

If you ask someone if they are going to Heaven, the answers vary but usually include one or more of these statements:

- A. I hope I will make it
- B. I try to live a good life
- C. I've been (baptized, confirmed, christened)
- D. I am (pick a denomination)
- E. I have always been a Christian
- F. No one can know that

The Bible tells us that none of these are good enough. Entrance into Heaven requires a *relationship* with God. But what kind of a relationship might that be? There are numerous kinds of relationships. Let's consider some of them, in ascending order of importance:

6. Encounter-based. Examples: Barber, beautician, car repairman, doctor, home serviceman. This is a person you may see regularly, know their name, have conversations about non-personal things, but you really are not personally related. Perhaps spiritually, this is the "Easter and Christmas" church attender. They know who the church is, but aren't really part of it.
5. Fellowship-based. Clubs, churches, lodges, associations. These connections are repeated, lengthy, and may involve a closer social relationship in which you know something about each other and may even be friends. This might correlate to the folks who attend church every so often and may even be a member.
4. Purpose or goal-oriented. Examples would include political parties, activist, service, lobbying or trade organizations. Personal connection is based around shared goals and joint efforts, and usually have some degree of camaraderie, loyalty, or brotherhood. This type of professing Christian may be committed to "the cause", perhaps focused on social, humanitarian, or political activities. But their hearts remain unconverted.
3. Team-related, such as sports, workplaces, contracted affiliations, and even religious groups. You spend a lot of time together doing things together or working together, learn things about each other, but still have limits on personal connections. This likely, sadly, includes a good many regular church attenders and members. They do things, they are often there, but their walk and works rarely seem to be on the spiritual side of things.
2. Adoptive relationships. This includes chosen familial relationships, marriage, lifelong friendships. These relationships are the closest chosen ones we can have, and are based on just that—choice. The spiritual bond that believers share in Christ is a lot like this.
1. Blood. This is the closest human relationship humans can have, and it is based on parent/child and other blood relationships that come from that. People sometimes break fellowship and contact, but the blood relation is unchangeable. In this kind of relationship with Christ, the relationship is not formal but total. This person's identity in Christ is obvious, constant, uncompromised by the world and eternal in purpose.

We must have a BLOOD relationship with God to enter Heaven! NONE of these other kinds are good enough. Number 1 and number 2 are the result of trusting Christ, but there is no relationship type 2 without type number 1! We cannot have a relationship like that with God on our own because of sin.

In old western movies, scenes were sometimes enacted involving the act of becoming "blood brothers." In this ceremony, two people, usually depicted as Native American and white, otherwise expected to be enemies, would cut their hands, put the wounds together, and depict the sharing of blood, even though not born into the same family or even race. It was symbolic of a choice and commitment to one another to enter into the closest of human relationships, signified by the sharing of blood.

Jesus Christ did that for us. How, do you ask?

- a. He became like one of us. John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth

There is no other way He could have redeemed us. His incarnation, by being born of a woman, made Him one of us, at eternal consequence.

- b. He shed for us His Divine blood. He was the only begotten of the Father, born of a virgin, untainted by the sinful bloodline of Adam, and thereby qualified to be the Lamb of God, a Holy sacrifice in which the Son of God / Son of Man became the sacrifice for sin. His blood was given the propitiation of our sins. *Romans 3:25* *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;* *1 Peter 1:18-20*¹⁸ *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...*¹⁹ *But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*
- c. He took on a body like ours, now glorified, forever. This is the way that He will make us fit for His presence. *1 Corinthians 15:20* *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.* *Philippians 3:21* *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*
- d. We must die to receive this change, by shedding the sinful "body of this death." (Rom. 7:24) But it is His redemption that gives us a place with Him instead of the second death (Rev. 20:14). *1 Corinthians 15:50:* *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

This kind of a relationship, *through His blood, (Ephesians 1:7* *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;)* is permanent, unbreakable, and created by His power and choice, and entered into by our power and choice. (John 1:12) Once we understand this forgiven, cleansed, holy, and eternal connection with Christ, we can clearly understand that it is eternal and that we can offer no works or merit with which to aid God in establishing it.

I hope this illustration helps us know that going to Heaven is already settled before you die. If you are IN Christ, you share a relationship with Him that *required HIM to change forever, so that He could change us forever.*

- *Enemies, now reconciled:* *Romans 5:10* For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
- *Estranged from God, now family* *Ephesians 2:19* Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
- *Joint heirs with Christ* *Romans 8:17* And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
- *Taken as family by Christ* *Mark 3:35* For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.
- *Held by Christ:* *John 10:28* And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
- *Adopted:* *Galatians 4:5* To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; *Ephesians 1:5* Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

This should make us examine every religious teaching we've ever heard, the religion of which we may be or have been a part, the ceremonies, recitations, rituals or whatever in which we have taken part, and anything that gives us hope of Heaven but not certainty. None of those, only Christ, can create or sustain a relationship of blood, family and redemption in Him.

Have you entered into that relationship?