

GOD LOVES YOU AND OFFERS YOU LIFE

But what do you have to do to receive eternal life and live with God forever in heaven?

- Do your best?
- Be good?
- Turn from your sins?
- Obey the golden rule?
- Keep the Ten Commandments?
- Tithe to the church?
- Go to church?
- Be baptized?
- Confess Jesus publicly?
- Take up your cross and follow Jesus?
- Give your heart and life to Jesus?
- Surrender all to Jesus?
- Make Jesus Lord of your Life?
- Believe in Jesus and bear good fruit?

Man's Solution: Performance

The things listed above are good things, but believing they are even part of the reason God should let you into heaven is a very deadly mistake. The Bible says, "*There is none righteous, not even one*" (Rom 3:10). "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom 3:23). All the good things we have done are like a filthy garment in God's eyes because they are stained with sin (Is 64:6). None of us are good enough to get to heaven. For example, how many people do you have to **murder** to be a murderer? Just one. How many sins do you have to commit to be a sinner? Just one. The Bible says, "*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all*" (Jam 2:10). "*Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them*" (Gal 3:10). We all commit numerous sins and are cursed by our performance rather than justified by it. Being better than someone else is not good enough. We all fall way short of being good enough to go to heaven.



To illustrate, suppose we were standing outside of the **Empire State Building**. Could we jump to the top? No. You might jump higher than me, or I might jump higher than you, but neither of us would even come close to reaching the top. Likewise, none of us can reach heaven by being good.

The Bible says, “*Your sins have made a separation between you and your God*” (Is 59:2). “*The wages of sin is death*” (Rom 6:23). “*And I saw a Great White Throne...and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their works...And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, then he was thrown into the lake of fire*”



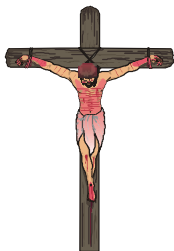
(Rev 20:11-15). Spiritual death is ultimately eternal separation from God in hell.

Since God is holy, He must punish our sin. The way we live and the things we do condemn us all as hell-deserving sinners.

But the gospel, the good news, is that God is not only a holy God, He is also a loving God. He loves you and has provided a way for you to be saved from hell, to have your sins forgiven, to have eternal life, to have your name in the book of life, and to live with Him forever in heaven.

God's Solution: Jesus

As the holy righteous judge of the universe, God cannot ignore our sin. The death penalty had to be executed. And it was. Jesus died in our place. According to the Bible, *“when you were dead in your transgressions...He... canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross”* (Col 3:13-14).



Jesus *“bore our sins in His body on the cross”* (1Pet 2:24). *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Rom 5:8). *“He was pierced through for our sins, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed”* (Is 53:5). Jesus, the sinless Son of God, took the sin that was causing our death in His body and died in our place.

By His death, Jesus has made it possible for you to have His righteousness, to be holy. Jesus offers His righteousness, and thus eternal life, to you as a free gift (Rom 5:17). Jesus, the holy Son of God, came down from heaven and lived a sinless life. He then died on the cross, allowing His heavenly Father (like a loving doctor) to swap our sins with His righteousness so that we might be made righteous (2Cor 5:21). He is our righteousness (1Cor 1:30). God imputes Christ's righteousness to us apart from our works (Rom 4:6).

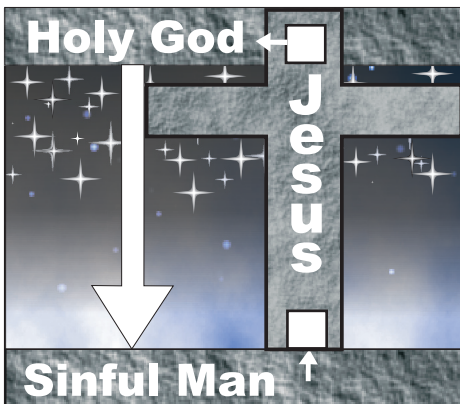
For example, suppose you had smoked all your life and were dying in the hospital of terminal lung **cancer**. Now I had never smoked, but I let the doctors exchange my healthy lungs with your cancerous lungs. What would happen to me? I would die. What would happen to you? You would live. Jesus, likewise, has taken what was causing your death (i.e., your sin) and offers you that which gives you life (i.e., His righteousness and His life).



Jesus died “because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom 4:25). “For I delivered to you as of first importance...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time” (1Cor 15:3-6). Jesus said, “**I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies**” (Jn 11:25). Jesus was raised from the dead and entered heaven, demonstrating that He had taken care of our sin problem and made it possible for us to enter heaven by trusting in Him.

But what do you have to do?

But what must I do to be saved? “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved**” (Acts 16:30-31). “Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name **everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins**” (Acts 10:43). Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who believes in Me has eternal life**” (Jn 6:47). The Bible has “been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name” (Jn 20:31). You must believe that you are saved by simply believing in Jesus for eternal life (1Tim 1:16). We enter heaven through Jesus, who said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but **through Me**” (Jn 14:6). “I am the door; if anyone enters **through Me**, then he will be saved” (Jn 10:9). We are saved “**through Him**” (Rom 5:9).



Just as an engineer can design an **elevator** to take you to the top of a building and then the workers can build it, God the Father has designed a plan by which you can reach heaven. And His Son, Jesus, has done all the work necessary in carrying out that plan. All you have to do is simply enter the elevator by trusting in Jesus alone for eternal life.

One Foot In – One Foot Out

But suppose you refused to trust the elevator and just stood there outside of it, could it take you anywhere? No. Suppose you just put one foot in the elevator and left the other foot firmly planted on the floor outside of the elevator, just in case the elevator did not make it, could the elevator lift you? No. You have to trust the elevator, fully enter into it. Likewise, you must fully trust in Christ by trusting Him alone to take you to heaven.

The world says to believe in yourself, and that if you want it done right, you have to do it yourself. But Jesus does not offer you a do-it-yourself religion. The world is full of those. He wants you to trust Him, to believe that He has done all that is necessary for you to be saved. He is the Christ, the Savior, not you. Jesus paid it all and did it all for you, in place of you. And He conditions your salvation from eternal damnation on what you believe, not what you do.

Works



Some people are trusting in their good works for eternal life. But as we have already seen, we all fall short of God's holy demands. None of us are righteous. The Bible says that since salvation from hell *"is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace"* (Rom 11:6). If we could get to heaven by being good, then Christ did not have to die. Thus, those who trust in their own goodness for eternal life are saying in effect that Christ's death was **unnecessary**. Clearly, they have failed to trust in Christ for eternal life.

Faith And Works



Other people trust in their good works **and** in Christ for eternal life. But in doing so they are saying in effect that Christ's death was not good enough, it was **insufficient**. Thus, they insult Christ rather than trust Christ. For this reason the Bible warns that we are *"justified by faith apart from works"* (Rom 3:28). *"But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness"* (Rom 4:5). We must trust in Him rather than trust in what we do for Him.

Beware of the subtle ways in which pseudo **Lordship Salvationists** add works as a condition for entering heaven. They teach a false gospel that ultimately conditions entrance into heaven on a faith **that** works (= faith + works). Such teachers are really wolves in sheep's clothing (Mt 7:15), who deny salvation by faith alone. They appeal to their good works as necessary proof of salvation and thus make good works necessary to enter heaven.



Look at my sheep skin as proof that I am saved!



Faith Alone



We **cannot be** saved by believing in **both** Jesus **and** our good works for eternal life. Jesus paid the full purchase price with His precious blood (1Pet 1:18-19), not merely the down payment. We must receive salvation as a free gift without trying to earn it. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast”* (Eph 2:8-9). *“The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ”* (Rom 6:23). We are *“justified as a gift by His grace”* (Rom 3:24).

Gift

Suppose I said, “Here is a **\$100** bill which I offer to you as a free gift; do you believe me?” You simply give a nod of your head to indicate, “Yes,” so I put the \$100 bill in your pocket. How much would it cost you? Nothing. How much would it cost me? \$100. A gift costs the giver not the recipient. Likewise, God offers you eternal life as a free gift. It costs you nothing, but it cost God the life of His Son. Just remember that the promise is to those who believe in **Him**, not to those who believe in Him plus something else.

Promise

The will of the Father is that we receive eternal life freely by simply believing in Jesus for eternal life as a free gift (Jn 6:37-40). Jesus promised, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life”* (Jn 5:24). *“I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish”* (Jn 10:28). *“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life”* (1Jn 5:13). As a result of trusting in the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you already have eternal life, and you will never perish in hell. Best of all, you can know it!

If you believe in Jesus alone for eternal life, then your name belongs in the following blank. His promise to *whoever* certainly includes you.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one-and-only Son, that _____ believes in Him
whoever

will not perish, but have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16).

Thank You

When someone gives you a gift, it is polite to tell him, “Thank you.” Why not express your thanks right now to God in prayer for giving you eternal life? Jesus said, “As many as received Him, to them (to those who believe in His name) He gave the right to become **children of God**” (Jn 1:12). By trusting in Jesus for eternal life, you become a child of God. As God’s child, it should only be natural to tell Him, “Thank you.” Just talk to Him as a loving Daddy.

Discipline and Rewards

In addition to giving us **eternal life**, God also wants to demonstrate His love for us by rewarding us with **abundant life** on earth (Jn 10:10). He wants to deliver us from the destructive power of sin in our earthly lives. God does not promise that He will spare us from trials when we become His children. But He does provide us with strength to overcome our trials if we will trust Him and learn to rely upon His strength.

Jesus is Lord. Both unbelievers and believers will give account of their lives to the Lord Jesus. Believers will enter heaven, but they must live a life in harmony with the Lordship of Christ to be rewarded with the **crown of life** in heaven (Rev 2:10). God will discipline us because He loves us and in order that “we may share His holiness” in the way we live (Heb 12:6, 10). Submitting to His discipline here on earth is to be greatly preferred to being subjected to it in heaven.

