the answer in light of the Scripture:

- What is “The Day of Judgment”? (Rev 20:11-15)
- How is eternal punishment a “just sentence” for not believing in Christ?
- What’s significant about being cast from the presence of God? Will there be some sort of freedom or liberation in an autonomous existence without God?
- How does the reality of Hell help us understand the significance cross?
- How is a real, literal hell evidence of God’s love?