

# FAITH CHAT

with James & John

## Can Non-Believers Go To Heaven?

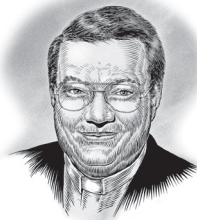
### Know This...

Even if a person doesn't know Jesus or through no fault of his own doesn't believe in Him, by responding to the grace God freely gives, he may still go to heaven; but, if someone dies, comes before the judgment seat of Christ, and rejects Him as God, that person—whether Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Mormon, Jew, Moslem, polytheist, or atheist—will not enter heaven. If someone rejects Jesus while in His very presence, why would that person want to share eternity with the God he has rejected? People do not find joy and happiness when forced to spend time with someone they have rejected.



**John:** Jesus says that neither "faith alone" nor "good works alone" will get us into heaven, but His "grace alone" will. He says we must persevere in "faith and good works" until the end, if we want to go to heaven.

**James:** Whether we know Jesus or not, whether we have rejected Him or not, Jesus gives each of us sufficient grace in our lifetime to believe in Him, to do His works, and to call upon His name at the moment of death.



**John:** Jesus established His Church as the ordinary means of salvation. He gave Her the mission of communicating the truth of salvation to the world. Jesus' presence is visible on earth through the Church. When you reject Her, you reject Him.

**James:** If we know the truth, with God's grace we must embrace it. If we are invincibly ignorant of the truth, we are still called to respond to the grace God gives us in our lives.

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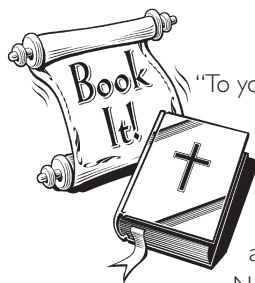


Jesus tells us, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Mt 7:21 "If you love me you will keep my commandments." Jn 14:15 "And when he saw their faith he said, 'Man, your sins are forgiven you.'" Lk 5:20 "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." Jn 11:25 "You will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved." Mk 13:13 "Whoever believes in me will do that works that I do." Jn 14:12a Jesus warns us, "On the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Mt 12:36-37

"Heretics bring sentence upon themselves since by their own choice they withdraw from the Church, a withdrawal that, since they are aware of it, constitutes damnation."



St. Jerome, 386 A.D. "All nations form but one community. This is so because all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth, and also because all share a common destiny, namely God. His providence, evident goodness, and saving designs extend to all." CCC 842 (Nostra aetate, 1) "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation." CCC 847 (Lumen gentium, 16) "Every man who is ignorant of the gospel of Christ and of his Church but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it can be saved." CCC 1260



"To you we owe our hymn of praise, O God... To you all flesh must come with its burden of wicked deeds. We are overcome by our sins; only you can pardon them." Ps 65:2, 3b-4 The Apostle Paul makes it quite clear that no one is guaranteed heaven. "I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." 1 Cor 9:26-27 But Paul also reassures us. "For the scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" Rom 10:11-13

Lord Jesus, through Your cross and resurrection You opened the gates of heaven for all of us. Let Your blessing rest on those who believe in You and Your Church. Let the grace You give to those who don't know or believe in You be sufficient for them to do Your work in this life. May all of us respond to Your grace and call out Your name at the moment of death. Amen.

