



*River Road  
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# Reflections

## RELIGIOUS?

When most folks are asked, *Do you believe that you're going to go to Heaven after you die?*, answer with a clear and definite affirmation believing that since they are "good" people they will certainly go there. Many believe that all religions are pathways that lead to the same place; Heaven. Eternal life is a concept that seems to be "hard-wired" into the heart of everyone. Even people groups that still live in a primitive society understand that this life is not the ultimate life. Their religious thinking has life choices that please the gods and those that make them angry and that those choices have eternal consequences.

While some profess to be atheist in their beliefs, even their beliefs carry an eternal thinking, though an anti-God one, because they still have to attempt an answer for the purpose for existence. Why do we all have to think in terms of eternity? It's because God has made Himself evident in what He has created. The Bible tells us...*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, (Romans 1:18-20 NKJ)*

Men have long tried to explain the creation using a system of "naturalistic explanations" rather than accepting the Biblical view that God created the heavens and the earth. They have, as a result, believed the lie that it all happened by accident. They have proclaimed their own "wisdom" to be superior to the idea of Almighty God being the creator and sustainer of the Universe and in so doing the Bible declares that they become fools and worship the creation instead of the Creator. Sadly, they have managed to captivate the public educational system, the media and many colleges, and have had great influence even on the Church.

When Christians are asked about how things came into being, many will, at best, try some combined thinking that connects what they have been taught in school with what the Bible teaches. This gives the Word of God a vote of no confidence and makes it impossible for them to believe it. Jesus taught His disciples that He is God, that the creation speaks of

God's glory, and that to understand life meant that one must come to Him. When Jesus explained where He was going when He left them, He made the declaration that His enemies have hated ever since... *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. (John 14:6 NAS)* He went on to say that if they had seen Him, which indeed they had, that they had known and seen the Father. His answer rings through history into eternity with the powerful and true declaration of what is required to see the Father. The answer is that unless we come through Him, we will not have eternal life.

This, of course, is not acceptable to those who don't want to be accountable to God for who they are and what they do with God's Son, Jesus. Since it is through Jesus that we will get to Heaven to be with Him eternally, we must ask, once again: Do you plan on going to Heaven when you die? If your answer is yes, then how do you expect to get there? Many will answer that it is by doing good, being a good person, loving our neighbor and by helping those less fortunate than ourselves. All desirable traits, to be sure, but the Bible contradicts such thinking by declaring that *...For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;<sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Ephesians 2:8 NAS)* We better return to the primary questions and come up with more satisfactory answers. *Are you going to go to Heaven when you die? If yes, how are you planning to get there?* It is important to note that God's existence does not depend on you believing in Him but *your* eternal existence does.

The Bible records Jesus telling Nicodemus... *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.<sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.<sup>18</sup> He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:16-18 NKJ)* It has been made quite clear that man's hope for eternity can only be found in Christ Jesus. One may certainly plan to go to heaven, but unless we are found in Jesus through the salvation secured for us with His death, burial and resurrection, we will not be spending eternity with Him. Going to Heaven is definitely the hope of many, but without a personal relationship with Jesus, through faith, it is a vain hope indeed. **Pastor Doug**