

High Desert URC – Heidelberg Catechism Supplement
October 2025

* Read each Heidelberg question and answer before discussing them according to the prompts below.

I. Question and Answer 11

Q/A 11 states that the character of God is such that he is merciful, but he is also just. This seems to suggest that his mercy should overshadow his justice so that people won't be judged for their sin. After all, doesn't God understand that we are sinners?

It is true that God understands our propensity to sin. While he is merciful, he must act according to his nature that is just. Justice means that sinners must be punished for their sin. Therefore, all sin is against God, which means that God will punish sinners for their sin body and soul for eternity in hell. If all people were to die and go to hell, that would be just.

II. Question and Answer 12

Question and answer 12 asks if there is any way we may escape eternal punishment (in hell) and again be receive into his favor?

Since God's justice must be satisfied, we would have to make full satisfaction to that justice either by ourselves or by another. In either case, justice will be satisfied. This means someone must be punished eternally in hell. This speaks to the fear all people have of God since they know they are culpable before God for their actions in this world; Paul speaks to this in Romans chapter 1.

III. Question and Answer 13

Question and answer 13 asks if we can make this satisfaction. This is to ask if there is any way in which we can do good works that God would accept so that he would overlook our sins. Also, assumed, is a person's sorrow and repentance for sins, which in God's sight, would suffice for justice to be fulfilled.

The answer states that we cannot make satisfaction for our sins by good works or by sorrow and repentance for our sins. This is so because we daily increase our guilt for our sins that we continue to commit every day. Lest we lose hope, the catechism will go on to argue to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ to obey God perfectly, die on the cross, be buried and rise from the dead on the third day. This work of Jesus Christ satisfies the justice of God and releases us from the slavery to sin, death and the devil as we have faith in Jesus Christ.