

How *to* Know
You're
Going *to*
HEAVEN

JOHN ANKERBERG
JOHN WELDON



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Dedication

This book couldn't possibly be dedicated to anyone other than "the LORD our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6 KJV)—Jesus, the prophesied Messiah, our Lord and God incarnate—who at incalculable cost to Himself provided eternal redemption as an unreservedly free gift to all who would trust in Him and His finished work on Calvary: *Tetelestai!* (It is finished, paid in full!)

Yes, Lord, we "will praise you forever...for what you have done" (Psalm 52:9 NLT). "Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness" (Psalm 115:1).

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*“What I long for, and what I think every person longs for, is
the knowledge that my relationship with God is secure—
permanently secure—not just for today,
but for tomorrow and for all of eternity.”¹*

—ERWIN W. LUTZER

Where Will You Spend Eternity?

This book is about the most important topic of your life—where you will spend eternity.

If you are a Christian, you can have full confidence you will go to heaven when you die. If you're not a believer in Jesus Christ or are uncertain, you'll read how to be certain and how you can dwell in heaven forever.

This teaching that the believer in Jesus Christ is saved forever is also called the doctrine of eternal security. Every Christian has doubts about their salvation at some point, a natural consequence of our sin nature interacting with a fallen world. But a look at God's Word, the Bible, provides ample evidence of the believer's eternally changed condition.

This book won't prevent the devil's attempts to make you doubt. But we hope that it will go a long way toward increasing your assurance so that you have no doubts as to your eternal destiny and, as a result, will "rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8 NKJV).

How Do You Know?

*Those who truly believe the Gospel can never
be lost, no matter what they do.¹*

R.T. KENDALL

If you aren't already certain that you will go to heaven when you die, then it's important for you to read this book. You may *think* you have assurance of this, but how do you *know* it? More personally, if you died today, right now, would you go to heaven?

It's Vital!

Vital is defined as being necessary to life and existence. Nothing is more vital than knowing we are going to heaven when we die. Considering that the alternative is eternal separation from God in hell, what could possibly be more important in life than being assured of our eternal destination?

To be plain, those who have exercised saving faith in Jesus Christ will experience eternity with Him forever. A Christian can no more lose his or her salvation than Jesus could remove Himself from the Trinity. That's how strong a believer's eternal security is.

Real Encouragement

One of the greatest encouragements a person could ever have is to know without a doubt he or she will live with Jesus Christ in heaven forever. A Christian never has to wonder about the possibility of going to an eternal hell. In fact, biblical Christianity is the only religion on earth that teaches believers they can know with absolute assurance

that they have eternal life. In every other religion it's a guessing game because salvation (however conceived) is based upon the attainment of undefined and unattainable levels of human performance.

In contrast, as one writer has observed, everyone on earth desires eternal joy and happiness—but how can this ever be certain unless one is absolutely assured that such eternal joy is attainable in *this* life? This is the kind of salvation Jesus offers freely without cost:

God is offering us a joy that infinitely transcends all other joys combined in the power and potential to satisfy, thrill, fill, and fulfill. He is talking about spiritual ecstasy, incomparable ecstasy, unparalleled ecstasy, and unfathomable ecstasy... We must come to grips with the fact that the Bible unashamedly appeals to our desire for pleasure and happiness. And it does so because God built into us an undeniable, unrelenting, inescapable hunger for joy and satisfaction and delight. God built us to be fascinated, to be intrigued, to be exhilarated, to be stunned... You can no more escape from your desire for eternal pleasure than you can cease to be human, nor should you try.²

So why try?

100 Percent or Something Less?

Some have labeled the idea of absolute assurance of heaven as being naive or simplistic. They argue that spiritual truth or reality cannot have the certainty of something like a mathematical proof. We disagree.³ If Jesus Himself told us to rejoice because our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20) and the apostle Peter declared we have “an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4 NASB), then how could we rejoice *unless* the guarantee is absolute?⁴

God's Power and Our Assurance

If God is for us, who can be against us?... Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies [declares righteous]. Who then is the one who condemns? No one.

ROMANS 8:31,33-34

Who is greater than God?

To emphasize a point, the Bible sometimes makes an argument from the lesser to the greater. For example, regarding salvation, consider the following line of reasoning:

Since we have *now been* justified by his blood, *how much more* shall we be saved [future reality] from God's [eternal] wrath through him! For if, when we were God's *enemies*, we *were reconciled* to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall *we be saved* [eternally] through his life! (Romans 5:9-10).

In other words, if God did the *most* for us when we were His enemies, will He do *less* for us now that we are His own dear children, purchased by nothing less than the precious blood of Christ?

Note also that in Romans 8:28-39 the argument is both logical and particularly authoritative: "If *God* is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Who's bigger than God? No one. Who has more authority than God? No one. Who is superior to God, having more power? No one. "He who did not spare *his own Son*, but gave him up

for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

In addition, in Romans 8:26 and 8:34 we see that *both* the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ are personally interceding for believers in Christ throughout the entirety of their lives. Can the intercession of both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit combined ever fail under any circumstances? And would God the Father give us a glorious Christ Himself and refuse us a comparative crumb?

The apostle Paul declared that nothing will separate a believer from the love of Christ: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Romans 8:35).

Ten All-Embracing Topics

In Romans 8:38-39, Paul said that nothing will ever separate believers from God’s special love for them: “death,” “life,” “angels,” “demons,” “[anything in the] present,” “[anything in the] future,” “any powers,” “height,” “depth,” and “anything else in all creation.”

If death can never separate a believer from Christ’s love, then when a believer dies he or she is not separated from Christ’s love and will go to heaven. This idea is reinforced by the phrases “neither the present” and “nor the future.” Nothing in our present or future can separate us from God’s love.

What’s more, even angels and demons—who are more powerful than we are—cannot separate us from Christ’s love. The term “powers” includes any and all additional powers that exist anywhere now or in the future, and would include our own power. The terms “height” and “depth” indicate that nothing in heaven or hell—no person, place, or thing to the extremes of “height” and “depth”—can separate us from Christ’s love. Nor can any circumstances do this, and finally, “anything else in all creation.” In other words, nothing can separate believers from Christ’s love.

Notice in verse 31 God *Himself* has been ruled out as ever separating us from the love of Christ. The one who is infinitely wise, powerful,

and loving has taken an absolute stand with believers against all others. “If God is for us, who can be against us?” Contextually, the “if” here means “since” or as the great eighteenth-century biblical scholar and theologian John Gill put it, “Seeing that He is for us.” *The thought is as profound as any on earth.* Some interpreters have spoken of the idea as transcending almost everything in the human language.¹

This nothing includes anything that the believer would or would not do during life on earth.

Think about it: Nothing *we* do and nothing done *to* us can prevent our going to heaven forever if we believe in the biblical Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. To reemphasize a point, as R.T. Kendall plainly declared, “Those who truly believe the Gospel can never be lost, no matter what they do.”²

The Most Powerful Verse in the Bible

Some say the single most powerful verse in the entire Bible on the eternal security of the believer is Romans 8:30. Theologians sometimes call this verse “the golden chain” or “the iron chain” because it is eternally unbreakable. We like to think of it as a five-jeweled and overwhelmingly precious spiritual gold necklace worn around the neck of every Christian. There, we read that those whom God foreknew He also predestined, and those whom

he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

As can be seen from the English translation, the original Greek text of the New Testament has the words “predestined,” “called,” “justified,” and “glorified” all in the *past* tense. As far as God is concerned these things have *already* happened.

In God’s mind, every believer is already glorified. If you are foreknown (verse 28—as we will see later, this primarily means “eternally foreloved”), then you are also predestined, called, justified, and glorified.

Already in Heaven?

In other words, the believer is *already* in heaven with Christ *in this life*. In God's mind the believer is, right now, spiritually, already in heaven "in Christ." That's why noted Bible expositor John MacArthur has said, "Spiritually, the Christian becomes *a part of heaven* with full rights to citizenship *here and now in this life*," and "Because of our spiritual union with Him, we have *already entered into the heavenly realm*. We already possess eternal life, and the spiritual riches of heaven are ours in Jesus Christ."³

A great deal more could be said about this. But for now we should simply try and let it sink in. God says that as far as He is concerned, those with saving faith in Jesus are already in heaven with Him forever.

Do you believe it?