

The World's BIGGEST LIE



It's safe to say it's the biggest lie that has ever entered the human mind. Most people in the world believe it. Name any country you want. The majority of people have swallowed it whole. These people are sincere. They bet their whole future on it. They're convinced because it seems so reasonable. And they are hard to change...their mind is made up. What is the lie? It's the idea that, when you die, God weighs your good works and your bad works in a scale. If your good works outweigh your bad ones, you'll go to heaven. If your bad works are heavier, you'll go to hell. That is absolutely false.

ONE of the most common versions of the lie is that God is most concerned with us keeping the Ten Commandments. So let's list those commands and see how we do.

1. You must have no other God.
2. You must not worship or create idols.
3. You must not use the Lord's name in vain (no cursing).
4. You are to set aside one day of the week for worship, service and rest.
5. You must honor your parents.
6. You must not commit or even consider murder.
7. You must not commit sexual immorality.
8. You must not steal.
9. You must not lie.
10. You must not desire what is not yours.

Here's the problem

But here is what the Bible teaches about the Ten Commandments. No one born of human parents has ever kept them. No one can keep them perfectly. And yet, the law requires complete, not partial, obedience. To break one commandment is to break all ten. Which is why God never intended the ten commandments to be a ladder to heaven. Their purpose is to show us that we are all sinners. *"By the law [the ten commandments] is the knowledge of sin"* (Romans 3:23). The consistent testimony of the Bible is that we are all sinners. Listen.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

"There is not a just man who does good and does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

"Behold I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me. (Psalms 51:5). There is none who does good, no not one" (Romans 3:12).

Because we are sinners, we are unfit for heaven. God is holy and cannot look on sin with any degree of approval or tolerance. Sin must be punished and the penalty for sin is death, that is, eternal separation from God. Before anyone can be sure of heaven, his sins must be forgiven.

Other versions of the lie

So far, we have seen that the Ten Commandments are not the ticket to heaven. They expose us as guilty and unfit to go there. Now before we get to God's answer to our problem, let us list some other versions of the biggest lie. Just obey the Golden Rule. *"Just do as you would have men do to you, do also unto them"* (Luke 6:31). Or, just be confirmed. Or, just be baptized. Just join a church. Just take Holy Communion. Just do penance for your sins. Just depend on prayers, tithing and fasting. Just give to charity. Just turn over a new leaf. Just do the best you can. Good or not, none of these can make us right with God. All variations of the world's biggest lie have this in common: we earn a passing grade from God by doing good works, or by living a clean life. And this seems reasonable, but it is utterly false. The Bible says, *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death"* (Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25).

So then how do we get to heaven?

If we don't get to heaven by doing good works, how do we get there? How can I be sure of going to heaven when I die? God sent His Son to earth to die as a substitute for sinners, like you and me. On the cross of Calvary, the sinless Savior shed His blood to pay the penalty for man's sins. He died so that we could spend eternity with Him in heaven. But what do we need to do? When we repent of our sins and believe on Christ as our Lord and Savior, God saves us.

Our sins are all forgiven. We receive eternal life. The moment we trust Jesus Christ as our only hope for heaven, we are as saved as God can make us. What do we mean by repent? Repenting means to acknowledge to God that we are a guilty sinner, and that we don't deserve to be saved—in fact, we deserve to go to hell. We can never be saved until we know and admit we are lost.

Taking God at His word

If one thing is clear in the Bible, it is that our salvation requires us to believe in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to this verse: *"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"* (John 3:16). There is enough in that one verse for a person to be saved for all eternity. But the Bible also tells us that *"He who believes on the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him"* (John 3:36). This tells that there are only two possibilities. We either believe or we don't. We're either saved or we're lost. *"He who believes in Me has everlasting life,"* Jesus said (John 6:47). It's so simple – *"Has everlasting life."* Has it now – we don't have to wait until we die. *"He who has the Son has life"* (1 John 5:12). Salvation is in a person and His name is Jesus. As I said before, if we have Him, we are as saved as God can make us.

Can we know for sure?

There is one other passage in the Bible that summarizes all that we've explored. It's Ephesians 2 verses 8-10: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship,*

created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Looking at this deeper, we understand that *"For by grace"* means that we don't deserve to be saved. Yet it says— *"For by grace you have been saved."* So clearly, it is possible for us to know that we are saved. The Ephesians, to whom this letter was written, certainly knew. It also says, *"you have been saved through faith."* Faith is believing. Saving faith is believing Christ. *"And that not of yourselves."* We cannot save ourselves or contribute to our own salvation. *"It is the gift of God."* Salvation is a gift which we receive when we believe. *"Not of works."* We cannot do anything to save ourselves. *"Lest any man should boast."* There is no room for boasting in God's plan of salvation.

We do all the sinning, Christ does all the saving. *"For we are His workmanship."* Every believer is a new creation. *"In Christ Jesus."* That means in union with Him. *"For good works."* This is important. Good works are not the means of salvation, they are the result. They are not the root, they are the fruit. We are not saved by good works; we are saved to do good works. *"Which God before prepared that we should walk in them."* Meaning that God has a blueprint for our lives. Our responsibility is to discover the blueprint and follow it.

But how do we know?

How do people know when they're saved? We know it first and foremost by the Word of God. If we repent and believe, the true and living God says He will save us. God cannot lie. As time goes by, we know by the changes in our lives. We have a desire to obey the Lord. We have a desire to do good works. We have a new love of holiness and hatred of sin. We desire to know the Word of God. We have a love for prayer. We want to share the Good News with others. We love our fellow Christians.

Now is the time to decide

We've all heard people say things like, "Life is uncertain" or "Tomorrow is not promised." But have you ever slowed down to really let that soak in? Have you thought about what it means for you? Most people fear death, so they simply try to avoid thinking about it. But that's like avoiding going to the doctor out of fear of being diagnosed with a terrible disease. It doesn't resolve your problem in the slightest way.

My friend, if anything is sure, it is that you and I are going to die. The Bible tells us that God is a just God, and His justice requires Him to punish sin! We cheer on the idea of God's justice toward the murderer or the rapist, and rightfully so. But have you ever thought about that same justice being poured out on your own sin? The scripture says God's punishment for sin, even a single sin, is hell. And if you die in your sins, hell is where you will spend eternity.

But the good news for you today is that the punishment which was due to you, for your sin, has been poured out on Christ. He lovingly chose to take your place in punishment, so that God could both forgive you completely of every sin and yet maintain His justice while doing so. Your sins have been dealt with by Christ! Eternal life is a free gift and God gives it to everyone who places their eternal hope in Jesus Christ alone.

The world's biggest lie is that being a good person will lead to eternity in heaven. Today, transfer your trust from being a good person to Christ's work on the cross. Your eternity depends on it.

—William MacDonald