

## Think about it! (11)

What if you're wrong?

After all, you could be, couldn't you? And me too, of course. But the question is, who stands to lose most?

I believe that God exists, and that he is the God who's described in the Bible. What about you? Maybe you believe in some other 'God', different from the one I believe in, or maybe in more than one. Perhaps you're not sure if there's a God or not. Or maybe you're an atheist, full-stop. But what if you're wrong?

I believe that we human beings are, deep down, sinners; that there was a Fall from the way we were at the beginning, and that the world is the way it is because of the separation between us and God. Maybe your concept of mankind is much more positive and optimistic – that deep down the vast majority of us are 'good people'. But what if you're wrong?

I believe that there is another life, apart from this one here and now, and that that other life consists in heaven for some and hell for others. Maybe you're absolutely convinced that after death there's nothing apart from physical decomposition and a return to the impersonal, anonymous existence of the basic elements of nature. Maybe you're right, but what if you're not?

I believe that our natural destiny is not heaven, but hell – condemnation, lostness, the eternal punishment of separation from God. The Judge has to judge us according to his own law, and in that I don't see much hope for us. Perhaps you see it differently; that if there's anything, it's definitely not hell, that's for sure. O. K., but what if you're wrong?

I believe in Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, God's Son who became a man; I believe that he wasn't just born, but that he came from heaven, and with a clear purpose in mind: to save sinners from the tragic consequences of their sin. What about you? What do you think? That such a Jesus never existed? That he wasn't the Son of God, but just another human being? That he was a good man who was got rid of by the power structures of his day? That he was some kind of dreamer, or madman even? What if you're wrong?

I believe that if we want to be saved, we're not asked to work our way to heaven by doing a number of good or religious things; that spiritual salvation is a present from God, and that he gives it to everybody who simply believes – trusts – in Jesus as their Saviour. What do you think? That salvation doesn't even exist? Or that you have to sweat to make it? O. K., that seems reasonable, but what if you're wrong?

If I'm wrong, what've I got to lose? A few pleasures that, because I'm a believer are either forbidden to me, or don't interest me? If when I die there's nothing afterwards, I won't even realize that I was wrong! And anyway, I reckon that my faith, even if it turned out to be a mistaken faith, gives me and other people certain values which would still be meaningful even if I were wrong. But what about you? If I'm right, and it turns out that it was you who was wrong – I mean, that is possible, isn't it? – what would you stand to lose? A lot more than me, right?

God has spoken. You can take it or leave it. But before you reach your final decision, think about it!