

DO ALL ROADS LEAD TO HEAVEN?

June 27 & 28, 2009

THE COMMON ASSUMPTION THAT MOST PEOPLE MAKE IS THAT GOOD PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN

- People say, “surely there is more than one way to get to heaven.”
- People say, “It’s not about your religion or your beliefs, just whether or not you’re good.”
- People say, “you don’t have to be perfect, just a good person.”
- People say, “God or a higher power will gather up all of the good people in this world and take them to heaven.”

WHY IT IS SO ATTRACTIVE TO BELIEVE THAT GOOD PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN

- Because it makes some sense that God would not want to limit people to just one way to get to him.
- Because it seems fair. Good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people (ex. Karma, reaping what you sow).
- Because you can make the cut. You’re a generally good person.
- Because it motivates you to do good stuff.
- Because it seems very consistent with the idea of a good God. A good God would want to gather all good people to be with Him.
- Just seems like practical common sense

THERE ARE MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH THE IDEA THAT GOOD PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN

- There is no clear standard of good and bad by which we can evaluate our progress.
 - ✓ Bible: There is no relationship in the bible between keeping God’s laws and spending eternity in heaven.

“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.”

Romans 3:23

“As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous— not even one.”

Romans 3:10

“For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.”

Romans 3:20

- ✓ Internal gauge or natural sense of right and wrong: There is no agreement or consensus either cross-culturally or historically on what “good” means.
- We don’t know how we are graded or how good is good enough.

- ✓ Like a job performance evaluation with no clear job description or work criteria.
- ✓ Like preparing for a test without knowing the subject matter, the type of examination, or the number of questions on the test.
- Makes a liar out of Jesus Christ.
 - ✓ Jesus taught that “bad people” go to heaven and “good people” don’t.

"But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!" **Matthew 5:20**

- ✓ Jesus didn’t teach that “good people” go to heaven; he taught that “forgiven people” go to heaven.

"One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!" But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise." **Luke 23:32, 43-44**

- ✓ Jesus clearly taught that forgiveness could only come through Him.

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me'." **John 14:6**

GOD HAS OPTED FOR FORGIVENESS RATHER THAN FAIRNESS

- God has gone beyond fairness in order to offer forgiveness.

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners." **Romans 5:6**

- Biblical Christianity is beyond fair because:
 - ✓ Everyone is invited.
 - ✓ Everyone gets in the same way and can meet the requirement.

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." **John 3:16**

NEXT STEPS

- Are you ready to communicate Christ’s message about forgiveness to a culture that often gets hung up on fairness?
- Are you ready to stop the balancing act that includes a backup plan of being “good,” for complete faith in Christ and His work on your behalf?
- Is Christ asking you to reject the notion that “good people go to heaven,” and to fully trust in Him for forgiveness and eternal life today?