

What is the Gift of Heaven?

Throughout the ages, men and women have fantasized and theorized about the nature of heaven. If there is an all-powerful God, a God that has the power to create everything you see, then this God clearly has the power to be perfect. Think about it. An all-powerful God is perfect by definition. We too, therefore, would have to be perfect in order to enter into the realm of such a Holy God. Every faith system on the planet recognizes this reality and tries it's best to establish a path toward perfection.

But you and I have a problem. No matter how you and I try, we just can't be perfect. We're not even close to perfect, and if you're honest with yourself, you know that you're not getting all that close to perfection. And remember, God's Kingdom is a Kingdom of PERFECTION. You want to be with God someday? Then you better make perfection your goal!



No One Is Really Good

So many of us, in the years before we ever really believe that there is a God, will find ourselves saying something like, "Hey, if there is a God and a Heaven, I should be OK; after all, I'm a good person!" But if there is a God, then his Holy Habitat is far better than our 'good'. And in a place like this, our 'good' is terribly deficient. I don't care how good we think we are, we really aren't all that great, especially if God's standard of perfection is what we are shooting for. The Bible says:

'No one is good - no one in all the world is innocent. No one has ever really followed God's paths or even truly wanted to.' (Romans 3:10-12)



Everyone Makes Mistakes

Every day you and I do little things that we know are wrong. If we're trying to earn our way to heaven, these little obstacles are devastating because they will ALWAYS prevent us from perfection, the one requirement for entry into the Eternal Kingdom! Even these 'little errors and mistakes' are called 'sins', and everyone misses the mark of perfection once in a while. Most of us miss the target much more than that. Every time you get angry when you're not supposed to, lust after someone, or do something else that you know is wrong, you are sinning! The Bible says:

'Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal.' (Romans 3:23)



Sin Has A Consequence

Now that's not the way that God wanted it for us. That was not part of his original plan. In fact, God wanted us to live a perfect life without sin. He wanted us to live forever with Him in a place where only perfection is allowed (we call this heaven). But starting with the first man, Adam, we humans have just continued to make mistake after mistake. The Bible says:

'When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. his sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned.' (Romans 5:12)



Sin Results in Death

Sadly, there is a penalty for sin. No kidding, you shouldn't be all that surprised. There are always penalties that have to be paid when we do what we know is wrong. You and I can both understand that. When you blow it, you pay the price. Do you know what the price is for our sin? It's death. Sounds terrible, doesn't it? It sounds pretty harsh, but it's the plain truth. Sin is the reason why all of us humans don't live forever. The Bible says:

'For the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23)



But God Does Want Us to Come Home

So if God and Heaven are perfect, and we are so fallen, how in the world are we ever going to get to live with Him when we die? Well, there is some really good news. God has a plan for us, and that's why he sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. God sent Jesus to pay the penalty of death so we wouldn't have to. Jesus lived a perfect life and was without sin. He was, and is, God Himself in human form. He didn't have to die, but He died on the cross, and He did it for us. He doesn't want you to try to add your own good deeds back to His sacrifice. Your works are meaningless to a perfect God, but the free Gift that Jesus offers is priceless. The Bible says:

'But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners' (Romans 5:8)



There is a Way Home

God knows that there is nothing you can do to save yourself. All your good deeds and works simply don't impress the holy God of the universe. He's been there and done that. In fact, God is deeply offended when you won't admit that your work doesn't matter. He is offended when you won't simply accept the free gift of salvation. He's offended when you try to play God and earn your own way to heaven. After all He did on that cross, why would you deny Him and try to work your own way into God's presence? He simply wants you to believe and take the gift of grace He is offering you. The Bible says:

'Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved' (Romans 10:13)



Just Accept the Gift

Don't try to add anything to the free gift. Don't go out now and think you can earn it all over again. Cults step away from the truth when they add good works or deeds to the free gift of God. You can spot the lie coming at a distance if you just look at this one issue. Do they say that I have to DO something to be saved, other than simply accept the free gift of salvation that God is offering me? The one true God is too big to be impressed by anything other than your humble acceptance and admission that He alone can do ALL the work of saving you. The Bible says:

'For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord and believe in your own heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God; and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation' (Romans 10:9-10)

So, what are you waiting for? Why are you still trying to earn favor with God through good works or proper behavior? Hey if you surrender your life to Jesus, if you recognize the incredible offer He is making you, if you are truly saved, then your gratitude will certainly be reflected in a new set of behaviors! These will be the natural overflow of a surrendered and grateful heart, but remember, all this good behavior never had the ability to save you! If you haven't asked Jesus to come into your life and do everything that it takes to save you, replacing your dirtiness with His Righteousness; if you haven't told God how you feel, now is the perfect time. In your own words, in your own prayer right now, tell him that you believe and are willing to stop your own efforts and surrender to Him. Tell him you are willing to live a new life as a child of God. And by the way, welcome to God's family!