

Can I Be Sure That I'm Saved?

The apostle Paul warned the Greek philosophers in Athens of a coming day of God's judgment on the whole world. This FAQ answers the question for Christians who want to know, "How can I be sure that I am

Acts 17:31 because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has saved from judgement.ordained; of which he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead.

But God does not want anyone to be lost, so he gives us all a chance to be saved.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

If an all powerful God wants me to be saved, I have a good chance. Our problem is that God gave us free will, you or I can reject his salvation, if we want to. Some of the pleasures the world offers are very attractive, it isn't easy to resist them. God could force everyone to be good, but then we would be just a bunch of robots. He loves us enough to give us the choice of where we want to spend eternity, with him or not.

We saw in the FAQ, "What is Christianity?", that Christians believe in God (the LORD), an all powerful, all wise awesome being who cares about us, his children. God keeps track of what is going on with us, even taking the trouble to know how many hairs we have on our heads (Matthew 10:30). He created the world, not just this world, he created the whole universe. Our ancestors sinned separating us from God and bringing the curse of death on the whole human race. Our sin is so offensive to God that, if he didn't care for us so much, he would destroy us. Instead of destroying us he sent his son, Christ, to be a sacrifice to save us from the coming day of judgment by taking our punishment for us.

Christ's life fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, but the people of his day didn't recognize him and instead crucified him. Christ's resurrection proved his divinity. After his resurrection Christ told his disciples to "go into all the world and make disciples of all nations". When the Holy Spirit came on the disciples in Acts 2, Peter explained to the very people who had killed Christ that they could be forgiven, if they would repent and be baptized. We are all sinners, but even bad people can be

saved. Is all that we need to do to be saved to believe, repent, and be baptized, or is there something more?

We cannot earn our salvation. At best we are unprofitable servants.

Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. (KJV)

What saves us is God's wonderful grace. We were created to do good works, but doing good works alone won't save us.

Ephesians 2:8-10 for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.

We can invent a list of rules and traditions like the Pharisees did and carefully follow it, but that won't save us. The following verses show that even people who do mighty works for Christ aren't necessarily going to be saved.

Matthew 7:21-23 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will tell me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?' Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.'

So are we saved by faith or by works?

James 2:19-20 You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder. But do you want to know, vain man, that faith apart from works is dead?

The devils believe and tremble, but are not saved. The answer is that we need both faith and works and something else, there is a third piece to the "What must I do to be saved?" puzzle.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, just like I have loved you; that you also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

The test which Jesus gave us to enable us to tell real Christians from false

ones is whether we have love for one another. Love is a commandment. If we love him and keep his commandments, he will give us his Spirit of truth which will dwell in us and He and the Father will dwell in us through the Spirit.

John 14:15-18 If you love me, keep my commandments. I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, that he may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see him, neither knows him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.

John emphasizes the necessity of love. If we don't love others, we don't know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:8-10 He who doesn't love doesn't know God, for God is love. By this God's love was revealed in us, that God has sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

If I don't have love, but have a faith that can move mountains or if I give my life for Christ (a work), I won't be saved.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 If I speak with the languages of men and of angels, but don't have love, I have become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but don't have love, I am nothing. If I dole out all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but don't have love, it profits me nothing.

The following verse says that we must have "God's spirit". 1 John 4:8 says that "God is love". So we could read the following verse to say that we must have love.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if it is so that the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.

In Matthew 7:23 when Christ tells the people who did mighty works that he doesn't know them, we realize that they do not have his spirit (love), so he doesn't recognize them. His spirit of love dwelling in us is what he is looking for.

So the answer to the question what else must I do to be saved is that I

must have both faith and works and God's spirit of love dwelling in me. How do I know that I have his spirit? Do I pass the fruit test? If I go around bitter, unhappy, critical of everyone, looking for a fight, cruel, mean, foul mouthed and foul tempered, do I show the fruits of the spirit? Sometimes Christians have to suffer in this life and it is hard not to be bitter. But the mark of a true Christian is the optimism that this life is not all there is and we have a place reserved in heaven.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

In this world we will have troubles, Christ warned us in advance. In spite of worldly troubles and problems, we can have peace through Christ.

John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."(NIV)

However, the troubles we have are light when we consider the reward.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we don't faint, but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, works for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we don't look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Here is another test to see if I am saved. The way to tell if we really do know him and love him, is to see if we keep his commandments. He knows that we will slip and sin sometimes. He paid the awful price for our sins with his blood, he became the atoning sacrifice for you and me. When we slip, and who doesn't, he is also our Counselor or lawyer. He knows how hard it is to be human and can intercede for us with his father.

1 John 2:1-3 My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments.

Being a Christian is a wonderful thing. Once we accept Christ and become his follower, his blood continually washes away our sins.

1 John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we haven't sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Christ invites all who are over-burdened and troubled to come to him and become his disciples. When compared to the alternative, his commandments are not hard for his disciples. When compared to the alternative, his commandments are not hard to keep. Sometimes it doesn't seem that way, but in the long run it will be well with those who follow Jesus.

Matthew 11:28-30 'Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

The rewards of walking with Jesus are great. If we love him we will keep his commandments and his Spirit will dwell in us. His Spirit will guide us through life and through life's problems and will even pray to God on our behalf. Christians have a direct line to the creator of the universe, that line is called prayer.

Philippians 4:6-7 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Jesus, our king and high priest intercedes with God for us. Because of him we have access to God.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Having then a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold tightly to our confession. For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace for help in time of need.

Christianity is a religion based on the supernatural, we have an active enemy, the devil, but God will take care of us, if we ask. We can pray to God, the creator of the universe, and lay our problems, cares, wants, and burdens at his feet, remembering that he cares for us. Sometimes we may have to suffer or even die for him; but if we ask him for the strength we need, we can remain faithful even unto death and in the long run he will

give us a crown of life. Compared with our eternal reward, our afflictions here seem light and momentary. Many Christians have died for their faith and some are still doing so.

Revelation 2:10 Don't be afraid of the things which you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested; and you will have oppression for ten days. Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life.

God limits the devil's power so that we cannot be tempted more than we can bear.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

We need to be faithful to God and trust him no matter what, like the three Hebrew children who were tossed into a super-heated fiery furnace for defying king Nebuchadnezzar's command to worship his golden idol. They told the king that God could save them, if he wanted to, but they were not going to sin against God, even if he didn't deliver them. (But He did deliver them.) The strength of Christianity is that people of faith are willing to die for Christ, trusting him to save them.

Daniel 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, 'Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up.'

Christ did not harm those who were crucifying him even though he could have called ten legions of angels, instead he forgave them and prayed for them. To be a follower of Christ, a Christian, we must follow Christ, love others (even our enemies), forgive them, pray for them, and be gentle and kind to everyone.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 The Lord's servant must not quarrel, but be gentle towards all, able to teach, patient, in gentleness correcting those who oppose him: perhaps God may give them repentance leading to a full knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the devil's snare, having been taken captive by him to his will.

When problems arise and differences occur, and they will, we must keep our temper and be gentle and kind and say only those things which build people up not tear them down. We need to give grace to those that hear us. In order to do this we need to be full of Christ's spirit of love and kindness, remember we are speaking to God's children. If we try to do this in our own wisdom, we will probably mess us, we need to be humble and ask God for help and guidance.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for building up as the need may be, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Christians are be God's ambassadors to this world and our mission is to build bridges between people and God and to help people be reconciled to God. We build bridges between people and God and to help people be reconciled to God. We can do this by reaching out to them and helping them, by loving them, and by sharing the gospel with them, as Christ commanded us to do. Sometimes they may not be willing to come to us, we may need to go them. Will you be a good ambassador for Christ?

2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Earlier we said that we must seek God's forgiveness and we must forgive others. This is such an important part of our salvation that the next FAQ is devoted to forgiveness. If we really have God's love in our heart, we will be able to forgive others.

Make God your choice!