

## WEEK 11: “How could a loving God send people to Hell?”


[ WARM-UP ]

[ READ ]

Mark 9:42-50

[ EXAMINE ] Mitigations of Hell (Erroneous Views):



1. **Universalism:** All people are eventually saved
  - *“And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.... Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ” (Matt. 25:33,41).*
2. **Annihilationism:** Unsaved souls are eventually totally destroyed
  - *“These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt. 25:46).*
3. **Free Will / Self-Imposed:**
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*C. S. Lewis*
  - “The doors of hell are locked on the inside.”<sup>1</sup>*
  - “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell, choose it.”<sup>2</sup>*
  - *“You brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?” (Matt. 22:13).*
4. **Mere Metaphor:** Hell is just a symbol.
  - *“The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:49).*

[ THINK ] Objections:

- Q: How is it right that a person cannot repent and be saved after he dies? (*Rev. 16:11,21*)
- Q: How is it right that a person’s earthly lifetime merits eternal punishment? (*Isa. 30:1*)
- Q: How is it right that all the unsaved receive the same punishment? (*Luke 10:12*)
- Q: How is it right that Hell even exists at all? (*Rev. 18:20—19:3*)

### TAKEAWAYS:

- Because Hell is a hard truth, some try to soften it, but Jesus says the heaviest things about it.
- Hell is about punishment (not rehabilitation) as hardened hearts eternally grow harder.
- The Bible views God’s Love and Justice as harmonious, not as a problem to be reconciled.

**Next week:** Cultivating fruitful conversations (no chapter)

<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 130 (chapter 8).

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 75 (chapter 9).