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Scarcely Saved

By Teresa Hampton

It happened again. A famous celebrity passed away. The news coverage consisted mainly of those talking about how we lost a hero, but heaven gained an angel, or something to that effect. It really did not matter if the deceased person's life was driven by materialism, lust, or questionable activities. It reminded me that a large percent of the population believes that heaven is everyone's destination. After all, God's grace is amazing!

A few verses in the Bible come to mind. Paul wrote the Romans about their misunderstanding of grace, *Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?* (Rom. 6:1-2). The power and magnitude of God's grace does not give one liberty to sin willfully. If we sin unintentionally, we must confess our sins, pray for one another, and God will forgive us (1 John 1:9).

Every person will not go to heaven. The Lord made it clear that many would not enter heaven because of their sinfulness. Jesus said, *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it* (Matthew 7:14). Conversely, there will be few who find heaven, *narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*"

Peter wrote, *...what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now if the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?* (1 Peter 4:17-19). Key words in this verse are *if the righteous one is scarcely saved*. Think about what Peter said. We must obey God to be found righteous—in our hearts, with our words, and in every action. Earlier Peter wrote, *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble* (2 Peter 1:10). This admonition is for those who have personal struggles, as well as those who encounter false teaching. One must be devoted to God's word to identify sin and to distinguish between truth and error. Some call this legalism, but it is simply God's way of keeping the saved saved.

We may believe that everyone is going to heaven, but truthfully, God will only allow the faithful righteous to enter.

Today's verse: *Test all things; hold fast what is good* (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

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