

the good news about the

Greatest Gift

In all of life, nothing is more wonderful than discovering God's GOOD NEWS.

STEP **1** to this discovery is realizing
GOD'S PLAN.

PEACE and LIFE

**GOD IS GOOD, A LOVING GOD WHO DOES NOT WANT ANY TO PERISH.
HIS DESIRE IS TO SAVE THE PEOPLE HE CREATED.
GOD WANTS US TO HAVE PEACE, AND AN ABUNDANT LIFE.**

The Bible gives us the name of this one and only Creator God.

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

THE BIBLE SAYS . . .

John 1:1, 3, 14 In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** [Jesus] was with **God**, and the **Word was God**. **All things came into being through Him**, and apart from **Him** nothing came into being that has come into being. And the **Word** became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw **His** glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 3:16 "God so loved the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes in Him** should **not perish**, but have **ETERNAL LIFE**."

1 John 5:11-13 And the testimony is this, that God has **given** us **eternal life**, and this LIFE is in His Son. **He who has the Son has the LIFE**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the LIFE. These things I have written to you who **believe** in the name of the Son of God, so that you may **know** that you have **ETERNAL LIFE**.

Romans 5:1 "Therefore, having been **justified by faith**, we have **PEACE** with God through . . . Christ."

YET VERY FEW KNOW THIS PEACEFUL, ABUNDANT LIFE AND THE GIFT THAT GOD DESIRES FOR ALL; BUT THE PROBLEM IS NOT WITH GOD . . .

Everyone, at one time or another, has broken GOD'S Laws.

STEP 2 is acknowledging

MAN'S PROBLEM

SIN

ALL MEN ARE SINNERS, AND SIN SEPARATES US FROM A HOLY GOD.

We hear many romantic things about our hearts, but the Bible says that at the very core of our being there is something wrong. There is a strong impulse in our human nature that insist on putting ourselves first, and GOD second. When we break any of God's Laws (by lying, stealing, lust, hatred, etc.), even in THOUGHT, we have "sinned" or "committed a crime" against GOD.



SIN IS DISOBEYING GOD'S LAWS.

THE BIBLE SAYS . . .

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more **deceitful** than all else and is desperately sick."

Isaiah 53:6 "All of us like sheep have **gone astray**, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

Ecclesiastes 7:20 "Indeed, there is **not a righteous man on earth** who continually does good and who never sins."

Romans 3:23 "For **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:10 "As it is written, **THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.**"

NOW, THE FRIGHTENING THING THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES IS THAT THERE IS A TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCE AWAITING THOSE WHO SIN.

STEP 3 is realizing

SIN'S CONSEQUENCE

ETERNAL DEATH

THE PENALTY FOR MAN'S SINS IS ETERNAL DEATH.

Man, through the ages, has tried to bridge this gap (separation) in many ways – baptism, communion, commandments, commitment, confession, religion, etc., – without success.

DEATH MEANS SEPARATION:

1. Spiritual Death: sinful man born separated from God,
2. Physical Death: separation of soul and spirit from the body, and
3. Eternal Death: man separated forever from the presence of God – eternal torment in flames.



THE BIBLE SAYS . . .

2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9 ". . . dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of **eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Luke 16:22-24 ". . . **The rich man also died** and was buried. And in **Hades** [Hell] he lifted up his eyes, being **in torment** . . . he cried out and said . . . I am **in agony in this flame.**"

Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into **the eternal fire** which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;"

Revelation 14:11a "And the smoke of **their torment goes up forever and ever**; they have **no rest day and night** . . ."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is **death**, but the **free GIFT** of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord."

BECAUSE WE ALL HAVE SINNED, WE ALL DESERVE ETERNAL DEATH –TORMENT IN FLAMES. PRAISE GOD THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO STOP WITH THIS BAD NEWS. HERE IS THE GOOD NEWS! (That's what "gospel" means – "good news.")

Step **4** is the GOOD NEWS,
GOD'S REMEDY

The CROSS

**THE SUFFERING OF JESUS IS GOD'S ONLY
PROVISION FOR THE PARDON OF OUR SINS.**

Christ died and suffered in Hades in **OUR** place. After three days in agony, He rose from the dead. He exchanged His righteousness for our sinfulness so that when we place our trust in Him, we can exchange our sinfulness for His righteousness.

Galatians 2:21 "I do not nullify the **grace** of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

THE BIBLE SAYS . . .

1 Peter 1:18, 19 ". . . knowing that you were not **redeemed** with perishable things like silver or gold . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, **the blood of Christ.**"

1 Peter 2:24 ". . . and **He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross**, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds we were healed."

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates **His own love** towards us, in that while we were yet sinners **Christ died for us.**"

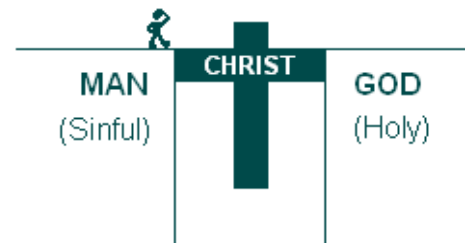
Hebrews 10:10 "By this will we have been **sanctified** through the **offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE for ALL.**"

1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also died for sins, **ONCE for ALL** . . ."

Acts 2:24, 31b "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the **agony of death**, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. . . . that He was neither abandoned to **Hades**, nor did His flesh suffer decay."

**IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE SOME FACTS ABOUT CHRIST AND HIS DEATH
SWIMMING AROUND IN YOUR MIND.**

DO YOU KNOW WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?



Step **5** is understanding

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

EXERCISE SAVING FAITH

YOU MUST CLAIM BY PERSONAL CHOICE TO TRUST EXCLUSIVELY IN CHRIST'S SUFFERING ON THE CROSS AND IN HADES TO BE SUFFICIENT PAYMENT FOR ALL YOUR SINS.

are you HERE . . .

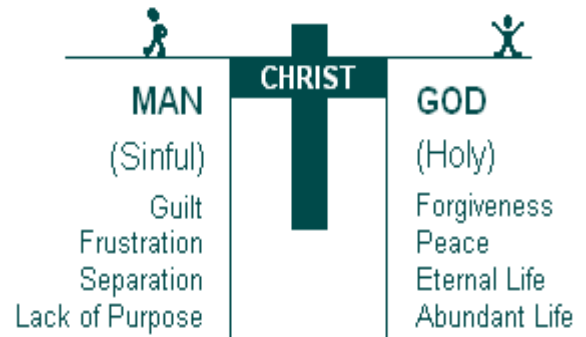
or HERE?

SAVING FAITH INVOLVES:

Choice: coming to repentance (changing your mind) as to the truth of God's promises.

Trust: believing that the suffering of Christ alone is sufficient payment for all the sins of our whole life.

Romans 4:21 ". . . and being **fully assured** that what **God had promised**, He was able also to perform."



THE BIBLE SAYS . . .

1 John 2:25 "**This is the promise** which He Himself made to us: **eternal life.**"

Hebrews 11:1 "Now **faith** is the assurance of things hoped for . . ."

Romans 5:1, 9 "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

Ephesians 1:13 "In Him, you also, after **listening** to the message of truth, the gospel of your **salvation** -- having also **believed**, you were **sealed in Him** with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by **grace** you have been **SAVED through faith**; and that not of yourselves, **it is the GIFT of GOD**; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Romans 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but **believes in Him** who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness."

DO THE THINGS YOU HAVE JUST READ REALLY MAKE SENSE TO YOU?

. . . in summarizing,

GOD WANTS YOU TO

1. Admit that you are a lost sinner.

Take your place, right now, before God, as a lost, hell-deserving sinner; understanding that you cannot get saved (keep yourself saved or prove that you are saved) through water baptism, mass, communion, commitment, confession, repentance, keeping the commandments, or any type of good works.

2. Recognize the deity of Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that the term "Son of God," which Jesus used to describe Himself, meant that He was **EQUAL** with the Father – Jn. 5:18. Also, Jesus created all things – Col. 1:16, and He put off His Godly power to become a "man" to die for sinful mankind – Phlp. 2:6-8. After suffering three days in **Hades**, Jesus Christ **resurrected bodily** – Acts 2:24-32. Although He was tempted in all ways, He was without sin in thought, word, or deed – Heb. 4:15.

3. Recognize that God in flesh, Jesus Christ, was tortured for your sins.

Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who shed His precious blood on a cross and suffered three days in Hades to pay the full penalty for **all of YOUR** sins. He resurrected from the dead and is alive in heaven today. Jesus became **YOUR** substitute in order to become **YOUR** Savior. He paid for all the sins – past, present, and future – of your whole life! Only God in flesh could do this, not "another Jesus" such as Michael the Archangel, the "Jesus" of the Jehovah's Witness and the Seventh Day Adventists; or Lucifer's brother, the "Jesus" of the Mormons; or the sacramental wafer, the "Jesus" of those such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, or the Roman Catholic Church – 2 Cor. 11:4; Matt. 7:22, 23.

4. Personally claim salvation.

Claim by faith alone the **free gift of eternal life** which God promises to you for placing your trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone. **Your** faith in **His sacrifice** for you **will save YOU** from the eternal torment that you will always deserve. (Once saved, your obedience and faithfulness to God will bring blessings in this life and rewards in eternity, but obedience and faithfulness have absolutely nothing to do with "keeping" your salvation. Once saved, you are sealed by God's Holy Spirit and predestined for heaven.)

HAVING DONE THIS, GOD GIVES YOU TREMENDOUS . . .

ASSURANCE

from HIS WORD, the HOLY BIBLE

SALVATION, not PROBATION

When you become saved from the penalty of your sins, you acquire **ETERNAL LIFE**, and it is **ETERNAL – FOREVER**. You cannot lose it! You have been "**BORN AGAIN**" according to God's Word, the Bible. This is the "second birth," and there are only **TWO!** You cannot be "unborn." Yes, you will battle with sin, but sin can **NEVER** separate you from your **SAVIOR**. Jesus died for **ALL** your sins – not most, but **ALL** – past, present, and future. God offers us "salvation," not "probation." John 6:39-40 "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of **all that He has given Me I lose nothing**, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that **everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life**, and I Myself **will** raise him up on the last day."

THE BIBLE SAYS . . .

John 4:14b ". . . but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him **shall never thirst**; but the water that **I** will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

John 6:35 "Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life**; he who comes to **Me** will not hunger, and **he who believes in Me will never thirst**."

Titus 3:5 "**He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness but **according to HIS mercy . . .**"

Ephesians 1:5 "He **predestined** us to **adoption** as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of **His will**."

Ephesians 4:30 "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom **you were sealed** for the day of redemption."

Romans 6:23b ". . . the **FREE GIFT** of **GOD** is **eternal life** in **CHRIST JESUS** our **LORD**."

Romans 11:29 ". . . for **the gifts** and the calling of **God** are **irrevocable**."

YOUR SALVATION BEGINS A WONDERFUL NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

To show your appreciation for this gift you should:

1. Be water baptized (immersion) as your first act of obedience. Acts 8:36-38; 10:47-48
2. Read your Bible every day to learn more about your Savior. (Begin with the gospel of John and then Romans.) 2 Tim. 3:15-17
3. Talk to God every day (prayer), thanking Him for saving you. 1 Thes. 5:16-18
4. Tell others about Jesus Christ, and how He saved you. Acts 1:8
5. Worship, fellowship, and serve with other Christians in a fundamental Bible church with male pastors who teach that Jesus is God, and that salvation can never be lost. 1 Tim. 2:9-15; Heb. 10:25
6. As Christ's representative in a needy world, demonstrate your new life by your love for others. 2 Cor. 5:18-20

God will bless you as you do these faithfully.

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