

~Heaven—are most people going there?~

If you asked the average man or woman where they would go when they die, they will usually say ‘heaven’!

In fact, most believe that the only people who go to hell are people like: Hitler, Stalin, Jack the Ripper and other bad folks in history.

When a person dies, we automatically believe that they are now “looking down on us” or “are now at peace”.

This is not true! Jesus said regarding heaven:

Matt 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction (damnation), and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life (salvation), and only a few find it."

Jesus, the greatest teacher of life and death in history, should know. He has ‘*been there and done that*’, as the saying goes.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is now the Judge of all of humanity, this position being given Him by His Father. It is HE who will assign each of us to our eternal destinies. Please note:

John 5:22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son...

He, and He alone, will judge you the moment you die and face Him. The Bible says:

Heb 9:27 “Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...”

Why would He let you into Heaven? Give one good reason!

If you are like most people, you will start with: “I did....” and then describe how nice a person you are and all the ‘good’ things you did while on earth. You will continue with: “I didn’t.....” and then list all the ‘bad’ things you didn’t do (as if that makes you a good person!) and because we all think we are pretty good, we are sure our good deeds will outweigh our bad! In truth, we are legalists!

After all has been said, that is, when you think you have justified yourself in the eyes of God, you will expect Him to let you in, even though you have the feeling that something is wrong with this situation. You feel inadequate, insincere, as if trying to make yourself better than you are, as though you can fool God into thinking what an acceptable person you are—even though He knows everything you have ever done-good or bad!

The problem with all of this is that you have forgotten one VERY important fact! You have sinned!!! This fact, alone, makes you ineligible for heaven. You have broken God's laws. How will you atone? Being 'good' won't change the fact that you have broken the law. Doing good deeds won't either. How do you pay the penalty for your crime of breaking God's laws?

Some, although very few, maintain they have never sinned. I know of such a lady. She is very moral and does good deeds and is a pleasant, kind person. But, has she loved God with all her heart, mind, soul and strength? NO! Because of this, she has broken the greatest commandment of all!

Jesus told us what the MOST important commandment is.

Matt 22:37-38 *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment.*

Reader, have you loved God with every fiber of your being all your life? Have you? *If you haven't (and none of us have) you have broken God's greatest commandment!*

You are *not* a 'good' person, after all! In fact, NO ONE is 'good'! The Bible says:

Rom 3:10-12 *"As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

Matt 19:17 *"Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good and that is God..."*

You see, we call each other 'good' but that is a *relative* term. It is God who sets the standard for 'good' and, according to His definition, we are NOT! *Your so-called 'good' deeds will do you no good when you stand before Jesus on that day!*

Until we see ourselves as hopeless sinners, we will never see the need for a Savior! If we could enter heaven based on what we do or did, then why did Jesus, God's only Son, have to die on a cross?? Did you ever wonder why? If there were some other way for you to go to heaven, why would Jesus go through such suffering for us on the cross?

In the Old Testament, God had His people offer animal sacrifices for their sins. These animal sacrifices could not take away their sins because only a human life could do that—a life for a life. God's Law required that a 'soul that sins shall die'!. If the person used an animal, as prescribed in the Law, as a substitute, the person would live, providing it was not a sin that required death. However, in the Old Testament, the sacrifices of animals 'covered' the sins of the people until the ultimate human sacrifice came along, who would take them away completely,—Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

He lived a life of loving God the Father with all of His heart, mind, soul and strength. He is the only one who did it perfectly and consistently! When He died on the cross, it was not for any sin He committed—it was for us sinners. In other words, He took our place.

In some countries (I believe even today) if a guilty person is sentenced to die, another person, who is innocent of the crime, can take his place and take his punishment. When the innocent person is executed, the guilty person can never be charged and punished with that crime—ever! This is called vicarious atonement!

This is exactly what Jesus did on the cross! He took our place. God sent Him to do this very thing. Jesus did not die for any sins He committed for the simple reason He did not commit any!

If God sent His beloved Son to die for us that we may live eternally with Him in heaven, can you see what an insult you offer to God by holding up your 'good' deeds in the place of His Son??

What you are really saying is: "I don't need the suffering that Jesus went through while taking MY punishment on the cross. I, instead, offer my 'good' deeds instead.

What do you suppose God is going to think of that?

Jesus, in **John 14:6** said: ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."***

Did you catch that last statement? Jesus declared Himself to be the ONLY way to God. Was He narrow-minded? No, He was telling the truth. There is no other savior, leader, guru, prophet, system, religious duty, good work or teaching that can lead me to Heaven—only Jesus. ***He is exclusive!***

The definition of a Christian is someone who has realized that they have sinned, has turned to Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior and has repented of their sins and asked Him to save him/her. They, then, commit their lives to following Him and His teachings in the Bible.

Salvation is necessary because, a long time ago, Adam sinned against God. Adam was the Federal head of the human race and what he did--we did. I know it doesn't seem fair, but that is the way it is. In the same way that we were under the curse of God because of what Adam did, we are under the blessing of God for what Jesus did. What is expected of us is to ***"...believe (trust) in the Lord Jesus Christ and we will be saved."***

"Saved from what?" you ask. Saved from the curse we were born under 'in Adam,' as well as the punishment for our own personal sins. What trusting in Jesus Christ does is take us 'OUT of Adam' and put us 'IN Christ', which is where salvation is.

So, a Christian (one who loves and follows the Lord Jesus) is someone who, upon dying, looks forward to being with the One who died for her and loves her. Therefore, if asked why God should allow her into heaven, she would reply that because of Jesus dying for her, she is cleaned from all sin and because of what righteousness He has, she has. That is why she is welcomed in. That is why any of us are welcomed in!

Another thing to think about when speaking of Heaven is to consider that most people are so wrapped up in the pleasures of this world they would actually feel uncomfortable in heaven. Think for a minute! If you were about to go into God's presence and spend eternity with His people, singing His songs and enjoying His presence, how happy would you be? After all, you say you don't have to go to church to be a Christian (which is only an excuse non-Christians have for staying in bed on Sunday morning) but are going to spend eternity with those same folks that you wouldn't spend 2 hours a week with?

Being a Christian means Jesus giving us a love for the holy things of God. Things we once loved to do (sin) we don't want to do any more. Things that we hated (the things of God) we now love. He makes the change!

Do you see yourself as a sinner or as a ‘pretty good guy’ all around? Do you have hope in yourself when standing before a HOLY Judge when you die or do you realize you better have a good lawyer?

In fact, Jesus is called the Christian’s lawyer (advocate). He only takes guilty cases and always gets them off! HOW? Because He paid their penalty.

I Jn 2:1 “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate (lawyer) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous...”

In conclusion, most people will die in a damned state whereas few will turn to the Savior, Jesus Christ, and be saved. Heaven will be full of those who love the Lord and those who don’t, won’t be there.

Think about this next time you go to a funeral!