

Life's Test

It may be to your advantage to thoughtfully read this handout, there will be a test! The Bible makes it clear that all must take an exam at the end of life: *"it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). Are you ready for God's performance review?

The Problem

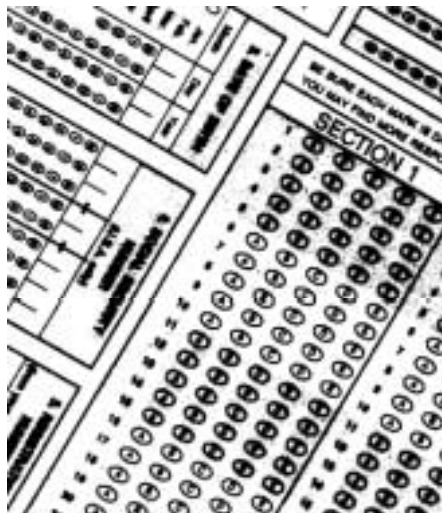
God created people in His image (Genesis 1:27). One of the most profound aspects of being in the image of God is that people have a free will to either accept or reject a relationship with their Creator. From the very beginning, it has been mankind's nature to exercise his will by putting himself ahead of God. This is what separates us from God and keeps us from enjoying a relationship with Him.

The Bible calls mankind's selfish nature sin. All of us are born with this problem, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Sin has gotten so bad in this age that many don't even acknowledge God's existence and rationalize that this life is all there is. But deep down inside, all people know the truth because God has written key fundamentals of His Law on their hearts (Romans 2:14-15).

Another aspect of being in the image of God is that all people will exist into eternity future. But the issue is, where will you spend eternity? Those who pass God's test will spend eternity with Him, those who fail will spend it separated from Him in punishment: *"for the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). This death is spiritual death and also called the *"second death"* in Revelation 21:8.

The Wrong Answer

One of the ways mankind's selfish nature manifests itself is in thinking God's favor can be earned by being a good person. All the religions of the world teach that eternal life is obtainable by doing good things. All religions are wrong! Apart from having a



relationship with God, good works have no eternal value, *"all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags"* (Isaiah 64:6).

The Bible teaches that to earn a place in heaven, God's standard is perfection: *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect"* (Matthew 5:48). God made this clear in His Law beginning with the Ten Commandments. Even if it was possible for people to appear perfect to men by not sinning outwardly, it is not possible to hide your true motives from God for, *"the LORD knows the thoughts of man"* (Psalm 94:11). All who are honest with themselves will have to acknowledge that it is not possible to meet God's standard, *"for whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all"* (James 2:10).

The Right Answer

Fortunately for us, *"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). God had mercy on His creation and provided a way for people to be saved from the second death: *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). God took the form of one of His creations and paid the penalty for the sins of those who believe Him.

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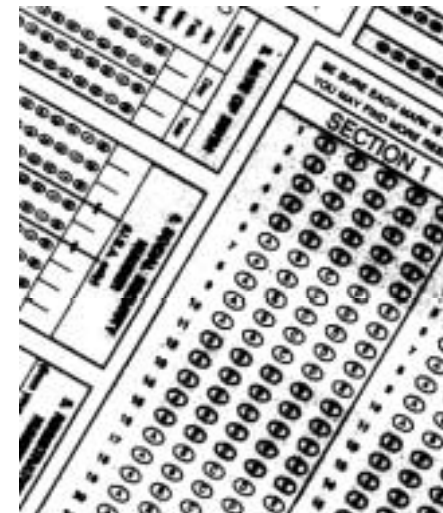
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The good news we now have is: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Those who have put their trust in the Son of God need not fear judgment: "for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). The issue of where eternity will be spent will not even come up at the judgment of believers because Jesus settled this at the cross.

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The Urgency

Jesus said He would return some day (John 14:3). When He returns, He comes

"to execute judgment on all" (Jude 1:15). We can not know the "day and hour" of His return (Matthew 24:36) so the wise thing is

to be ready now. Jesus did give us signs to watch so that we may know when we are in

the season of His return. It was prophesied that Israel would cease to function as a nation

but will be resurrected in the last days (Ezekiel 36-37). The parable of the fig

tree tells those with spiritual discernment that the generation seeing Israel return to

the promised land will see the return of Jesus (Matthew 24:32-36).

We are that generation!

What to do

You may receive the gift of eternal life right now, where ever you're at. Just pray for

Jesus to save you. "Who ever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans

10:13). If you are sincere in your prayer, you will

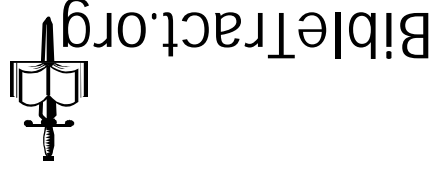
now have a hunger for God's Word (1 Peter 2:1-3). You will want to start reading the

Bible and will be convicted to join a Bible-believing church. True Christians go to

church because this is one place they get to hear the Word of God expounded upon and

to be with the ones they love most, "We know that we have passed from death to life,

at the same time Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).



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God's Grace

Having eternal life has nothing to do with practicing a religion. Instead, it is having a

personal relationship with our Creator-God (John 17:3). This relationship is not

something we can attain through our own efforts. It is a gift from God to all who

accept His invitation: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not

of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jesus made it clear that letting Him into your life is the only way to have an eternal

relationship with God when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes

to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Many dismiss this truth because it

sounds so "intolerant" from the world's perspective. But this attitude is "a way that

seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Thank God that He

provided everyone a way to be saved! He wasn't under any obligation to give anyone

eternal life but He did so out of His grace which is unmerited favor toward us.

Jesus Christ is the only one who can save 100% man and

He is at the same time 100% man and 100% God. Jesus said, "he who has seen Me

has seen the Father" (John 14:9). It is one of the mysteries of God how He can be One and

at the same time Father, Son, and Holy Spirit yet the Bible teaches that this is the case.

The Simplicity of God's Way

Knowing how to be saved is so simple, a child can understand it and many do: "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and

believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). However, this simplicity becomes a stumbling block for some people because they don't see the value in being good if this effort does not save them. True Christians do good works out of gratitude for being saved, "for the love of Christ compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

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