

Approximately 30 minutes Topical



HOW CAN I KNOW I AM GOING TO HEAVEN?



Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lord, this is one of the most important questions anyone can ask: “How can I know I am going to heaven?”

There may be someone listening who gave their life to Christ many years ago but now struggles with doubt. There may be someone who has drifted away from You. And there may be someone who has never truly surrendered their life to you, Jesus.

Father, speak clearly through Your Word today. Remove fear and confusion. Help us understand that salvation is not based upon our emotions, our good works, or our religious accomplishments. Salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone.

Open our hearts and give us understanding.

In Jesus' name, amen.

★ INTRODUCTION: CAN I REALLY KNOW?

Have you ever asked yourself:

“If I died today, would I go to heaven?”

- Maybe you gave your life to Christ when you were young.
- Maybe you remember praying a prayer.
- Maybe you were baptized.

- Maybe you grew up in church.

But then life happened.

Years passed. You made mistakes. You sinned.

Maybe you even drifted away from the Lord for a season.

And now a question has entered your mind:

“Am I really saved?”

Maybe even:

“Am I going to heaven, or could I still end up in hell?”

👉 That is a serious question.

But thankfully, God does not leave us guessing.

The Bible teaches that we can know where we stand with God.

- Our assurance does not come from how religious we feel.
- It does not come from how perfect our life has been.
- It comes from the promises of God and from what Jesus Christ has done for us.

So today we are going to answer one simple question:

How can I know I am going to heaven?

★ **1. WE MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND OUR PROBLEM**

Before we can understand salvation, we must understand why we need it.

★   (NIV) **Romans 3:23 says: *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,***

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¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 3:23–24.

Notice the word: **All.**

That includes every one of us.

Sin means that we have fallen short of God's perfect standard.

Some people say:

"But I'm a good person."

Maybe you are a good neighbor.

Maybe you work hard.

Maybe you help people.

Those are good things.

But good works cannot erase sin.

  (NIV) **Romans 6:23** says: ***For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***²

² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 6:23.

Sin produces death and separation from God.

But the second half of that verse gives us hope.

There is a gift.

And that gift is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

★ 2. HEAVEN CANNOT BE EARNED

Many people think heaven works like a scale.

- Good deeds on one side.
- Bad deeds on the other.

And hopefully the good outweighs the bad.

But that is **not** what the Bible teaches.

  (NIV) **Ephesians 2:8-9** says: **⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it**

is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.³

Salvation is a gift.

You cannot earn a gift.

If we could save ourselves by being good enough, then Jesus never needed to die.

But Jesus went to the cross because we could not save ourselves.

He took our sin upon Himself.

He received the judgment we deserved.

That is grace.

👉 Grace says: **“You cannot save yourself, but Jesus can save you completely.”**

★ **3. JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY**

³ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Eph 2:8–9.

Our world often says:

“All roads lead to God.”

But Jesus did not teach that.

In   (NIV) ***John 14:6***, Jesus said:⁶ ***Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”***⁴

  Jesus did **not** say:

“I am a way.”

   He said: **“I am the way.”**

Why?

Because Jesus is the only One who died for our sins and rose again.

- Religion cannot save us.
- Church membership cannot save us.
- Baptism cannot save us.

⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 14:6.

- Our family's faith cannot save us.

👉 Only Jesus Christ can save.

📖 + (NIV) **Acts 4:12** says: ***Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.***⁵

Christianity is not simply about becoming religious.

It is about being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

★ **4. WHAT DID JESUS DO FOR US?**

The heart of the gospel is the cross and the resurrection.

📖 + (NIV) **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** says: ***For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our***

⁵ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 4:12.

sins according to the Scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,⁶

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day.”

Jesus died **for our sins**.

He took our place.

At the cross Jesus paid the price for everything we have ever done wrong.

In   (NIV) ***John 19:30***, Jesus said:

³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.⁷

 ***“It is finished.”***

The debt was paid.

⁶ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Co 15:3–4.

⁷ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 19:30.

- The sacrifice was complete.
- Nothing needed to be added.
- Then three days later Jesus rose from the grave.
- Jesus defeated sin.
- Jesus defeated death.
- Jesus defeated the grave.

So when we ask:

“How can I know I am going to heaven?”

We begin here:

Jesus has already done everything necessary to provide salvation.

★ **5. HOW DO I RECEIVE SALVATION?**

The Bible answers this clearly.

  (NIV) **Romans 10:9** says: **If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God**

raised him from the dead, you will be saved.⁸

Notice those words:

You will be saved.

Salvation involves genuine faith.

- It means placing your trust in Jesus Christ.
- It means believing that He died for your sins and rose again.
- It means turning from your old direction and turning toward Him.

Jesus said in **John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**⁹

Whoever believes.

⁸ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 10:9.

⁹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 3:16.

That means anyone can come.

- No matter your past.
- No matter how many mistakes you have made.
- No matter how far you have wandered.

👉 Jesus can save.

★ 6. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BORN AGAIN?

Jesus said in   (NIV) **John 3:3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”¹⁰**

Being born again is more than joining a church.

It is more than becoming religious.

¹⁰ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 3:3.

👉 It means God gives you new spiritual life.



(NIV)

2 Corinthians 5:17 says

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*¹¹**

When we come to Jesus, God begins changing us from the inside.

That does not mean we instantly become perfect.

- Christians still struggle.
- Christians still stumble.



But something has changed.

- There is now a desire for God.
- There is conviction over sin.
- There is a hunger for truth.
- There is a desire to follow Jesus.

¹¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 2 Co 5:17.

Salvation is not simply saying words.

   It is entering into a real relationship with Jesus Christ.

★ 7. BUT WHAT IF I STILL SIN?

This is where many Christians struggle with assurance.

They say:

“I believe in Jesus, but I still mess up.”

The Bible never says Christians become sinlessly perfect.

We are forgiven, but God is still changing us.

1 John 1:9 says *if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us*

our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.¹²

Christians still need to confess sin.

The difference is that the Holy Spirit does not allow us to become comfortable in rebellion.

- He convicts us.
- We confess.
- We repent.
- We get back up and keep following Jesus.

  Think about Peter.

Peter denied Jesus three times.

If salvation depended upon perfect performance, Peter would have been finished.

   But Jesus restored Peter.

¹² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Jn 1:9.

Your failure does not have to be your final chapter.

★ 8. CONVICTION IS NOT CONDEMNATION

This is important.

The Holy Spirit convicts.

The enemy condemns.

- Conviction says: **“That was wrong. Bring it to God.”**
- Condemnation says: **“You are hopeless. God is finished with you.”**
 - Conviction draws you toward Jesus.
 - Condemnation tries to drive you away.



(NIV)

Romans 8:1 says: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,¹³

Does God correct His children?

➤ Absolutely.

Can sin bring consequences?

➤ Yes.

But God does not throw away His children every time they stumble.

A loving Father corrects His children because they belong to Him.

★ **9. YOUR SALVATION IS NOT BASED ON FEELINGS**

- Some days you may feel close to God.
- Other days you may not.

¹³ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 8:1.

- Some days you may feel strong in your faith.
- Other days doubt may come.

  But feelings are not the foundation of salvation.

 God's Word is.

  (NIV) **1 John 5:11-12** says **¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**
¹⁴

The question is **not**:

“Do I feel saved today?”

The question is:

 **“Am I trusting Jesus?”**

¹⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Jn 5:11–12.

Feelings change.

God's promises do not.

★ 10. JESUS HOLDS THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIM

One of the greatest passages about assurance is found in John chapter 10.

Jesus said in   (NIV) ***John 10:27-28*²⁷ *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*²⁸ *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.*¹⁵**

That is powerful.

Sometimes we picture ourselves desperately trying to hold onto Jesus.

But Jesus says something better.

¹⁵ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 10:27–28.

He is holding us.

Our security is not found in how strong we are.

   It is found in how strong **He is**.

That does not mean we live carelessly.

A genuine follower of Jesus desires to follow Him.

But our confidence rests in Christ.

★ 11. HOW DO I KNOW MY FAITH IS REAL?

Scripture tells us to examine ourselves.

  (NIV) **2 Corinthians 13:5** says
⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you

**not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—
unless, of course, you fail the test?¹⁶**

**“Examine yourselves to see whether you
are in the faith.”**

So what do we look for?

Not perfection.

➤ But direction.

Ask yourself:

Do I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of
God?

Am I trusting His death and resurrection for
my salvation?

Do I desire to know Him?

When I sin, is there conviction in my heart?

Do I want to follow Jesus?

¹⁶ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 2 Co 13:5.

Do I see evidence that God is changing me?

👉 These things do not earn salvation.

😬 🔓 🔑 They are evidence that God is working in our lives.

📖 ✝️ (NIV) ***Ephesians 2:10 says ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. ¹⁷***

Good works are not the root of salvation.

👉 They are the fruit of salvation.

★ **12. WHAT IF I HAVE DRIFTED AWAY?**

Maybe you know you have drifted.

- You have not been praying.
- You stopped reading your Bible.

¹⁷ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Eph 2:10.

- You became distant from Christian fellowship.
- Maybe sin slowly took over areas of your life.



What should you do?



Come back.



(NIV)

James 4:8 says Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ¹⁸

- Do not let shame keep you away.
- Do not let the enemy tell you that you have been gone too long.
- 👉 Come back to Jesus.
- 👉 Confess what needs confessing.
- 👉 Open your Bible again.
- 👉 Begin praying again.
- 👉 Get around other believers again.

¹⁸ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jas 4:8.

- 👉 Start walking with Christ again.

Not to earn salvation.

😬 🔓 🔑 But because you belong to Him.

★ **13. DON'T KEEP TRYING TO SAVE YOURSELF AGAIN**

Some believers repeatedly pray the salvation prayer because they are terrified that they somehow lost salvation overnight.

They say:

“Jesus, please save me.”

Then they make a mistake.

So they pray again:

“Jesus, please save me.”

Then doubt comes:

“Maybe I didn’t mean it enough.”

Listen carefully.

The power is not in saying the perfect prayer.

   The power is in the perfect Savior.

  (NIV) **John 5:24** says ²⁴ **“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”**¹⁹

Notice:

 **Has eternal life.**

   Eternal life begins when we receive Christ.

So instead of constantly trying to resave yourself, learn to **trust the promises of God.**

¹⁹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 5:24.

★ 14. WHAT ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL?

The Bible clearly teaches that eternity is real.

- Heaven is real.
- Judgment is real.

But God has provided a way of salvation.

  (NIV) **John 3:17** says **¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ²⁰**

Jesus came on a rescue mission.

He came because God loves us.

So if someone asks:

²⁰ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 3:17.

  “How can I know I am going to heaven?”

The answer is not:

“Be good enough.”

The answer is:

 **Know Jesus Christ.**

★ **15. WHEN I STAND BEFORE GOD**

One day every one of us will stand before the Lord.

On that day, I do **not** want my confidence to be:

- “I preached sermons.”
- “I went to church.”
- “I helped people.”
- “I gave money.”

Those may be good things.

   But they cannot save me.

 My hope is Jesus.

- His cross.
- His resurrection.
- His righteousness.
- His grace.
- His finished work.

 That is my confidence.

The Christian does **not** say:

“I deserve heaven.”

The Christian says:

“Jesus saved me.”

INVITATION - YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

Maybe you are listening and realizing:

“I am not sure I have ever truly surrendered my life to Jesus.”

- Maybe you grew up in church.
- Maybe you were baptized.
- Maybe your family believed.

But salvation is personal.

   You must personally come to Jesus Christ.

Jesus said:

“You must be born again.” (John 3:3)

 Today can be the day.

You do not need to clean yourself up first.

- Come as you are.
- Admit that you are a sinner.
- Believe Jesus died for your sins.
- Believe He rose again.
- Turn from your old life.
- Put your faith in Him.

★   (NIV) **Romans 10:13** says **for,**
“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”²¹

If you want to receive Jesus Christ today,
you can pray from your heart:

 Let us Pray...

**“Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner....
I know I cannot save myself.... I believe
You died on the cross for my sins and
rose from the grave.... Please forgive
me.... I place my faith and trust in You....
Come into my life and be my Savior and
Lord.... Help me turn from my old life
and follow You.... Thank You for loving
me, forgiving me, and giving me eternal
life.... In Jesus’ name, amen.”**

The prayer itself does not save you.

²¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 10:13.

👉 Jesus saves you.

If you sincerely place your faith in Him,
begin walking with Him.

- Read His Word.
- Pray.
- Find Christian fellowship.
- Grow in your relationship with Jesus.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

So how can I know I am going to heaven?

👉 Because salvation rests upon Jesus Christ.

- Not my goodness.
- Not my emotions.
- Not my perfect performance.
- Jesus died for my sins.
- Jesus rose from the dead.

➤ And God promises eternal life to everyone who genuinely places their faith in Jesus.

- ✓ When doubts come, go back to Scripture.
- ✓ When your feelings tell you God has abandoned you, go back to Scripture.
- ✓ When the enemy reminds you of your past, remember the cross.



(NIV)

***Romans 8:38-39* says ³⁸ *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* ²²**

And remember the words of Jesus:

²² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 8:38–39.

John 10:28 “....I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish....”

Christian, keep your eyes upon Jesus.

- If you stumble, confess it.
- If you wander, return.
- If you doubt, go back to His promises.
- If you are afraid, remember the cross.

Your hope is not that you are strong enough to save yourself.

   Your hope is that **Jesus Christ is strong enough to save you completely.**

 And He is.



Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word.

Thank You that salvation is not something we earn.

Thank You for sending Jesus Christ to die in our place.

Thank You that He was buried and rose again.

Lord, for the believer struggling with doubt, give them assurance through Your Word.

Help us trust Your promises more than our feelings.

For anyone who has wandered, draw them back to You.

For anyone who has received Jesus today, help them grow strong in their faith and walk closely with You.

Father, help us never take salvation lightly.

Give us a desire to know You, obey You, serve You, and share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

And when our time on this earth is finished, may our confidence be found in Jesus alone.

Thank You for Your grace.

Thank You for Your mercy.

Thank You for eternal life.

In the precious name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

