

"I Hope That Maybe I'll Be Lucky Enough to Go to Heaven"

How certain are you of your salvation? Can you at this very moment say with all confidence, "I am saved and if I were to die today I would be with the Lord in eternity"? Some cannot say that because in reality they are not saved, having never obeyed the Gospel of Jesus. Others cannot say that because, having once obeyed the Gospel, they have since fallen away. Yet others make their boast of the certainty of their salvation based on their false Calvinistic doctrine of "once saved, always saved." They believe that the only way they can have full assurance of their salvation is if they have been predestined to eternal life or if there is absolutely no way for them to lose their salvation during life. Then there are those who truly have become Christians but who nonetheless wonder if they really are going to go to heaven after they die. Even though they might not come out and say it this way, their attitudes are reflected in the statement that serves as the title of this article.

The fact of the matter is that we can know that we're saved and that we'll inherit eternal life when we die. Consider the inspired writings of John in the book of First John. Although the epistle is known for its frequent usage of the word "love," it should also be recognized for its frequent usage of the word "know" (I John 2:3,13,14,21; 3:18; 4:13; 5:2,20). Among these usages is this statement in I John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Let's look at something else that John wrote. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." (I John 2:25). To whom did God make this promise of eternal life? Back up a verse and you'll find the answer. "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the son, and in the Father." Now think about this: Has God ever made a promise that He did not keep? Titus 1:2 says, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." If God does not break His promises, and if He has promised eternal life to those who remain in Him by virtue of faithful obedience to His Word, could we not confidently state, "I am saved and on my way to heaven" if we are indeed living faithfully to Him?

Is such an attitude boastful, haughty or prideful? Perhaps it could be if we were essentially saying, "Hey, you who are lost. I'm saved and you're not." But it is not an improper attitude if it is accompanied with humility and a genuine appreciation for God's salvation. When that is the case, our assurance of salvation is a blessing that holds us up when the storms of life try to beat us down. When we obey the Gospel and then live faithfully to the Lord, it is no more unacceptable to say, "I know that I'm going to heaven" than it is to say, "I know the Lord will provide what I need today" (Matthew 6:33) or "I know the Lord hears my prayers" (I John 5:14-15). The God who promised to provide our daily needs and hear our prayers is the same God who promised eternal life to the faithful. One promise of God is just as certain as another. All of the promises of God evoke confidence in the faithfulness of God, including the promise of eternal life.

"But what about hope?" someone asks. "I thought the best we could do was hope for eternal life." Such a concept is a misunderstanding of the word "hope" as it's used in the Bible. A hope is not a wish as in, "I sure would like to go to heaven. I wish I could be there in eternity and I hope I'm doing all the right things to get there." To the contrary, one word translated hope in the New Testament means, "joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation," such as in Colossians 1:5, "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." Anticipating a birthday, a child "hopes" he'll get a certain present for which he asked. Several factors such as the stores being out of the item or the parents not having enough money for it may disappoint him on his birthday, but he nonetheless is filled with hope until that day comes. The hope of eternal life is drastically different than this child-like wishing because faithful Christians know what we've been promised by God in His Word and we know that He will never disappoint us. In short, the road to salvation has been laid and the promise of heaven is there. We can know we're on the road (Matthew 7:13-14) and we can know that heaven awaits us (Matthew 25:34).

Do you know that you're going to heaven? If not, then you need to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ or, having once obeyed the Gospel and having since fallen away, you need to repent and turn back to God for forgiveness. But if you are living faithfully to Him, the next time we sing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine," sing it with vigor and confidence like you never have before because it is true. "Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood."