

The most important
→ **Decision** ←
you will ever make
What do you think it is?

By Chris R. Losey
Clear View Books
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Many people believe the most important decision they will ever make will be:

- *Where to go to school*
- *Whom to marry*
- *What profession to seek*

The Bible teaches that the most important decision a person will ever make is:

Where he or she will spend eternity.

To understand this, let's start at the beginning...



The Bible teaches us what God is like. Among other things, He is:

- LOVING**—He loves unconditionally
- JUST**—He is fair in His dealings
- HOLY**—He is perfect and pure
- FORGIVING**—He is ready to forgive

In contrast, humans are often:

- UNLOVING**—They love conditionally
- UNJUST**—They are sometimes unfair in their dealings
- UNHOLY**—They are not perfect or pure
- UNFORGIVING**—They often hold grudges

The Bible says that God created humans in His own image. **What happened?**

HUMANS
are often...



- UNLOVING
- UNJUST
- UNHOLY
- UNFORGIVING

GOD
is always...



- LOVING
- JUST
- HOLY
- FORGIVING

To understand what happened, we must understand the following:

God made humans with special rational abilities far above other creatures. Animals and plants, on the other hand, operate by **CREATED DESIGN**; they do what they were designed to do. For example:

*Ants do not go on strike.....they just do the job.
Peach trees don't give apples.....they give peaches.*



God could have made humans like the animals to operate like robots, but He didn't. Why didn't He? The answer is, God wanted one creature to love Him just because the creature wanted to. A robot relationship would have been unfulfilling.

Just as one special ingredient in a good husband-wife relationship is that each one chooses to love the other, likewise, God wanted humans to **choose** to love Him because they wanted to, not because they had to.

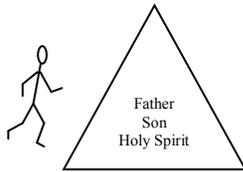
*What was the danger in giving humans the ability to **choose** whether or not to love and serve God?*

The answer is, they could choose not to love or serve Him...and sadly, that is what they did. Humans still make the same choice today. The Bible calls this **sin**.



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AT FIRST
Humans
fellowshipped
with God



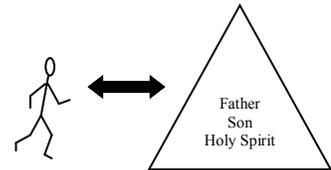
Original
state

THEN
Humans
chose to
sin



Sin entered and
fellowship was broken

NOW
Humans
are separated
from God



Present
state

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ISAIAH 59:2

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

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*“For **all** have sinned and **fall short** of the glory of God.”* Romans 3:23

Everyone has sinned. To sin is to go against God. The root of the word means “to miss the mark.” Picture a target. God wants us to hit the target in every area of life, but we often fall short with the things we think, do, and say. Many times we know what is right, but choose the wrong anyway. This is sin.



Target

Sin causes our arrows to fall short of the target

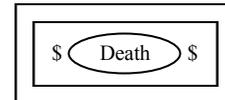
Life's Arrows
Thoughts, words, deeds

The Bible also teaches, *“For the **wages** of sin is **death**...”* Romans 6:23

Just as people get paid a certain wage for a job, so God pays a wage for sin...DEATH. A person's sin causes him to be spiritually dead, separated from God. The wage for a “little” sin is the same as for a “big” one. To God, sin is sin. Because God is holy, He can't have sin around him. To illustrate this, consider a hospital operating room. It needs to be clean. No amount of crud is allowed on a surgeon's scalpel. Likewise, Heaven is clean (holy), and God does not allow human sin in His presence.



Humans earn a wage for SIN. That wage is death.

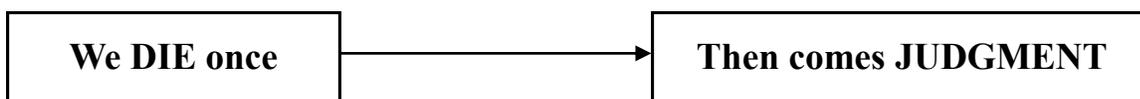


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In addition, the Bible teaches that we will **DIE** physically and then be **JUDGED**.

*“And inasmuch as it is **appointed** for man to **die once** and after this comes **judgment**.”* Hebrews 9:27

The Bible leaves no room for reincarnation. It clearly teaches that after a person dies, the next step is judgment by God.



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Summary



1. All have sinned
Romans 3:23
2. The wages of sin is death
Romans 6:23
3. After death comes
judgment - *Hebrews 9:27*

Isaiah 59:2
Sin separates
us from God.

*If a man dies and nothing has been done to remove his sin, at judgment he will be faced with **eternal separation** from God in Hell.*

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Mankind has tried to reach out to God in many ways. The religions of the world are evidence of this. People in every part of the world have what might be called “a God-consciousness,” and try to connect with God in ways they think are right. Some worship idols, some worship planets, some worship the God of the Bible, and some worship other gods of their own making. Assuming for a moment that God exists, if you had to stand before Him right now, and He asked you,

“Why should you be allowed to enter Heaven?”



What would you say?

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Here are some **COMMON REASONS** people give for why they should be allowed to enter Heaven when they die. They say:

I’m basically a good person and have tried to do what is right...

I lived a good, moral life. I was better than many people...

I served my country and was a responsible citizen...

I was a good parent and took care of my family...

I went to church and even read my Bible...

Isn’t everyone going to Heaven???

I treated people fairly...

Which of the above reasons do you think would be **ACCEPTABLE** to God? 13

None of the reasons would be acceptable. Every reason people give for why they should be allowed to enter Heaven fits into one of four categories. God’s Word, the Bible, has a response for each category showing why it is unacceptable.

Category #1—Good Works

Some people say, “I should be allowed to enter Heaven because I tried to do the best I could in my life. I know I’m not perfect, but I’m a lot better than many people. I helped people in need and gave money to worthwhile causes. I was a good citizen. I took care of my family...”

WORKS = Doing good things

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Response #1—Here’s why good works will not get a person into Heaven

There is no doubt that God wants us to do good deeds. **Ephesians 2:10** states that we were created to do them. On the other hand, **Ephesians 2:8,9** makes it clear that good works will not get anyone into Heaven. If we could get to Heaven because of our good works, we could boast about it. No one will boast before God.

Ephesians 2:8,9—“*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a free gift of God, not as a result of works that no one should boast.*”

Works will not get a person into Heaven

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Category #2—Religion

Some people say, “I should be allowed to go to Heaven because I’m a religious person. I go to church. I even read my Bible and pray. I give money to the church and support my church leaders.”



Religion = Doing religious things

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Response #2—Why religion will not save a person

There is no doubt that God wants us active in church and related activities, but these will not save us. They are religious works, and we have already seen that **works** will not save a person. Therefore, reading one's Bible, going to church, praying, giving, or doing other religious things does not fulfill God's requirement for entrance into Heaven.

Religion will not get a person into Heaven

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Category #3—Philosophy

Some people say, "I should be allowed to go to Heaven because I think, in the end, we will all make it. Since God is loving, everything will work out if I do what 'I' feel is right. God will accept that. If He doesn't, then He's unfair."

Various Unbiblical Philosophies—Mankind is the ultimate source of authority in the universe. People are the result of random evolutionary processes. There is no God, thus there is no absolute morality. Humans can choose to do whatever they want. Humans must determine right and wrong. This will change as culture changes.

Philosophy = A way of looking at life

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Response #3—Why philosophy will not save a person

No matter what view a person has of life, his problem according to the Bible is sin. Until that problem is eliminated, a person will not be saved. Philosophies do not take away sin. The following verses make this clear.

Romans 6:23—*"For the wages of sin is death..."* **Proverbs 14:12**—*"There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death."* **Colossians 2:8**—*"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."*

Philosophy will not get a person into Heaven

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Category #4—Morality

Some people say, “I should be allowed to go to Heaven because I’ve lived a clean life. I don’t have bad habits or run around with people who do. By living this kind of lifestyle I think that God will accept me.”



Some people’s life checklist:

- ___ *Don’t smoke*
- ___ *Don’t drink*
- ___ *Don’t run with the wrong crowd...*



Morality = Living a clean life

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Response #4—Here’s why morality won’t save a person

There is no doubt that God wants us to live moral lives. The problem is that none of us can. We may live morally most of the time, and that’s good; but we will all sin sometime. Scripture teaches that even one sin makes us guilty before a holy God. Thus trying to gain salvation through morality won’t work.

Romans 3:23—“*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*”

James 2:10—“*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*”

Morality will not get a person into Heaven

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Summary

Every bridge that humans try to build to God falls short. None of us can reach God through his or her own efforts.

Works can’t save us!
Religion can’t save us!
Philosophy can’t save us!
Morality can’t save us!

All of mankind’s bridges break and leave him separated from God.

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Our efforts fall short



1. All have sinned
Rom 3:23
2. The wages of sin is death
Rom 6:23
3. After death comes judgment - *Heb 9:27*

Works

Religion

Philosophy

Morality

Isaiah 59:2
Sin separates us from God.

Does God love us even though we can't reach Him through our own efforts?

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Yes! God loves us no matter what!

Romans 5:8

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”



**God
loves
us!**

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Question

If we (*humans*) cannot bridge the gap to God (*which we can't*), and God still loves us (*which He does*), then who must bridge the gap between man and God?



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Answer—God must bridge the gap!

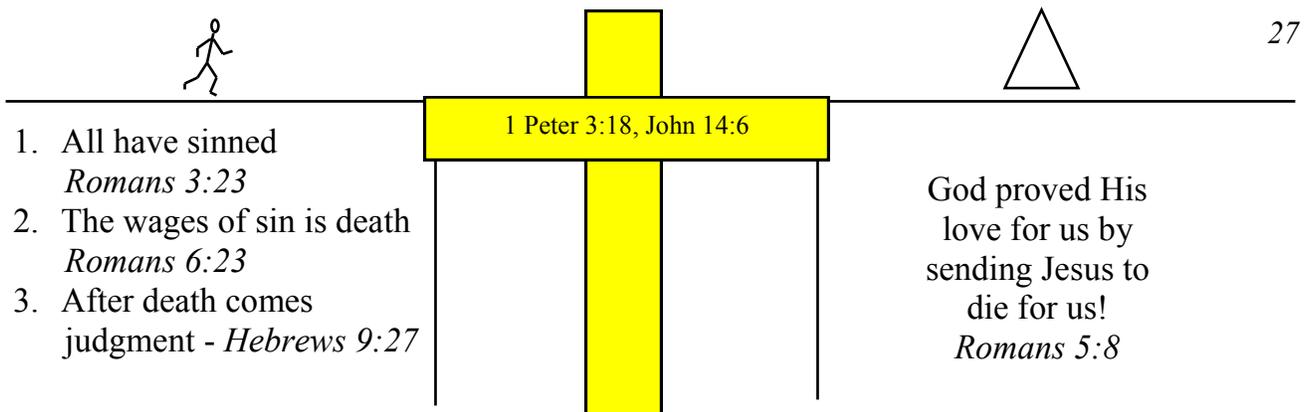
According to the following verses, who did God use to bridge the gap? He used Jesus!

1 Peter 3:18—“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.”

John 14:6—“Jesus said, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’”



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Just because Jesus bridges the gap, is everyone automatically going to heaven?

No! Entrance into heaven is not automatic. God’s requirement is found in John 3:16,

“For God—*the greatest Lover*
so loved—*the greatest love*
the world—*the greatest community*
that He gave—*the greatest act of giving*
His only begotten Son—*the greatest gift*
that whoever—*the greatest opportunity*
believes in Him—*the greatest simplicity*
shall not perish—*the greatest insurance*
but have—*the greatest assurance*
eternal life.”—*the greatest possession*



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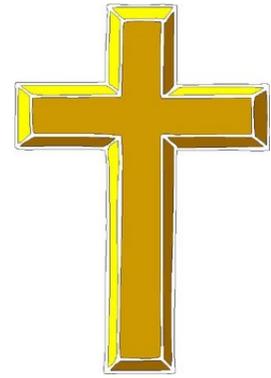
According to John 3:16, what did God do?

- He **loved** us...
- He **gave** us His Son...

According to John 3:16, what must people do in order to be saved?

- They must **believe!**

If all a person needs to do to be saved is “**believe,**” then it is essential to discover what it means to believe. What do you think it means?



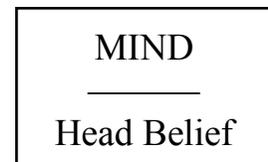
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What it means to BELIEVE...

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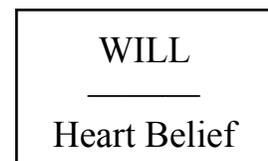
1. Intellectual Recognition

Recognizing in your mind who Christ is (*the Son of God*) and believing that He died for your sins on the cross and rose from the dead. This is having **HEAD** belief.

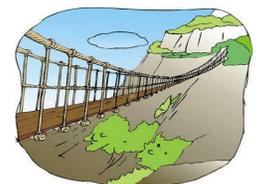


2. Personal Commitment

Putting your faith in Jesus as personal Lord and Savior by trusting and following Him. You ask Him to be your Savior (*the one who saves you from sin*), and Lord, (*the one who runs your life*). This is having **HEART** belief.



Here is a way to understand what it means to believe. A man could look at a rope bridge spanning a deep gorge and say, “I believe the bridge will hold me.” No matter what the man says, if he never gets on the bridge, he has only **believed in his HEAD** (*Intellectual Recognition*). To really believe in the bridge, he must walk across it. Only then has he **believed in his HEART** (*Personal Commitment*).



To believe in Christ, a person must go beyond intellect to personal commitment. The Bible makes it clear that Satan intellectually believes in God but will not be saved because he lacks personal commitment. He knows who Jesus is but chooses not to follow Him. Likewise, if a person only has an intellectual belief in Jesus, he will not be saved. He needs to believe in his head and his heart.

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Looking at the diagram on the opposite page, the question now is,

“Which side are you on?”

Are you:

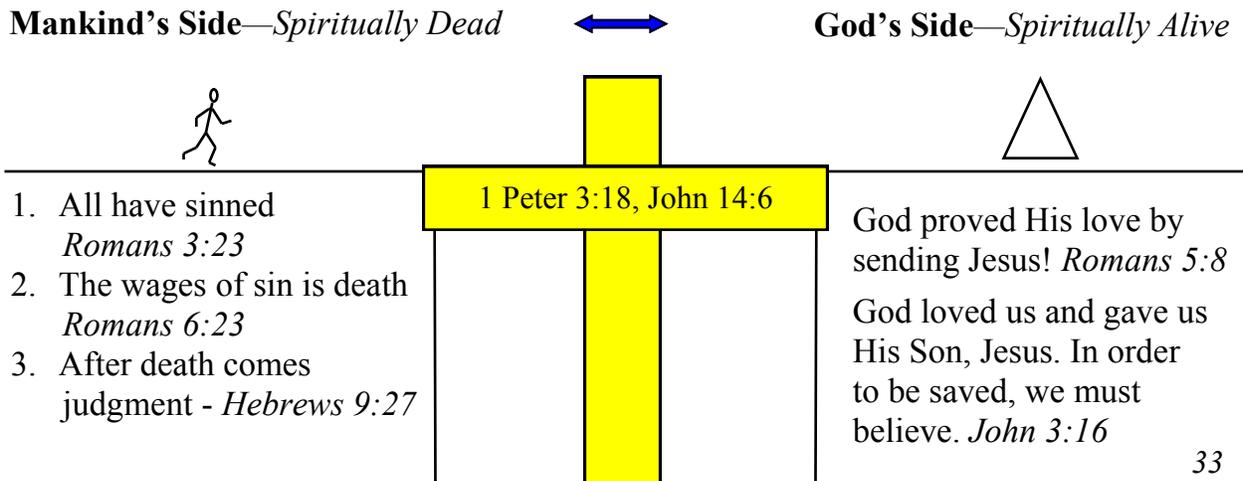
- **On mankind’s side**—still dead in your sin?

or are you:

- **On God’s side**—you have received Christ as Lord and Savior?

If you are still on mankind’s side, where would you like to be?

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If you are still on mankind’s side, but would like to be on God’s side, here is what you should know.

1. To **BELIEVE** on Christ is to **RECEIVE** Him as Lord and Savior.
John 1:12—“*But as many as RECEIVED Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who BELIEVE on His name.*”
2. If you want to **RECEIVE** Christ right now, you can do it through **PRAYER**.
Romans 10:9—“*If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*”

If you would like to receive Christ, please pray the prayer on the next page.

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The following prayer expresses a person's desire to receive Christ. You can pray the prayer right now and ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. Remember, God cares more about the attitude of your heart than the specific words you use.

The Prayer—“*God, I know that I am a sinner. I have done things that are wrong in thought, word, and deed. I know that because of my sin I deserve to be eternally separated from You. I believe that Jesus died for my sin on the cross and rose from the dead on the third day. I confess my sin, turn from it, and ask You to forgive me. I receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I ask Him to come into my life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Make me the person You want me to be. I place my faith and trust in You. Amen.*”



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If you prayed the preceding prayer and meant it, you are now a child of God. Congratulations! Your salvation does not depend on your feelings, but instead on the fact that God promised He would save you if you put your faith (trust) in Him. The following verses assure you of your salvation.



1 John 5:11-13—“*And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

Again, pray and thank God for what He has done for you! In addition, you are encouraged to tell someone soon about the decision you have made.

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You may wonder how to follow Christ and live a life that honors Him. Just as there are things you need to do to keep yourself **physically fit** (right food, enough sleep, proper exercise, less stress, etc.), so there are things to keep yourself **spiritually fit**. They are:

1. **The Bible**—Get a good Bible and begin to read and study it (2 Timothy 2:15).
2. **Prayer**—Pray to God often about whatever is on your heart (Ephesians 6:18).
3. **Worship**—Find a good church and worship there regularly (Hebrews 10:25).
4. **Fellowship**—Spend time with other Christians from your church (Acts 2:42).
5. **Trust & Obey**—Trust what God says (Proverbs 3:5,6). Do what is right (James 1:22).
6. **Serve**—Find a place in your church where you can serve others (Ephesians 4:11,12).
7. **Give**—Give financially to your local church to advance the ministry (1 Corinthians 16:2).
8. **Share**—Share your faith as God gives the opportunity (Acts 1:8).

A great place to purchase Christian books and other resources is through www.cbd.com.

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The Christian life is not an easy life, but it is the best life. There will be challenges and temptations, but also there will be great joy and personal victories. Even though you will sin from time to time, don't ever forget that God loves you and is there to pick you up and clean you off. A verse to remember if you sin is 1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* May God richly bless you as you trust and follow Him.

If this tract has been helpful to you, please share it with a friend.