

Choices that Affect Our Destiny

I saw a news anchor brashly claim that a person who just died is most certainly in hell. Curious comment. Despite people's opinions, can we know what a person's eternal home will be? When this question arises, both Christians and non-Christians alike seem to gravitate towards: *"How can a loving God send someone to hell?"* Yet, there's a logical counterpart: *"How can a just God send someone to heaven?"* The response to both questions traces back to Jesus Christ. God has given humanity free will, and for His love to be genuine, it cannot be coerced. He permits us the ability to choose: to obey Him or to disobey Him. God's attributes coexist and cannot be separated or stand alone. God is love, shaping His justice, while His justice also influences His expressions of love. Justice requires adequate payment for sins committed, whereas love involves extending grace to the offender. The cross exemplifies both justice and love. As Jesus died on the cross, He bore the punishment for sin that justice required, and He offered the grace of forgiveness to sinners. Thus, both God's justice and love were at work. **Psalm 85:10:**

"Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other." For those who believe in Him, placing their complete faith in Christ and accepting His loving sacrifice on their behalf, God's justice rests on Jesus. For those who turn away from Christ and reject His sacrifice, God's justice falls on them. Consequently, we should be careful when declaring someone's eternal destiny, as knowing a person's relationship with God is impossible. We can't see the heart, but God can. **1 Samuel 16:7:** *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."* Therefore, it's best to speculate less and concentrate more on a fundamental understanding of the gospel.

We can confidently assert that in Christ there is salvation. Jesus tells us, **John 6:27:** *"Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."* Jesus' greatest gift was not physical bread, but eternal life, which the Father authorized Him to give. Physical bread is perishable; the gift of Jesus, who is Himself the bread of life, will last forever. If people accept the gospel and are born again, they will be with God after death. Our focus should be on our own spiritual needs and the needs of those who are still living. What we know for sure is that there are only two destinations for the dead: heaven and hell. Those who have received Christ through faith will be with God after death, while those who have rejected Christ will be separated from God forever. Jesus said, **John 12:26:** *"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."* What choice will you make?