

# The Wrong Answer at Heaven's Gate

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Imagine that you died today and were brought face to face with God at the gate of heaven. If He asked you the question, "Why should I let you into heaven?" – what would you say? Would you reply, in so many words, that you had lived a decent life, that you had tried to help people, or that you had done the best that you could?

Perhaps you would say that you had given your money to good causes, that you had gone to church or chapel regularly, and that you had been an exemplary neighbor. Or would you tell God that He should let you into heaven because you had responded to an altar call, that you had signed a decision card, and had been baptized and had been a faithful member of your church?

What would you say if I told you that, based on responses like these, God would not and could not let you into Heaven? All of these answers – and many more like them – reveal one very sad and important thing about those who believe that these things will see them through the gates of heaven – *they believe that good works will save them from hell*. But what does the Bible say?

God's Word says that it is "*not by works of righteousness that we have done*" that we are saved from the judgment of God (Titus 3:5). Salvation from sin and hell can never be obtained by trying to live a good life or keep the Ten Commandments. God's law can only condemn you; it cannot save you. It demands perfect obedience which neither you nor anyone else can give because every man is born into this world a sinner, without any power to meet the demands of God's holy law.

Remember, it only takes the breaking of one of God's commandments to condemn a man to hell forever. "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*" (James 2:10). Tragically, many people imagine that God is just going to "wink" at all their sins and let them into heaven. After all, it is argued, He is a God of love and mercy and would never condemn anyone to hell who had tried to do their best.

But while God is certainly One who is "*full of compassion*", yet He is also a God who is full of justice. "*And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity....*" (Isaiah 13:11) His own holy nature demands that every sin be punished. The Bible says that, in the eyes of God, "*all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*" (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, if your present hope for heaven is your "good life", you have no ground for hope at all.

But there is good news! God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, left heaven and came into this world to save those could never save themselves. He was crucified on the Cross in order to take the wrath of God in the place of sinners like you. God the Father punished sin in Christ on Calvary...not for sin that *He* had committed, but for the sins of others. "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:5).

Not only do you need someone who can take away the punishment of God for your sin, but you also need someone who can make you perfectly righteous in the eyes of a holy and just God. This is why

**CHRIST** is the only Savior of sinners. As the God-Man, He kept perfectly that law of God that you could not keep. And if you will lean your whole weight on what *He* has done for your salvation and on *His* righteousness, God will accept you as righteous for Christ's sake. He will save you.

Christ states the matter very plainly, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me*" (John 14:6). Read those words again... "*the way.*" Jesus Christ is not one of many ways to God the Father and heaven; He is the one and only way. "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). If you do not go to Him and take the salvation that He – even now – freely offers you, then you must, upon your death, personally bear the wrath of God in hell forever. The factor that determines where you will spend eternity depends on whether or not you have trusted in Christ alone to save you.

Call upon the Lord Jesus Christ right now where you are. Confess to Him that you are indeed a sinner that deserves to be punished, that you have no good works that could ever make you acceptable, and that you have no power whatsoever to save yourself. But then plead the gospel truth that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save those who could not save themselves. Ask Christ to save you from your sin and the judgment to come. Go to Him even now for He said, "*...him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*" (John 6:37).

*"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy Blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God I come, I come."*