

How is your salvation secured?

We have many questions about how we shall enter into the joys and blessings of heaven's Paradise. We want to know that our salvation is secured and that we will have a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. That grand entrance into heaven has captured my attention. In Matthew 25:34, Jesus said the Father has prepared this kingdom for you. 1 Peter 1:4 says it is an "inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

What can cause you to have a grand and abundant entrance into heaven? Someone said, "If I can just get in, I will be satisfied." God wants more than that for you. The Greeks used the phrase "grand and glorious entrance" to describe the entrance of Olympic winners in the stadium. Our entrance into heaven's paradise is filled with the sound of trumpets and the voice of celebration. The victorious child of God is coming home. They have been faithful and now a crown of life is waiting.

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Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...

God has demonstrated to you the depth of His love, compassion, and unmerited favor by making it possible for you to become a partaker of Christ's salvation and enter into the Paradise of God. One of the great wonders of God's salvation is that it is not secured by human performance but by divine action. We will have a grand and glorious entrance through the power and grace of God.

Titus 2:11-14 NKJV For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men... looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us...

Join me in quick journey to the northwestern outskirts of ancient Jerusalem, to a hill that provides a view of the city walls.

On that hill called Golgotha, there were three crosses that day, and the Man on the middle cross paid the price for your salvation.

Many things transpired that brought the three of them to that appointed time. Two of the men on the cross were criminals, but the third Man was God's Son and our Savior. We do not hear about the procession that brought the two criminals to the place called the Skull. Their crimes and lifestyle of sin had culminated with a conviction and execution on the cross. We learn from the details of the crucifixion of Christ that this was a brutal way for anyone to die. Death on the cross required many hours of mental and physical pain and suffering. The Gospel account tells us that a great multitude of people

followed Him and watched the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Many of the crowd continued to accuse, slander and curse the Lord. The two thieves who were crucified with Him joined with the crowds reviling and blaspheming Him. While they were in the process of dying on the cross, something happened that changed the destiny of one of the thieves. About the sixth until the ninth hour of the day, it became as dark as night over the whole earth. During that time Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Some of those who watched on said, "This is indeed the Son of God." During their hours of agony on the cross, one of the thieves turned to Jesus and said, "*Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.*" In abundance of grace and kindness, Jesus said to him, "*Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.*" Shortly after that, Jesus Christ the Son of God breathed His last breath and the earth began trembling and shaking and the veil in the Temple was torn from the top to the bottom.

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There was absolutely nothing the thief could have done to secure his salvation. He was justly dying for his evil lifestyle and actions. That day in Paradise, the thief found the reality of salvation by grace.

Do you remember a woman named Mary who was called Magdalene?

We are not provided with information about her life prior to Jesus' encounter with her, except that she had been possessed by seven demons. Such an amazing transformation occurred in her life when the grace of God that brings salvation appeared to her. From the depths of demonic despair, she found life and hope in Jesus Christ. As a result of God's gift of saving grace, Mary called Magdalene became a dedicated disciple and follower of Christ and was one of the first to find that Jesus had arisen from the dead.

In the Book of Acts, we are introduced to a man named Saul.

Saul was a strictly self-righteous Pharisee. He had carefully followed all of the Law of God and was very zealous concerning it. Yet, his heart was not truly right with God. In the early days of the Christian church, following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, Saul exhibited a fervent and violent opposition towards the Lord's disciples. He consented to the death of believers and asked for letters of permission to capture and persecute any who followed Christ. On the road to Damascus, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him from heaven and gloriously changed his life. In Romans 7, he told how he had attempted to work out his salvation on his own. He said he delighted in the law of God, but was weakened by his flesh. He miserably failed in every way that he attempted to please God.

Romans 7:24-25 NKJV O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this

body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

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Saul who was now the Apostle Paul found that the only way to secure his salvation was through Jesus Christ our LORD. In all of his own attempts to please God, he was a wretched failure. Instead of pleasing God, he persecuted the very One Who came into this world to save his soul. It is amazing grace that delivers a wretched sinner and transforms their life.

Rather than continuing in sin, Saul found salvation and new life in Christ. He gave testimony to this new life in Romans 8.

Romans 8:1 NKJV There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:2-3 NKJV For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son...

How is your salvation secured?

The law cannot save you. Self-righteousness cannot save you. You cannot be saved by resisting what others do to you. Satan and all of the powers of darkness offer no hope.

Eternal life is accomplished because God so loved the world that He sent His Own Son to save sinners from their sin.

Salvation is secured by the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is life and hope in Jesus Christ.

How is your salvation secured?

Go with me to the gates of Paradise.

Lazarus is there.

He was a poor beggar that suffered greatly in this life. His body was full of sores and he was constantly hungry and destitute. Somehow he found grace, mercy and entrance into Paradise. You cannot buy salvation, it is freely given.

The third man on the cross is there.

Ask him how he made it in. All of his lifetime he had been a thief and criminal. While he was dying on the cross, the man on the middle cross said: “*Today you will be with me in Paradise.*” He knew nothing about righteousness or living a good life, it was all grace and mercy.

Saul of Tarsus talks about his entrance into that glorious place.

Ask Saul, how is your salvation secured? He would tell you, to live a holy life and shun the wrong and do the right, but the only way to be saved is through Jesus Christ. If you want to secure your salvation, you must believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins. You must believe that He was buried and on the third day came out of the grave having conquered death

and the grave. You must believe that Jesus Christ is your Savior and allow Him to be the LORD of your life.

Mary who was called Magdalene would tell you, *“The only way to find peace, safety, and salvation is through Jesus Christ.”*

The pathway to salvation begins with your personal response. If you will confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart, you will be saved. Your salvation is not secured by your human performance but by the divine action of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.