

ARE YOU HEAVEN-BOUND?

To those students that will soon be completing their studies in high school or a university, we often say, “What are your plans after you graduate?” In a similar fashion, we frequently inquire of those men and women that will soon be retiring from their job, “What are you going to do after you retire?”

Some of us may never graduate from a high school or university, and others of us may never retire from a job. But there is one thing that all of us will do: one day you and I will leave this world. Mark it down: we will not live on this earth forever. Some day our “departure” will come. What then? What do you plan to do after you leave this world? Our “out-of-this-world” plans are a whole lot more important than any other plans that we might ever consider!

Do you plan to go to heaven after your life on earth is over? Wouldn't any right-thinking person want to be in heaven for eternity? Surely so! Heaven is an uncontaminated place where the faithful of all ages will be together with the Godhead forevermore. What a wonderful thought! It could not get any better than that!

The Bible tells us who prepared heaven, what heaven is like, and yes, how to get there. Jesus' disciples once asked Him, “*Who then can be saved?*” His response was, “*With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible*” (Matthew 19:25,26). Would you not agree that the most important topics that any human being could ever contemplate are being saved in this life and going to heaven after this life is over?

Are you heaven-bound? Regardless of how you answer, we would ask, “What makes you think so? What is there that convinces you that you either are, or are not, going to heaven?” Would you do this? Would you with an open mind look at what the Bible says about salvation, then be courageous enough to accept what God's word says on this vital subject? We have some serious questions to present, and we sincerely want to examine the Bible's answers to them.

Will every person go to heaven? The Bible affirms that by the grace of God, Jesus tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). Yes, “. . . *the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*” (Titus 2:11). This, however, does not mean that all people will be saved eternally. You see, Jesus said that while the righteous will go into life eternal, others “*shall go away into everlasting punishment*” (Matthew 25:46). The Master said that many are travelling the path to destruction, but few are taking the way to life (Matthew 7:13,14). According to the Bible, no, not every person will go to heaven.

Will every “good moral person” go to heaven? Just who is “a good moral person?” People have different ideas about morality. “I mean a good moral person according to what most people in society would think – don't steal, don't murder, don't harm your neighbor, those kinds of things.” While it is true that the Bible plainly teaches that God wants us to refrain from these types of activities, there is a truth about morality that the whole world needs to learn: good morality can never solve the problem of sin. Good morality cannot wash away even one sin, let alone a lot of them! God's word says, “*For all men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). Because of this, all men stand in need of salvation or redemption. Being a good moral person is not the cure for any sins that we have committed. Sins can be washed away only by the blood of Jesus, of Whom it is written, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). If a “good moral person” has not had his sins washed away by Jesus' blood, then he is still lost. According to the Bible, no, not every “good moral person” will go to heaven.

Will every religious person go to heaven? Please consider an example from the book of Acts that answers this question. Acts 2 records that on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, “*devout men out of every nation under heaven*” were gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1,5). These were very religious people. Many had traveled from

far away places just to be able to worship the Lord. In his sermon that day, the apostle Peter told those that were assembled, “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . .*” (Acts 2:38). Those “devout” Jews were religious people, alright, but they still needed to repent and be baptized in order to have their sins forgiven. This clearly shows that they were still lost, even though they were religious. There is no doubt that all heaven-bound people are religious folks, yet according to the Bible, no, not every religious person will go to heaven. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6). The only way to heaven is through Jesus and His plan.

Will every person that believes in God go to heaven? The Bible says, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (Hebrews 11:6). While this verse certainly shows that it is necessary to believe in God's existence, it does *not* state that believing in God guarantees that a person is saved and headed to heaven. Maybe someone will think, “God is in my heart, so that is good enough.” Be honest, now. Who told you that all a person has to do is to believe in God? Did you ever read that in the Bible? No, God's word doesn't teach such. Do you remember the kind of life that the apostle Paul (formerly known as Saul of Tarsus) lived before he became a follower of Jesus? He persecuted Christians, sometimes to the point of death. He said himself that all the while he did so, he “*was zealous toward God*” (Acts 22:3) and zealous in the ways of the Jews' religion (Galatians 1:13,14). Paul believed in God alright, yet he was lost! We know that this is true because later he was told to be baptized in order to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). What does this example show us? According to the Bible, no, not every believer in God will go to heaven.

Will every believer in Jesus go to heaven?

Jesus said that a person that does not believe in Him as the Son of God or the Christ is condemned and will die in his sins (John 3:18; 8:24). What is the point? Believing in Jesus as God’s Son is absolutely mandatory in order to be saved. Does that mean, then, that each person that calls Jesus “Lord” is definitely going to make it to heaven? Listen to what Jesus said: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 7:21). So, just crying out “Lord, Lord,” is not enough, is it? The Bible also tells us of those in the 1st century that *“believed on him [Jesus]; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:42,43). What did they do? They believed on Jesus. Yet what? They would not confess Him. What about people that are ashamed of Jesus? The following words of Jesus provide an answer to that question: *“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words . . . of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels”* (Mark 8:38). According to the Bible, no, not every person that believes in Jesus will go to heaven.

Will every “church member” or “churchgoer” go to heaven? If you say, “Yes,” then I would ask: Who said so? Where did you read that idea in the Bible? Friends, the Bible teaches no such thing. The Bible records that Jesus promised, *“I will build my church”* (Matthew 16:18). Not “churches,” but “church.” Not “the church of your choice,” but “my church.” Not “one of many good churches,” but “my church.” The Bible further says that the Lord purchased His church *“with his own blood”* (Acts 20:28). What did Jesus buy with His blood? His church. Not “churches,” but “church.” Of what is Jesus the head? *“Christ is the head of the church”* (Ephesians 5:23). Not

“churches,” but “church.” The church is Jesus’ spiritual body. How many bodies does He have? The Bible says, *“There is one body”* (Ephesians 4:4). The meaning? There is one church – that is, one church that Jesus built, one that He bought, and one over which He rules as head. And what does Jesus do for the church or body? *“And he is the savior of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23). Jesus is the Savior of what? Of His body or church. Not “bodies,” but “body.” The Lord Jesus said, *“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up”* (Matthew 15:13). Any religious organization or any “church” that the Lord God did not establish is man-made! If it is not **from** the Lord, then its members are not **with** the Lord, and are not going **to** the Lord. According to the Bible, no, not every “church member” or “churchgoer” will go to heaven.

Who, then, will go to heaven? Saved people. Saved people in the Christian era (from the beginning of Jesus’ church until He comes again) are those that are in the Christ. The Bible says that salvation is in Jesus the Christ (2 Timothy 2:10). At the same time, the Bible says that the Lord adds saved people to His church (Acts 2:47). Thus, what a person must do in order to get into the Christ is the same that he must do to get into the Lord’s body. What must one do in order to be saved from past sins? After hearing the gospel, one must believe that Jesus is God’s Son (Romans 10:17; John 3:16-18), then repent of every sin (Acts 3:19), confess faith in Jesus (Romans 10:10), then be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Water baptism is the final act that puts one into the Christ, where salvation is located (Romans 6:3,4). After baptism, one must faithfully serve the Lord by continuing to follow His teaching (1 Corinthians 15:58).

God wants all people to be saved. It’s up to you where you will be throughout eternity. Are you heaven-bound? May we help you to be?

Union Grove church of Christ
4889 Bates Pike SE www.ugcoc.org
Cleveland, TN 37323 TEL: (423)-479-8307

Service Times: Sunday at 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

This tract was written by Roger D. Campbell.

**ARE
YOU
GOING
TO
HEAVEN?**

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, **reserved in heaven** for you” (1 Peter 1:4).

“For we know that . . . we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, **eternal in the heavens**” (2 Corinthians 5:1).