



# Heaven...Are You Going There?

If you believe in the afterlife, then you may believe in heaven. If so, do you know what the Bible says about how to get there?

Many who believe the Bible know what God's Word says is necessary for a person to go to heaven. Others who claim allegiance to the Bible, however, may add qualifications for entrance into heaven that are not stated in the Bible. In addition, those who believe in heaven but do *not* believe the Bible may have self-derived beliefs about who is qualified to go to heaven. And, of course, there are those who do not even think about who will go to heaven since they believe heaven is an illusion. Even with these different perspectives, people usually have common ground with regard to the concept of heaven.

## A COMMON CONCEPT OF HEAVEN

Whether people believe heaven is a reality or an illusion, few believe that the *concept* of heaven describes a wretched place that is populated by evil people. Typically, the word *heaven* indicates that it is recognized as a pleasant, even ideal place. For example, most of us realize the phrase, "That's heavenly" means that something is delightful, pleasant, blessed, or good. On the other hand, when someone says "Go to hell," we know that the speaker is probably angry and does not wish another person well. Obviously, the concept of hell is negative, and the concept of heaven is positive.

## THE CONCEPTS OF GOD AND HEAVEN ARE LINKED

People who believe in *God* and *heaven* link them together. People who do not believe in *God* or *heaven* also link the concepts of *God* and *heaven* together and, correspondingly, link *Satan* (or the devil) with *hell*. If you doubt this, ask any number of people, "In one word, where do you think the devil lives?" and follow up that question with, "In one word, where is God's home?" The answers to those questions are quite predictable.

In light of having a common belief about heaven's goodness yet maintaining various beliefs about heaven's reality or characteristics, people across the world have differing opinions about who can go to heaven. *There is a majority opinion, however, about what qualifies a person to go to heaven.* This belief is basic to many religions and is embraced by billions of the earth's inhabitants.

## THE MOST CONSISTENTLY BELIEVED QUALIFICATION TO ENTER HEAVEN

Doing good works—often defined as being obedient to religious tenets and/or moral practices—is the most commonly supposed qualification for a person to go to heaven, or "to enjoy the afterlife" as some religions state.

*To compare religious beliefs about heaven/afterlife and associated qualifications to be there, see the following:*  
[http://www.religionfacts.com/big\\_religion\\_chart.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/big_religion_chart.htm)

*Another resource that compares religious beliefs about going to heaven is **How to get to heaven—what are the ideas from the different religions?** at <http://www.gotquestions.org/how-to-get-to-heaven.html>*

## THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OTHER RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY

You may not know it, but Christianity is the only spiritual belief that says it is impossible to qualify for heaven by doing good works. God's Word states in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

There is another significant difference between Christianity and all religions. An article on the Christian Ministries International website states:

"The key difference between Christianity and every other religion in the world *is that* Christianity is not a religion! What are religions? Religions are about human attempts to make our lives right with God through our good works, sacrifices, rituals, and money. However, Christianity is not a religion. Christianity is about God entering human history to graciously save men and women through His Son Jesus Christ."

## **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT YOUR LIKELIHOOD OF GOING TO HEAVEN?**

If other religions and personal beliefs state that you can do specific “good things” to merit heaven, what does the Bible say? According to the Bible, everyone by nature is a sinner and, as a result, is disqualified from going to heaven.

**Psalms 53:2-3**, God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. <sup>3</sup> They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

**Ecclesiastes 7:20**, Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

**Romans 3:12, 23**, All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. . . .  
<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

The very best anyone could do is not good enough according to God’s standard of perfection and holiness.

**Isaiah 64:6**, We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

If none of us deserves heaven even by doing the “best we can” in this life, what do we deserve? According to the Bible, all of us in our natural state deserve death, both physically and spiritually. But, there is hope . . . we can have life in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Romans 6:23**, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **THE ONE AND ONLY QUALIFICATION TO GO TO HEAVEN IS TO HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST**

According to the Bible, a relationship with Jesus is the only prerequisite for you or anyone else to go to heaven. This relationship is due to divine grace and is based on Christ’s sacrificial love and His work on your behalf instead of your being dependent on personal efforts to gain God’s favor.

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

**Romans 5:8**, But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Ephesians 1:7**, In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**, For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**1 John 4:9-10**, In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Since our sin separates us from God, no matter how many good works we may do, the problem of sin must be dealt with. As the above verses indicate, God has provided the solution to the problem of sin. For that, we should be grateful; since our “sin problem” is the major hurdle that must be overcome for us to go to heaven.

## **WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO GO TO HEAVEN?**

Heaven cannot be earned, since God has graciously provided the only way to heaven through salvation in Christ Jesus. Instead of trying to measure up to some standard of righteousness proven by your deeds, you are instead to believe (trust) only in Jesus Christ and receive forgiveness of sin, right standing with God, the gift of eternal life, and the assurance of being in heaven with Him forever.

**John 3:16**, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**John 6:28-29**, Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

**Colossians 1:13-14**, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Titus 3:5-7**, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

If you would like to go to heaven and are trying to measure up by doing good works, you should stop your efforts since good works cannot save you. Instead, simply believe that the Lord Jesus Christ gave His life's blood to provide forgiveness for your sins. Completely rely on Him alone as your Savior. Because of His costly sacrifice, you can freely enter into a relationship with Him now and enjoy fellowship with Him for all of eternity in the life to come.

If you want to give thanks to God for providing salvation through Jesus, just speak to Him as you would with a friend. Thank Him for forgiving your sins and giving you eternal life. Thank Him for providing the only way that you can go to heaven. Ask Him to help you live according to God's Word, the Bible. Ask Him to provide His strength so that your life will become more Christ-like in the days that you have left to live on this earth.

For further information about salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, see **Life's Most Important Decision** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Lifes%20Most%20Important%20Decision.pdf>

### **ARE YOU GOING TO HEAVEN?**

Hopefully, this article helps you understand the only qualification necessary to go to heaven. That qualification is simply to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is your only Savior. Prior to placing faith in Jesus Christ, the emphasis with regard to getting to heaven is "do" but after receiving Christ, you can rest and be assured that the work is "done." It is our prayer that you have responded to the biblical truth that was presented and are now assured of your eternal destination in the afterlife.