



Can You Know You Will Go To Heaven?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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Can you know you will go to Heaven? Can you have that kind of confidence and be absolutely sure of your eternal salvation? Or, must you always live your life with doubts in your mind about where you will spend your eternity? Let's investigate how the Bible answers these questions.

God Has Revealed Who Will Go To Heaven

Who will go to Heaven is not a mystery. God has outlined the criteria for who will go to Heaven throughout the pages of His word. So, if we will be diligent to study God's word, we can know who will (and who will not) go to Heaven. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Therefore, it is God's inspired word (as revealed in the pages of the Bible) that will completely equip you to live your life in a way that pleases God and results in everlasting life in Heaven!

First, you must understand that sin is what keeps people out of Heaven. Since God is holy and there is no element of wickedness or evil in Him at all (1 John 1:5), those who conduct their lives according to the ways of sin cause themselves to be separated from all of the blessings God provides (1 John 1:6). Isaiah 59:1-2 puts it this way: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear." Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Spiritual separation from God (spiritual death) is what those who commit sin earn by their actions.

Therefore, those who have never sinned have not been separated from God and will go to Heaven. Those who have never sinned include babies, young children, and those without the mental ability to make decisions that cause them to violate God's laws. These people are not yet

morally responsible for their own actions. They have not yet learned right and wrong or developed the personal accountability for choosing to do wrong. God's word teaches that these individuals are innocent of sin (read Deuteronomy 1:39; Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 18:1-4). Therefore, because they have no sin and have not been separated from God, they will go to Heaven.

While those who have not sinned will go to Heaven, the Bible teaches that everyone who has reached an age of personal accountability has sinned. Romans 3:23 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Now, Paul is writing in the context of those who are morally responsible, demonstrating that both Jews and Gentiles were guilty of sin. Then, as we have already seen, this sin will keep people out of Heaven (Romans 6:23). The only way salvation is possible for these individuals is through the grace and mercy of God! Although the "wages of sin is death...the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Titus 2:11 says that "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." This grace has been made available. However, God has placed certain requirements on mankind to be saved. Hebrews 5:9 says that Jesus Christ became "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

Now, please briefly consider what it is that God requires of you in order to be saved from your sins and spend eternity in Heaven. (1) God says that you must hear His word (Romans 10:17; Acts 18:8). (2) God says that you must believe in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Romans 10:9-10). (3) God says that you must repent of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30). (4) God says that you must confess Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). (5) God says that you must be baptized (immersed in water) for the forgiveness of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Upon being obedient to these instructions, God says that you are a Christian, are forgiven of your sins, and are in a "saved" condition.

However, the Bible does *not* teach the doctrine of "once saved, always saved." That is, the Bible does *not* teach that once you are saved you can never sin so as to be eternally lost or fall from God's grace. Instead, God requires that you remain faithful to Him throughout your earthly life in order to receive the crown of life in Heaven (Revelation 2:10). In addition, the Bible directly teaches that those who sin after becoming Christians must repent of their sin, confess their sin to God, and ask God for forgiveness (Acts 8:14-24; 1 John 1:8-2:2) – or they will fall from God's grace (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 10:26-39).

Now that we have considered the basics of what the Bible teaches concerning those who will go to Heaven, let's spend just a moment to observe a couple of points about those who will *not* go to Heaven. Those who die while living in their sins will *not* go to Heaven. Galatians 5:19-21, for instance, says that those who practice the "works of the flesh" will "not inherit the kingdom of God." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 demonstrates that those who "do not know God" and "those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" will "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Then, Matthew 7:21-23 even teaches that there will be many religious people who professed Christ as "Lord" and did many wonderful works in His name, who will be lost because they had not been obedient to God's will!

You Can Trust In God's Promises

Now that you have seen what God has said about who will (and who will not) go to Heaven, you know that it is possible for you to spend eternity there – if you will do what He requires of you. So, now the question becomes one of how much do you trust the promises God has made? If you trust in His promises, you can have confidence in salvation. However, if you do not trust in His promises, you cannot have confidence in salvation.

Please understand that God *cannot* lie! Titus 1:2 says that God “cannot lie.” Hebrews 6:18 says that it is “impossible for God to lie.” Remember, God is completely holy and is separated from everything that is evil. Therefore, God cannot be involved in anything that is not true! Instead, the Bible teaches that God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13). This means that whenever God says anything, you can have full confidence that it will happen just as He has said! In John 17:17, Jesus said that God’s word is “truth.” So, whenever you read about the things God requires for salvation (in the passages we’ve already considered), you can place your complete confidence in what He says!

Take a moment to consider how Paul had complete confidence in God based on the promises God had made. In 2 Timothy 1:12, Paul expresses His complete confidence in God – so much that he was willing to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ and be put to death for Him. He says, “For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” Later in the same letter, consider what he wrote (as he, evidently, believed that he was nearing the end of his physical life), “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Earlier in Paul’s life (during one of his imprisonments), Paul expressed similar confidence when he said that dying would be “gain” and that he had a “desire to depart and be with Christ” (Philippians 1:21-23). Surely, Paul knew that he had been living according to God’s instructions and had confidence in the promises of salvation God had made!

In addition to these examples of confidence in the apostle Paul, consider how the Scriptures teach that Christians ought to possess great joy and peace. In Philippians 4:4, Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” Then, in Philippians 4:6-7, he says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” This is just a sample of passages to demonstrate the joy and peace with God that should be experienced by the Christian. Now, please consider: How could the Christian possibly have true joy and experience true peace if he/she could not be confident he/she would go to Heaven? This would be a life of constant turmoil and inner struggle!

Beware Of Self-Deception

As you learn of the confidence of salvation God gives you the opportunity to experience, please be aware of the danger of self-deception. Many people have confidence that they will go to Heaven. However, they will actually be lost because their confidence was not based on the truth.

Consider Matthew 7:21-23 (referenced earlier in this lesson). Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

On the Day of Judgment, Jesus clearly indicates that there will be many people who will claim to have followed Him, having professed Him as “Lord” and having done many wonderful works in His name. However, because they had not obeyed the will of the Heavenly Father, they will be condemned to Hell – because they were living in sin!

Other Scriptures also warn about the danger of self-deception. Galatians 6:7-8 encourages you to remember that you will reap according to what you sow. Therefore, you should not be deceived so as to think that God will not hold you accountable for the things you do while living on this earth. Also, James 1:22-25 warns that those who are only hearers of God’s word (and not doers) deceive themselves. They think they are pleasing to God because they know the right things; however, they fail to please Him because they do not obey Him.

Therefore, if you are not actually obeying God and you are still living in your sins, you cannot have confidence in salvation. Actually, if this is the case, you can have confidence that you will *not* be saved (according to the promises God has made). Do not deceive yourself! Make sure your confidence in salvation is based on an accurate understanding of God’s word and is accompanied by your full obedience to His instructions!

Conclusion

Yes, you can know that you will go to Heaven – if you are carefully searching the Scriptures to learn God’s will and being obedient to it! However, if you are failing to gain an accurate understanding of God’s word or if you are failing to be obedient to it, you will not be saved.

Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

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