



Serving the Truth in a Love Sandwich

Heaven & Hell

Our Eternal Destiny

1st Peter 3:15 "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

This series of courses is about answering difficult questions about Christianity. As disciples of Jesus Christ we have a responsibility to be prepared to defend our faith. We are *not* going to study what Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists etc. believe. We are going to study the truth, not lies, except for a few of their questions, which often have lies as their basis. I hope as we go through these lessons you will create your own personal statement of faith, so you will have a clear idea of what you are defending.

However, as we study, remember God's truth is spread more heart to heart than mind to mind. Since we have minds they must also be included in the communication, but never forget to serve the truth in a love sandwich.

In this course we hope to show that both the saved and the lost will someday be resurrected; the saved to literal everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, and the lost to judgment and literal everlasting punishment.

Lesson 1 – Is There More Than One Heaven?

Lesson 2 – The Kingdom of Heaven

Lesson 3 – Father and Son in Heaven

Lesson 4 – The Nature of Hell

Lesson 5 – The Residents of Hell



Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's text aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer if it is based on Scripture.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. The final "Think & Pray" question should always be covered, because that is when everyone takes a quiet moment to listen to the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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Additional Reading

These lessons are designed for small groups or individuals to use without reference to other materials besides the Bible. However, a lot more could be gained if those involved would do some additional reading between class meetings. (See <http://lovebiblestudy.com/CC/Library.htm>)

We plan to provide specific recommendations with each course at <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Adjunct/> We also hope to be making specific chapter recommendations from various Christian books that have helped us in our understanding of apologetics, but are not entirely about the topic of the course. Such as these books which would make good companions for this entire series of courses.

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek

The Case for ... series of books by Lee Strobel

Cold Case Christianity, God's Crime Scene, and Forensic Faith – 3 books by J. Warner Wallace

Heaven and Hell, Our Eternal Destiny

Introduction: What do you believe about heaven and hell?

Lesson 1 – Is There More Than One Heaven?

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(1A) Genesis 2:1 Is there more than one heaven? _____

(1B) Genesis 1:14-17 Where did God put the sun, moon, and stars? _____

(1C) Genesis 1:20 Where did God place the birds? _____

(1D) Genesis 7:11 Where did the rain come from? _____

(1E) 1 Samuel 2:10 What comes out of heaven? _____

(1F) Psalm 78:26 Where does the wind blow? _____

(1G) Deuteronomy 26:15 God looks down from _____

(1H) 2 Chronicles 6:21 Heaven is called what? _____

(1I) Job 22:12 Where is God found? _____

(1J) So there is an atmospheric heaven, an astronomical heaven, and Heaven, God's home So what?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[1k] Malachi 3:10 says blessings pour out of the windows or floodgates of heaven. Which of the three heavens does it mean here? How do you know?

[1L] What is the only thing in Heaven made with human hands? (First try to answer it without these hints: Ps 22:16, John 20:24-29, Gal 6:17, Is 53:5)

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

(Introduction) We believe both the saved and the lost will someday be resurrected; the saved to literal everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, and the lost to judgment and literal everlasting punishment.

Lesson 1 – Is There More Than One Heaven? Yes.

(1A) Genesis 2:1 Is there more than one heaven? Yes, most versions say heavens here.

(1B) Genesis 1:14-17 Where did God put the sun, moon, and stars? heaven or sky

(1C) Genesis 1:20 Where did God place the birds? heaven

(1D) Genesis 7:11 Where did the rain come from?

Heaven, heavens (some versions translate it “sky”)

(1E) 1 Samuel 2:10 What comes out of heaven? God’s thunder

(1F) Psalm 78:26 Where does the wind blow? In heaven or the heavens

(1G) Deuteronomy 26:15 God looks down from

His Holy habitation or Holy dwelling place in Heaven

(1H) 2 Chronicles 6:21 Heaven is called what? The Lord’s dwelling place.

(1I) Job 22:12 Where is God found? High in heaven

(1J) So there is an atmospheric heaven, an astronomical heaven, and Heaven, God's home. So what?

Different Christian churches believe various things about Heaven. The reason might be because the word as it is used in the Bible can mean more than one thing. Much as the word light can mean the rays that allow us to see, the fixture that we turn on to make something more visible, something that is not heavy, or a food with few calories, the word heaven has more than one meaning depending on how it is used. Heaven can mean the atmosphere, the sky, the area of the universe where the sun, stars, and other planets are found, the kingdom of God, the place where God resides, a special place prepared for us to enjoy after we die, or the spiritual universe that exists beyond this physical one. To make things more interesting, often other words are used that apparently refer to one of these ideas like “paradise” or “eternal reward.” The word "heaven" appears over 700 times in the Bible.

Someone asked a man if he wanted to go to Heaven.

He said, "No, thanks!"

"But why?" he was asked. "Would you rather go to Hell when you die?"

He answered, "Oh! When I *die*. Yes, I want to go to heaven when I die. I thought you were trying to get up a bus load to go to heaven right now."

My further thoughts:

[1k] I think it means all three. Clearly the spiritual blessings in our life come from the spiritual heaven. But we are also blessed by the beauty of the sky, both day and night. We are also blessed by the falling rain which makes crops grow and feeds us. And the stars can keep the knowledgeable from losing their way because they can be used for navigation.

[1L] Jesus’s scars. Interesting question: We know Jesus still had his scars because of passages like John 20:26-29 where Thomas is made to notice them and invited to touch them. The question is, why is Thomas invited to touch Jesus but right before that in John 20:17, Jesus won't let Mary touch Him. Why is Jesus untouchable and then touchable?

Lesson 2 – The Kingdom of Heaven

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(2A) Genesis 21:17 Where was God's messenger speaking from? _____

(2B) Daniel 4:13 What came down from heaven? _____

(2C) Luke 2:15 Where did the angels go? _____

(2D) Matthew 3:1-2. How did John the Baptist say to prepare for the kingdom of heaven? _____

(2E) Matthew 18:10 Who always sees the face of God in heaven? _____

(2F) Which of the three heavens - atmosphere, sky, or the dwelling place of God, is the home of angels? How do you know?

Think & Pray _____

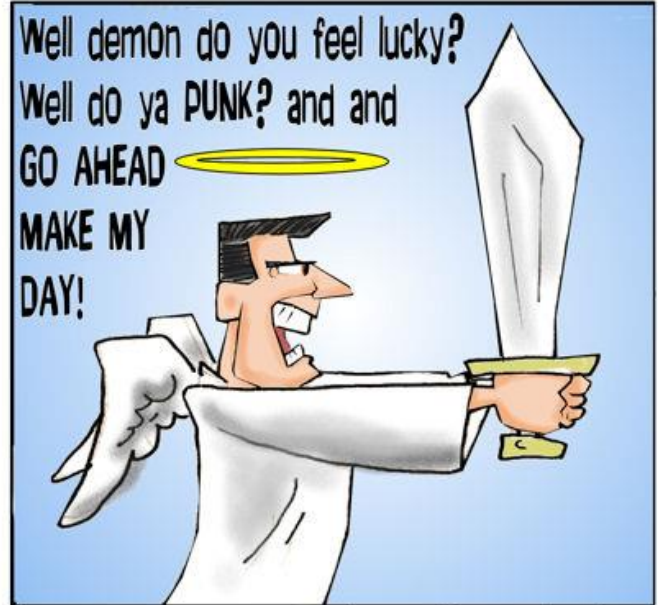
(2G) Which of the three heavens atmosphere, sky, or the dwelling place of God, is the same as the Kingdom of Heaven? Or is it a fourth kind of heaven? How do you know?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[2h] *Atheist Attack:* "Heaven is not Perfect. Revelation 12:7 There was WAR in Heaven. What? No! How can that be? Surprised? If there is war in Heaven, what other horrors does Heaven hold? How can you explain that God is truly in control? How can you explain God's lack of popularity in Heaven? Revelation 19:14 "The armies which were in Heaven..." The US army I was in was designed for fighting, destroying, killing and dying. If you fight and die in God's army in Heaven, where do you go from there?" How would you answer this attack? (Hints: Rev 21:4, Rev 22:12).

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



It was becoming obvious that Joe the Guardian Angel had been watching too many Dirty Harry movies.. AGAIN!

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 2 – The Kingdom of Heaven

(2A) Genesis 21:17 Where was God's messenger speaking from? Heaven

(2B) Daniel 4:13 What came down from heaven? Holy one, angelic watcher, or messenger

(2C) Luke 2:15 Where did the angels go? to heaven

(2D) Matthew 3:1-2 How did John the Baptist say to prepare for the kingdom of heaven? Repent

(2E) Matthew 18:10 Who always sees the face of God in heaven? Angels of little ones

(2F) Matthew 18:10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven." What are the angels doing in heaven? Looking at or beholding God's face. God shares His home with the angels.

(2G) Matthew 8:11 "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Unless you think Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are floating in the sky someplace, the kingdom of heaven must mean God's home. 1 Peter 1:3-4. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you," This doesn't sound like the atmosphere or outer space to me.

My further thoughts:

[2h] He was arguing with his own misinterpretation. He was also very annoying and condescending with his multiple presumptuous questions, and I did not respond well. I believe it might have been better if I had responded like this: You have raised many questions about heaven. Please be patient with me while I try to answer them all for you.

You said, "Heaven is not Perfect. Revelation 12:7 There was WAR in Heaven. What? No! How can that be? Surprised?" No, I am not surprised because I can't find any place where the Bible says that Heaven is perfect. I've read about the war in heaven before.

You asked, "If there is war in Heaven, what other horrors does Heaven hold?" The war was to rid Heaven of the horrors, so I would say the answer to your question is "none."

You asked, "How can you explain that God is truly in control?" This is the question about God's sovereignty and man's free will that we have discussed at length elsewhere. However, if you like we can go over it again?

You asked, "How can you explain God's lack of popularity in Heaven?" Everyone remaining in Heaven worships Him, so I guess I don't really understand your question. If you were referring to Satan's rebellion, the cause of it was Satan's pride. It was not a failing in God.

You said "Revelation 19:14 'The armies which were in Heaven...' The US army I was in was designed for fighting, destroying, killing and dying. If you fight and die in God's army in Heaven, where do you go from there?" My son is in the army. I like to think it was designed for fighting, winning, surviving and victory. However, that doesn't change the point you were making. I don't think anyone dies in God's army. There are no reports of any deaths in God's army except for the King, Jesus Christ, and he came back to life.

The Bible makes no claim that Heaven has always been trouble free. It only claims that it will be a good place to be for us in the future. I hope you will accept Jesus' invitation to be a part of it. I like what Rev 21:4 says about heaven: "And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Lesson 3 – Father and Son in Heaven

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(3A) Genesis 1:1 Who created heaven (or the heavens)? _____

(3B) Exodus 20:22 Where did God say He spoke from? _____

(3C) Ecclesiastes 5:2 Where is God? _____

(3D) Jeremiah 23:24 What does God fill? _____

(3E) Matthew 26:64 How is the Son of Man going to come? _____

(3F) John 1:32 When Jesus was baptized what came down to Him from heaven? _____

(3G) Acts 22:6 What did Paul see coming from heaven on the road to Damascus? _____

(3H) John 17:1 When Jesus was talking to God the Father where did He look? _____

(3I) Philippians 2:10 What is going to happen in both heaven and earth? _____

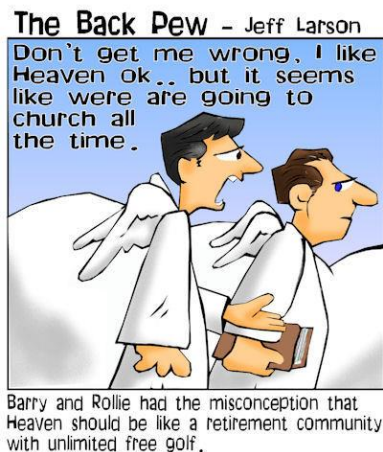
(3J) Which of the various truths about Heaven mentioned in the Bible is it necessary for someone to believe in order for them to be saved? Why do you say that?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[3k] *Atheist Attack:* “There is inequality in Heaven. Matthew 11:11 Jesus said: He that is least in Heaven is greater than He. What? Is there discrimination, inequality, rank or a cast system in Heaven? What do you truly know about Heaven? What do you believe about Heaven? Is what you claim to know and what you claim to believe about Heaven vastly different? Can you spell hypocrisy?” How would you answer this attack? (Hint 1st Cor 3:8-15, Heb 8:12)

[3l] What do look forward to most in eternity?



----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 3 – Father and Son in Heaven

- (3A) Genesis 1:1 Who created heaven (or the heavens)? God
(3B) Exodus 20:22 Where did God say He spoke from? Heaven
(3C) Ecclesiastes 5:2 Where is God? In heaven
(3D) Jeremiah 23:24 What does God fill? The heavens and the earth (All three kinds of heaven.)
(3E) Matthew 26:64 How is the Son of Man going to come? The clouds of Heaven
(3F) John 1:32 When Jesus was baptized what came down to Him from heaven? The Spirit
(3G) Acts 22:6 What did Paul see coming from heaven on the road to Damascus?
A bright light which later turned out to be Jesus.
(3H) John 17:1 When Jesus was talking to God the Father where did He look? Up towards heaven
(3I) Philippians 2:10 What is going to happen in both heaven and earth? Every knee will bow to Jesus.
(3J) None. Belief in heaven is not required for salvation. It is Jesus that we must trust in, not heaven. Of course, as new believers grow in the Lord, they will learn more about heaven. They may even get to the point that they agree with us about some of it, but that is not a requirement.

My further thoughts:

[3k] My response was not very good. He assumes inequality and discrimination are evil, when they are only evil in certain circumstances. He is also very insulting. Be that as it may be, this is the response I would have liked to have given him: You asked several questions. That demonstrates a lot of interest in the topic of heaven, I think. I hope I can help you with it.

You said, "There is inequality in Heaven. Matthew 11:11 Jesus said: He that is least in Heaven is greater than He. What? Is there discrimination, inequality, rank or a cast system in Heaven?" Discrimination and inequality are only evil when they are the result of injustice. We don't select toddlers to be truck drivers or uneducated people to be doctors. Neither does God allow evil people into heaven. Those who are greater in heaven will have demonstrated they are better. Just as I don't expect to win the gold in the Olympics and yet admire those that do, no one will mind the inequality in heaven.

You asked, "What do you truly know about Heaven?" Only what the Bible says. It is a good place where God will love us forever.

You asked, "What do you believe about Heaven?" I believe both the saved and the lost will someday be resurrected; the saved to literal everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, and the lost to judgment and literal everlasting punishment.

You asked, "Is what you claim to know and what you claim to believe about Heaven vastly different? Can you spell hypocrisy?" No, they are not different, which means your accusation of hypocrisy does not apply to me, at least in this case. If I can answer some more questions for you, I will be glad to do so.

Lesson 4 – The Nature of Hell

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

- (4A) Matthew 5:29-30. What is worse than blindness and having a limb amputated? _____
 - (4B) Mark 9:47-48. How long will the fire in Hell last? _____
 - (4C) Luke 16:19-26. Once in Hell is there a way to get to heaven? _____
 - (4D) Deuteronomy 32:22 What kindled the fires in deepest Sheol (hell)? _____
 - (4E) Proverbs 27:20 When will hell be full? _____
 - (4F) Amos 9:2 Where can you escape God? _____
 - (4F) Matthew 10:28 Whom should we fear? _____
 - (4G) Matthew 18:9 How is hell described here? _____
 - (4H) 2 Peter 2:4 Where in hell did the fallen angels end up? _____
 - (4I) Describe Hell *Think & Pray* _____
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For further thought:

[4j] *Atheist Attack:* How could a loving God condemn anyone to Hell?
How would you respond to this attack? (Hints: 2nd Peter 3:9, Isaiah 30:15) _____

[4k] *Atheist Attack:* All Rich People go to Hell: Mark 10:25 Jesus said: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. If you are rich, do you perceive that Jesus lied? If you are not rich, do you think this is really fair?
How would you respond to this attack? (Hint 1st Timothy 6:9-10) _____



For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,
- COLOSSIANS 1:13 NIV

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 4 – The Nature of Hell

- (4A) Matthew 5:29-30. What is worse than blindness and having a limb amputated? Hell
(4B) Mark 9:47-48. How long will the fire in Hell last? Forever
(4C) Luke 16:19-26. Once in Hell is there a way to get to heaven? No. Luke 16:26
(4D) Deuteronomy 32:22 What kindled the fires in deepest Sheol (hell)? God's anger
(4E) Proverbs 27:20 When will hell be full? Never
(4F) Amos 9:2 Where can you escape God? You can't
(4F) Matthew 10:28 Whom should we fear? The one who can destroy us in hell (also Luke 12:5)
(4G) Matthew 18:9 How is hell described here? Fiery
(4H) 2 Peter 2:4 Where in hell did the fallen angels end up? Pits of darkness
(4I) I believe hell is a place of anguish prepared for Satan and his followers where God will put human beings who prefer Satan and his ways to following God.

My further thoughts:

[4j] *My response:* What is God supposed to do with someone who will exist forever but will not behave themselves? If He puts them in heaven, heaven would become just like earth.

Atheist Retort: Eternity is a long time. Can't God give them more time to repent?"

My response: Once He knows they will never repent, why give them any more time?

Of course, he ignored my question, and had conveniently forgotten that we had already covered the Problem of Evil in some detail. Nevertheless, I should have been more patient and loving with my response. Perhaps something like this:

That is a very interesting, and certainly valid, question, "How could a loving God condemn anyone to Hell?" The answer is that they give Him no alternative. He tells us that even though we deserve to go to Hell that if we will repent of our sin, He will not send us there. He even dies in our place because He loves us so much. When we reject His love and don't repent, what else can He do? What is God supposed to do with someone who will exist forever but will not behave themselves? If He puts them in heaven, heaven would become just like earth is today. Once He knows they will never repent, why give them any more time?

[4k] *My response:* It is just a metaphor for "very difficult." I have no reason to suspect it is not true that riches are an obstacle. Wealth might make it more difficult for rich people to realize their need for the Savior.

How could this truth have been served in a love sandwich?

I think my answer in this case really was pretty good as is. I might have added some diplomacy around it -- thanks for the question, did my answer help, etc.

James 3:6 tells us that Hell sets the tongue on fire to speak evil.

Lesson 5 – The Residents of Hell

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(#A) Read Scripture Question? _____

(#B) Read Scripture Question? _____

(#C) Read Scripture Question? _____

(5A) Matthew 25:41. For whom was hell created? _____

(5B) Matthew 5:22. Do you have to kill someone to end up in Hell? _____

(5C) Philippians 2:9-11. Can those who go to Hell avoid kneeling before Jesus? _____

(5D) Revelation 20:15. Where do people go who are not in the Book of Life? _____

(5E) Psalm 139:8 Who will be found in Hell? _____

(5F) Proverbs 7:27 Whose house is the gate to Hell? _____

(5G) Proverbs 9:13-18 Who is lured to the depths of Sheol (hell)? _____

(5H) Proverbs 15:24 Who avoids Sheol (hell)? _____

(5I) Proverbs 23:13-14 How do you rescue children from hell? _____

(5J) Matthew 16:18 What will stand against Hades? (Hell) _____

(5K) So, how does one end up in Hell?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[5I] *Atheist Attack:* God is not Just. The punishment should fit the crime or it is not justice. Nothing done in our limited lifetimes could possibly merit eternal punishment.

How would you respond to this attack? (Hints: Romans 6:23 & James 1:13-15)

To learn more about hell see: Acts 2:27; Acts 2:31; Ezekiel 31:16-17; Isaiah 14:9-15; Isaiah 28:15-18; Isaiah 5:14; Isaiah 57:9; Jonah 2:2; Luke 10:15; Matthew 11:23; Matthew 23:15; Matthew 23:33; Revelation 20:13-15; Revelation 6:8

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 5 – The Residents of Hell

- (5A) Matthew 25:41. For whom was hell created? Satan and the demons.
(5B) Matthew 5:22. Do you have to kill someone to end up in Hell? No, insulting someone is enough.
(5C) Philippians 2:9-11. Can those who go to Hell avoid kneeling before Jesus? No
(5D) Revelation 20:15. Where do people go who are not in the Book of Life? Hell or the Lake of Fire.
(5E) Psalm 139:8 Who will be found in Hell? The Spirit of the Lord (Ps 139:1, 4 & 7)
(5F) Proverbs 7:27 Whose house is the gate to Hell? The cunning woman dressed as a harlot (Prv 7:10)
(5G) Proverbs 9:13-18 Who is lured to the depths of Sheol (hell)? The naïve
(5H) Proverbs 15:24 Who avoids Sheol (hell)? The wise
(5I) Proverbs 23:13-14 How do you rescue children from hell? Discipline
(5J) Matthew 16:18 What will stand against Hades? (Hell) His Church
(5K) I don't care to know how to get there. I'm more interested in how to avoid it. Revelation 1:17-18 says that Jesus has the keys to Hell and death. Thank God, Jesus is my Savior.

My further thoughts:

[5I] My Response: You may need to consult your dictionary about what the words "just" and "justice" mean. I'm not sure how you support the idea that the punishment must fit the crime. Isn't "Let the punishment fit the crime" a line from a Broadway musical? In fact, I'm not even sure what that phrase means in your context. In human affairs I guess it means to be firm enough without being too harsh. As I understand the words just and justice in the Biblical context, they have more to do with righteousness and keeping your promises. The consequences of our sin are death and hell. I agree these consequences are an unpleasant truth, but you cannot deny that you have been warned. You have been told if you do not repent, eventually you will find yourself in Hell. Besides what is to be done with someone who will not behave himself and yet will exist forever?

Atheist Retort: "Forever" seems like plenty of chance for repentance. Can't God wait?

My Response: He is waiting. You are not in hell yet, are you?

How could I have been more kind and gracious? Perhaps like this:

You bring up some interesting points. I'm not sure how you support the idea that the punishment must fit the crime. I'm not even sure what that phrase means in your context. In human affairs I guess it means to be firm enough without being too harsh. As I understand the words "just" and "justice" in the Biblical context, they have more to do with righteousness and keeping your promises. The consequences of our sin are death followed by Hell. I agree these consequences are an unpleasant truth, but you can not deny that you have been warned. You have been told if you do not repent, eventually you will find yourself in Hell. Besides what is to be done with someone who will not behave himself and yet will exist forever?

You said, "'Forever' seems like plenty of chance for repentance. Can't God wait?" That is a good question, and ultimately one I cannot answer, since God does not explain Himself. He is not accountable to us; we are accountable to Him. I assume at some point He knows that additional chances to repent will not yield a different decision, and so there are no more chances offered. In your case though, He is still waiting. I hope you will decide to accept the freely offered forgiveness of God and join me in having a better destination than Hell.