



Finding Hope in Jesus

***15 Key Truths to
Knowing God and
Having a Meaningful
Relationship with
Jesus Christ***

Written By: Dr. Jeffrey Lange

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Written by: Dr. Jeffrey Lange

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For more information contact Dr. Jeffrey Lange at:

Email: BibleStudyGlobal@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FindingHopeInJesus>

Facebook Messenger: <https://m.me/FindingHopeInJesus>

WhatsApp: +1-701-491-2199

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Introduction

I am so glad that you are interested in learning from the Bible how to have a personal relationship with God. The Bible is the most important book in the whole world, because it teaches us how to come into a right relationship with God.



The Bible is God's message of hope and love to all people. The 15 key truths found in this booklet will help you understand who God is, why He created the world, why there is sin and suffering in the world, and why Jesus Christ came to this earth.

But most importantly, you will learn how know God personally and have a relationship with Him.

Feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions regarding what you read or would like to know more.

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Key Truth #1 – God does not want your life to be empty, but wants to bring purpose and meaning to your life.



Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

According to Genesis 1:1, who created the heaven and the earth? It was God. The Bible does not use science or philosophy to prove the existence of God. It simply states that God exists.

Not only does the Bible tell us that God created the world, but more importantly, it tells us who God is. Many people have a wrong view of God. Some think there is no God. Some believe there are many gods. Some believe God is nature. Some people think they are their own God. Some think God is a force.

How do we know these are wrong views of God? The answer is because the Bible reveals to us who God is, what He is like, and where He came from.

The Bible is the only source of information where we can learn about God. He gave us the Bible to reveal truths to us that we cannot know any other way.

According to this verse, what did God do? He created. What does the word create mean? It means to make something.

What does this verse say that God created the heaven and the earth out of? What materials were in existence that God used to create the heaven and the earth?

The answer is “nothing”. Everything God created was out of nothing.

We can take wood and cement and build a house, but we cannot build a house out of nothing. We can take meat and vegetables and make a meal, but we cannot make a meal out of nothing.

Man is able to make things, but he can’t make something out of nothing. Only God can make something out of nothing.

According to verse 1, when did God create the heaven and the earth? This may be a hard question for some people to answer.

What word in verse 1 implies time? It is the word “beginning”. God created the heaven and the earth in the beginning.

What does the word beginning mean? It means to start. So, what did God start? He started time. There was no time before God created the heaven and the earth.

Not only did God create the heavens and the earth, but he also started time. It is important to understand that God did NOT begin to exist at the start of time, but was already in existence at the beginning of time.

So, some people wonder “Where did God come from?” The Bible answers that question. We read in Psalm 90:2,

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

What does the word everlasting mean? It means to last forever; to have no time limits. If you go back in time, God is there. He is everlasting in the past. If you go forward in time, God is there. He is everlasting in the future. He has no beginning and has no end.

We learn from this verse that God has always existed. There never was a time when God was created or came into existence.

Genesis 1:2 – “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

This verse describes what the earth looked like before God created life on it. What is the first word that described the earth? It was “without form”. What does “without form” mean? It means to be desolate and undeveloped.

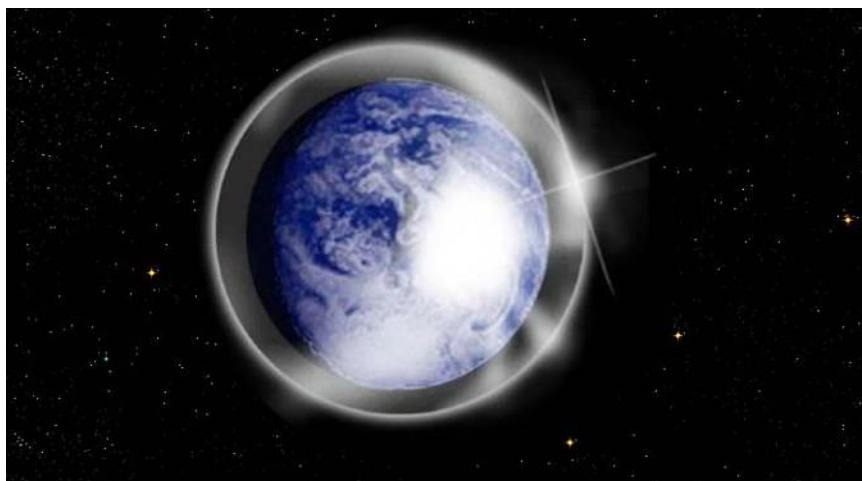
What is the second word that described the earth? It was “void”. What does the word “void” mean? It means empty.

So, the surface of the earth was undeveloped, desolate and lifeless. It probably looked like the surface of the moon or Mars.



Verse 2 also tells us two things that covered the earth. What was the first? It was darkness. The earth was covered in total darkness. There was no light.

Second, the earth was also covered in what? It was “waters”. At that time, a layer of deep water covered the surface of the earth.



So the surface of the earth was undeveloped, desolate, and lifeless. It was surrounded by water in complete darkness. This is how the earth started but this is not how God left it.

God is going to take the earth that is undeveloped, dark, and empty and will form the earth so that He can bring light and life upon it. So, what does this teach us about God?

First, God finishes what He starts. He did not leave the earth undeveloped, dark, and empty. What He starts, He brings to completion.

He will bring life and light to a dark and lifeless earth. Likewise, God does not stop with just giving you physical life. He does not want your life to be without meaning, empty, and dark but wants to bring light and meaning to your life.

Second, we see that God is a planner. He planned His creation in stages. Likewise, God has a plan to bring you into a right relationship with Him that will bring peace, purpose, and meaning to your life.

Third, we learn that God is all-powerful. God has the power to take what was undeveloped and form it into what He wants it to be. Likewise, if you feel lifeless and empty, God has the power to bring life to you.

Fourth, we learn that God focuses on the earth. Although God made both the heavens and the earth, we learn that He focuses on the earth. Likewise, God is also focused on your life. He does not want your life to be without meaning.

God is planning to bring light and life to the dark, empty, and lifeless earth. But even more importantly, He wants to bring light and life to you. Do you sometimes feel lifeless or that your life has no meaning? Do you sometimes feel like you are missing your purpose in life?

Just as God brought the earth from a dark and lifeless place to a place of light and life, so God can bring to you spiritual life and remake you into a person that has light, life, purpose, and meaning in life.

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Key Truth #2 – God created man good. There was no evil or suffering in the world God created.



Before creating man, in Genesis 1:3-25, the Bible describes how God prepared the earth for man to live. God revealed to us that He created the earth in six literal 24-hour days.

On day 1 (vs 3-5), God created light. In verse 4, God said that it was “good”. Then on day 2 (vs 6-8), God created the atmosphere where the birds fly.

On day 3 (vs 9-13), God caused dry land to appear from the waters. In verse 10, God said that it was “good”. God also made the grass and trees. In verse 12, God said that it was also “good”.

On day 4 (vs 14-19), God made the stars, the sun, and the moon. In verse 18, God said that it was “good”. Then on day 5 (vs 20-23), God made the fish that swim in the water and birds that fly in the air. In verse 21, God said that it was “good”.

On the last day, day 6 (vs 24-31), God made the land animals and in verse 25, God said that it was “good”.

When God looked at what He made up to this point, He said that it was “good”. God was preparing the world for man to live on and everything was good in his sight. There was no evil or suffering in the things God created.

Then in verses 26-30, still on day 6, God finished His creation by making man. The first man’s name was Adam.

Genesis 1:31 – “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...”

What did God say in verse 31 after creating man? God saw everything He made and said it was “very good”.

It is important to see the difference. When God created nature, He said it was “good”. But after creating man, God said it was “very good”. This shows that God values mankind more than nature and the animals He created. Man is much more important to Him.

According to verse 31, God created man good. God created everything and everyone to fit together in perfect harmony. There was no sin, evil or suffering in the world God created.

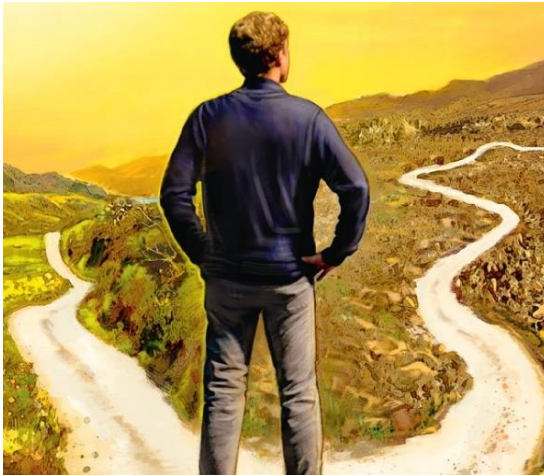
God said after creating man, that it was very good. What does very good mean? It means to be of high quality, complete, and perfect. This means that God designed you to be a great, amazing and awesome person.

But most likely you do not feel that way about yourself or about mankind. As we look at society around us, we see evil, sin, and suffering in this world.

If we are honest, we also know that there is something wrong inside our own heart too. Sin is there. Something happened to this perfect world God created. What happened? Read on to find out.

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**Key Truth #3 – God does not force you to obey Him,
but gives you a choice to obey or disobey Him.**



In chapter 2, verses 1-14, God gives more detail when He made man. Then in verse 15, God prepared a garden, called Eden, for man to live and work. For this lesson, let us focus on the first phrase of verse 16.

Genesis 2:16 – “And the LORD God commanded the man...”

What is the action word in this phrase? It is the word “commanded”. What does “command” mean? It means an order. Who commanded the man? God commanded.

God is our Creator. All life comes from God. He has the right to command us what to do. Did God force Adam to obey Him? No.

Although God commanded Adam, He also allowed him to have a choice. Adam could either choose to obey God or he could choose to disobey God.

It is the same with us today. God does not force you to obey but gives you a choice to obey or disobey Him.

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Key Truth #4 – There was no death in the world God created. Death is the result of sin.



After God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, He told him,

Genesis 2:16 – “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:”

God told Adam in verse 16 that he may “freely eat” of every tree in the garden. God provided everything for man to live. He told Adam that he could eat whenever and how much he wanted.

Genesis 2:17 – “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

However, what is the first word in verse 17? It is the word “But”. God told Adam that he could eat from every tree, but one tree. What was the name of that tree? It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

What does the word knowledge mean? In this case, it means more than just to know something; it means to know something by experience.

Shortly after commanding Adam, God created the first woman, Eve. Up to this point, Adam and Eve only experienced good. They had not experienced evil, because there was no evil in the world God created.

What did God say in verse 17 would happen if they ate the fruit from that tree? He said they would “surely die”. Is this something that might happen or will happen? The word “surely” means that it will absolutely happen.

Death is something new that would be introduced into God’s creation if they were to disobey God. Death was not a part of God’s creation.

This death that God is speaking about is something much worse than physical death. The word “death” itself means separation. There are three aspects to this death or separation. If they were to disobey God,

1. They would be separated from God in their relationship to Him.
2. This separation from God would lead to physical death. Adam and Eve’s life came from God. So, being separated from the source of life would lead to physical death in the future.
3. If a man dies being separated from God, he will be separated from God for all eternity in Hell.

God did not create death. Death, like sin, came into our world as a result of man’s sin and disobedience to God.

The good news is that although man is born into this world separated from God, God provided a way for man to come into a right relationship with Him.

Some people wonder why God placed a tree in the garden and then forbid Adam to eat from it? It is because God created Adam and Eve with a free will. God wanted Adam and Eve to obey, but God also gave them the freedom to choose to obey or disobey.

It is the same for us today, we can choose to obey God and experience the good or we can choose to disobey and bring suffering into our life. It is our choice.

Some people ask the question. “Wouldn’t the world be a better place if God had not given us free will?” The Bible tells us that God created us for His glory and pleasure. Think for a moment about it from a parent’s perspective.

Do parents force their children to love them back? Do they program their children like a robot to love the parents back? Would the parent get pleasure from the child’s love? Not when you consider that the child would not have a choice in giving love back since it is an involuntary act, a programmed action.

There are many joys of being a parent. One of them is when one of my children will come up to me and give me a big hug and say, “I love you, Dad!”. Usually, my reply is, “Thank you. I love you too, now what do you want?” I am thinking that they are trying to flatter me so that I will be more apt to grant their request.

When they reply, “Oh nothing, I just want to tell you that I love you.” that gives me so much joy and pleasure as their dad.

God purposely created man with a free will. So, imagine the joy and pleasure God receives when one of His children willingly and voluntarily demonstrates true love back to Him.

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Key Truth #5 – All the sin, evil and suffering in this world is a result of man's disobedience to God.



Genesis 3:1 – “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

How does verse 1 describe the serpent? It says that it was more subtle than any other animal. What does subtle mean? It means cunning and crafty. This serpent was clever, but in a bad way.

Can a serpent speak? No. So, how was the serpent able to speak? It was under the power of the devil. The devil inhabited the serpent's body to speak to Eve.

What did the devil say to Eve in verse 1? He said, “Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Basically, he says to Eve, did God really say that you cannot eat from every tree of the garden?

The devil is trying to deceive Eve by putting doubt in her mind about what God said. God already said they could eat the fruit of every tree, but one tree.

But by twisting God's word, he caused Eve to doubt what God said. This happens in our day too. The devil twists God's Word to deceive people so they do not believe God.

*Genesis 3:4 – “And the serpent said unto the woman,
Ye shall not surely die:”*

What did the devil say to Eve? He told Eve that she would not die. But what did God tell Adam? We read that in Genesis 2:17, God said, “thou shalt surely die”. The judgment for sin was sure.

The devil contradicted and denied God's word. Remember that God always tells the truth. The devil is a liar.

Genesis 3:6 – “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Sadly, Eve was tricked into disobeying God. However, we read that Adam willingly disobeyed God.

There are four action words in this verse. What is the first action word? It is the word “saw”. There are three things that she saw in this verse.

First, she saw that the tree was “good for food”. She saw the thing that God had forbidden as something good. She thought she had a good reason to disobey God.

Second, she saw that it was “pleasant to the eyes”. Looking at the tree made her feel happy. Maybe she was thinking, “How could something that makes me happy be wrong?”

Perhaps she started wondering if God was keeping something good from her.

This is the mistake that many people make. They look at sin and think that it will make them feel happy. Then they think that something that feels good could not be wrong and start thinking that God is trying to keep something good from them.

Third, she saw the tree was “desired to make one wise”. She is thinking, “Why did not God create me with more wisdom? What is God hiding from me?”

What is the second action word? It is the word “took”. She took of the fruit. She goes from looking at the tree to taking of the fruit.

God allowed Adam and Eve to eat of every tree except this one tree. God kept this tree for Himself. He said it was His. But Eve decided to take that fruit which belonged to God. She stole it from God. She saw it, and then took it.

What is the third action word? It is the word “eat”. She saw, she took and then she ate. She did what God said not to do. She disobeyed God. This is the way sin progresses in our life. We see things that God has forbidden and then find a way to make it ours.

What is the fourth action word? It is the word “gave”. She was not happy being in sin alone. She wanted to include her husband and have him disobey God as well. Usually, sin does not stop with one person doing wrong. The one who sins wants to include other people in their sin as well.

This verse shows us the steps to sin. It starts when she thought that she should have something that God said no to. Then she took it. Then she ate it and gave it to her husband and he did eat.

All the sin, evil and suffering in this world is the result of man’s sin and disobedience to God. But the good news is that God made a way to conquer that sin in our life so that we can come into a right relationship with Him.

Key Truth #6 – Although you have sinned against God, He still wants a relationship with you and comes looking for you.



Genesis 3:8 – “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”

In verse 8, what did Adam and Eve hear? They heard God’s voice. What did they do when they heard God coming? They hid from Him. Before Adam and Eve disobeyed God, when God came to the garden, He would call out to them, and they would go and talk with Him.

But now after they disobeyed God, when they heard God coming, they hid from Him. Instead of going to God and telling him about what they did wrong, they hid themselves.

We learn something very important about God. Did He come looking for them or did they go looking for Him? Of course, it was God that came looking for Adam and Eve.

What does this teach you about God? Even though you sin, God comes looking for you so he can restore a relationship with you.

Some people think that it is hard to find God. Is that true? Was God hiding from Adam and Eve making it difficult for them to find Him? No. God was out in the open where He could be seen. God does not make it hard for people to find Him.

Adam and Eve were hiding from God. They did not want to meet with God because of their sin. Likewise, man hides from God because of their sin.

Genesis 3:9 – “And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”

God did not stop looking for Adam because he was hiding. He did not turn around and leave. Likewise, if you are hiding from God because of your sin, He will not stop looking for you too.

What does this verse say that God did? He called unto Adam. He wanted Adam to know that He was looking for him.

God could have forced himself into Adam's life, but He did not. Likewise, God could force himself into your life, but He will not. He wants us to come to Him willingly.

When God called out to Adam, what did He say? He said, “Where are you?” God knew exactly where Adam and Eve were hiding, but He called out to them because He wanted them to respond.

Likewise, He also knows where you are. He knows all about your life, your struggles, your suffering, and your sin. He is also calling out to you because He wants a relationship with you.

God asked them, “Where are you?” because He wanted them to realize that they had a sin problem and admit that they were not right with God.

Their problem is not with God. God did not do anything wrong to them. Their problem was with their own sin. Likewise, the problem in our life is not with God. God never wronged us. Our problem is with our own sin.

God came to Adam and Eve because He wanted to restore their relationship with Him and He had a plan to fix their sin problem, but they would need to come out of hiding and meet with Him.

Likewise, God made a way for you to come into a right relationship with Him, but you will need to come out of hiding to meet Him. You will not find God if you hide yourself from Him.

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Key Truth #7 – God promised to send a Savior to fix man’s sin problem so that man could have a right relationship with Him.



After Adam and Eve sinned, their relationship with God was broken. In love, He comes looking for them in the garden. He has a plan to fix their sin problem and restore the relationship.

God revealed His plan in verse 15. He is speaking to the devil and He says,

Genesis 3:15 – “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

What does the word “seed” mean? In this case, it means descendants. God tells the devil that there will be a descendent of the woman who will destroy him.

God knew that man would sin, but He had a plan to fix the sin problem and make a way for man to come into a right relationship with Him.

God's plan focused on this particular descendant of the woman. This descendant would become known as the Savior because He would save people from penalty of their sin. It would be this coming Savior who would destroy the devil.

Who is the Savior? It is God Himself. He planned to be born into this world in order to pay the penalty of man's sin so that we can come into a right relationship with Him. His name is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman because, as God, He does not have a physical father. Just as the Bible teaches in other places, Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, without a human father.

God told the devil that he will bruise the Savior's heel. Does a wound to the heel speak of permanent death? No. Jesus died, but three days later, He rose from the dead.

Then God told the devil that the coming Savior will bruise his head. Does a wound to the head speak of permanent death? Yes. The Savior will bring permanent destruction to the devil.

Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sin when He died on the cross. He defeated Satan and fixed man's sin problem so we could have a right relationship with God. God can now give eternal life to all those who turn from their sin in repentance and believe on Him with all their heart.

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Key Truth #8 – There is nothing man can do to make himself right with God. There is only one covering for sin that God will accept.



After Adam and Eve sinned, we read

Genesis 3:7 – “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”

When Adam and Eve were created, they were made without clothing and were not ashamed. However, after they sinned, what did they realize? They realized they were naked.

They saw nakedness as something to be ashamed of. So, they sewed fig leaves to cover their bodies. But now we read,

Genesis 3:21 – “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”

Adam and Eve tried to fix their sin problem their own way to make themselves right with God. Did God accept their covering of fig leaves? No, He made coats of skins instead.

God did not approve of their attempts to make themselves right with Him. Likewise, God refuses to accept your way of making yourself right with Him.

Some people try religion and think it will make them right with God, but religion cannot make you right with God. Some people try being a good person and think that it will make them right with God, but being a good person cannot make you right with God.

There is only one covering for sin that God will accept, and it is pictured for us in verse 21. What is the first action word in this verse? It is the word “make”. Who is doing the action? God is. What did God make? He made coats of skins.

Did God let Adam and Eve make the clothing themselves? No. Did they help out God in making the clothing? No. God made the clothing by Himself. It pictures that man cannot work for or earn God’s covering for sin.

Many people try religion or being a good person to make them right with God. But these are actually obstacles to receiving the forgiveness of sins and coming into a right relationship with God.

Just as God alone made clothing for Adam and Eve so their sin could be covered, so God alone made a way for man’s sin to be covered and come into a right relationship with Him.

What is the second action word in verse 21? It is the word clothed. Did Adam and Eve clothe themselves with these coats of skins? No. Who did? God did. It is a picture of God’s grace.

What does grace mean? Grace means getting something you do not deserve. God covered Adam and Eve’s sin even though they did not deserve it. Likewise, God offers to cover your sin even though you do not deserve it.

Where did the skins come from? Skins come from animals. The only way you get the skin off of an animal is for the animal to die.



The animal skins that God put on Adam and Eve are a picture of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God first mentioned the coming Savior in verse 15 and now God gives them a picture of what Jesus Christ will do. Jesus Christ would become the substitute, the one who dies in our place.

Just as the animals died in Adam and Eve's place, so Jesus Christ died in our place. In clothing Adam and Eve with skins, the animal's blood was shed. Likewise, Jesus Christ shed His blood for our sin.

There is only one thing that will cover your sin. It is not following religion. It is not being a good person. It is not by anything you can do to earn it. Jesus Christ is the only covering for sin that God accepts.

Are your sins covered by Jesus Christ?

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**Key Truth #9 – Jesus Christ is 100% God
and 100% man.**



After God finished His creation, He said it was very good. There was no death, no sin, no evil or suffering in the world. It was perfect where everything and everyone fit together in harmony.

God wanted a love relationship with mankind, but man rejected God and rebelled against Him. Therefore, mankind was fallen into a sinful state.

Man's sin is the reason there is suffering in this world. Man's sin is the reason there are difficulties and hardships in life. You can blame every bad thing, every wrong thing, every murder, every disease, every cancer, every war and every death, on sin.

For thousands of years, man rejected God. But God still loves man and wants to have a relationship with man. He says "Although you are a sinner, I still love you and I am coming after you!" But God has a dilemma.

Man is sinful and cannot approach a holy God. Likewise, a holy God cannot receive sinful man. But God had a plan so that man could approach God and that God could receive man. His plan was to be born into this world and become a man so that He could pay the penalty of sin and make a way for man to come into a right relationship with Him. His name is Jesus Christ.

Who is Jesus Christ? Some say He was just a man, while others say, He is God. We should not believe what people say, but we should see what the Bible teaches and believe God's Word.

1 Timothy 3:16 – "... God was manifest in the flesh ..."

According to this verse, we learn that Jesus Christ is both God and man. Jesus had a normal human birth and grew in manhood in the same way as any other man. He possessed a sinless human nature and a holy divine nature. Jesus Christ is not 50% man and 50% God. He is 100% man and at the same time 100% God!

Why did Jesus Christ have to be 100% man? Jesus Christ had to become a man in order to pay the penalty of sin for mankind. It was man that sinned, thus only a man could pay the penalty of sin.

Why did Jesus Christ have to be 100% God? God's plan to fix man's sin problem involved a substitute – the innocent dying for the guilty. Only someone who was without sin could die for sinners. Man was disqualified to be the substitute because all men are sinners. I cannot die for your sin because I am a sinner. Likewise, you cannot die for my sin because you are a sinner.

The only one who could pay the penalty of sin is someone who is without sin. The only one without sin is God Himself. As God, Jesus Christ could pay the penalty of sin on the cross. God's plan to fix man's sin problem was for Jesus Christ to pay the penalty of sin on the cross for us.

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Key Truth #10 – Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sin for us on the cross.



Jesus did many things while He was on the earth. He performed miracles that proved He was God. He healed sick people. He cast demons out of people. He raised the dead and many other miracles.

Jesus Christ did not come to be a teacher, though He taught. He did not come to set a good example, though He did. The greatest work of Jesus Christ focused on His death on the cross.

The Jewish leaders were very jealous of Jesus' popularity with the common people. Eventually, they had Him arrested. They made up false charges against Him so they could put Him to death.

But God was still in control. Actually, this was all a part of God's plan to fix man's sin problem by providing the sinless substitute, the innocent dying for the guilty.

Based on the false charges, Jesus Christ was sentenced to be executed. He was led to the place of execution and nailed to the cross. What happened on the cross so that God is now able to give eternal life to those who turn from their sin and believe on Him with their whole heart. The Bible answers that question.

2 Corinthians 5:21 – “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

According to this verse, was Jesus a sinner? No. The verse says that He “knew no sin”. Jesus Christ is righteous and holy. He never spoke a sin, thought a sin, or committed a sin. He is the only one who has ever lived this way because He is God.

According to this verse, what did Jesus become? He became sin. God “made him to be sin”. God took the sin of man and laid it upon Jesus Christ while He was on the cross.

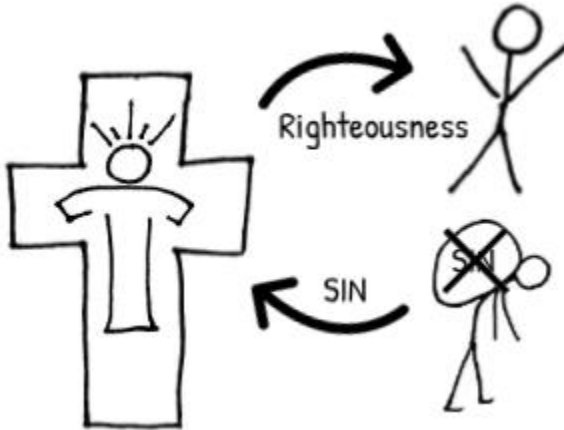
Romans 6:23 says “*For the wages of sin is death...*” Jesus literally paid the penalty of sin by dying on cross.

According to this verse, who did God do this for? God did this “for us”. God would only accept a sinless substitute. Since every man is a sinner, man is disqualified from being the substitute. Without God providing the sinless substitute, there would be no way to fix man’s sin problem. God did this for us so that He could bring us into a right relationship with Him.

According to this verse, God took man’s sin and put it on Jesus Christ so that man might be what? The answer is “be made the righteousness of God”.

For those who come into a right relationship with God, God takes the righteousness of Jesus Christ and places it upon them. When God looks at a believer, He does not see a sinner but a person with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

This is the great transaction! God took our sin and put it on Jesus Christ so that He could take the righteousness of Jesus Christ and put it upon us. That is what happened on the cross. That is how God fixed man's sin problem.



Jesus Christ died, was buried, and three days later rose from the dead. He is now able to give eternal life to all that turn from their sin in repentance and believe on Him with all their heart.

The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is called the gospel. The word gospel means good news. God fixed man's sin problem through the gospel. That is good news indeed! Through the gospel, you can now come into a right relationship with God.

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Key Truth #11 – God offers you a free gift



Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

What does a wage mean? A wage is a paycheck. It is something you receive, something you earn. Suppose at your job you earn \$4,000 per month. You work one month and then you receive \$4,000 for the work you did.

When we sin, we are increasing our wages. But according to this verse, our wage is not money but what? It is death. The wages of sin is death. This death does not refer to physical death. Every person will face physical death.

This death means a spiritual death. It is a separation from God for all eternity in Hell because of our sin. But there is good news. According to this verse, what does God offer? He offers a gift.

What is a gift? It is a present. Do you have to pay money to receive a gift? No, a gift is free.

Suppose I gave you a gift, but then told you that you needed to clean my house first. Is it really a gift? No, because you had to work for it. A gift is free to the one receiving it.

What is this gift of God? It is eternal life. You receive the gift of eternal life when you come into a right relationship with God. Then after physical death, you will go to be with God in Heaven.

So, God offers you a choice between earning wages of sin that will lead you to Hell or the free gift that leads to eternal life in Heaven.

Many people have asked the question, “Can you know for sure you are going to Heaven before you die?” Most people answer that you cannot know for sure.

Is that true? Do you need to wait until you die to find out if you are going to Heaven? No, you don’t, not according to the Bible.

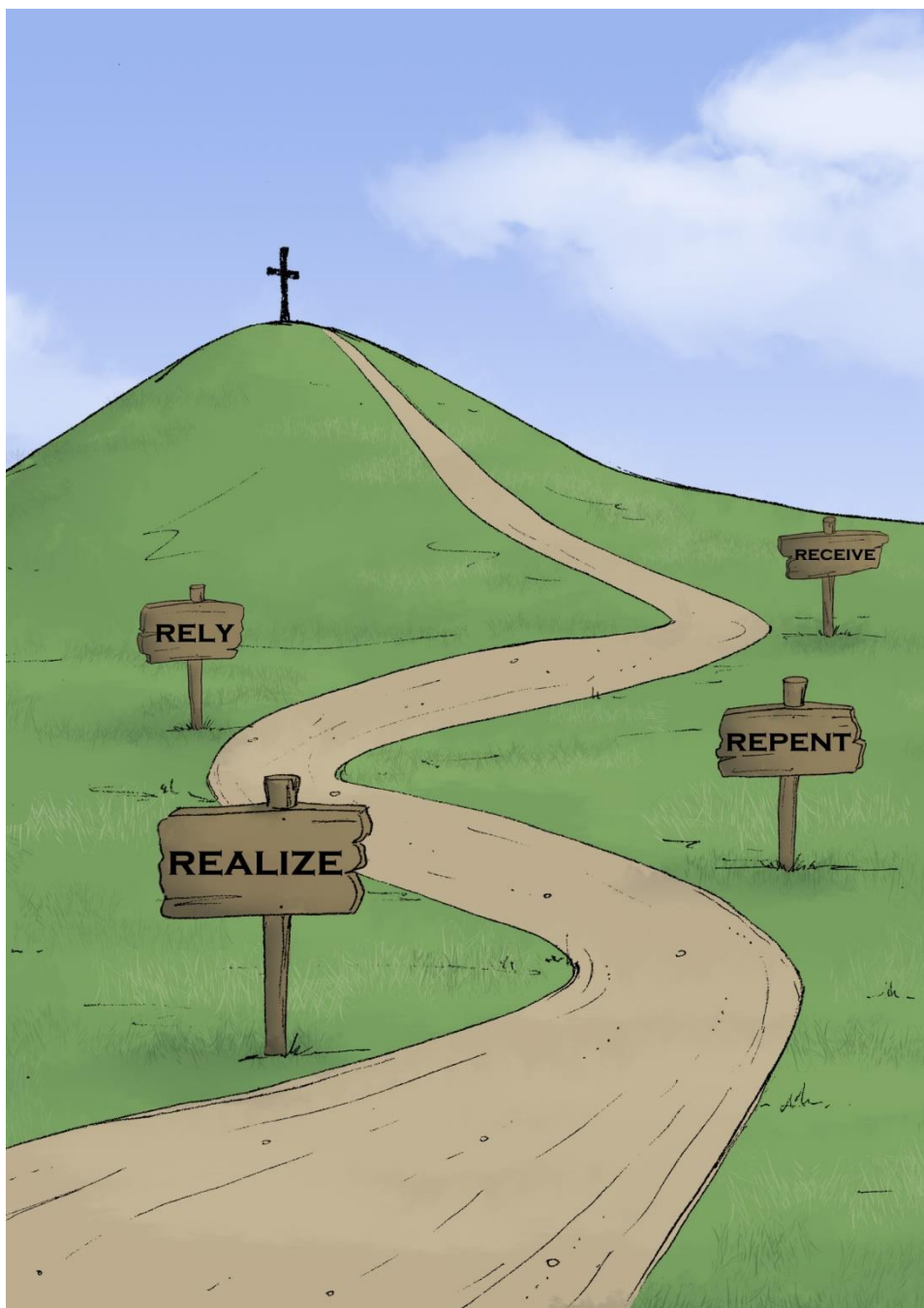
This verse teaches that God offers you the gift of eternal life. If I gave you a gift, is it possible for you to know that you received this gift? Of course, because you reached out and received the gift from me. It is in your possession. You received it.

Likewise you can know that you received God’s gift of eternal life. You can know absolutely 100% for sure that you will go to Heaven when you die, because you will know that you have received God’s gift of eternal life.

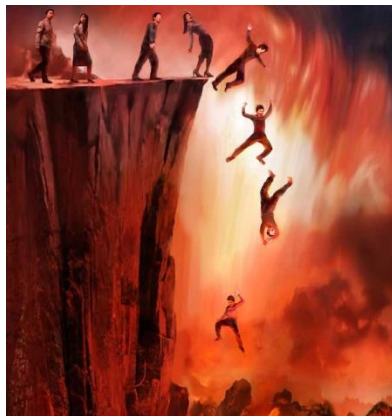
There is a difference between choosing the wages of sin which will lead you to Hell and choosing to receive the gift of God which will lead you to Heaven. The choice is yours.

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God's Plan of Salvation



Key Truth #12 – You must realize that YOU are a hell-deserving sinner.



A sinner is one who commits sin, but what does the word “sin” mean? In 1 John 3:4, we read:

1 John 3:4 – “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

God defines sin as transgressing God’s Law which means that you sin when you violate or break God’s Law.

As an example of what it means to break God’s Law, let us consider a few of the Ten Commandments as listed in Exodus 20.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Has God always been first place in your life? Do you really love God above all else? Or has there been times when leisure, education, a career, money, relationships, sports, or your own life were more important than God?

If you are honest, you would admit that there have been times when you set your affection on something or someone other than God. Every time you have done so; you have broken this commandment.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

The second commandment warns against making an idol. An idol does not have to be made of wood or stone. You can set up an idol in your heart (Ezekiel 14:3) meaning that you made a god in your mind that suits yourself and one that you are comfortable with.

Maybe you think, "My god is a loving god who would never send anyone to Hell"? Or perhaps your god does not mind a "white" lie here or there. In reality, that god does not exist; he's a figment of your imagination.

If your god is not the One revealed in Holy Scripture, then you have made an image of God to suit yourself, something the Bible calls idolatry and you have broken this commandment.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.

Have you ever used God's name or Jesus' name flippantly like "Oh my GOD!" or "JESUS!" or alongside a four-letter curse word? Would you ever use your mother's name that way? Of course not, because you respect your mother.

But if you ever used this kind of speech, it shows that you do not respect God or His name. Even Hitler or Stalin's name was not despised enough to be used as a curse word. If you have taken the holy name of the God, who gave you your life, and used it in that manner, that is called blasphemy and it is very serious.

The Bible says, "The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). Every time you have done so; you have broken this commandment.

4. Honor thy father and thy mother.

Every time you have disobeyed your parents or had a bad attitude towards them, you have dishonored them and broken this commandment.

5. Thou shalt not kill.

Jesus warned in Matthew 5:22 that if you have ever been angry at someone else that you have committed murder in your heart against them. You violate God's Law by your heart attitude towards them. Every time you have been angry at someone else, you have broken this commandment and 1 John 3:15 says "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Jesus said that looking on someone else with lust (sexual desire) is committing adultery in the heart. No one honestly can say they have been pure of heart their whole entire life. God has seen every impure thought you have ever had. Every time you have looked on someone else with lust, you have broken this commandment. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 6:9 that fornicators (sex before marriage) and adulterers will not enter the kingdom of God.

7. Thou shalt not steal.

Have you ever taken something that did not belong to you, regardless of its value? This includes stealing an answer on a test, taking items home from work, or even stealing time from your boss by using your phone or computer for personal use while the boss is paying you to work. If you have taken anything that is not yours, then you are a thief and you cannot enter God's kingdom (1 Cor. 6:10). Every time you have taken something that was not yours, you have broken this commandment.

8. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Have you ever told a lie? Then that would make you a liar. It does not matter that you think it is a “white” lie. God considers any untruth regardless of severity to be a lie.

The Bible warns that all liars will have their part in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:8). Every time you have told a lie; you have broken this commandment.

On the Day of Judgment, when God judges you based on His Law, would you be guilty or innocent? You know you will be guilty. Would you go to Heaven or Hell? God’s place of punishment for the guilty is the “prison” of Hell.

You may think that God will overlook your sin because you believe that your good outweighs your bad. God is not going to judge you for the good you have done, but He will judge you for breaking His Law.

Perhaps you think that God is good and that a loving Judge will not send anyone to Hell. But if you were guilty of a crime in a civil court and said to the judge, "Judge, I am guilty, but I believe you are a good man and will therefore overlook my crime".

The judge would probably respond by saying, "You are right about one thing; I am a good man, and it's because of my goodness that I am going to see that justice is done, that you are punished for your crime."

The very thing that many people are hoping will save them on Judgment Day, God's goodness, will be the very thing that will condemn them. If God is good, He must punish adulterers, fornicators, murderers, liars, thieves, etc., in the "prison" of Hell.

What a terrible place Hell must be! If you hear that a man received a \$5 fine for a crime, you could conclude that his crime was insignificant. But if he received the death sentence, you could conclude that his crime was very severe.

In the same way, we can catch a glimpse of how abominable sin must be in the sight of a holy God by the punishment given for it: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and eternity in Hell.

But God is not willing that you perish. He made a way for you to be forgiven. To make clear what an incredible thing He has done for you, let us look again to civil law: You are standing in front of a judge, guilty of very serious crimes. All the evidence has been presented and there is no doubt about your guilt.

The fine for your crime is \$1,000,000 or life imprisonment, but you have no way to pay the fine. The judge is about to pass sentence when someone you do not even know steps in and pays the fine for you. Justice has been served, the law has been satisfied, and you are now free to go.

That is what God did for you, 2,000 years ago. He sent His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, to pay your death penalty in your place. Jesus died on the cross on your behalf, so that you could live. You are guilty; He paid the fine. It is that simple. The Bible puts it this way in Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth (proved) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

It was no small thing for Jesus to die for us. The only thing that would satisfy the demands of God's Law was the shed blood of the sinless Son of God. What love God must have for you! Jesus suffered unspeakable agony, so that you would not have to be punished for your sins. Then three days later He arose from the dead, defeating death.

His sacrificial death and resurrection mean that you need no longer be in debt to the Law, and God can now grant you everlasting life if you obey the gospel.

What should you then do? Please read the rest of this booklet to find out how to be saved from the penalty of your sin. Of all the things that you should prioritize in your life, it is not your health, your career, etc. - it is your eternal salvation.

Can you see your predicament? You are guilty of sinning against God Himself. Does the fact that you have sinned against God scare you? It should. You have actually angered Him by your sin. The Bible says His wrath abides on you, that you are an enemy of God in your mind through wicked works.

But let fear work for your good, in the same way that a fear of jumping out of a plane mid-flight would make you put on a parachute. Let your will to live open your heart to the gospel of salvation.

It is critically important for you to realize that your sin is leading you to Hell. Praise God that He made a way for you to come into a right relationship with Him, but coming into a right relationship with God starts with you admitting to God that you are a hell-deserving sinner.

Key Truth #13 – Respond to God in repentance.



The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died for your sins, He was buried and the third day He rose from the dead. However, just because of what Jesus did for you does not mean that you will automatically go to Heaven.

As we already learned, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. As with any gift, it does not become ours until we receive it. So, there is a response that God expects of us. What is that response?

Mark 1:15 – “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Jesus said that man’s response to the gospel is two things, what are they? It is repentance and faith. We will first study repentance and then faith in the next lesson.

Luke 13:3 – “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

What did Jesus say would happen if you do not repent? Jesus said if you did not repent then you will perish meaning go to hell. You cannot go to Heaven without true repentance. That is why it is so important to understand the meaning of repentance. What does it mean? The Bible defines it in Matthew 21,

Matthew 21:28-29 – “²⁸But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. ²⁹He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.”

How did the son answer his father? He said “I will not go”. But then the Bible says he repented. What was the result? The son went. So repentance means a change of mind resulting in a change of action.

In salvation, repentance is a surrender to God; a change of mind about your sin that shows in turning away from sin and turning to God which results in a changed life.

Most people believe they are a good person and do not deserve to go to Hell. Repentance starts with admitting that you are a hell-deserving sinner.

When you see the seriousness of your sin then it causes you to feel deeply sorry because you know you sinned against God. The Bible calls this godly sorrow.

2 Corinthians 7:10 – “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation...”

Is godly sorrow the same as repentance? No, being deeply sorry is not repentance, but it leads to true repentance and a desire to turn away from sin. We find an example of this in 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 – “...and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”

An idol is more than just an object that you worship. Anything that is more important than God is an idol in your heart. For some people, education is more important than God. For some, money is more important than God.

For some, a position, a job, or maybe a boyfriend or a girlfriend is more important than God. Some people have the idol of drunkenness or drugs in their life. For some people, their false religion is more important than God.

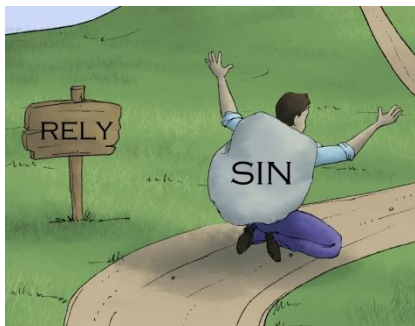
True repentance is seen in turning away from these sins and turning to God. You surrender to God. You change your mind and say in your heart, “I don’t want this sin to be a part of my life anymore”. It results in a change of action. Now you want to follow God and obey Him.

If you profess to be a Christian but have been struggling to live the Christian life, examine your heart, maybe you did not repent.

If there was no repentance, then you are not a true Christian, but still on the road that leads to Hell.

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Key Truth #14 – Respond to God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.



Mark 1:15 – “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Jesus said that man’s response to the gospel is two things, repentance and faith. We studied repentance in the last lesson and now we will study faith.

Acts 16:31 – “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

The word saved is used to describe those people who have come into a right relationship with God and will go to Heaven when they die.

According to this verse, for a man to be saved, who must he believe on? He must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In order to come into a right relationship with God, you need to respond to the gospel by faith in Jesus Christ. Since we are saved by faith, it is very important we understand what faith means.

Faith does not mean knowing facts in your head. This is called head-knowledge or an intellectual faith.

You may believe there is a God and believe Jesus died on the cross and rose again, but these are facts that you believe in your head. This is not true faith that will save you from Hell. You can know about God and still not know God.

Faith according to the Bible is trusting in what Jesus did for you in your heart. This is called heart-knowledge. That is real faith that will save you from Hell.

There is a difference between believing in your head (head-knowledge) and believing in your heart (faith). One will take you to Heaven and the other will take you to Hell. We can explain the difference this way:



A man examines a chair and believes (in his head) that it will support his weight. That is only a head-knowledge, an intellectual faith. It is not true faith.

True faith believes in your heart. This man's belief becomes faith the moment he trusts the chair to support him when he sits and rests his entire body weight on the chair.

Another example that explains the difference between “believing in your head” and “believing in your heart” is that of Charles Blondin. He was a world-renowned acrobat, who walked a tightrope across the Niagara Falls in 1860. Niagara Falls is a large waterfall between U.S.A. and Canada.



He did many tricks across the tightrope, and many people were amazed by his skill. A man standing nearby expressed his amazement to Blondin. Blondin then asked the man, “Do you think I could carry a man across the waterfall on a tightrope?”

The man was sure that he could and wanted to see him do it. Charles Blondin then asked him, “Will YOU let me carry you across?”

The man was unwilling to trust Blondin and refused. That man “believed in his head” that Charles Blondin could carry a person across the waterfall on a tightrope. He only had an intellectual faith.

But he did not have true faith or “believe in his heart”. He did not trust that Blondin could do it. Faith would have been trusting Blondin in his heart and getting on his back.

Blondon’s last stunt at Niagara Falls was carrying his manager across on the tightrope. His manager had true faith.



Acts 16:31 says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”

According to this verse, how are you saved from hell? You are saved by believing on Jesus Christ. Just as Blondin’s manager had real faith (heart-knowledge) by getting on his back, so you must have real faith in Jesus Christ and trust Him with all your heart.

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Key Truth #15 – Receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and be born again.



John 3:3 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Jesus said a man cannot go to Heaven unless he is born again. Jesus is not speaking about a physical birth. He is speaking about a spiritual birth.

Just as there was a specific time in your life when you were born physically into this world, so there must be a specific time in your life when you were born again spiritually.

John 1:12 – “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”

According to this verse, when do you become a child of God? You become a child of God when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.

In summary, how are you born again spiritually? How do you become a true Christian?

1. You need to realize that you are not just a sinner, but a hell-deserving sinner.

I grew up in a Christian home. I thought I was a Christian because I was baptized, went to church, and was a good person. I knew I was a sinner, but I thought I was still good enough to go to Heaven.

One day when I was 23 years old, I was in a Bible study in my university dorm room. I will never forget how shocked I was to learn from the Bible that I was not a true Christian and that I was on the road to Hell.

That night, I realized I was a hell-deserving sinner. I realized that going to church, being religious, being baptized, being a good person, and obeying the 10 commandments would not help me get to Heaven.

2. You need to repent of your sin. Repentance is an attitude of surrender and seen in that you are willing to turn from your sin and turn to God.

3. You must trust in Jesus Christ with all your heart. True faith is not an intellectual faith. It is trusting on Jesus with all your heart.

4. You must receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.

You are born again when you realize you are a hell-deserving sinner, then in repentance, you turn from your sin and turn to God and believe on Jesus Christ with all your heart to save you from the penalty of your sin and then receive Him as your Savior.

Only then do you become a true Christian. Only then are you born-again, the Bible way.

Many years ago, I was in a taxi car in Bangkok, Thailand. The driver asked me if I was a Christian. I said yes, and he replied that he is too. I asked him when he became a Christian. He said that he was born a Christian and that his parents were Christian so he is a Christian.

My friend, no one is born a Christian. I was born into a Christian family, but that did not make me a Christian. In fact, no one is a true Christian based on the faith of their parents.

God only has children; He does not have grand-children. That means that every person needs to repent of their sin, trust in Jesus Christ and personally receive Jesus Christ as their Savior. That taxi driver is not a true Christian.

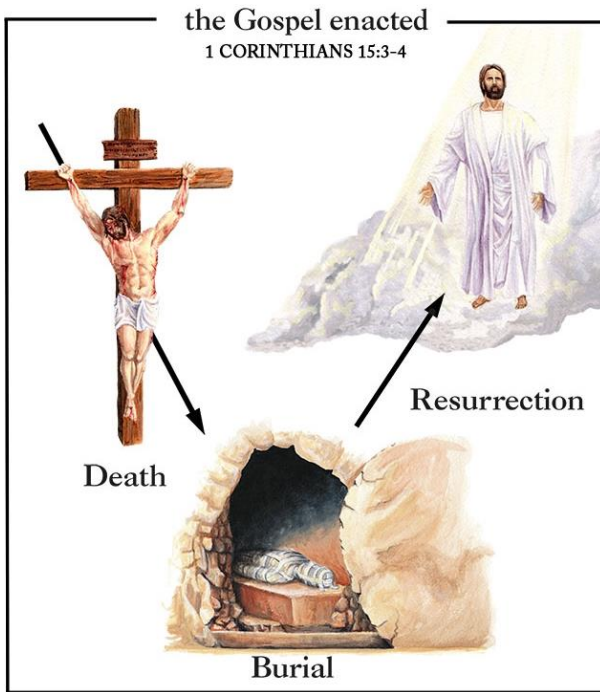
I became a true Christian when I was 23 years old. I realized that I was a hell-deserving sinner, and then I repented of my sin and put my faith in Jesus Christ 100% to save me and I received him as my Savior.

I know that I will go to Heaven. Not because I am a good person. Not because I go to church. Not because I was baptized. Not because I am a bible teacher. I will go to Heaven because I responded to the gospel in repentance and faith. I received God's gift of eternal life.

Have you received God's gift of eternal life? Are you saved?

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Conclusion



The gospel is a wonderful story. Jesus paid for our sin and then conquered death by rising from the dead on the third day. In rising again, He is now able to give eternal life to all that turn from their sins in repentance and believe on him with all their heart.

Religion says you have to work your way to God for Him to accept you. Jesus says there is nothing you can do to work your way to Heaven. You simply receive the gift of God as it is freely offered. That is God's plan to bring you into a right relationship with Him.

In order to receive eternal life, you must realize you are a hell-deserving sinner, repent of your sin, trust Jesus Christ with all your heart and receive Him as your Savior. This is God's plan to bring you into a right relationship with Him. There is no other way to Heaven.

If you are not ready, that is o.k. We do not want to pressure you. We recommend you continue to seek God through reading and studying the Bible and praying to God for understanding.

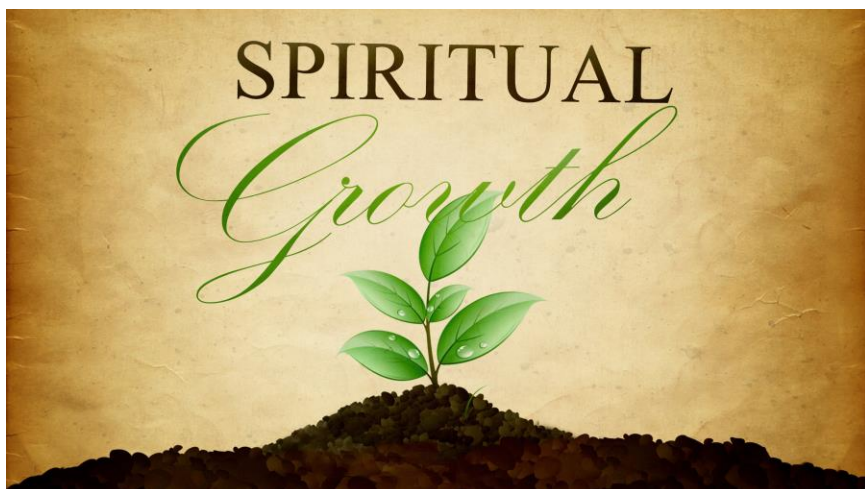
Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or do not yet understand salvation. We are happy to talk to you more about how to come into a right relationship with God.

If you would like to be saved today, you can. If you are ready, feel free to contact us and we would be happy to lead you to salvation.

However, it is not necessary for us to be with you when you receive Christ. If you would like to pray for salvation and receive Jesus Christ right now, you can pray the prayer below or you can pray to God in your own words.

“Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a hell-bound, hell-deserving sinner. I know there is nothing I can do to save myself from the penalty of my sin. I am willing to turn from my sin in repentance and trust in what Jesus Christ did on the cross to pay for my sins. I believe Jesus died on the cross, He was buried, and three days later, He rose from dead. I now am trusting Jesus Christ with all my heart. Please forgive me of all my sin and save me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

If you sincerely prayed that prayer, you just became a Christian. Please let us know so that we can rejoice with you.



As a new believer, here are five things we recommend to you to help you grow in your newfound faith.

1. Tell your friends and family about what happened to you and what you are learning. Invite your friends and family to study this course.
2. Read your Bible every day. We recommend you get a King James Version.
3. Pray to God every day. If you need help to know how to pray, let us know and we will teach you.
4. Join and be baptized in a Bible-believing church that teaches the gospel so that you can grow in your faith. If you need help finding a church, please let us know and we can help you find a church in your area.
5. Continue to study the Bible. We have free Bible studies to help believers grow in their faith. If you would like one of these Bible studies, please let us know and we will send them to you, free of charge.

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Contact Information

For more information contact Dr. Jeffrey Lange at:

Email: BibleStudyGlobal@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FindingHopeInJesus>

Facebook Messenger: <https://m.me/FindingHopeInJesus>

WhatsApp: +1-701-491-2199

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