

ARE YOU GOING TO HEAVEN?

There's probably more uncertainty about the most important matter in the world than about any other.

Let me illustrate: If you were to ask 100 people at random about the economy, politics, or pollution, you would get a fairly definite opinion from most. But ask the same 100 people, "Are you going to Heaven when you die?" The vast majority would answer with varying degrees of doubt — "I don't know"... "I'm working on it"... "I have no idea"... "I'm not sure."

Many of these same people would tell you that they believe in Jesus Christ and that they believe in Heaven. Yet they don't know whether or not they are going to Heaven.

What would your answer be?

Most of us know definitely whether or not we are working and whether or not we are married. Yet we do not know whether or not we have eternal life.

Many travelers know where their destination is. Yet ask them where their final destination will be—where they will be living forever—and very few know!

This uncertainty comes from a misunderstanding of what is involved in attaining eternal life and going to Heaven. If you were to ask the average person what one must do to have eternal life, his answer would probably include one or more of the following:

- Live a good life
- Obey the Ten Commandments
- Join a church and attend regularly
- Love your fellow man
- Be baptized and/or confirmed
- Follow the teachings and example of Christ.

All of these represent something that people do or try to do. They reflect the popular idea that eternal life in Heaven is a reward to be earned. They have the idea that when they reach the pearly gates, St. Peter will examine their good deeds to decide if he will let them in to heaven. But nothing could be further from the truth!

The Bible states clearly that we cannot win or earn our way to Heaven. Eternal life is not a reward for what we have done or tried to do; it is a free gift.

"The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, but by God's kindness."
(Ephesians 2:8,9)

So long as we think that we must earn our way into the presence of God, we can never be certain that we have done enough to deserve Heaven.

Most of us realize that we are not good enough to measure up to God's perfect standards. And for us to say "I know I'm going to Heaven" sounds like the ultimate in pride and boasting, if Heaven is reached through good works.

The only sure answer!

The Bible, however, teaches that we cannot be good enough, that we cannot work our way to Heaven—and that we do not need to! We are to realize, instead, that Jesus Christ has opened the way to Heaven for us. No matter how bad we may be, any of us can qualify.

The Bible says, *"Therefore no one will be declared right in [God's] sight by doing good deeds; like trying to keep God's laws. The law only shows us our sin. But God makes people right with himself through their faith in Jesus Christ."* (Romans 3:20-22).

You see, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be judged for our sins—yours and mine—by His death on the cross. Having completely paid our sin penalty, He rose from the dead and now offers eternal life to you and to me as a gift.

By simply recognizing our need for a divine Savior, and by accepting Christ's payment for our sins and our salvation, the matter of our eternal destiny is immediately resolved. This is the way—the only way—to know for sure that you have eternal life.

Do you have this assurance?

If not, you can gain this assurance right here and now. How? The Bible says, speaking of Christ:

"To all who receive Him, to those who believe in His name, He gives the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)

Have you received Him?

How, you still ask? Well, let me illustrate by comparing your life to your home.

In the last book of the Bible, Jesus said, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and dine with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)*

It's up to you to open the door of your life to Christ. Are you willing to invite Jesus to come in and change your life?

Are you willing to place all of your trust and confidence in Him rather than in your own works?

If so, let me suggest you complete the transaction by praying something like this:

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner and unable to save myself. But I do believe You love me, and that You sent Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for my sins.

Right here and now, I ask You to forgive my every sin and give me the gift of eternal life. Thank You, dear God, for hearing and answering my prayer, and for giving me eternal life as You promised You would. Amen."

If this has been your decision and your prayer, please contact me and I will send you some literature to help you start the exciting adventure that is the Christian life.

In closing, let me remind you that the Bible says, *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)*

Arthur S. DeMoss
Bible references: NIV
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