

THE ROAD TO SALVATION

Do you know with 100-percent certainty that you are going to heaven when you die? Do you know that you CAN know with 100-percent certainty?

The definition of salvation is “a deliverance from the power and effects of sin.” I think we can agree we have all sinned. Some sins we define as “big ones” and some sins we define as “little ones,” but none of us are perfect. **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:23)** **“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)** And even if you could state that you have only sinned one time, the Bible says, **“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” (James 2:10)**

So what happens to us as a result of being a sinner? (Please bear with me for a couple of paragraphs because I have to give the bad news before I can give the good news.) Sin separates us from God. The Bible tells us that **“the wages of sin is death.” (Rom 6:23)** A holy and righteous God cannot and will not ignore sin. Every sin must be punished. The price that must be paid for sin is death. Some of us think this sounds harsh. But if we had a God who let certain people into heaven if they had “some” sin and turned certain people away if they had “a lot” of sin, who defines “some” and “a lot”? And would that definition even hold up consistently for eternity? Is some slack cut for those who have had to suffer from disease or were born into poverty? This system would allow room for much confusion and arbitrary decisions. How could men even know what to aim for, what was “good enough” to get in? This would leave men to guesswork and to the whim of a God whose rules of “some” and “a lot” are not even defined for them. But no...God has been clear. God has set His wrath against sin and He will judge all sin. He will not allow sinful man into His eternal heaven. His Word and His nature consistently testify to His dealings with sin.

So what hope is there for us? How are we saved from this death sentence and from God’s wrath? Well, despite what many people believe, the following things WILL NOT get you into heaven: being a good person, attending church, teaching Sunday school, being charitable, following the Golden Rule, tithing, and volunteering your time. You won’t even get in if you believe there is a God and you have tremendous knowledge about the Bible and you know that Jesus died on the cross. Why is that not enough? Because even Satan believes all of that, and he certainly isn’t going to be welcomed into heaven.

The only way a righteous and holy God can allow sinners into heaven is if their sins are forgiven. The Good News for us is that God sent His Son Jesus to pay the price for our sins, to become our substitute, to receive our death penalty. Jesus never sinned. Therefore, Jesus, being without blemish, was the perfect sin offering on the cross and paid the price for our sins, past, present, and future. God then raised Him to life again three days later. It is by having faith in the Risen Lord Jesus that we are saved from our sins. We hand Jesus our sins; He hands us a righteous and holy standing before God Himself. We become God’s children and our eternal home is in heaven with Him. **“To all who received Him (Jesus), to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)**

Let's look at the rest of **Romans 6:23**, **"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."** The Bible explains this beautifully in **John 3:16-18** -- **"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."**

The name of Jesus is the only name by which man can receive salvation. **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** (**Acts 4:12**) Jesus is the doorway to heaven -- **"I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me."** (**Rev 3:10**) Jesus is the gate to heaven -- **"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved."** (**John 10:9**) When some people hear the message that there's only one way to enter heaven, they get mad and say that God is exclusionary. But God is not excluding anyone from heaven. His message is for everyone – all nations, all tribes, all people, all ages, male and female. Everyone is invited to come. Everyone is loved and precious to Him. The exclusionary part is done by man. Man excludes himself by rejecting God's open invitation to the doorway/gate to heaven.

So do you want that 100-percent assurance you will go to heaven when you die? You can do that right now. If you feel that tightness going on in your chest, that inward battle, that tugging and pulling sensation, what is happening is the Lord is asking you to come to Him, and your sinful nature is fighting Him. Please don't turn away from the One who laid down His life for you. You can pray these words right now -- "Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner. I have been trying to do things my own way, in my own strength and by my own rules. I know that I am helpless to save myself. I ask you to forgive my sins. I do believe that your Son, the Risen Lord Jesus, died on the cross so that my sins could be forgiven. I know that He paid the price with His life so that I wouldn't have to die in my sins. I thank you for this precious gift of grace, and I ask Jesus to come into my heart and be Lord of my life. Thank you for the assurance that I am forgiven and now know that I will one day be with you in heaven...in Jesus name, Amen."

If you have prayed this prayer, I welcome you into the Kingdom of God as my brother/sister in Christ and as heir to all the promises of God. The Bible tells us that the angels in heaven are now rejoicing over you and that your name has been added to the Lamb's Book of Life. Please e-mail me and let me know of your decision, as I want to pray for you, rejoice with you, and e-mail you some information to encourage you and to help you get started in your walk with the Lord. I would also suggest you read "And Your Name Is" found on my writings page, to get an idea of who you are in Christ Jesus.

