



## GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: HEAVEN

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### HOW DO YOU GET TO HEAVEN FROM HERE?

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

It's an old story but it still proves a point. A pastor midway through his sermon asked the question on a warm Sunday morning, "How many of you want to go to heaven when you die?" Everyone raised his hand except one man, obviously asleep. Focusing on the sleeping man, the pastor loudly asked, "How many of you want to go to hell when you die?" Sensing the change of tone in his voice, the man abruptly awoke, stood to his feet, looked around sheepishly and said, "Pastor, I don't know what I'm standing for; but it looks like you and me are the only ones for it!"

The fact remains, very few *don't* want to go to heaven when they die, but how you get there seems to be a trade secret which is the property of a few who are either afraid to let it out, or too embarrassed to share that truth with family and friends. Do you know how to get there? If you died and stood at the door of God's heaven, and Peter opened the door, and said, "Why should I let you in?" What would you say?

Suppose you replied, "Because I've been a pretty good person. I'm not perfect, of course, but I'm a whole lot better than most people. Besides, I've given quite a lot of money to charity." What you've said may be completely true, but would that open the door?

Not according to what the Bible says. Here's what it says: "But when the time came for the kindness and love of God our Savior to appear, then he saved us--not because we were good enough to be saved, but because of his kindness and pity--by washing away our sins and giving us the new joy of the indwelling Holy Spirit whom he poured out upon us with wonderful fullness--and all because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did so that he could declare us good in God's eyes..." (Titus 3:4-6, Living Bible).

The Bible says that entrance to heaven isn't based on what you do--either good or evil--it is based upon what Jesus Christ did. The Bible describes this as a gift which is given to those who believe. "The gift of God" is how Paul described it in Ephesians 2:8, and then he said it is received "not by works, so that no one can boast."

In two minutes, however, I can tell you what you need to do to receive this gift which opens heaven's door. Three simple steps are necessary. Step #1: You must acknowledge your personal need of salvation. The Bible categorically says that all have sinned--everybody, no exceptions (See Romans 3:23, Isaiah 53:6). Do you admit that? Then go on to step #2 which is to believe that God will save you. The Bible puts it like this: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

The third step means that you go public with your commitment of faith. You run up your flag and commit yourself. Here's the text: "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

Your intelligence, your money, your goodness, or your gifts will never open the door of heaven when you die; but what Jesus did unlocks the door. No wonder He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). And what He said hasn't changed.

Resource reading: Ephesians 2:1-10