



## **"The Biggest Decision of Your Life!"**

Most decisions in life matter for something. However, only one matters most. If you are looking for a simple guide to a deeper understanding of this extraordinary decision - God's free gift of salvation - then begin here.

Taken from the book, "Out of this World; A Christian's Guide to Growth and Purpose" by David J. Swandt.

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# Should God Let You Into Heaven?

Just imagine for a moment that your time here on this earth had come to an unexpected conclusion. With overwhelming wonder, you find yourself standing before your Creator. As your confusion and awe turn to anticipation and excitement to finally see your eternal home, you are suddenly stopped before entering. God asks you a penetrating question, “Why should I let you into heaven?”

How would you respond?

Thankfully, when that great and wonderful day arrives for each of us, God will not ask us to complete a test prior to entry. Nevertheless, the scenario paints an important, thought-provoking picture intended to help us better understand salvation.

Some may respond to God’s question by referencing the good things they’ve done. Others would describe their faithful church attendance, and still others might list all of the bad things in life they’ve avoided.

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While these are important elements of every Christian's life, they do not guarantee salvation. There is only one correct answer to the question:

*I have made Jesus Christ the Lord of my life, and He has cleansed me of all of my sins.*

## God Created us with Eternity in Mind

When God created us, He had much more than a 70 or 80 year plan for our existence. He has a specific purpose for each of our lives. His plan spans both our earthly life, and our heavenly (or eternal) one. James 4:14 describes the difference between these two aspects of our existence. It says,

*“What is your (earthly) life? It is a mist that appears for a moment and then vanishes.” James 4:14*

You’ve heard the saying, “Life is short.” In light of eternity, it is! The Bible says,

*“...man is destined to die once, and after that to face the judgment.” Hebrews 9:27*

All of us are subject to a physical death. But physical death is only the termination of our physical body, not our soul. Our soul, or our conscious existence living inside our body, is eternal.

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Our soul will spend all of eternity in one of two places after our physical death: Heaven or Hell.

Heaven is eternal paradise where God lives.  
Hell is complete separation from God.

Our natural birth into this world was not only the beginning to our temporary, physical life on earth, but also our spiritual life here and beyond through all of eternity. So in light of eternity, some may see our earthly life as insignificant, but this simply is not true. Your eternal destiny is actually determined by the decisions you make during your time here on earth; most importantly, the decision to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life. Salvation is available for all of us through Jesus Christ, and through Him alone can we change our destiny from spending eternity separated from God, to spending eternity with God in Heaven.

*“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* **John 14:6**

The decisions we make in our earthly lives are important for other reasons, too. The way we live as believers can have an effect on the eternal destiny of others who do not yet know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Every day, those around us are watching our example of living for Christ. As Christians, God uses each of us to bring heaven to those around us who do not yet know Him. Jesus said:

*“You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* **Matthew 5:14-16**

## We All Need a Savior

When God created Adam and Eve, He made them without sin and in perfect relationship with Him. When they disobeyed God's command in chapter three of Genesis, they brought sin into their lives, and also to the entire human race. Romans 3:23 describes the far-reaching impact of Adam and Eve's decision.

*“... for all have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God.”* **Romans 3:23**

No one is exempt from sin and its effect; every one of us is guilty. As a result, we are all separated from God. Our sin also results in an eternal consequence.

*“For the wages of sin is death.”* **Romans 6:23a**

Because of Adam and Eve's decision to disobey God, death became inescapable for them and all of their descendants (the human race); both physically and spiritually.

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After their failure, God was faced with a decision: to allow sin to run its course with mankind, resulting in the extinction of the human race, or to provide a means to save mankind from sin's grasp. Thankfully, as the ultimate expression of His love and grace, God provided a means of salvation through His Son.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* **John 3:16**

*“...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* **Romans 6:23b**

Apart from Jesus Christ, mankind is destined for both physical and spiritual death; there are no exceptions. But for those of us who are in Christ, physical death still awaits us, but spiritual death (Hell) does not. Rather, eternal life in Heaven awaits us after we leave this earth. Through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead, we escape the spiritual penalty of sin!



## Salvation - God's Part and Your Part

Your salvation brings together two important decisions. The first decision is the one God made long ago to send His Son into the world to be our one and only Savior. The second is your decision to receive His Son as YOUR Savior.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”* **Ephesians 2:8-9**

GRACE is defined as unmerited or unearned favor. Grace is God's part in salvation, and He extends His favor to mankind in the form of the perfect gift, Jesus Christ. Through the cross, Jesus made the full payment for the penalty of our sins. And through Jesus, the personified grace of God, no amount of good works is required of us, or could ever be paid by us. We cannot earn our salvation; it is a free gift available to all, requiring no payment on our part.

FAITH is defined as evidence that something exists even though it cannot be physically seen or touched. Faith is needed for our part in salvation, and by faith, as an act of our will, we choose to surrender our lives to God by making Jesus the Lord of our life. Having received by faith God's grace through Jesus Christ, you are undoubtedly, without question destined for an eternity with God in heaven. You can be 100% certain of that fact!

While good works cannot earn our salvation, they do play an important role in living out our Christian life after we've received Jesus.

*“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* **Ephesians 2:10**

God has a specific purpose for each of our lives, the details of which are largely between you and Him. But God has a common purpose for all of His children, and that is that we put our faith into action by doing good works.

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When we do, we fulfill an important part of God's plan for our lives, and we have the privilege of shining His love to others. Salvation is both a new beginning and an ending and is cause for celebration. You are a new creation, forever changed!

# Water Baptism - A Public Declaration of a Changed Life!

Water baptism is an important way to publicly declare your salvation. Water baptism celebrates the ending of an old way of life and the beginning of a new one. Jesus taught the importance of water baptism to His disciples just prior to His ascension to heaven after the resurrection. He said,

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”* **Matthew 28:19**

Throughout the New Testament, there are countless stories of believers being baptized. Water baptism holds significant symbolism to both the one being baptized, and those observing. Water baptism publicly illustrates: the ending of your former way of life by being immersed down into the water; the beginning of your new life in Christ by coming out of the water cleansed, purified and a new creation in God.

Luke 3:3 represents water baptism as a “baptism of repentance,” and emphasizes the importance of publicly declaring we’ve turned away from our old life and sin. While water baptism does not save us nor cover our sin, it does represent a critical part of our Christian life – a declaration that you’re a new creation, a changed life! If ever there was someone who did not need to make this declaration, it was Jesus, who lived a sinless life here on earth. But Luke 3:21 says,

*“When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too.”* **Luke 3:21**

Jesus was baptized so that we would follow His example. The importance of water baptism cannot be overstated. If you have not yet been water baptized, you should consider making water baptism a priority. The Bible instructs us to make a public declaration of our salvation, and most Bible-believing churches provide many opportunities to get water baptized. Following Jesus’ example is always a winning proposition. God will richly bless and reward you for your faithfulness and obedience to Him!

## A Closing Consideration

If you have never received Jesus into your life, or if you did at one time, but are no longer living for Him, you can make a new commitment to Him TODAY by saying a simple prayer out of the sincerity of your heart. That prayer may be something like this,

*“Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and only you can set me free from sin’s penalty. I ask you to come into my life and cleanse me of all my sin. Help me to live for you in every area of my life, every day of my life. Thank you for coming into my life and setting me free!”*

If you prayed that prayer with sincerity, believing Jesus will do what He said He will do, you have just received salvation, and have altered your eternal destiny to be with Him forever! If you’ve given your life to Christ, we’d love to hear from you and send you additional devotionals. Click below to get started:

[\*\*I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW CHRIST!\*\*](#)