

How can a person know for sure that they are ready for heaven?

Salvation according to the Holy Bible is not something that you do or that a priest or someone else does for you. It is something God does without any help from man whatsoever. God saves a person, not by taking the old person and making him better through a combination of religious rituals, traditions and guidelines, but by supernaturally imparting a whole new nature into him via the Holy Spirit:

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." [Ezekiel 36:26-27].

The Bible says that unless God gives a person new heart and a new spirit, they will suffer the wrath of God by being cast into hell for eternity: "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 13:49-50].

Ask yourself the following questions to see if you bear the fruit and marks of a true Christian:

A. Do I see myself as a hopelessly lost sinner in need of the one and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, who died to rescue sinners like me from the wrath of a holy God? - "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." [Luke 18:13]

B. Has God given me a new heart? Is the Holy Spirit living in me? In other words, has my attitude about sin changed? Do I now hate the sins I used to love and love the things of God I used to hate before Jesus came into my heart and life? - "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" [2 Corinthians 5:17]

C. Do I enjoy talking about how Jesus Christ has changed my life and saved me from Hell? - "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" [Mark 5:19]

D. Do people make fun of me or in some other way persecute me for standing up for Jesus Christ? - "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." [2 Timothy 3:12]

E. Do I realize that I am here on earth to serve God and to get ready to spend eternity with Him? - "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" [Romans 12:1]

F. Do I have a love for other born-again Bible believing Christians? - "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." [1 John 3:10]

G. Do I love to read the Bible daily to find out more about God and how he expects me to live? - "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." [Psalm 119:16]

H. Do I realize that God is very holy and that I am accountable to Him for every thought, word and deed? - "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." [Matthew 12:36]

I. Do I realize that I owe Jesus everything for my salvation - there is nothing I could contribute to it? - "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" [Titus 3:5]

J. Do I understand that ALL people are lost without Christ and do I show my concern for the souls of others by warning people to flee God's wrath in hell? - "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." [2 Corinthians 5:20]

K. When I sin, no matter how trivial it may seem to most people, am I anxious to ask God for forgiveness and to apologize or make restitution to any people I may have wronged? - "Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.'" [Luke 19:8]

L. Do I have a love for the truth, no matter what it exposes in my own life? Does my concern for truth cause me to properly and promptly deal with things in my life that require correction? Am I concerned enough to search the Bible to see how I might better obey God? "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." [Psalm 139:23-24]. -- RM Kane

Visit us at: <http://comingintheclouds.org>

I PRACTICED A *RELIGION* BUT I DID NOT HAVE A *RELATIONSHIP* TO GOD

I was born into a Catholic family. I went to catechism classes, received my first 'holy communion' when I was about 7 years old, was 'confirmed' at about age 12. I tried to be a good person and a good Catholic, went to confession, went to mass on a regular basis until I was about 15 or 16. Then I continued to go at Christmas and Easter until I got saved (became spiritually alive) at 30 years of age. Now when I tell Catholics that I am saved, they often say they are saved too, that they got saved at baptism and that they are continually being saved. What they don't realize is that what they have been taught about being saved is not what Jesus taught about being saved, and so these dear, sincere Catholics are not really saved at all but are destined for Hell unless Jesus personally saves them like He saved me when the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sins and showed me that I was a lost sinner who needed a Saviour. *"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* [Luke 19:10].

Jesus said: *"ye must be born again to see the kingdom of God"* [John 3:3]. This does not happen at baptism - it is a supernatural work of God who must create a new heart in someone which occurs if and when the Holy Spirit takes up residence in them. It CANNOT be done merely by some man sprinkling water on someone nor does God even want any help whatsoever from man. God is perfectly capable of saving a person without their help, for the Bible says: *"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them"* [2 Corinthians 5:19].

The supposedly 'one, true, church', that most of my lost Catholic relatives are trusting their eternal souls to, never told me I needed to be saved, mainly because they thought **they** had saved me when they christened me as an infant. What the Catholic church did not realize was that *"salvation is of the Lord"* [Jonah 2:9] and **only He** could save me, not the Catholic church, and that they could not even help to save me since they teach a different way of salvation than what Jesus taught.

So for almost 30 years, I thought I was headed for Heaven, perhaps by way of Purgatory, when in fact, I was a lost hell-deserving sinner, unaware that church could not save me, no priest could save me, Mary could not save me, my good deeds could not save me, only Jesus could save me. Neither I nor anyone else on my behalf could in any way contribute to my salvation. I owe Jesus a debt that I could never repay - the price for my salvation is far beyond my reach even with the help of Rome and all its sacraments, traditions, penance, prayers, incense, candles, statues, holy water, saints, priests, nuns, monks, bishops, cardinals, popes, or even the Queen of Heaven, whoever that is, because it is certainly not Jesus' mother Mary - not according to the Bible.

In the Bible Jesus described the kind of religion I had and most people have: *"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* [Mark 7:7]. Paul the apostle also talked about this kind of religion: *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"* [Romans 10:3].

Why didn't Jesus ever mention Purgatory?
Simply because if it existed, we would not need a saviour... we could burn off all our sins in Purgatory and so Jesus would never have needed to die on the cross for our sins.

As a Catholic, I was never told that the Bible says *"all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"* to God [Isaiah 64:6] and if my name *"was not found written in the Book of Life"*, I would be *"cast into the Lake of Fire"* [Revelation 20:15], not Purgatory, because Purgatory is never mentioned in the Bible, not by Jesus nor by anyone else. Jesus said *"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"* [John 3:3]. He said this because all are born spiritually dead and need to become spiritually alive by crying out to God to save them from eternal damnation in Hell. *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* [Romans 10:13]. We are NOT saved by sacraments!

The Catholic church never told me how **holy** God is and that only Jesus Christ and **He alone** could pay for a person's sins because He alone was without sin. When Jesus died, He paid the COMPLETE penalty for every sin I ever committed or ever will commit, but I had to receive that payment and turn over lordship of my life to Him. After all, He is Lord of Heaven, not you or I. And all the candles, prayers and mass cards in the world will not get you out of Hell and into Heaven once you die lost.

Jesus always elevated sacred scripture above human tradition: "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." [Matthew 15:6]

Jesus said we must follow God's word in the Bible not the unbiblical traditions of men: *"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."* [Matthew 15:6-8]

Now that I am truly saved, I know it is a sin to pray to anyone but God the Father and Jesus because the Bible says: *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* [1 Timothy 2:5]. So I no longer pray to Mary or saints. I also learned that the Bible says: *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... Thou shalt not bow thyself down to them"* [Exodus 20:4-5] so I no longer own any statues, crucifixes, 'sacred heart' pictures, rosary beads or religious medallions. Many of these things were borrowed by Rome from pagan religions and are an abomination to God. When I see a priest I no longer call him 'father' because Jesus said: *"Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, in heaven"* [Matthew 23:9]. This is a clear reference to a spiritual father as indicated by verses 7 and 8 in Matthew 23. I now know that the sacrifice of the mass is a false sacrifice that grieves God

because the Bible says: *"we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God"* [Hebrews 10:10-12]. Many priests, nuns and others have left the Catholic church because they learned, by reading the Bible, that they had been deceived about what Jesus taught about Christianity and getting to Heaven. Many Protestant churches were started by such people during the Reformation of the 1500s.

Dear friend, do you realize that God is recording EVERY one of your thoughts, words and deeds? He knows everything you ever did, even the things you did in secret that you thought no one else ever knew about, for the Bible says: *"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"* [Proverbs 15:3]. You will have to give an account to Him on Judgment Day, unless you are covered in the precious blood of Christ. Going to confession, doing penance or doing good deeds will not erase a single sin. You have repeatedly violated the laws of a holy God and are incapable of undoing your sins or meriting heaven. ONLY Jesus Christ, *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* [John 1:29] could pay for anyone else's sins.

Cry out to the Lord Jesus to save you right now, before it is too late. Then the Holy Spirit will come into your heart and you will discover that it is possible to have a relationship to the Lord of Heaven and you will understand that you have something far superior to all the rituals and traditions of any religion on earth. Then find a **good** Protestant Bible-preaching church that is true to the Bible and be baptized as a truly saved Christian.