

Is Suicide a Ticket to Hell?

The Bible describes two believers who committed suicide: King Saul and Judas. For sure Judas went to hell. Peter said about him in Acts 1:16-18: “‘Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—he was one of our number and shared in this ministry. With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open, and all his intestines spilled out.”

This Scripture implies that Judas was not saved.

The other story is about King Saul. He was mortally wounded in battle, so to avoid torture he killed himself. From David’s words about Saul, it appears that Saul went to heaven. He says in 2 Sam. 1:23, “Saul and Jonathan—in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted.”

We know that Jonathan was godly, so if Saul and Jonathan were not parted in death, this would mean Saul is with Jonathan in heaven. I should also note that this passage may simply mean that they died together in battle, not necessarily that they are still with each other in death. At any rate, Saul killed himself only because he was trying to avoid torture, and he was going to die soon anyway.

The way I explain suicide is this: I tell believers to fear God enough not to take the risk. You could lose your soul by committing suicide, so it’s better to simply play it safe and trust God to make you happier. I lean to the idea that most cases of suicide lead to damnation. I wouldn’t bet on anyone going to heaven who committed suicide. I think the odds are against the person. Besides, suicide is the ultimate statement of unbelief. People commit suicide because they don’t have faith that God will help them, and we are saved by faith.

We have received many angry emails over my answer, usually because someone has lost a close friend or relative to suicide. Here is a sample email that represents many irate emails along with my response.

Reaction: I may be reacting in the flesh and you probably won't even get this, but I cannot sleep until I write this. Maybe I should write it and then click delete. I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that I am so very grateful to have and grow. I lost a dear childhood friend today to suicide. He was an awesome athlete in high school. He was an awesome Christian who did not mind showing it to his peers. He was an All-American High School Honor Roll student. His entire family are Christians.

I was disturbed today, that my little sister said he is going to hell. I do not believe this. I do not believe the sure ticket to HELL is to commit suicide. My God is more loving and merciful than that to his people.

I am disturbed at your opinion about suicide, also. I do not believe it has a place on the net for those people searching for answers and comfort at a time like this. It is an opinion not an answer. No where in the Bible does it say suicide is a sure ticket to Hell. I cannot find anything in the Bible that says you go to hell for committing suicide.

I would like to encourage you to take your opinion of something unknown off the Internet. I think it is very damaging to those who have a personal relationship with God and those who I hope come to know him.

Ann

Tom's Response: I sympathize with your grief, but it would be a mistake for me to tell people that they can make heaven and still commit suicide. God is merciful, and if people make heaven despite suicide, wonderful! But there is no Scripture to prove you can, so I believe it is best to fear God so much

that you would never commit such an act. Peter says, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and sinner" (1 Pet. 4:18).

Committing suicide is not a sure ticket to hell, because there is no ticket to hell. It is the other way around: Jesus is the ticket to heaven. However, Jesus said many will say that He is Lord, but He will reply, "Depart from me." Faith is not simply mentally agreeing to the facts of the gospel, but being changed by the gospel. And then one must continue in faith and not give in to unbelief. There is no "once saved, always saved" promise from God. Even if it were true that someone was saved, that does not mean that his or her salvation is "unconditionally secured." One still must persevere and trust God to the end, not end their lives through suicide.

You said that my answer is "very damaging to those who have a personal relationship with God." How could my answer damage someone's faith?

Maybe what you mean is that someone like yourself who lost a friend through suicide will not be comforted with this article, because I refuse to license suicide as a gateway to heaven. For sure my answer won't comfort you.

The article is meant to discourage suicide—not to comfort those who lost loved ones through suicide. I'm not thinking of you when I write this article but those who are contemplating this act.

I do understand your grief, but imagine if I told people that they could still make heaven and commit suicide. That message may be what they wanted to hear so they could be given a false sense of security that they will leave their unhappiness here and enter glory in the next life.

A similar message is given to suicide bombers in the Islamic faith. They are told that if they kill themselves and others through a Jihad they will enter a wonderful heaven full of

virgin wives. This false doctrine gives people courage to go through such a diabolical act. It should go without saying, but any Muslim who murders others through suicide will not make heaven, for the Scriptures say, "No murderer has eternal life" (1 John 3:15).

I think there is a delicate correlation between that and Christian suicide. As long as people think they will enter heaven by such an act, perhaps we unwittingly give people courage to go through with it. I refuse to give anyone such false hope.

Despite what I said, my prayers are with you.

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