

DOES GOD LOVE YOU?

Q. I sometimes wonder if He does love me. If He is a loving God, why is there so much suffering and sorrow in the world?

A. In His book called the Bible, God shows that our sins are the cause for all the suffering and sorrow. It is true that God reveals His love to the whole world, as we read in one of the most quoted verses in the Bible:

For God so [in this way] loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

This agrees with:

The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness. (Proverbs 15:9)

For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. (Psalms 1:6)

Q. But I am not wicked. I am a decent, moral person. Surely the good I have done in my life far outweighs whatever bad I have done. How can these verses apply to me?

A. By God's standard of righteousness even the most moral person is looked upon by God as a desperate sinner on his way to Hell. The Bible teaches that no one is good enough in himself to go to Heaven. On the contrary, we are all sinners, and we are all guilty before God.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:10-11)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

Q. If I am such a wicked person in God's sight, what will God do to me?

A. The Bible teaches that at the end of the world all the wicked will come under eternal punishment in a place called Hell.

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. (Deuteronomy 32:22-24)

Q. Oh, come on now! Hell is not real, is it? Surely, things are not that bad.

A. Indeed, Hell is very real, and things are that bad for the individual who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ as

Savior. The Bible makes many references to Hell, indicating it is both eternal and consists of perpetual suffering.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:49-50)

... the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

Q. That is terrible! Why would God create Hell?

A. Hell is terrible, and it exists because God created man to be accountable to God for his actions. God's perfect justice demands payment for sin.

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

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. (Matthew 12:36)

Q. Does that mean that at the end of the world everyone will be brought to life again to be judged and sent to Hell?

A. Indeed it does; that is, unless we can find someone to be our substitute in bearing the punishment of eternal damnation for our sins. That someone is God Himself, who came to earth as Jesus Christ to bear the wrath of God for all who believe in Him.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;

that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Q. Are you saying that if I trust in Christ as my substitute, as the One punished for my sins, then I will not have to worry about Hell anymore?

A. Yes, this is so! If I have believed in Christ as my Savior, then it is as if I have already stood before the Judgment Throne of God. Christ as my substitute has paid for my sins.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:36)

Q. But what does it mean to believe on Him? If I agree with all that the Bible says about Christ as Savior, then am I saved from going to Hell?

A. Believing on Christ means a whole lot more than agreeing in my mind with the truths of the Bible. It means that I have come to trust the whole Bible, God's law book to me. It also means that I have an on-going earnest desire to be obedient to the commands of the Bible. Thus I find I am truly happy when I am living like God instructs me in the Bible.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. (1 John 2:3)

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24)

Q. Are you saying that there is no way to escape Hell except through Jesus? What about other religions, including many that profess faith in Christ? Will their followers also go to Hell?

A. Yes, indeed. They cannot escape the fact that God holds us accountable for our sins. God demands that we pay for our sins. Other religions cannot provide a substitute to bear the sins of their followers. Christ is the only one who is able to bear our guilt and save us.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Q. Doesn't the Bible teach that I must attend church regularly and be baptized? Will these save me?

A. If possible, we should do these things, but they will not save us. No work of any kind can secure our salvation. Salvation is God's sovereign gift of grace, given according to His mercy and good pleasure. Salvation is, "Not of

works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:9)

Q. Now I am desperate. I do not want to go to Hell. What can I do?

A. You must remember that God is the only one who can help you. You must throw yourself altogether on the mercies of God. As you see your hopeless condition as a sinner, cry out to God to save you.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. (Luke 18:13)

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. (Acts 16:30-31)

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

Q. How can I believe on Christ if I know so little about Him?

A. Wonderfully, it is God Who saves us through the Lord Jesus and gives us the faith to believe on Him. You can pray to God that He will give you faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

God works particularly through the Bible to give us that faith. So, if you really mean business with God about your salvation, you should use every opportunity to hear and study the Bible, which is the only Word of God. In this brochure, all Bible verses are printed in *italic letters*. Give heed to them with all your heart.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

Q. Does this mean that I have to surrender everything to God?

A. Yes. When God has saved me, I will recognize that even though I did not deserve salvation, yet Jesus Christ in His great mercy and love has done all the work required for my salvation. Consequently, very humbly I will live a life that praises and thanks Him for my salvation.

...Saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. (Isaiah 66:2b)

We love our sins because we are sinners. Therefore, we can begin to pray to God for an intense hatred for our sins. We know that our sins are sending us to Hell.

Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. (Acts 3:26)

Q. I don't know if I am ready to do that. I need some time to think about it.

A. You might not have much time. For one thing, you

might not live to see tomorrow. What God said to the man who trusted in the things of this world, He could say to you, "... Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee:" (Luke 12:20)

Also, the Bible says that the end of the world is coming soon.

The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath. (Zephaniah 1:14-15a)

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. (James 5:8)

Q. Is the day of wrath and judgment really near? Can we know how close to the end of the world we might be?

A. Yes! It is near. God gives much information in the Bible which tells that we are very near the end of the world.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold... And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:12, 14)

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24)

Q. Besides being the time for Judgment Day, what else will happen at the end of the world?

A. Those who have trusted in Jesus as their Savior will be transformed into their glorious eternal bodies and will be with Christ forevermore.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Also, God will destroy the entire universe by fire and create new heavens and a new earth where Christ will reign with His believers forevermore.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter 3:10, 13)

Q. Why does God give us this warning?

A. Just as God warned ancient Nineveh that He was going to destroy that great city and He gave them forty days warning, the Bible also warns us that the end is very near.

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. (Jonah 3:4)

Q. What did the people of Nineveh do?

A. From the king on down, they humbled themselves before God, repented of their sins, and cried to God for mercy.

But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? (Jonah 3:8-9)

Q. Did God hear their prayers?

A. Yes. God saved the city of Nineveh from destruction.

Q. Can I still cry to God for mercy so that I will not come into judgment?

A. Yes. There is still time to become saved even though that time has become very short.

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: (Isaiah 55:6)

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. (Hebrews 2:3)

In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah. (Psalms 62:7-8)

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