

FATAL ASSUMPTION SERIES

“HEAVEN IS GUARANTEED”

By Dale Shorter

Proverbs 16:25 “There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. “(NLT)

Assumptions cause all kinds of chaos in our lives.

Sometimes they lead us to judge people unfairly. We are at times way too quick to judge things we just are not equipped to judge. To the point that God says, “Just let me be the judge.”

We assume so many things...about *difficulties in life*; about ***people***, about ***tomorrow***...and we don't stop there...we assume some things about ETERNITY.

■ Nothing is more dangerous than making assumptions about ETERNITY.

God has given us ASSURANCES about ETERNITY should we accept His gift of salvation...but many ASSUME their ETERNITY and live life on their terms.

Two destinations in life:

1. Toward heaven and eternal life with God, or
2. Toward hell and eternal separation from God the Father.

In John 6:38, Jesus said, (NLT) *“For I have come down from HEAVEN to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.”*

Heaven is an actual place...just as Earth is.

- 6 times in *chapter 6 John* states that Jesus “*came down from heaven.*” And in Acts 2:33 Peter states that He (Jesus) ascended to the “*right hand of the Father.*”
- The Greek word translated as "heaven" is **ouranos** and in context refers to the dwelling place of God. According to the Bible this is also where the redeemed dwell following this life.

Jesus reaching out to comfort His followers upon revealing to them His soon departure from earth...said in Jn. 14...¹ *“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. (NLT)*

So the Scriptures teach us that heaven is the place where God dwells and that every person who places their eternity in Christ’s hands lives and will live one day to dwell there after this life.

- Heaven is a wonderful place. It’s real.
But, the Bible also tells about a place called “Hell.”
- And the Bible reveals that every person will spend eternity in one of those two places... Heaven or Hell.
 - Hell is real and it is a place of eternal torment and unimaginable suffering.

The consequences stemming from decisions made in this life are real...and to base our eternity on any assumption is unthinkable!

What assumptions do people make concerning eternity???

I. THE ALL-LOVING GOD ASSUMPTION

This assumption is based upon the rock solid truth that God is *all-loving*. The Bible indeed reveals that God in His very essence is LOVE.

So from this premise, many surmise (*assume*) that an All-Loving God would never allow His prize creation to suffer eternally in such a place as Hell.

Remember this: Hell was already in existence when man was created.

- It was created for Lucifer & the fallen angels.
- Through the fall, mankind identified with the sinful rebellion and thus charted our course to such a destiny without God.

Those who buy into the “All-Loving God” assumption are adamant in their belief that God would never turn away people for some list of *minor infractions* in their eyes. But they fail to recognize the true **NATURE OF SIN** and the **NATURE OF GOD**.

That is: Sin is not just going to go away, and God is never going to be good with it.

The nature of God as revealed in Scripture has a broad spectrum.

That is:

1. God is indeed MERCIFUL (Deut. 4:31; Daniel 9:9), but also JUST (Job 34:12; Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 30:18).
2. He is also completely HOLY.

These aspects of His nature, particularly his *justice* and *holiness*, mean that anything sinful cannot dwell in God's presence.

II. THE GOOD WORKS ASSUMPTION

The view that entrance into heaven is on the basis of merit (our works) rather than God's grace is also common. However, a *works based system* of salvation is foreign to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Whether or not one enters heaven is not dependent on a rap sheet of good and evil deeds...*where we hope to God that our good acts outweigh our bad ones.*

While this perspective may be common and is as old as the church is, it is not supported by the Bible.

Ephesians 2:8-9... (NLT) “⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”

Grace is God's unmerited favor, demonstrated most fully in the sacrifice of Christ.

Jesus says in John 14:6 that He is, "**the way and the truth and the life.**" **The only way to heaven is through Jesus...**

<p>Good works cannot be substituted for GOD'S WORK!</p>
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Jesus is the only one who lived a sinless life and died a sacrificial death for you. Jesus is the only one who defeated death and ascended to heaven saying, "I'll be back!"

Those who argue that Good Works are good enough have no idea of what it took for God to provide Grace.

III. THE SINCERITY ASSUMPTION

Many ask, "What about sincere and good people who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior? Won't God welcome them into heaven?"

This assumes that sincerity is enough to satisfy the righteousness of God, when in reality it is not.

Proverbs 16:25, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."

No matter how sincere someone may be about being able to fly by frantically flapping their arms, their sincerity will not keep them in the air.

Why would we assume sincerity is *good enough* to get us into heaven when it is based on a false and fatal assumption?

Sincerity does not address the "sinful condition" of the heart.

The "*good enough*" gospel is an outright rejection of God's gift of salvation. Jesus didn't die because He wanted to give people *an option* to eternal life. Jesus died because there was no other way whereby man could be saved.

It seems rather odd to welcome a person into heaven when they have rejected God's plan and come up with one of their own which falls way short of solving the real problem, which is a sin diseased soul.

The "sincerity assumption" is based on a lie...and believing a lie as such has eternal consequences.

IV. THE GOODNESS ASSUMPTION

The thought here is that although some "bad" people may need punishment, most are generally "good" and entitled to heaven.

The position that views people as generally good and entitled to heaven tends to make the error of viewing human nature as basically good.

Many people have bought into this assumption that GOOD is Good Enough! The Scriptures however tell a different story about the human condition and it is not good!

Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT)

“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?”

Heart: "Heart" (Hebrew lebab/leb [b'bel], Gk. kardia [kardiva]) occurs over one thousand times in the Bible. It denotes a person's center for both **physical** and **emotional-intellectual-moral** activities.¹

Psalm 51:5... "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

Biblically speaking, most people are not "good." In fact, when compared to God's standards of holiness, no one is "GOOD."

In Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19, Jesus said, "**No one is good – except God alone.**" You see when we label something "good" it is relatively speaking.

¹Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology -

Our goodness falls far short of God's standard. To one degree or another, we all "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

This does not mean that we are always actively engaged in doing evil or participating in depraved acts all the time. But, it does mean that in our very nature we are "fallen," in rebellion against God and incapable of saving ourselves.

- So, people assume, using their own set of metrics, that God is obligated to let **good people** into heaven upon leaving this life.
- They assume that they themselves will be readily accepted by God in eternity. This is in spite of the fact that they have not accepted God's gift of salvation; this is in spite of the fact that they have **not repented of sin**. What they view as minor lapses in moral behavior is just the tip of the iceberg. These moral failures and flaws in character stem from a heart that is diseased by sin.
- This assumption fails to take into account the nature of God, the nature of sin, and what the Bible has to say on the subject.

God is holy, but He is also just. God's justice requires the reality of hell for the unredeemed. The nature of sin extends, biblically speaking, to everyone.

THIS ASSUMPTION ALLOWS THEM TO FEEL NO NEED OF MERCY OR FORGIVENESS...and...it's FATAL. If we are trusting in anything other than the saving grace of Jesus—we are going to be woefully disappointed in eternity.

Some would say this is quite "unfair" of God. But GOD SEES US AS WE ARE—*sinful*...and He knows the true state of our being.

This is exactly why He sent His Son to redeem the human race. This redemption is offered to us as a free gift.

Heaven is not ours because of “merit” but it is ours because of “mercy.”

V. THE EXEMPTION ASSUMPTION

This is the assumption that those who have never heard a presentation of the gospel will be exempt from judgment.

In their book *Faith Comes by Hearing*, Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson raise this question: "How could it be fair and just for those who have never even had a chance to hear the gospel, which is necessary for salvation, to be condemned to hell?"²They go on to say... "The question sounds powerful, but behind it lie faulty assumptions."

"The first mistaken assumption," they state, "is that our condemnation is based on a rejection of the gospel."

Not so. Scripture teaches that our condemnation is based on the fact that WE ARE SINNERS, not because at some point in time we rejected the gospel ...Furthermore, God's wrath is revealed against everyone who suppresses his truth revealed through creation ...

Strictly speaking, the Bible denies that there are persons who have never heard of God." ³There is "a confusion of justice and mercy."

² Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, editors, *Faith Comes by Hearing* (InterVarsity, 2008), 241. Questions about hell are addressed in another article in this series, "*Is Hell Real?*"

³Ibid.

God is merciful in that He has provided a way of salvation via Christ for those who will accept Him. But God is also just in that sin will not go unnoticed.

We know that God will deal fairly with those who have not received a direct presentation of the gospel, just as He will deal fairly with those who have.

Romans 1:20 (NLT), ¹⁸But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature.

So they have NO EXCUSE FOR NOT KNOWING GOD.

Question: Does this mean we are to not worry about the Great Commission of Jesus to go into all the world?

No, later in Romans Paul makes this clear...

Romans 10:13-15 (NLT), ¹³For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” ¹⁴But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

Creation provides a clear revelation not only of the fact of God, but of His divine nature, and man’s refusal to recognize this is a matter of the hardness and rebellion of his heart.

If someone wants to know God, God will call someone to go to them with the gospel.

Missionaries have reported that they've found natives in villages who believed that there was one Supreme Being even though they were worshipping idols and demonic powers and were longing to know the true God. (See Acts 17:22-31)

Of course, Satan seeks to blind the minds of people so they will not respond to the light they have either in creation or in the gospel. In this he uses all sorts of tricks, deceptions, and hindrances.

Some people use this as an excuse to reject the light they have, but interestingly, others still come to faith in Christ. While such negative conditions do make responding to Christ more difficult, it is not impossible and people are still without excuse.

We must remember that the Bible teaches us that God is seeking to bring men to repentance and convict them of their need of God and Christ (see Rom. 2:4; John 1:9).

As we look at the various fatal assumptions people make about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the way the Word of God presents the truth about heaven and hell, we must also look at the truth as to how to get to one of the two places. Heaven or hell is a choice one must make.

Let us be clear...there is only one way to get to heaven; that is, a person choosing Jesus as being the only way to the Father. It is by faith and trust in a God and Savior who desire our fellowship with them forever.

Yet, there is also only one way to get to hell; that is by choosing to reject the plan of salvation through Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

What assumptions are you making in life?

Do you assume you are prepared for heaven by the choices you make in life?

Jesus made it very clear to mankind about faith and belief as a way to heaven...Jesus said,

“...“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Believe and receive the gift of salvation. Today is the day of salvation!

This message was presented by Pastor Dale Shorter, Senior Pastor, Harvest Assembly of God, Fort Worth, Texas.

Brother Dale Shorter is my pastor. He has a heart for the hurting, a heart for those going through troublesome times, and a heart for seeing sinners coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. He truly has a pastor's heart...a genuine and inspiring shepherd of the flock.

Brother Dale is a mentor and lover of the soul. Messages such as above keeps Christians on their toes and in love with the gospel message. The Pastor has a helper who supports his mission to feed the hungry soul (physically and spiritually). Gilda, Dale's wife, provides the shepherd with the tools to minister appropriately and passionately. She never places herself in the lime-light; but gives of her time and energy in seeing the church grow in maturity.

*Dale and Gilda work together in providing quality education for the young and “not-so-young.” Their mission is to make Jesus a household name in the neighborhood in which they live by setting the example of the most important commandments according to Jesus; **“Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, **‘Love your neighbor as yourself”** (Luke 10:27).*

As a member of the church, I see Dale and Gilda fulfilling those commandments in their personal life. They are indeed God's servants.