



LIFEC H A N G E B O O K S

S P E C I A L E D I T I O N

S I N C E N O B O D Y ' S
perfect...

How GOOD
is good enough?

ANDY STANLEY

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P A R T I

HOW DO YOU GET THERE FROM HERE?

The story is told of a Sunday school teacher whose assignment was to explain to the six-year-olds in his class what someone had to do in order to go to heaven. In an attempt to discover what the kids already believed about the subject, he asked a few questions.

“If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale, and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into heaven?”

“NO!” the children all answered.

“If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would *that* get me into heaven?”

Again the answer was, “NO!”

“Well then,” he said, “if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children and loved my wife, would that get me into heaven?”

Again they all shouted, “NO!”

“Well then, how *can* I get into heaven?”

A boy in the back row stood up and shouted, “YOU GOTTA BE DEAD!”

DEAD SURE

Therein lies the problem: You gotta be dead to go to heaven. Consequently, you gotta be dead to know much about the place, as well.

The people who seem to be most confident about what heaven is like are those who claim to have died and come back to talk about it—and write bestselling books on the subject. I have read a couple of those books, and I’ve heard a couple of “returners” interviewed on television. Their stories are interesting. But they never give a straight answer to the questions we are all asking: “How do you get there? What can we do on this side of death to assure ourselves a spot in heaven?”

Most agree that death is a prerequisite, but that’s pretty much where agreement ends and speculation begins. In these pages, we are going to look at an ancient

but popular theory regarding who goes to heaven. I say ancient, because the idea has been around since the beginning of civilization. In terms of popularity, it is what most world religions espouse.

So why did I bother to write a book about it? Because in spite of its immense popularity and long standing, it doesn't make a lick of sense.

Seriously. Smart, educated, accomplished men and women from just about every nation on earth are banking their eternities on a theory that doesn't hold up under even the slightest scrutiny.

Why? Well, I'm not sure. My assumption is that everybody is preoccupied with making a living, falling in love, having kids, and whatever else they are doing. Nobody's got time to think about heaven. So they don't.

THE GREAT EQUALIZER

But every now and again we are confronted with our mortality. When that happens, we mentally take hold of *something* that gives us assurance. For most people on this spinning ball of minerals and dirt, assurance is found in an assumption they have never tested. And it brings them the assurance they need to jump right back into the game of life.

So what is this internationally held assumption?

Good people go to heaven.

The logic flows something like this: There is a good God who lives in a good place reserved for good people. This God goes by many names. He is behind all major world religions. Therefore, all major, and possibly minor, religions provide a legitimate path to God and, therefore, heaven. The criterion for making it to this good place is to be good. Each religion has its own definition for *good*. But what they all have in common is that men and women must do certain things, and not do certain things, in order to assure themselves a spot in this good place with a good God.

Make sense?

Actually, it doesn't really make any sense at all. In fact, if you are smart enough to read this book, you are smart enough to find the problems with the *good people go* view without my help. Chances are, you've never really thought it through. But you owe it to yourself to do so.

I figure it will take you about two hours to read this book. Investing two hours of your time to consider where you will spend eternity isn't really much to ask. So find a comfortable chair and prepare yourself for what may be an uncomfortable discovery.