

HOW CAN I KNOW GOD? (Lesson #2)

This is the second of three lessons on the subject of knowing God. The first lesson emphasized how a person can know that he has eternal life, even before death (Philippians 1:21-23), and that each of us is guilty of sin and in no way deserving of heaven.

SALVATION IS NOT GAINED THROUGH HUMAN MERIT

Many people feel that salvation is gained through hard work. This is a very natural way of thinking since most of what we now possess comes through this method. There is nothing wrong with hard work and living a good life, in fact, it is to be commended. But the question is: Will these efforts help us to gain salvation?

1. Some say that salvation is earned by good works. What does Ephesians 2:8-9 say?

2. Some say that salvation is merited by keeping the commandments. What does Romans 3:20 say?

3. According to Romans 3:20, what is the purpose of the law?

4. Some say if they live a good life, Heaven will be theirs. How many are good according to Jesus in Matthew 19:17?

The Bible is simply saying that our lives are characterized by sin. Our self-effort never takes away our sins. In fact, even our best works are normally influenced by selfish motives. (Read Ephesians 2:3.) If it were possible to be good enough to gain heaven, what would be the purpose of Christ's death on the cross? Would it be necessary?

SALVATION IS GAINED BY FAITH IN THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

1. What burden did Jesus bear on the cross? (1 Peter 2:24)
2. For what did Christ die? (1 Corinthians 15:3)

3. Read Hebrews 10:12 (this verse is speaking about Jesus Christ.)
How many times was Christ crucified?

How long will that sacrifice be effective?

4. The Apostles clearly taught about Christ's death (Acts 2:23), but what else did they teach about? (Acts 2:24)

Acts 2:36 says, "...God has made that same sacrifice Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." The Father clearly accepted the sacrifice endured by the Son, this was proven by the resurrection and ascension. The Good News (Gospel) could now be preached to the world (Luke 24:47, 48). Our Lord's actions made salvation possible, so let us consider how a person receives this salvation.

5. Paul was asked in Acts 16:30, "...what must I do to be saved?" (Saved means to obtain salvation or eternal life.) What was Paul's response in Acts 16:31?

The word *believe* means to trust or rely upon completely.

6. What does John say is necessary in order to have eternal life?

John 3:16 _____

John 5:24 _____

John 11:25 _____

Again, believe means to trust. Many people trust various things to obtain eternal life: good works, keeping the law, going to church, being baptized, loving their neighbor, believing in God, or any combination of these. For one to truly believe (trust) in Christ, that person must remove his trust from whatever he feels will get him to Heaven and place all of his trust in Christ alone to save him.

7. How does one actually put his trust in Christ? (Romans 10:13)

What is God's promise to one who obeys this verse?

Is this promise effective for everyone who obeys it?

8. Do you think the man in Luke 23:42 was placing his trust in Christ?

9. What was Christ's promise to him in verse 43?

10. Do you think this man is in Heaven today?

Do you think you could gain entrance into paradise by doing the same as the man in Luke 23:42? (Read Romans 10:13 again.)

Why not put your trust in Christ now?

The Bible makes salvation a very simple matter. We are lost in our sins, but Christ came, took our place, and died for our sins. He arose from the dead and now offers eternal salvation to anyone who will simply place his trust in Christ alone. Therefore, anyone can respond and place his trust in Christ and receive eternal life now. There is no greater joy than knowing that you have eternal life!

Thank you for completing this second study. The third and final study will help you understand that once you have trusted Christ for salvation, it can never be taken away or lost.