

2018 06 13

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Salvation

In my two religion books and in several essays, I said we should not worry about saved or lost, heaven and hell. This note makes the point again. It is in the same spirit as another note in which I tried to put my position simply.

(1) You know there is a God. You know God wants you to do the right things for the right reasons. You know what the right things are because you are an evolved sentient-moral being, your society taught you, you have read about morality, have read the teachings of Jesus, read the teachings of other great prophets, and have learned about morality from pop culture. You glimpse simple decency and try to act with simple decency. So, for a few minutes in your life, you actually follow the teachings of Jesus. You actually help another person and-or you actually make the world better. You actually get a glimpse of what it means to love your neighbor. As in stereotypical-but-true movies ("Topper"), you go beyond yourself for a minute. Maybe you only do your duty as a teacher, police officer, fire fighter, or judge. Maybe you only help some kids to read. Maybe you are only like Jimmy Stewart in "It's a Wonderful Life". Maybe once you tell the truth in a bad situation.

What is better, (1) that mere 10 minutes or (2) heaven without that mere 10 minutes? What is worse, not having that mere 10 minutes even once in your life or hell?

Salvation is (1). I cannot imagine anything better. It is what theologians call being near God.

Hell is never having (1) above. It is what theologians call being far from God. I can't imagine anything worse. Hell is living without (1) but knowing what it is. Hell is finding excuses for never living like (1) even though you know what it is. Hell is going back to excuses even if you did live well for 10 minutes once in your life. Hell is knowing all the damage that you cause because you never really try to live like (1) and knowing all the damage that is caused by people who never try to live like (1). Hell is belief in a dogma system, or a Church, that leads you to Faith, Justification, Grace, and Salvation, or to the Great Dharma System. A lot of people think they are going to heaven but really live in hell.

If you can see and accept (1), you are saved. I can't imagine being more saved. Even going to blissful heaven for all eternity is not saved like (1). If you understand (1) but refuse it, even if in all other ways you do what is needed to be saved according to your Church, even if you have visions of heaven or the great Dharma system, then I doubt God will be happy with you when you die.

I don't know how to say it any better.