



Jesus Christ made an important statement as recorded in Matthew 7:21-23. He said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day (*of judgment*), ‘Lord, Lord’, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” The words of Jesus convey a serious truth! What does Jesus mean when He says that only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven? His words make one thing about God's will very clear: God wants a personal relationship with you! Living with God forever is not determined by your good works for Him but by your relationship with Him. You must know God personally if you want to live with God eternally.

This raises another important question! How can you know God personally and therefore look forward to living with Him forever? Jesus answered this question one day while talking to a religious leader named Nicodemus. During this conversation He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born-again (*born spiritually*), he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). In order to make right decisions, you must have accurate information. It is essential for you to understand what God has said about how you can know Him and then it is necessary for you to respond to God concerning it.



Throughout human history, God has repeatedly demonstrated His great love for humankind. Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16-17). God has not only said that He loves you; He has demonstrated that love, even though no one deserves it, by giving His Son to die for the entire human race.

Why did Jesus have to die? Once again, the Bible has the answer. It is there that we read, “for all have sinned (*missed the mark*) and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). God is perfect and we are not. When Adam and Eve (*the first humans*) disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-3) their sin injured them and all future generations. “Just as through one man (*Adam*) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). The 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) serves a useful purpose in helping us to understand the extent to which we have missed the mark of God's holiness despite our attempts to live a good life.

God's love for humankind compelled Him to create a way whereby He could judge sin in a just manner while offering forgiveness to the sinner. God's solution was to do for us what we could not do for ourselves by offering Himself through His Son Jesus Christ as our substitute. God rightly judged and punished the sins of the entire human race when Jesus was crucified as His perfect sacrifice. “For as by one man's (*Adam's*) disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's (*Christ's*) obedience many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

Since God's Son died for everyone thousands of years ago, how can you know Him personally today? A relationship with God is possible because Jesus Christ is no longer dead! “...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (*The Bible*) ... was buried, and ... rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). When God raised His Son from the dead, He proved to all humanity that Jesus is who He claims to be (*God in human form*). Since Jesus is alive, you can have a relationship

with Him now and experience a meaningful life each day as you wait to be with Him forever in heaven. Jesus said, "... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

The fact that forgiveness, eternal life and a relationship with God are available is of no value to you unless you respond by receiving God's offer of salvation. God loves you but He wants you to love Him voluntarily. He is "... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). The decision is one that only you can make!

You can respond to God today by placing your complete trust and confidence in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and eternal life. "As many as received Him (*Jesus*), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). There is no better time than now to make such a decision. "Behold, now is the excepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Jesus said, "My sheep (*followers*) hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father (*God*), who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one" (John 10:27-30). Make your decision now to believe in Jesus Christ so that you can have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a personal relationship with God!

If you decide to believe in Jesus, get involved with a good church. You can also click on the following links for spiritual support and encouragement:

<https://www.cru.org/>

<http://billygraham.org/grow-your-faith/>

