

U. S. News and World Report did a poll awhile back of one thousand respondents, and they asked this question: **"Who do you think is 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' to go to heaven?"** They asked this question of about thirteen prominent figures. HERE ARE THE RESULTS.

Of the celebrities asked, the biggest vote-getters were Mother Teresa at 79%. Who came in second? Oprah Winfrey at 66%. Third place went to Michael Jordan at 65%. Fourth place went to Colin Powell at 61%. But when it came to politicians, the figures began to plummet. Al Gore and Hillary Rodham Clinton each scored 55%. Coming in next was Bill Clinton at 52%. But you know what is surprising, is to find that even heavenly connections didn't seem to help much in some cases. Only 47% thought that Pat Robertson has an inside track to heaven. Dennis Rodman got 28%, and the bottom figure was O. J. Simpson who gathered only 19% of the vote.

But here is the amazing part. Those who got the MOST VOTES of the 87% of Americans surveyed were those who were voting. YES, THEY BELIEVED IN THEMSELVES FIRST. THEY BELIEVED THEY WERE MOST LIKELY TO GO TO HEAVEN.

YOU SEE, OUR GOSPEL READING TODAY IS JUST ABOUT THIS..." GETTING TO HEAVEN." After all that the disciples have gone through...they are still questioning Jesus. Today, we still find both Phillip & Thomas questioning Jesus about what is still to come. **Questioning him about *"the Way to Heaven."***

You see, there are three things that are absolutely necessary for you, I or anyone else to understand if we are going to get into heaven. The 1st thing we must understand is: Jesus is the WAY to heaven. Secondly, *we must want to go to heaven.* But most importantly, *we must know the way to heaven. There is only one way to heaven, and it is not your way, nor is it my way, it is God's way.*

Jesus had just finished telling his disciples that **HE WAS GOING TO HEAVEN.** He said he was going there to prepare heaven for them, so that they could spend eternity with him in heaven. Well Thomas asked Jesus how to get there. He said, ***"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"*** (v.5)

Jesus gave him not just an answer, but the single greatest statement about the way to heaven and how to know you are on the way to heaven, in all the Bible. He said, ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*** (v.6)

Ever since the Garden of Eden and the fall of Adam, man has been divided from God, deceived by the devil, and dead in sin. The Lord Jesus is the remedy for all three of those problems. We are divided from God, but Jesus is the way of reconciliation. We have been deceived by the devil, but Jesus is the truth of revelation. We are dead in sin, but Jesus is the life of regeneration.

With this one divine dogmatic declaration, Jesus makes it unmistakably plain that He alone is the way to heaven. Now I want you to listen very carefully to what Jesus said. Because if Jesus was not who He said He was, quite frankly, nothing else really matters, but if Jesus was who He said He was, nothing but that really matters.

REMEMBER, JESUS Is the One Who Guides Our Direction

He said, ***"I am the way."*** Now that statement alone would raise the world's eyebrows. Jesus said the path to heaven is a person, not a principle, not a practice, not a precept, not a philosophy. Jesus said you can take the golden rule, the ten commandments, the church, religion, Bible study, prayer, charity, clean living, and put all of them together, and not one of them would pave one brick on the road to heaven. ***ONLY JESUS CAN SHOW US THE WAY. If you are going any other way, you're going the wrong way.***

One of the most famous battles fought in all of history was the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. The allies had fought their way a hundred miles inside the Belgian border. They were moving at a furious pace until all of a sudden they grounded to a halt.

The Germans had focused all their force at one point in their battle line, and a great bulge became apparent. This counter offensive almost succeeded because of something the Germans had done just before the battle. A few days before, German soldiers, dressed in American uniforms, parachuted behind American lines. They went over all of the roads which the allied

armies would travel, and they changed all of the signposts pointing to various towns and villages along the way, making sure that the Americans would always be going in the wrong direction.

When the Americans, fighting the Battle of the Bulge, called for reinforcements, most of them never came because entire battalions were lost trying to find their way across the countryside where signposts had either been taken down or turned in the wrong direction.

Today, entire nations are lost because they are following the signposts. They are headed in the wrong direction. Jesus is the only highway to heaven, and every other road is a dead-end street that winds up in hell. Now you may think your way will take you to heaven, but the Bible says in Prov. 14:12: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."*

I heard about a man from the city who was out in the country, and he got lost. He saw a farmer sitting on the front porch of his cabin, and he walked up to him and said, "Sir, is this the best way to the city?" The old farmer drawled, *"Nope, it's the only way to the city."*

Jesus is not a safe way to heaven, He is not a better way to heaven, He's not even the best way to heaven, **HE IS THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN.** If He is not The Way, then He is not a way at all, for He is a liar and a deceiver.

Now one of three things are true about you at this moment. ***You are either on your way to heaven;*** that is, you are saved and you are showing others how to be saved. ***Or, you are IN the way to heaven,*** and you are a stumbling block to others who need to be saved, or ***you are off the way; you are lost and you need to find the way.***

ALSO, IN TODAY'S READING, WE LEARN THAT JESUS Is the One Who Guards Our Doctrine—OUR BELIEF SYSTEM

Jesus then said, ***"I AM THE TRUTH."*** Now notice that Jesus did not just say He was truth. That is, He not only tells the truth, **He is the truth.** All truth is God's truth, and God's truth is centered in, surrounded by, and anchored to the Lord Jesus Christ. **Jesus is the PLUMB-LINE by which all of the truth is to be measured.**

If you **divorce social truth from Jesus**, you will have racism. If you **divorce economic truth from Jesus**, you will have communism. If you **divorce cultural truth from Jesus**, you will have humanism. If you **divorce scientific truth from Jesus**, you will have atheism.

Agnosticism doubts truth, rationalism questions truth, infidelity rejects truth, logic dissects truth, education seeks truth, **but Jesus said, "I am the truth."**

I heard about a pastor who liked boxing. He decided to take one of his prospects to a boxing match to get to know him better. Just before the fight started, one of the boxers knelt in the ring and made the sign of the cross. The prospect said to the pastor: "What does that mean?" The pastor said: "It doesn't mean a thing if he doesn't know how to box." **Likewise, it doesn't matter how much truth you know, if you do not know HIS TRUTH.**

Ask yourself...What will it matter if you master the sciences, all the histories, and learn all the languages, and yet missed out on the greatest truth—WHICH IS, "JESUS IS CHRIST THE LORD."

WHERE DO YOU AND I FIND THIS "GREATEST TRUTH?" The incarnate truth, the imprinted truth is the inerrant truth, and if you want to find that truth, come to the Bible; **if you want to know the truth, come to Jesus.**

Why Do We Turn To Jesus For TRUTH? BECAUSE HE IS THE ONE WHO GIVES US LIFE!!

Now there are basically three types of people in this world: there are people who have no purpose in life; they are born, they live, they die, and it's all over.

Then there are people who have the wrong purpose in life. They are climbing the ladders of financial, political, social, or religious success; but they don't realize that their ladders are leaning against the wrong wall.

But then there are those who have found the right purpose in life because they have found the only person who cannot only give years to your life, but life to your years. I tell you, you will never find the right purpose in life until you know the PERSON WHO IS LIFE—JESUS THE CHRIST.

You won't find life in Wall Street's gold, Broadway's glitz, or Hollywood's glamour. Real life can only be found in a reigning Lord who is the life.

That's why religion and Christianity are so totally different. You can have religion without Jesus, but you cannot have Christianity without Christ. You can be a Buddhist without knowing Buddha, you can be a Muslim without knowing Mohammed, you can be a Confucianist without knowing Confucius. But you cannot be a Christian without knowing Jesus.

Philip Brooks was once asked: *"Is it necessary to have a personal experience with Christ in order to be a Christian?"* That great New England preacher paused and then replied: *"My friend, a personal experience with Christ is Christianity."* Do you see why the greatest statement Jesus ever made was this statement? He said, *"I am the way to God, I am the truth of God, I am the life from God."*

When He said, *"I am the way"* He answered the question: *"How can I be saved?"* When He said, *"I am the truth"* He answered the question: *"How can I be sure?"* When He said, *"I am the life"* He answered the question: "How can I be satisfied?"

To the lost person He is the way. To the learning person He is the truth. To the longing person He is the life. He made it plain that "without Me there is no going, for I am the way; without Me there is no knowing, for I am the truth; without Me there is no growing, for I am the life."

JESUS IS THE ONE WHO LEADS OUR LIFE—OVERSEES OUR DESTINY

Jesus said, *"No one comes to the Father except through Me."* With that one statement Jesus opened the eyes of all who want to see. Yes, he shows to all the roads that lead to heaven, and that one way is just as good as another.

Now that statement sounds narrow because it is narrow. It sounds dogmatic because it is dogmatic. It sounds exclusive because it is exclusive. But that doctrine is the watershed of the Christian faith.

I want to make myself plainly heard and plainly spoken. If you believe that there is any other way to God, other than Jesus Christ, you have called GOD a liar, a fake, and a fraud.

You may go to heaven without wealth, without health, without fame, without a great name, without learning, without big earnings, without duty, and without beauty. **But you cannot go to heaven without Jesus Christ.**

Dwight L. Moody, who was the Billy Graham of his day, was preaching in a big tabernacle one day. The tabernacle was filled to capacity, and the ushers were not letting anyone else in the building. Dwight L. Moody was getting ready to be led into the temple by many to preach. He noticed a little boy standing outside that tabernacle crying. Well, that great big man, with a very tender heart, stopped and said, "Son, why are you crying?" He said, "Well, I wanted to go hear Mr. Moody preach and they won't let me in." Now he didn't know he was talking to Dwight L. Moody.

This gentle giant said, "Do you really want to hear Moody preach?" He said, "Yes sir, I sure do." He said, "Son, I will tell you how you can get in if you will exactly what I tell you." He said, "What's that?"

He said, "I want you to take hold of my coattails." Moody was wearing one of those long coats with those swan tails that reached almost to the floor. He said, "You just get ahold of my coattails and don't let go, because we're going in." Well, that little fellow just took him at his word. He got a strong hold on Moody's coattails and, of course, when Moody walked in that little boy walked in right behind him holding on to those coattails. Those ushers were smiling at each other as they all went in together.

I want to tell you that heaven is closed to everyone except the Lord Jesus and those who are holding on to his coattails.

My Friends...Jesus is the WAY—take Him. Jesus is the TRUTH—try Him. Jesus is the LIFE—trust Him.

If you do, your CHANCES FOR HEAVEN are 100%. Amen.