

# Heaven – How to Get There

By Gary T. Panell

There is a bridge between Pasco and Kennewick in Washington. This bridge is high enough that several people have used it to commit suicide. One dark, rainy night, a young girl was disillusioned with what life had to offer, so she climbed over the railing on the bridge and plunged to the murky depths of the Columbia River. As she jumped, a person passing by saw her. Now the bridge is not as high as some, where you would die from the fall, but usually the person would drown after entering the water.

The person passing by was an experienced swimmer (by the way, also a Christian), and when he saw what the girl had done, he knew what he had to do. So over the side he went, plunging into the murky depths below. He managed to find the girl, which was a miracle in itself, since it was night and the river was swift. Then he held her afloat until some others had time to get a boat to them. As the girl was being lifted into the boat, her savior, exhausted from the time spent in the cold water, slipped out of the reach of the people in the boat, and to his death.

He had died to save a girl whom he did not even know. As my father-in-law related this story to me, I thought, this is what Christ did for us on the cross.

However, He knew what we were, sinners, but He still died to save us.

The most important decision you will ever make in your life is what you decided about how you get to heaven. If you die before you have the right answer to how to be saved, it will be too late. Hebrews 9:27 says, “And as it is appointed for me(n) to die once, but after this the judgment” You may have heard that there is a “purgatory” where people can cleanse or purge their sins, but this is not taught anywhere in the Bible. You can look from cover to cover and you will not find this taught at all!

So if once we die there is not a second chance, it makes it all that much more important that we know how to get to heaven now. Do you want to take a chance and end up in eternity separated from God forever? Far too many people listen only to their church to find the answer for the question about how to get to heaven. But what if your church is wrong?

When you stand before God, (and we will all stand before Him one day) will you say I “assumed” that my church had the right answer? Do you think this will satisfy God? He, no doubt, will reply, “I gave you a brain and a soul to use to search for the truth?!” Then if you are not truly right with God when that moment comes, He will say, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41)

One of the most popular beliefs about how to get to heaven is by being good. The Bible says that there is no one that is good enough to get into heaven. “As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one.’” (Romans 3:10) “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

I am so glad the Bible says: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23). If you want to spend eternity with God you must be born again! How do you become born again? Only Jesus’ answer can be trusted on such an important subject. “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:3, 7, 14-16)

You now have a choice. You can believe in Him like the one thief on the cross beside Jesus did, or you can be like the other thief that did not believe. The entire world falls into the side of the lost or the saved. You say, “What must I do to be saved?” Someone else in the Bible asked that question and they were told, “Believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31a) Then you need to repent of your sins. “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30, 31)

After this you will need to confess Jesus as LORD (GOD and Savior of your life). “But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:8-10)

Right now, will you pray this prayer? Father in heaven, I believe Jesus, your Son, was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I believe that your Son the LORD Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. I believe that He rose from the dead the third day. Right now I repent of my sins, and receive the Lord Jesus as my personal LORD and Savior. If you prayed that prayer, and really meant it, God heard you and He saved you. Now you know you are saved!

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