

Is Michael Jackson in Heaven?

✖ What is it about him?

I was 13 years old and somehow convinced my dad, an avid Frank Sinatra fan, to play “Off The Wall” while driving to my uncle’s house. He reluctantly agreed. For me, it was the coolest 45-minute road trip and probably the most painful for him. Little did I know that the young voice I heard on the eight-track tape player would eventually become the subject of worldwide praise.

Thirty years later, I find myself talking to people every day who look for ways to move past the things that hold them back. Michael Jackson was an expert at breaking barriers. He was extraordinarily talented and accomplished things that most only dream about. He had the best-selling album of all time. He was one of the highest paid entertainers in history, pulling in over \$750 million and giving more money to charities than any other celebrity. He arguably changed the way the world dances.

On July 7, the world memorialized this entertainer who passed at the young age of 50 with a ceremony fit for a king. But, aside from his temporary accomplishments, what barriers did Jackson break that merit such an outpouring of praise and worship? He didn’t heal the sick. He didn’t liberate the oppressed. He didn’t give sight to the blind. He didn’t put his life on the line like a firefighter, soldier or police officer. He wasn’t a teacher or a doctor.

What is it about him that lures millions to lift him up and call him king? Perhaps at the core of the human race is the need to worship something. When God isn’t the center of our lives, we focus our adoration on something or someone glorious, godlike and outstanding. In exchange of our praise, we expect some sort of performance, and no one performed like

Jackson.

What about heaven?

Getting into heaven doesn't require being a good singer or dancer. If that were the case, most of us would be toast. It doesn't require being nice or attractive. A vast majority of us wouldn't make the cut either. Thank God it doesn't require having a lot of money or selling truckloads of albums. If that were a prerequisite, less than 1/1000th of a percent would make it through the pearly gates. Instead, it requires breaking some personal barriers.

I find it ironic that the man who broke so many professional barriers had great difficulty breaking his personal ones. His personal life was more tragic than glamorous. Just ask his brothers and sisters about the family in which he was raised. Or ask the teams of attorneys who scrambled to dispute the serious allegations of being called a pedophile. Jackson's personal life is anything but worthy of worldwide praise, and, to the dismay of the millions of people who insist on worshiping him, he would be the first to admit it.

If Jackson is in heaven, it's because he managed to break the most important barrier of all. He managed to get off the throne of his own heart and place Christ at the center of his life. Having a real relationship with the Son of God is the only way to break the barrier that separates us from heaven.

Is Michael Jackson in heaven? I would never pretend to know the answer to that question. No one does. The truth is only God knows.

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