

What About Eternity?

By Rocky Randall

The most important question anyone could ever ask is this, **"If you were to die today, do you know for sure you would go to Heaven?"**

You might think that you've never done anything too terrible, or maybe you think you've done enough good to outweigh the bad that you've done... well, can I show you a few verses from the Bible?"

Romans 3:23 says, ***"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."***

The definition of sin is to fall short of what God expects of us, and the Bible says we all have sinned. You've sinned, I've sinned... we've all sinned!

Do you think God would send us to hell for a "small sin" like telling a lie? Let's look at **Revelation 21:8**. The Bible says,

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters..."

That's a pretty bad list right? "Murderers, whoremongers, idolaters..." but look at the next one:

"...and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

How many lies do we have to tell to be a liar?" One, right? I've lied, have you lied? Of course! So, according to this verse all liars are going to the lake of fire (hell).

Now, do you believe God is a loving God? Well trust me, He doesn't want you or me to go to the Lake of Fire. Let me show you another verse... we're getting to the good news (do you know that is what the word "Gospel" means? It means good news and I promise you I'm fixing to tell you the good news.)

Romans 5:8 says, ***"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."***

You've heard about the Lord Jesus Christ dying on the cross, right? They beat Him, plucked out His beard, spat on Him, put a crown of thorns on His head...and then they drove nails through his hands and feet, nailing Him to a cross to die.

What does that have to do with us going to Heaven when we die? Let me show you.

Romans 6:23 says, ***"For the wages of sin is death..."***

So, the payment (like when you get paid at the end of the week, they call that your 'wages'), of our sins (what we have earned) is death. Remember that verse in Revelation said all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death? The punishment for our sins is eternal death in the lake of fire... **BUT** (look at the next part)

"...the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, a gift is good news, isn't it? Just in case someone wonders what a gift means, the Bible says 3 times in Romans chapter 5 that it is a **'free gift.'** Really that is the only kind of gift there is. Let me give you an example:

1) If I handed you a gift and said it was a free gift to you...but you had to pay me \$5, was it a gift? No, it was a purchase, right?

2) If I said it was a gift but you had to be really good and treat me nice, it wouldn't be a gift either, it would be a reward.

3) If I were to give it to you and in three days I said I didn't like you anymore and I wanted my gift back, then was it a gift? No, and I'd be a liar and a thief if I took it back.

I assure you God isn't a liar or a thief!

John 3:16 says, ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave (there it is again...He GAVE...it's a gift), his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."***

So, Who gives everlasting life? God does!

How long does "everlasting life" last? Forever!

John 3:36 says ***"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."***

So, if you believe on Jesus, the Bible says you HAVE eternal life. God isn't going to make you work for it, and He isn't going to take it from you.

Here is one more verse about our salvation from hell being a gift:

Ephesians 2:8,9 says ***"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."***

You see, if we could earn our way to Heaven by being good, we would brag about it and say "look how good I am." That would be sinful in God's eyes. But He wants us to give all the glory to Him. He saves us by grace when we put our faith in Jesus. The Bible says **"Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)."** The reason He is pleased is because we are trusting in Him and not in ourselves or other men. Does that make sense?

But you might wonder, "What if I don't believe enough?" It's not really about how MUCH you believe, it is about making a conscious decision to place your faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Let's go back to the illustration about the gift:

If you knew that I had given you a gift, I had paid a great price for it, written your name on it, set it down on your table...and then you just walked away and never picked it up, it would be yours, but you wouldn't have it, right? Well, the Bible uses the word "receive" a lot of times when it comes to this gift.

John 1:12 says, ***"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."***

Let me show you one more passage of scripture:

Romans 10:9,10 says ***"That if thou shalt confess (that means to admit or declare) with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved..."***

So we see that we need to believe in our heart that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again for us according to the Scripture and confess that it is so.

"...For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,"

And then finally **verse 13** says ***"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

Would you like to call on the Lord and declare to Him that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation? Remember, it isn't your prayer that saves you, it is trusting in Jesus. It isn't a magical prayer! So it doesn't really matter what you say exactly.

If you would like, I can help you word a simple prayer. If you are believing on Jesus for your salvation, pray something like this:

"Dear Lord, I know I deserve to go to hell for my sins. I am trusting in Jesus' death on the cross, His burial and His resurrection for the salvation of my soul. Thank you for your wonderful gift. Thank you for saving me. Help me to live for you a life that shows my gratitude. Amen."

IOLA BAPTIST TEMPLE

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