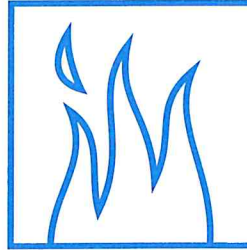


## Question 28

---

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



## Answer

---

They will be cast out from the presence of God, into hell, to be justly punished, forever.

### Big Idea

Eternal separation and punishment will be the everlasting reality for those who are not united to Christ by faith.

### Aim

To help the children understand that those who are not united to Christ by faith will perish eternally.

### Bible Passage

John 3:16–18, 36

### Memory Verse

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Virtue  
Honesty



## Notes

## Leader's Notes

This is a difficult topic to broach with children. The lesson must be taught in a way that clearly communicates God's Word but recognizes that the doctrine of hell is particularly unnerving to consider. It must be taught, however, because eternity is at stake, and if children aren't directly taught what the Bible teaches, they will default to what the culture around us believes. Because this is a difficult doctrine to teach to children, many people shy away from it, preferring to leave it until the children are older. That is a mistake because children who fail to understand what happens to those who are not united to Christ will have a lesser understanding of the glorious gospel of God's saving grace. Children must clearly understand what they have been saved from and for.

**Things to remember when planning and teaching:**

- This lesson has the potential to be scary for the children. Be aware of the

language that you use and your tone of voice as you teach these difficult truths.

- Be aware that for some children this lesson may have a very personal effect, particularly if they have non-Christian family members or friends.
- Help the children to consider carefully how to communicate the gospel message with urgency, but also with gentleness.
- Adults as well as children wrestle with this doctrine. If you are troubled by it, take some time to read through the commentary on [Question 28](#) at [www.newcitycatechism.com](http://www.newcitycatechism.com).
- Remember to mix and match the activities in the lesson to fit your time frame (see p. 12 for some sample outlines). You won't have time to do them all. Feel free to adapt each activity based on your class's strengths and weaknesses.

---

**Leader's Prayer**

Loving God, thank you that your great love caused you to send your precious Son to die on the cross in my place. I praise you that I am united to him and may have joy and confidence in my salvation, and I look forward to eternity in your presence. Grant understanding to the children who will

hear this lesson; may they be struck by how awful perishing apart from you is, but may they not be unnecessarily frightened or concerned. Let them carry from this lesson great confidence in your power to save. In Jesus's name. Amen.



### Leader's Tool Kit

- Whiteboard and whiteboard marker
- Some depictions of hell:
  - The Nether in Minecraft
  - Hell as depicted in the TV series *The Simpsons*
- A diagram of the circles of hell in Dante's *Inferno*
- Q28 Code Buster (RB), one per child
- Pencils
- A blank jigsaw puzzle and a marker

### 10 Catechism Recap

*You will need a whiteboard and two whiteboard makers and a copy of the catechism questions and answers.*

Divide the children into two teams and line each team up facing the whiteboard. Explain to the children that this is a head-to-head challenge! The children should come to the whiteboard in pairs; the first children from each team, followed by the second children from each team, etc.

Read a catechism question out to the children. Tell them that the first to write the number associated with the question on the whiteboard wins a point for their team. Give that child a chance to say the answer. If he gets the answer right, he gets another point for his team. If he can't remember it, the child from the other team can answer for one point. Play until every child has had a turn going head-to-head to guess the correct number and answer to a question.

### 5 Introduction to Question 28

*You will need some pictures that show common depictions of hell.*

Show the children several ways that hell has been popularly depicted:

- The Nether in Minecraft
- Hell as depicted in the TV series *The Simpsons*
- A diagram of the circles of hell in Dante's *Inferno*

Explain to the children that in the world, many people don't take God or the Bible seriously. Tell the children that, sadly, that means they don't understand the reality of life separated from God. They get their idea of hell from cartoons rather than from the Bible.

Introduce the children to Question 28: "What happens after death to those not united to Christ by faith?" Explain that everyone who is in Christ experiences one

thing after death and everyone who is still in Adam because he or she has not believed the gospel experiences something different.

Tell the children that this question will help them to consider the fate for those who are not united to Christ by faith.

10

### Activity



*Have a copy of the Q28 Code Buster (RB) worksheet for each child.*

Ask the children to decode some of the key verses where Jesus speaks about the fate of those who are not united to him. When they have finished, ask three children to read out the three different verses. Answers:

- “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matt. 10:28)
- “While the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In

that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. 8:12)

- “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. 22:13)

Explain to the children that instead of looking to the world to find out what life apart from God is like, it is important to look to Jesus and his words in the Bible. Read through each verse and observe that Jesus teaches that there is a place called hell and that is where those who are not united to Christ go.

15

### Teaching Outline

Begin the teaching time by asking for God’s help. Ask that the lesson would be taught faithfully and that the children might listen well.

**Read John 3:16–18, 36.** Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Ask the children to begin by looking at these verses. Have them consider what they teach about God. Draw out the following points for the children:

- God is loving.
- God gave his precious Son up to death on the cross because he loved the world.
- God will give his people eternal life.

Ask the children what this passage says will happen to those who do not believe in Jesus—who are not united to Christ by faith.

- Explain to the children that verse 16 says all who are not united to Christ will perish.



- Verse 18 says that those who will perish are those who are condemned. They are condemned because of their sin, their rebellion against God, and their rejection of God's laws. They are people who will be judged by God and face the just punishment of God.

Tell the children that in the Bible, *perishing* does not mean that you cease existing, but that you exist in eternal separation from God.

Explain to the children that many people live as if God doesn't exist. They ignore him and fail to acknowledge the many blessings that he provides to everyone on earth. They are blind to the fact that God's presence and grace are blessing them and that he is also holding back and restraining evil.

Explain to the children that in eternity, people who have lived as if God doesn't exist will be separated from him forever.

The main thing that characterizes hell isn't flames or devils. It is separation from God. We can't really imagine what that would be like, but it is the worst thing that could ever happen to someone.

Conclude by confirming for the children that hell is a real place! Share that even though people have come up with various pictorial representations of hell, no one can truly comprehend what it is like. Remind the children that God doesn't want people to perish (2 Pet. 3:9), which is why he sent his Son to save us.

**Conclude the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 28 and the answer to memory.**

*(These notes are just for guidance. Please expand or amend them to suit your own children and context. Write out your talk in your own words and include illustrations and applications that you know will connect with your children.)*

## Notes

---

### Activity

*Have the children turn to Luke 16:19–31 in their Bibles.*

Read the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to the children. Divide them into small groups and help them to create a short drama to retell the story.

Ask the children what they observe from this parable that Jesus taught.



- Heaven and hell are real places.
- It is not possible to move between heaven and hell.

Allow some of the children to perform their dramas for the group.



## Discussion and Question Time

Some questions that might arise include:

### ? How do I know if I'm going to heaven?

Explain to the children that if they believe in God and trust in Jesus for redemption, they need not fear. Reassure them that God will not let his children go.

### ? What about those who have never had a chance to hear about Jesus?

Tell the children that this is a good question, and there are a number of things to consider. First of all, God is just and fair. He will not do something wrong, and so he can be trusted to make the right decision about every person's salvation. Second, the Bible tells us that while God's Word is the most important place to learn about God and Jesus, creation also reveals the reality and existence of God. Finally, encourage the children by highlighting that God is kindly providing time for Christians to go and explain the good news about Jesus far and wide.

### ? If God doesn't want people to perish, why didn't he elect everyone?

Affirm that this is a good question, but not one that we know the answer to. The Bible clearly teaches that God is just and loving. While it may seem like a good idea to us for God to elect everyone, God's ways are higher than our ways, and we cannot fully understand his purposes. We have to trust that they are good and that one day we will understand.

Also use this opportunity to help the children to think about their own lives and how this question and answer affects them personally.

- Help the children to have a big view of God. Remind them that he is good, trustworthy, and in control.
- Ask the children if this lesson makes them want to tell people about Jesus. Ask them if they would consider going to places and people who haven't yet heard about Jesus.



## Virtue Vision

### Honesty

Acknowledge to the children that they all know God expects us to be honest. They will remember that the ninth commandment teaches not to lie. But ask them if God expects us to be honest *with him*. Explain to

the children that God loves and demands honesty from his children. Remind the children that God sees our hearts, so we couldn't hide anything from him if we tried!

Help the children to consider what it is to be honest with God in light of this lesson.





Psalm 62:8 says, “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.” If any of the children have found today’s lesson troubling, the best thing

they can do is pour out their hearts to God in honesty. They can tell him if they feel scared or they don’t understand. They can be honest with their parents and teachers about it too.

## Notes

---

### 10 Memory Activity

*Write the memory verse or catechism question and answer on the blank jigsaw puzzle.*

Give the children the puzzle and ask them to put it together to reveal the memory verse or catechism question and answer.

Read the verse through with the children several times. Slowly remove pieces of the puzzle and see if the children can remember the verse or question and answer. Continue removing pieces until the puzzle is fully broken up.

### 5 Closing Prayer Time

Pray that the children may know God’s great love and trust him. Pray that they might be eager to tell others about Jesus so that none might perish.

