

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Thus Saith the Lord

ANSWERING A QUESTION

By Jeff Sweeten

Answering the questions of some of the most genuine of God-seekers demands that one never assume malice in the questioner. However, in trying to help a lost soul, neither can one compromise honesty; this hard truth cannot be avoided. And the toughest part is that questioners often do not even realize the flawed foundation of their query. Such was the nature of the question I recently received.

Can someone who has never been baptized, but talks to God, reads their Bible everyday, does anything to help anyone who needs help, tries to love everyone like Jesus, and lives the Christian life better than some Christian's might live. Will that person go to heaven?

We must begin with the fact that God does not lie (Titus 1:2). That being the case, if God states that something is essential in order to be saved, if one does not obey that God-given mandate, God will not lie about it, when, in fact, one has not done what God has commanded (John 14:15), no matter what one might do otherwise. If I were to tell you that if you stand on your head, you will receive a new car and you go about the display of every imaginable gymnastic maneuver you can think of, except standing on your head, would you expect the new car? I think not! If I am being honest, would you expect me to lie and give you the car anyway, even though you did not stand on your head?

Of course, this brings up the interesting question: why would one not do something so simple as, say, baptism, if it saves? So, when Peter, by inspiration, writes: "baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21), either it does save us or it does not save us. How do you read that verse? If we are baptized (along with many other things God directs us to do – like those you mentioned in your post), we can expect to be saved. If we are not baptized, do you expect God to lie? I don't.

So, to answer your question: no, a person that refuses to do what God said to do in order to be saved will not be saved. Might I recommend 1 Samuel 15 as an explanation of this truth (with special emphasis on v. 22): "to obey is better than sacrifice."

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