



# Why Believe in Jesus

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**Jim Connell**

*To understand the good news of the gospel, we must first understand the bad news. God is holy, but we are not. God demands perfect righteousness from us, but in our rebellion we reject God, break His laws, and delight in sin. Since God is righteous and just, He must judge and condemn the evil of sin. So, God will pour out His wrath on lost sinners forever. However, while God is a just Judge, He is also rich in mercy. God sent His son to the world to rescue guilty sinners from the hell we all deserve, and graciously bring them to Himself. This booklet describes this God-man, who is the Savior of the world. We'll show you that you can know who He is beyond a shadow of a doubt. Prophecy points to Jesus, He claimed to be the Son of God, and He backed up His claims with the power of God. [John 3:16](#) says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

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# Preface

Classroom of adults being taught words of faith and sound doctrines understand what they should believe as Christians and why they should believe it. There's no good reason why Christians should doubt the reasonableness of their faith. We do not need to be embarrassed by what we affirm to be true.

*In pointing out these things to the brethren you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.*  
Timothy 4:6

The Christian Church in America today has become biblically illiterate. The reputable Barna Group cites only 6% of identified Christians possess a biblical worldview. So, Why are over 90% of Christians unfamiliar with the Bible and incapable of articulating the doctrines of the Christian faith? Many of the spiritual leaders in our churches have capitulated to a watered-down gospel that seeks to entertain rather than raise up Christians, who are capable of advancing the kingdom of God.

Consequently, parents are ill-equipped to disciple their children in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord.” And with the decline of biblical literacy comes an absence of godliness in the church and a decline in overall church attendance.

I chose to write this material to help Christians better

Without this understanding, our witness of Christ to the outside world will be ineffective, because it will lack credibility. Christians who are unsure of their faith and how to express it will be more comfortable sitting on the sidelines rather than engaging a lost world for Christ.

Additionally, genuine Christians, who lack full assurance of their salvation, need to know how they can be sure of their relationship with God. Conversely, professing Christians, who have not been truly reconciled to God, need to know it so they can be forewarned before it's too late.

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# Table of Contents

Preface .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
<b><u>Proof of the Bible and Jesus Christ .....</u></b>	<b><u>1</u></b>
Our Redeemer had to be God and Man .....	2
How Jesus is proven to be the Christ .....	5
Personal Experience Confirms the Gospel .....	7
Repent and Believe in Jesus Christ .....	9
<b><u>Jesus Christ's Claims of Deity .....</u></b>	<b><u>11</u></b>
Jesus is the "Bread of Life." .....	12
Jesus is the Light of the World .....	14
Jesus is the Only Way to God .....	16
Jesus is the Good Shepherd .....	19
Jesus is the Resurrection & the Life .....	22
Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life .....	25
Jesus is the Source of Our Good Works .....	27
Jesus is the Great I AM .....	29
Miracles Validate Jesus' Message .....	31
Believe in the Lord and His Resurrection for Salvation .....	35
<b><u>Authority &amp; Majesty of Christ .....</u></b>	<b><u>41</u></b>
Jesus has Authority to Forgive Sins .....	42
Jesus Expects our Worship .....	46
If You Love Jesus You Will Obey Him .....	48
<b><u>Promises of God fulfilled in Christ .....</u></b>	<b><u>52</u></b>
God Promised the Coming of the Messiah .....	53
Daniel's Vision of Time Before The Messiah Comes .....	57
The Miraculous Birth of Jesus Foretold .....	59
Christ's Life and Ministry Foretold .....	63
The Messiah is the Suffering Servant .....	70
<b><u>Reliable Witnesses of Christ .....</u></b>	<b><u>74</u></b>
The Forerunner points to the Messiah .....	75
God declares Jesus to be His Son .....	78
The Apostles' Preaching Backed with Power .....	82
Angels Know Jesus Is Lord .....	86
<b><u>Arguments Against Unbelief .....</u></b>	<b><u>89</u></b>
Liar, a Lunatic, or Jesus is Lord! .....	90
Why belief in the supernatural really matters .....	93
How We Know Jesus is not a Legend .....	98
<b><u>Be Reconciled Unto God .....</u></b>	<b><u>103</u></b>
The Curse of the Law of God .....	104
Made Holy Through the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ .....	109

[We Are Dead In Adam Or Made Alive In Christ.....](#) 114  
[No One is Good Enough to be Saved.....](#) 118  
[Make the Great Exchange.....](#) 123  
[A Dead Faith Saves No One.....](#) 127  
[How To Begin Your Life Over Again.....](#) 130  
[Once Dead but Now Alive.....](#) 138  
[About the Author.....](#) 141

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# Proof of the Bible and Jesus Christ

We can reason from general revelation that God is moral, and He always lives out His morals virtuously. In fact He is altogether holy. On the other hand, every human being is radically corrupt. Even though God has placed His moral laws in their hearts, their conscience convicts them of their guilt.

Since God is perfectly holy, we know He must relate to His creation in a way consistent with His holiness. He must punish us for our guilt, but He has refrained from punishing us so far. Why, if not to give us the opportunity to repent of our sins? But, even if we did repent, that by itself would not excuse our guilt or impart any real righteousness in us.

God must have made a plan we would never dream that He would carry out. He had to find a satisfactory substitute to take on the punishment we deserve. And He had to count the perfection of that substitute as the righteous status of those people who His substitute suffered to save from God's wrath.

There could only be one person in the entire universe that would qualify for such an assignment. It would have to be a person, who would prove to be sinless Himself, and someone who could endure God's full punishment and yet survive it. But, it would also have to be a person who could represent man before God by sharing in the essence of humanity, yet without a sinful nature common to all

mankind. In other words, our substitute would have to be both God and man, for only such a being could meet the necessary requirements. It had to be Jesus—the Son of God, who was born of a virgin and took on a human nature, without forfeiting His divinity.

The following articles will show how the reliable historic record of Jesus of Nazareth proves Jesus is the Son of God that He claimed to be. And we can rely on Scripture to be God's Word, because the Son of God told us so. It's also this very Scripture that God uses to communicate His message to us. Therefore, we can trust in the promises of God they contain.

Although Jesus' public ministry occurred about 2,000 years ago, the power of His message is still with us today. Every true believer in Christ has a personal testimony that confirms the Gospel. So, how can we ignore such a great salvation. Today is the day of Salvation! So, repent and believe in Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul.

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## Our Redeemer had to be God and Man

### The Redeemer had to be both God and Man. Here's how we know.



*Jesus Christ had to be truly man to suffer and He had to be truly God to survive that suffering and save sinners*

There's one thing we know for sure. In order for the savior of sinners to take upon Himself the infinite punishment they deserve, survive that suffering, and save them through His sacrifice, He had to be truly man and He had to be truly God—[One person with two natures](#).

First, Jesus had to be truly man to deserve the punishment and to receive it. For Him to be a suitable sacrifice, acceptable to God, He had to be [sinless Himself](#) so His death would not be for His own sin, and He had to be willing to be [treated by God the Father as if He had committed the sins](#) of everyone who would ever believe in Him as their worthy substitute.

Secondly, He had to be God in order to take upon Himself the infinite wrath of God toward sinners, survive that [unimaginable suffering](#), and satisfy God's wrath toward those who would ever believe in His anointed Redeemer to save them from their deserved damnation.

### Jesus redeems as the God-man

So, Christ suffered as man because God cannot suffer.

God is the infinitely, unchangeable, happy and blessed God. If Christ suffered, He didn't suffer in his deity; He had to suffer as man. But as man, Christ would never have triumphed. If He were only a man, He would never have risen from the grave in triumph. Therefore, Christ triumphed as God, He suffered as man, and He redeems as the God-Man.

In His suffering, He was "despised and rejected by men". ([Isaiah 53:3](#)) On the cross, the people stood watching as the rulers sneered at Him, the soldiers mocked Him, and one of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him. They couldn't believe that the One who was supposed to save Israel, couldn't even save Himself. But not only that, God the Father turned away from Him and forsook His Son as Jesus was enduring divine punishment for our sins. Just before He died, He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ([Matthew 27:46b](#))

### Jesus proved He was God by living

Jesus Christ proved He was God by living, and He proved He was a man by dying. The reason He proved He was God by living was because He had lived a [perfectly righteous life](#). Nobody could charge Him with sin, other than the supposed sin of blasphemy because He had claimed to be God's Son, which was in fact true and therefore not a sin.

The Bible tells us that the [first Adam](#)<sup>1</sup> was created in the image of God and was without sin, although he had free will to sin. He lived in an ideal, garden environment. He was in regular fellowship with God, and he had everything He needed.

God tested Adam by giving Him a single restriction—he was commanded not to "eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." Although He had every possible advantage and motivation to obey, He disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit. The fall consequently affected Him and the entire human race that descended from him.

On the other hand, Christ, who is also called in Scripture the [Second Adam](#)<sup>2</sup>, had to withstand His opposition from

all sides and prove his righteousness in every way throughout His entire life. Though He was a man, He was able to remain sinless because as God, He was in perfect union with the heavenly Father. This would seem to render Him incapable of sin. How could God become such a man? We don't know exactly how to answer that. But He did it. It's a sublime mystery.

### Jesus proved he was truly man by dying

Jesus Christ also proved to be truly man by dying. God has never suffered and never will suffer. But as a man, Jesus bled and died to suffer on our behalf. We are saved by both [Christ's bloody death](#) as a man and by His perfect righteousness that He lived out as deity. Throughout Christian history, there's been a tendency to either underscore Jesus' deity by denying His humanity or underscore Jesus' humanity by denying His Deity.

According to the universally-accepted church doctrine established at the church [Council of Chalcedon](#) in 451 AD, Christians should know and believe that Jesus is one Person with two distinguishable natures, a truly human nature and a truly God nature. Although the natures are distinct, they shouldn't be confused or mixed together as one nor should they be totally separated from one another.

### Faith is a gift from God

The news of Jesus Christ is just too good not to true. We might think that the sacrifice for sin we need would have to come from a person like this, but as soon as we think about it, we would immediately dismiss the idea because we would know that God would never do such a thing as this. Yet, we have to believe this to be saved.

What we may not understand is that faith is a gift of God. It's only when He changes our hearts that we're able to believe. That's why this gospel is too good not to be true. Only God could think of it, entertain it, and execute it. Man wouldn't think of it, and even if he did, he couldn't imagine it. The [devil](#) would dismiss it from our mind immediately. He would deny it from the start and oppose anybody that would preach it as the way of redemption of his slaves from his dominion.

## Jesus Christ is God in human flesh

The only way we can account for Jesus Christ, the God-man, is that [He is indeed God incarnate](#). This is a built-in [apologetic](#). The idea that He has to be God, yet is truly man, and He continues to be man even when He dies, and He actually dies as sinner, though He committed no transgression whatsoever, and that is the basis on which multitudes of sinners are cleansed of their guilt and clothed with everlasting righteousness, that itself has to be true. It couldn't exist if it weren't a fact.

### Jesus came down from heaven to give you life

How can you pass up such a great salvation as the one God has arranged? God's Son is the the precious treasure you should be searching to find. Have you believed in Him? It's time to find out.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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1. Go to the post, We are Dead in Adam or Made Alive in Christ, to learn about our spiritual identity
2. Ibid, We are Dead in Adam or Made Alive in Christ

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## How Jesus is proven to be the Christ



*[Jesus answered them,] “Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”* ([John 10:36b-38](#))

**We believe Scripture is true because God’s Son affirmed it. Once Jesus is authenticated as a messenger from God and establishes Scripture to be infallibly true, we know that Jesus is proven to be the Christ, who redeems sinful man, because Scripture declares it.**

### **The reliable witness accounts of Jesus show He is God’s Son**

It doesn’t require [circular reasoning](#) to prove that Jesus is who He claimed to be—the Son of God. Some theologians make the error by reasoning from the Word of God to the Son of God and back to the Word of God.

They begin with assuming that the Word of God is infallible and inerrant. And the Bible does teach that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. But, how do we know the Bible is the Word of God in the first place? The argument is that it’s true because the Son of God said it’s true, which of course He does. But do you see the fallacy in this form of circular reasoning? We first assume the unproven premise that the Bible is God’s Word to reach the conclusion that it is. It’s

an academic chasing of one’s tail.

### **If God’s Son tells us the Bible is God’s Word, we know it is**

The real argument should be revised to say that the Word of Man proves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and if the Son of God tells us that the Word of Man is the Word of God, then we know it’s true.

Let’s begin with the Bible as being just another historic, religious document. It was written within the lifetime of the people whose story it tells, not only about Jesus but about Herod and Pilate and the other people living in Israel in those days. We can also tell that [the accounts are reliable](#), human documents. The gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which tell the story about the life of Christ, were [written beginning about 50 AD](#), about 20 years after the death of Jesus. And everyone grants that in the intervening years, the oral gospel circulated.

These reliable, historical documents tell us that [Jesus performed miracles](#). Now, some people will deny the possibility of miracles, but if God exists and He wants to behave in a particular, out-of-the-ordinary manner, why couldn’t He do so? All we need is credible evidence of the miracles that Jesus performed, and we have that evidence.

These documents are early documents, He did live, He wasn’t a lunatic. He went around talking soberly and having a profound influence for doing good, but He also healed the sick, raised the dead, opened blind eyes, cast out demons, calmed the storm, and much more.

### **Jesus’ documented miracles prove His claim of Deity to be true**

This, by itself, wouldn’t prove that Jesus is the Son of God. Others have done miracles, including Moses, Elijah, Peter and Paul. But, we don’t think they are deity. So, what’s the difference between Jesus and these other authentic miracle workers? The difference is that they didn’t claim deity;

they claimed it for Jesus Christ. And Jesus accepted it. When people worshipped Him, He permitted it, He also demanded it when He said “I and the Father are One”.

The miracles show that Jesus had the power of God. It doesn't show He was God. But, it does show [He was a commissioned messenger of God](#). He couldn't get that power from God unless He was to be a true spokesman for God. So, when [He claims to be God](#) by saying “He who has seen me has seen the Father”, you know that in Him you see the fullness of the Godhead dwelling bodily. He Himself is God.

So, the Word of Man leads us to the Son of God, and [the Son of God tells us that this Word of Man is no mere Word of Man, but is the Word of God](#). Therefore, we know full well it is the Word of God. [The Word of God proves the Son of God](#) once the Son of God proves the Bible to be the Word of God. There is no fatal, circular reasoning in this way of thinking.

## Since God doesn't err, the God's Word cannot contain errors

Some might raise an objection by asking, “How can you believe the Bible when it contains so many errors?” I would agree that if it did contain errors, it can't be the Word of God because God cannot make an error. However, [what some would consider errors aren't really errors at all](#).

If there are any error in the original manuscripts, that's all we would need to dismiss it as a human document. However, nobody has ever proven an alleged error to be a real mistake at all. We can trust it to be God's true Word to mankind.

## Jesus came to save sinners like you and me

Without Jesus taking our place to suffer and die for the punishment of our sin, we would be left without hope. Have you received God's mercy, which is given to everyone who believes and trusts in Christ alone?

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Personal Experience Confirms the Gospel



*Inner joy and peace is a sign of personal experience with God that confirms the power of the gospel*

**Personal experience alone does not prove the gospel, but it does give credibility to our witness about the gospel.**

### The power of the gospel is confirmed through changed lives

Your personal experience with God is important to share with others, but it's not the gospel itself. Many Christians make the mistake of thinking that telling others how God has radically changed them is all they need to do to witness to others. But this leaves out the objective content of the Bible. To truly believe in Christ means you need to know and trust in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, testifying about your personal experience with God underscores the power of God unto salvation. So, how has God changed you?

[Joy](#) and [peace](#) should certainly characterize the lives of Jesus' disciples. A real Christian who has no [joy](#) is a contradiction. How can someone who has received God's free [grace](#) not be eternally grateful for receiving the most important blessing anyone can have? God's grace is free and it's forever! We could not earn it and we could not deserve it. How blessed are we, whose sins the Lord will not count against us?

But what personal experience does not prove by itself, the empty tomb does prove. When someone believes the reliability of the eye-witness account of Jesus' resurrection, they should also realize that Jesus' truth claims have been authenticated by God. And Jesus claimed that God would come and dwell with His followers.

*Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." ([John 14:23](#))*

So, we know that it is indeed possible to have such a personal relationship with God. Therefore, it's further confirmation of the gospel of Jesus Christ when we can affirm that what Jesus said would happen actually happened to us personally.

### Tests of the reality of our relationship with Christ:

Christians need only to answer the question of whether this feeling they have experienced is the same thing as what Jesus had said would happen. Here are some of the tests to consider:

1. **Joy and Peace.** As I already mentioned, there should be a sense of joy in our heart and a sense of peace toward God. The Bible tells us that the *Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.* ([Romans 8:16](#)) We have a sense that we belong to God, and our strong desire is to live our lives to love, serve, and please Him.
2. **Our new affections.** If we love God, our affections should have changed. We should love what He loves. Do you love God's Word and His people? Are you eager to gather together with other Christians to worship God?
3. **Humble attitude.** We should walk humbly with our God. His goodness and favor toward us is always more than we deserve. In this life, we'll never be perfect. So, our remaining sin should keep us humble and continually grateful for His grace.

4. **Obedient.** We should always be endeavoring to obey God to demonstrate our love for Him. Are you endeavoring to do everything the Lord has commanded you to do and to refrain from everything He forbids. And when you sin, are you acknowledging it, asking for His forgiveness, and committing to turn away from it.
5. **Endurance through trials.** Have you withstood the fiery trials of life with your faith intact? This is further evidence that the faith you claim to have is the real thing, not something you've mustered up for yourself. According to [Romans 2:8-9](#), faith is a gift of God; It's not something we can conjure up for ourselves.

If the above characteristics describe you, then your claim to have a personal relationship with God is indeed true. What else could it be? And your testimony to others about having God in your heart is "icing on the cake" as you witness to others. They can't deny it. The promise has become the reality!

## Is your life missing joy and peace?

Jesus Christ came to give you abundant life. If you're missing the peace and joy that comes from having a personal relationship with Him, He's imploring you to "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is

light" ([Matthew 11:28-30](#)).

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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# Repent and Believe in Jesus Christ

**You must choose whether you will die in your own sins and perish forever or repent of your sin and believe in Jesus Christ to be saved.**



*<em>Enter through the narrow gate For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it<em>  
<em>Matthew 7:13-14<em>*

## God calls us to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, His Son

We must choose. [God has been patient](#) with us. He hasn't judged us yet. There is still time for us to be [saved](#). Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ. If we don't, we'll certainly [perish](#); but if we do, we'll enjoy our blessed [inheritance](#) forever. We have to make a choice. Though [God is sovereign](#), He nevertheless holds us responsible for making the right choice. God won't tolerate our neglect or indifference.

We have learned through what God has revealed to us in nature and by reason that God is moral, virtuous, loving, holy, wise, just, and powerful. It's also known through our built-in moral compass that we have violated what we know to be right. We deserve to be punished because we are [guilty of sin](#). But, He hasn't punished us yet. Why not, if not for God giving us the opportunity to [repent](#) of our sin? The Scripture confirms what nature reveals to us.

The evidence we see in nature and through the Bible

demands a verdict from us. [God is calling us to repent](#). Not only is He calling us to repent, He is pleading for us to repent. He demands everyone to repent and be saved from His wrath and the punishment that awaits us. If we don't repent, we'll be going to [hell](#).

There is time now to repent. God has said, "**vengeance is mine, I will repay.**" ([Deuteronomy 32:35](#)) But he hasn't repaid it yet. And, we can't escape the consequences of our sin by neglecting His call. God's pleasure is that we will repent, not that we won't.

## Come boldly to God by repenting & believing in Jesus

Our coming to God through [repentance](#) and [faith](#) in the [Son of God](#) will certainly not be in vain. We can come boldly to the God of grace, knowing that He will never turn us away. He will accept you.

Jesus declared, ... "*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.*" [John 6:37](#)

Though we should be asking God, with great uncertainty, for permission to repent and escape His wrath. And yet He only wants us to come back to Him. Jesus likened him to a loving father in the parable of the prodigal son. He is the father who is eagerly waiting and watching for his wayward son to return home. He embraces him as a beloved son when his son returns home.

## Come to Jesus while there's still time

God is patiently bearing with us right now to give us time to repent. But, there will eventually come a time when this gracious opportunity comes to an end. The Bible says, "[Today is the day of salvation](#)". If we neglect such a great salvation, only damnation awaits us. If you don't believe in His mercy now, you will believe in His wrath later.

Everything exists to glorify God. [You will glorify God one way or another](#). If you come to God through repentance

and faith, you will glorify God's mercy, compassion, and grace. But if you don't, you will certainly glorify God's holiness, justice, and power.

Come to Jesus if you haven't done so already. Repent and believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. He will forgive you and give you rest. Don't ask Him to say to you when the time comes, **"Depart from me, you wicked into the hell of fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."** ([Matthew 25:41](#)) Let Him say to you at that time, **"Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom, prepared for you before the foundation of the world."** ([Matthew 25:34](#))

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# Jesus Christ's Claims of Deity

Virtually all biblical scholars agree that Jesus of Nazareth was a real historical person. And most people, who have heard about Jesus, admire this historical Person as being a great teacher. But there are a fewer number of people who believe He actually claimed to be God, or that if He did, He must have been mistaken.

The same is true today as it was back in the day that Jesus taught the crowds throughout Israel. Jesus would call people to believe in Him for true life, and He would amaze them by the miracles He performed. But when Jesus asked His disciples who the crowds were saying He is, they replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life" ([Luke 9:19](#)). Few of them recognized Him for the Person He claimed to be.

It's easy to understand how believing Jesus is equal with God would be a stumbling block for a typical Jew. They were taught over and over again that there is only one God, and He alone is to be worshipped. If that is true, the Jews must have been puzzled by what Jesus was saying about Himself. The miracles He performed clearly showed that He could exercise the power of God, but for Him to use for Himself the memorial name of God must have seemed to be blasphemy.

This section of articles will examine several of the Bible's accounts of Jesus' claims about Himself and some of the many miracles He did, which authenticated His message. Jesus said, "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves" ([John 14:11](#)).

Yet, it is also true that the true identity of Jesus is divinely hidden from many, but revealed to some. "At that time Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him'" ([Matthew 11:25-27](#)).

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## Jesus is the “Bread of Life.”



*Then Jesus declared I am the bread of life He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty John 6:35*

**The Lord Jesus Christ reveals His divinity to the crowds by the miracle of feeding 5000 men and claiming, “I am the bread of life.”**

### Jesus claims God's name

Jesus made it abundantly clear who He is and why He came to the earth. He revealed His divinity through the use of seven “I am” statements in the Gospel of John. Jesus used the same words to uniquely describe Himself that God used to reveal His name to Moses.

**God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”** ([Exodus 3:14](#))

Jesus Christ reveals His divinity by claiming He is the bread of life and using the name I AM to do it.

### Jesus' miracle proved His claim of divinity to be true

Everywhere Jesus went, He amazed the crowds with His teaching and His miraculous power. On one occasion, [Jesus fed 5,000 men](#) by multiplying a boy's five small barley loaves and two small fish. Twelve basketfuls of bread were left over after everyone had their fill (See [John 6:1-15](#)). Surely, God used this miracle to show that Jesus was a teacher who had come from God. For no one could

perform the miraculous signs He was doing if God were not with Him (See [John 3:2](#)).

### Jesus gives life to the world

After the feeding of the five thousand, the crowd found Jesus on the other side of the lake. Jesus knew they were following Him for the wrong reasons. So, Jesus warned them not to focus on their fleshly needs, but to look to the One who could give them eternal life. They responded by asking Jesus what they must do. **Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”** ([John 6:29](#))

The crowd then asked Jesus for a sign, so they could see it and believe. They reasoned that because Moses had given the Israelites a sign in the form of [manna from heaven](#), Jesus should do the same.

Then Jesus told them it was His Father who gave the manna, not Moses, and it is His Father who gives the true bread from heaven to eat. Jesus told them, **“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”** In saying this, Jesus was indicating His heavenly origin as the Son of God. So, they asked Him to give them this bread, and Jesus replied, **“I am the bread of life”**. ([John 6:35](#)) Upon hearing this, they began to grumble about Him because they did not believe Him.

### God's elect will believe

Jesus then goes on to explain to the crowd the following truths about who will believe and who will not:

1. **He who comes and believes in Jesus will never be spiritually hungry or thirsty again.** Jesus came to give “eternal” life, not temporary life. If you come and truly believe in Jesus, [you will never fall away](#) from Him. For the Lord is able to keep you in your faith. Remaining in your faith is therefore not dependent upon your own ability to persevere.
2. **All who the Father gives to Jesus will come**

**to Him.** God the Father chose to give His only Son a love gift of redeemed people, for whom the Son would be willing to make an atonement for their sin. In return for this free gift of grace, His people would forever be devoted to Him in love and gratitude. (See [Ephesians 1:4-6](#)) Each person God elects unto salvation will gladly come and believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. God is willing and able to change their attitude and the disposition of their heart so they are eager to do so.

3. **All who comes to Jesus, He will never drive away.** Jesus would never refuse anyone who has been given to Him by His Father. For Jesus knows that it is His Father's will that no one who the Father gives to the Son will ever be lost.
4. Nobody can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him, and Jesus will raise him up at the last day. No one has the ability to come and truly believe in Jesus unless the Father compels him to come. Man will naturally refuse to bow to the Father's command to repent and believe to be saved since he has a sinful nature. But everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him will come to Jesus.

### **How will you respond to Jesus' Claim of Divinity?**

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you

sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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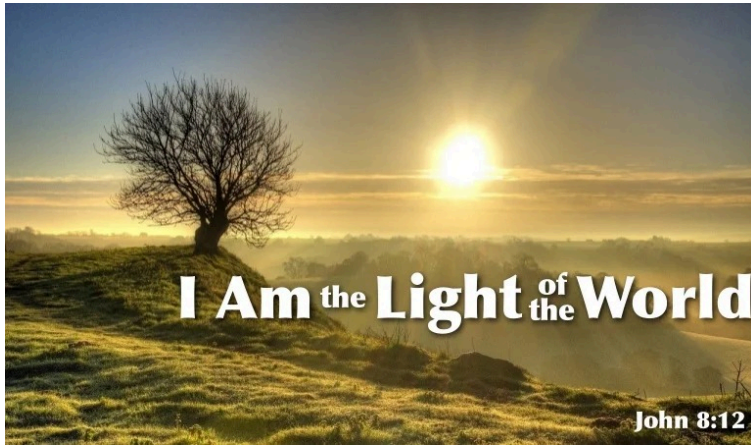
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# Jesus is the Light of the World



*Jesus is the light of the world*

## Jesus is the Light

There is only one source of truth—Jesus Christ. Follow Him for He is the light of the world. You will never again walk in darkness.

### The nature of light

Jesus knew that mankind was living in a state of [darkness](#). God gave men over to a depraved mind to live in darkness because they didn't think it was worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God. ([Romans 1:28](#)) But God, who is rich in [mercy](#), sent His Son Jesus into the world to reveal Himself to a lost world. If we follow Jesus, we will live in the light of the truth.

After Jesus refused to condemn the woman caught in the act of adultery ([John 8:1-11](#)), He told the people, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." ([John 8:12](#))

The word [light](#) in the New Testament is used as an image of both [holiness](#) and [illumination](#). Light also, most significantly, characterizes Jesus, who is the light that shines in the darkness, bringing life. People can recognize their lost condition, come to God, and find their way to a righteous life only through Jesus. They are released from darkness and given "the light of life", which is eternal life.

### God is true light

The earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the face of the waters before God formed it for us to live in. His first decree was, "Let there be light," and there was light. ([Genesis 1:2-3](#)) This light probably came from God Himself, who is light ([John 1:5](#)), since the luminaries weren't created until day four. God wraps Himself in light like a garment ([Psalm 104:2](#)).

And at the end of the ages, there will be no more night in the New Jerusalem. God's servants, who inhabit the City, will no longer need any source of light other than the Lord God Himself, who will always give them light ([Revelation 22:5](#))

### Plato's Allegory of the Cave

Plato's famous [Allegory of the Cave](#) reveals his theory of knowledge. Plato supposes some men are chained in a cave so that they can only see the shadows of objects on the cave wall in front of them. Consequently, they come to believe the shadows are the real things, not knowing that the real objects exist only outside of the cave.

In the Allegory, the cave symbolizes the world of opinion, while the outside world represents the world of knowledge. Plato said that the natural place for men is ignorance. Rocked by the senses and prejudice, most men live under the yoke of opinion. Therefore, there needs to be a revolution in the way of seeing the world and to change their perspective to get rid of men's opinions or preferences.

Scripture agrees with Plato's conclusion that man is in a place of ignorance. The Bible goes on to say that this is a form of willful ignorance. Paul writes that men suppress the truth by their wickedness and exchange the truth of God for a lie ([Romans 1:18b, 25a](#)). Jesus Christ came into the world to pierce the darkness and dispel the lies. "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him..." ([Col. 1:19](#)). So, follow Jesus for He is the light of the world.

## The miracle of Jesus' transfiguration

Peter, James, and John witnessed firsthand the glory of Jesus. Jesus took them up a high mountain, and there He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light. Just at that moment, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking to Jesus about His departure, which He was about to fulfill at Jerusalem. Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!" ([Matthew 17:1-2](#), [Mark 9:7](#), [Luke 9:30](#))

The transfiguration is a unique miracle that happens to Jesus Himself. It further reveals Him to be the Son of God, and is attested to by God the Father's audible pronouncement. Jesus is indeed the light of the world.

## The image of the glorified Christ in heaven

God gave the Apostle John a revelation about the things to come. John saw someone like a "son of man" walking among the seven golden lampstands. In his description of the glorified Jesus Christ, John says His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance ([Rev 1:16b](#)). There's no darkness in Him.

The term "son of man" refers to the vision given to the prophet Daniel about the day of judgment when one like a son of man [Christ] was led into the presence of the Ancient of Days. "He [Christ] was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" ([Daniel 7:14](#)).

## Following Jesus, the Light of the World

Follow Jesus for He is the light of the world. Jesus said,

"If you love me, keep my commandments" ([John 14:15](#)). The Apostle Paul says, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" ([Romans 8:29](#)).

We will shine like stars as we follow Jesus Christ. His light radiates from within, whereas our light is a reflection of His. Follow Jesus, for He is the light of the world.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Jesus is the Only Way to God



*<em>I am the gate whoever enters through me will be saved He will come in and go out and find pasture John 109<em>*

### **There is no other way to God but through Jesus Christ.**

#### **Jesus knew Himself to be God and the only way to God**

Jesus again declared Himself to be God when He said "I am the gate." He chose His words carefully. He used the same unique name, "[I AM](#)", that God used to identify Himself to Moses ([Exodus 3:14](#)). This was no accident. Jesus identified Himself this way in each of His famous "[I AM](#)" statements contained in the book of John.

#### **The Miracle**

It's important to know the setting in which Jesus described Himself to be the "gate" for the sheep. Jesus had just performed a miracle, the likes of which nobody had ever heard of before. He opened the eyes of a man who was born blind.

This should have been an occasion for great rejoicing for everyone around him, including the religious leaders who had authority over him. But, some [Pharisees](#) were upset

because the healing took place on a [Sabbath](#) day. They said that Jesus had to be a sinner because He didn't keep the rule of not working on the Sabbath. (They considered this healing to be a work.)

But there was a division among them. The others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" And the man who was healed told those who were questioning him, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

#### **The controversy**

Jesus found the healed man afterwards and revealed Himself to be the [Son of Man](#), a title used by the prophet Daniel to refer to Christ ([Daniel 7:13](#)). Jesus said that He came into the world for judgment, so that those who were blind to the truth would see it and those who claim to see it would become blind to it ([John 9:39](#)).

The Pharisees who were with the healed man were insulted by this statement of Jesus. They asked Him, "What? Are we blind too?" "Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim to see, your guilt remains' " ([John 9:40-41](#)).

So, this dialogue led Jesus to contrast Himself with the rest of the religious leaders who were leading their flock down the wrong direction that only leads to destruction.

### **Jesus says He is the one gate you must enter to be saved**

#### **The earthly illustration**

Jesus used an analogy that His hearers could readily grasp. [Shepherding sheep](#) was very common in the near east. Sheep will tend to stray off from the flock when left to their own instincts. This leaves them vulnerable to thieves and wild animals. Therefore, it was customary to have a shepherd in charge of a flock of sheep.

During the day, the shepherd would lead his flock to graze in good pastures and to drink their fill of water. He would

also defend the sheep from bear or lion attacks and from thieves and robbers. The sheep would grow attached to their shepherd; they trusted and relied upon him; they knew his voice, and he often called them individually by name.

At the end of the day, the shepherd would lead his flock through a gate into a well-protected sheepfold. The sheepfold had a gatekeeper, who would only open the single gate for the shepherd and his sheep. The sheepfold was usually made of stones with briars attached to the top to discourage wild animals and thieves from sneaking in to do harm. It was a safe place for the sheep to spend the night, usually with other flocks too.

The next morning, the shepherd would enter the gate to the sheepfold and call his sheep out. Then they would only follow their own shepherd because they only recognized his voice when he called.

### **The spiritual significance**

Jesus drew a comparison between Himself and the gate to the sheepfold. The sheepfold represents heaven. It's a place of sanctuary, a place of safety and everlasting peace and protection. This place has a single point of entry, just as the sheepfold has a single gate. Jesus said, "I AM the gate".

There are others who try to enter in by some other way, but Jesus called them a thief who comes only to steal and kill and destroy. Jesus was referring here to the Pharisees and religious leaders who were leading others in Israel to follow a religious system of [works-righteousness](#), just as they were doing.

### **How the truth about Jesus is offensive to unbelievers**

There may be no teaching of Jesus that is more intolerable to the unbelieving, [pluralistic](#) world than Jesus' claims of being the only way to God. The world considers difference in religious beliefs to be unnecessarily divisive. It has sought to find and merge the religious principles that are common to all religions in hopes of unifying mankind.

They say, the problem with Christianity is its claim to [exclusivity](#). But should we dismiss our religious differences for the goal of being inclusive? Christ calls Christians to follow Him by being separated from the

world's ways and encouraging others to do the same.

In a pluralistic country like ours, we need to make a distinction between being tolerant of other religious beliefs and believing each religion is equally valid. The Bible makes it clear. God saves us by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Our salvation is not based on our own merit, works, or inherent goodness.

This focus on undeserving grace goes against all of our pride. Men want some control and some credit for what happens to them. But God insists He will not give man any reason to boast in anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). We are acceptable to God by His merit, His works, and His righteousness. Nothing else will do!

### **Will you come into the sheepfold of God?**

Some people may ask, "How can you believe in a God that only offers one way to Him?". The answer should be, "I can't believe He offers even one way!" But just think about it. We have committed cosmic treason to the creator and ruler of our soul when we disobey Him even once. He regards us as His enemies before we come to know and love Him from our heart. Why do we think we deserve anything other than eternal separation and punishment from Him?

Think about the extent to which God has gone to give us, his enemies, a way of escaping His wrath. If God sends His only Son into the world to bear every one of your sins and to kill Him in your place, will you charge Him with not being merciful enough? And if He says that if you put your faith in Him, He's going to forgive every one of your sins and give you everlasting life, will you object to His grace?

We can be so arrogant that we think God should give us multiple ways to enter into His sheepfold. Then we reject Jesus' own teaching that there's a broad road that leads to destruction and many enter through it, but there's a narrow way that leads to eternal life, and few enter into it ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)).

If you want to go into God's sheepfold, you must come in through Jesus, who is the door to life itself, a life which is abundant. If you want to go in through some other way, you will miss that life. Follow Jesus, who says, "I am that

door. Come through Me and that life will be yours.”

## Come to the wellspring of life

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Jesus is the Good Shepherd



*<em>I am the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down is life for the sheep John 10:11<em>*

**Jesus is the good shepherd who loves and cares for His people.**

### The role of a good shepherd

Psalm 23 is probably the most familiar passage in the Old Testament that portrays our need for a good [shepherd](#).

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

He leads me beside quiet waters,

He restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

*Psalm 23 NIV*

There will always be times when we walk through the “[the valley of the shadow of death](#)“. We need a good shepherd who promises to always be there with us in those trying times.

The Good Shepherd, who is the guardian of our souls, fulfills the following three distinct roles:

### He loves and cares for His People

The love relationship between Jesus and His people is reciprocated. His people know Him and will only follow Him. They recognize His voice, and only His voice, when He calls, and they come to Him. Those being saved come because they know Him and can rely upon Him; They trust Him.

### He is willing to die for them

Jesus, the good shepherd over our souls, gives His people what they need most—a [sacrifice](#) for their sin. God will not acquit the [guilty](#). Sin must be punished by [death](#). So, Jesus willingly obeyed His Father's will to die in the place of His people ([John 10:15](#)). Though He committed no sin Himself, [God laid the sins of His people on His only Son](#) so that they would escape His [wrath](#) ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)).

Jesus endured His suffering because He loved His people. He said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay



down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)). And He took great joy in them ([Hebrews 12:2](#)).

### **He unites His flocks together as one**

Jesus is the good shepherd for ALL His people. The Jews commonly thought that they alone were God's chosen people and objects of His love. But Jesus said, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" ([John 10:16](#)).

God's chooses His people from every nation, tribe, people, and language ([Revelation 7:9](#)). So, Jesus will unite both Jews and Gentiles, and together reconcile them to God through Himself ([Ephesians 2:14-18](#)).

### **The danger of not following Jesus, the Good Shepherd**

#### **Beware of those who cause others to fall**

Jesus sharpens the picture by contrasting His sacrificial service with the Pharisees, who are represented in this metaphor as "hired hands". Their own self-interest controlled them. Jesus said, "The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it" ([John 10:12](#)).

Jesus denounced the ways of the Pharisees. In Matthew 23, He pronounced seven woes on them for their hypocrisy. For example, He said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to" ([Matthew 23:13-14](#)).

#### **The spiritual condition of those led astray**

Jesus Christ is the one and only Good Shepherd over the souls of His people. People are led astray when they deny the supremacy of Christ and total reliance on Him alone to save.

The Apostle Paul explained Israel's plight. He wrote, "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the

Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" ([Romans 10:1-4](#)).

Scripture is full of warnings about [false teachings](#) and those "hired hands" who promote them. Your eternal life depends on your knowing and following the truth. Christianity is all about turning away (i.e., repenting) from our old way of sinful living and placing all of our faith in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty for our sin, and God credits us with Jesus' perfect righteousness.

### **Shepherding relationships that matter**

#### **The relationship between the Good Shepherd and His sheep**

Jesus knows His people and His people know Him. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" ([Romans 8:16](#)). And the people of God will not follow anyone else. So, Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" when Jesus asked him if wanted to leave Him too. Peter continued, "You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" ([John 6:67-68](#)).

#### **The relationship between Jesus and His Father**

Jesus compared his relationship with His people with His relationship with the Father. He said, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ... The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father" ([John 10:14-15, 17-18](#)).

In other words, Jesus attributes His Father's love for Him

## Jesus Christ's Claims of Deity

to His voluntary obedience to do His Father's will. At Gethsemane, Jesus told Peter, James, and John that His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. In private, Jesus prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" ([Matthew 26:39](#)).

Jesus could have called down the angels to rescue Him from being sacrificed. Yet, he chose His Father's will over His own. Consequently, His Father's love for His Son must have peaked as Jesus submitted Himself willingly to the Father.

### Entering into a relationship with Jesus, our Good Shepherd

Likewise, our Good Shepherd has called us to follow Him. Scripture says, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" ([Romans 10:9](#)). Have you obeyed the Lord's command? Are you willing to follow Him?

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you

don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Jesus is the Resurrection & the Life



*<em>Jesus said to her Martha I am the resurrection and the life He who believes in me will live even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me will never die  
<em> <em>John 11:25-26<em>*

### Jesus raises the dead

A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned ([John 5:29](#))

Jesus is the One who gives us life and can resurrect life from the dead. Through Jesus, all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men ([John 1:3-4](#)).

### Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus from the dead glorified Him

Shortly before Jesus' sacrificial death, His friend Lazarus was sick. So, Martha and Mary, Lazarus' sisters, sent word to Jesus about his condition. They knew Jesus had healed others, so they expected him to come and heal their brother too. But Jesus had a better plan. He wanted to use this circumstance to do something that had never been done before. He would wait four days following Lazarus' death

and then demonstrate His power by bringing him back to life.

By waiting four days, no one could question whether or not Lazarus was really [dead](#). The Jews believed that the spirit of the deceased can remain for up to [three days](#) before departing. They did not embalm the body. So, the body would begin to decompose soon after death and would stink greatly by the fourth day.

Jesus said to his disciples, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" ([John 11:4](#)). Jesus knew that He was doing the very work the Father gave Him to finish. And this testifies that the Father sent Him ([John 5:36-37](#)).

On an earlier occasion, when Jesus told the Jews, "I am God's Son", the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy. He told them, "Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" ([John 10:37-38](#)).

Once again, God would make Christ credible to the world through the signs and miracles performed through Jesus. The Spirit of God in Jesus accomplished the work of the Father by means of the miracles performed.

### Jesus declares Himself to be the resurrection and the life

Both Martha, and later Mary, met with Jesus when He arrived in their hometown of Bethany. They were perplexed by Jesus' late arrival and told Him that their brother would not have died if He had been there. Jesus plainly told Martha that her brother would rise again. However, she thought Jesus was referring to the resurrection on the last day, which Jesus had taught. Yet, she was still hanging onto some hope. For she said, "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask" ([John 11:22](#))

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life, He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do

you believe this?' ” ([John 11:25-26](#)). And once again, she reveals her faith in Jesus by saying, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world” ([John 11:27](#)).

### **Jesus proves He is the resurrection and the life by raising Lazarus from the dead**

Jesus was moved by all the sorrow and mourning of Martha and Mary and those who were consoling them. He wept bitterly as He understood the sorrow of the moment. He could also weep as He thought about the judgment to come for everyone who would ever reject Him as the Son of God.

Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus, which was a cave with a stone in front of the entrance. He then instructed those who were there with Him to remove the stone, which they did. Jesus prayed publicly. But instead of asking God to raise Lazarus, He thanked God for having heard Him. He did this for the benefit of those who were there so they would believe the Father sent Him for this purpose.

Jesus then called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ([John 11:43](#)). He spoke only three words, and life reentered the decomposed body of Lazarus. He came out of the tomb, wrapped with his grave clothes. No one had ever seen a miracle like this before. Then, Jesus told them to remove the wrappings and let him go.

### **The resurrection miracle enraged Jesus' enemies**

The word of this miracle spread rapidly throughout Israel. The display of Jesus' power served multiple purposes. Many of those who saw the miracle placed their faith in Him, while others reported what Jesus had done to the Pharisees. All Israel knew that the Pharisees hated Jesus. He was openly critical of them. They saw that His popularity and influence was undermining their own position and authority in the community. So, they wanted Him killed.

This miracle further hardened their hearts against Jesus. They assembled the [Sanhedrin](#) and agreed with their high priest, Caiaphas, that Jesus would have to die. Of course, their decision just happened to be in complete alignment with God's purpose and timing. God chose to use the

scheme of wicked men to make Jesus a sacrifice for sin.

After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, Peter preached to the crowd in Jerusalem, saying the following:

“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

“But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him” ([Acts 2:22-24](#))

## **How will you respond to Jesus?**

You must make a choice. God won't allow you to sit on the sidelines over the most important decision that man will ever make. There are basically three options: 1) Trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord, 2) Remain undecided, indifferent or apathetic—neither being hot nor cold (see [Revelation 3:15-17](#)), or 3) Reject the teaching of Holy Scripture and face the consequences of your sin.

You must not only know the facts about Jesus and believe it is true to be saved, you must also personally trust in Him alone to save you.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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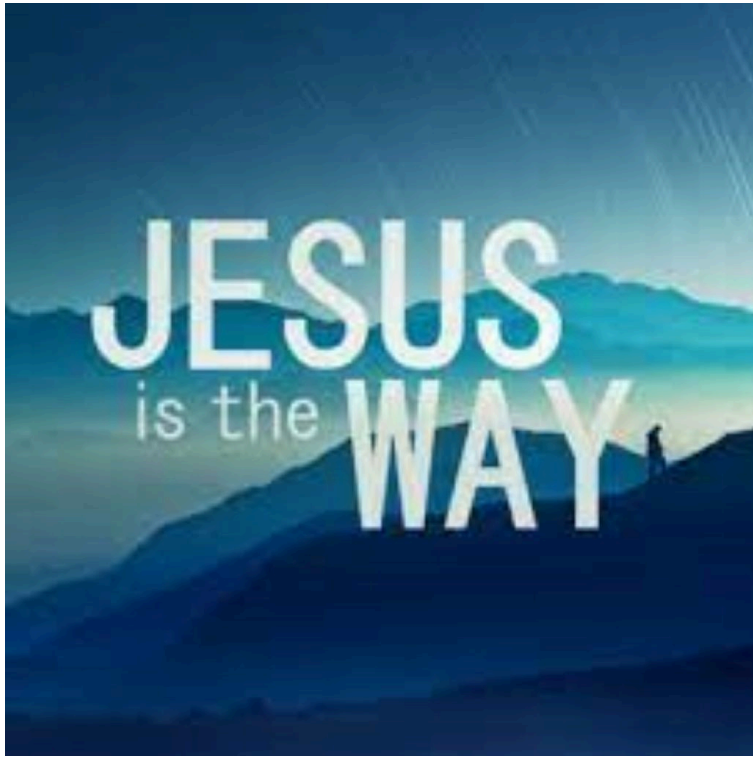
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# Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life



*<em data sider select id=5dffeeef d912 4b57 ae0a 079fefaab31e>Jesus answered I am the way and the truth and the life No one comes to the Father except through me<em><em data sider select id=5dffeeef d912 4b57 ae0a 079fefaab31e> John 14:6<em>*

## Jesus is the way to God and the way to eternal life.

Life can be confusing. A pluralistic society like ours calls for us to be tolerant of all religious beliefs. But the danger is for us to mistake tolerance for validity. Truth is not a matter of preference; It is absolute, not relative. Jesus made that abundantly clear when He said, I am the way and the truth and the life.

### Jesus is the Way

God is exceedingly holy, but we are not ([Romans 3:23](#)). Our sin has left an impassable gulf between us and God. Our only hope is that God would find a way to bridge that gulf. But what we would never guess in a million years is

how He would do it.

God must show His righteous anger toward sin in man. Sinners must be punished, but man could never survive the punishment he deserves ([Romans 6:23](#)). So, God condescended to provide a [substitute](#) in their place to endure His wrath ([Romans 3:25](#)). He sent His only Son to become like us in every way, except without sin. His Son willingly offered Himself to suffer the punishment we deserve for our own sin ([John 10:17-18](#))

But this alone wouldn't be sufficient because mankind doesn't want to change and seek after God on their own ([John 3:19-20](#), [Romans 3:11](#)). So, they must be "born again" by the sovereign choice of God, at which time they receive the [gift of faith](#) in Jesus upon hearing the gospel ([John 3:3](#), [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). For He is the [single gateway](#) into the very presence of God ([John 10:7](#)). No one else has died in your place for your sins to be forgiven.

### Jesus is the truth

It wouldn't matter that [Jesus is the truth](#) if truth itself didn't matter. But truth does matter. A person can't be forgiven and saved if he doesn't know the truth and love the truth.

The message of salvation has both an objective and a subjective element to it. The objective content centers around the factual truth of the Person and work of Jesus Christ to reconcile all penitent sinners to God ([Ephesians 2:16](#)). This truth must first be known and also [acknowledged to be factually correct](#) for anyone to be saved.

But that's not enough. Besides knowing the truth and believing it to be true, you must also be willing to [entrust yourself](#) into the very hands of Christ. You're no better than a demon if you have no love for the Lord, who made His incredible sacrifice possible for you. ([James 2:19](#)).

### Jesus is the Life

Jesus is not dead, He's alive. He calls Himself the First and the Last because He is eternal; Jesus had no beginning

and will have no end to His life ([Revelation 2:8](#)). He is the embodiment of life itself. Without Him there can be no life, for He creates it and He sustains it. As Paul said, "For in him we live and move and have our being" ([Acts 17:28](#)). All of creation exists for the [glory](#) of Him, and by extension, the entire Godhead. God made Jesus the way, the truth and the life!

Whether or not you believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, your life will never end. The most important question is where will you be spending it. Our life now is like a vapor when compared to eternity. It vanishes quickly, but it matters greatly. We have just one life to live, and when we die we face the judgment ([Hebrews 9:27](#)).

God will either identify us with the [first Adam](#), who disobeyed God and deserved death, or with the [second Adam](#), Jesus Christ, who gave His life so that our sins could be forgiven. Those who [ignore such a great salvation](#) will spend their eternity in unbearable torment, apart from God ([2 Thessalonians 1:8-9](#)). And for those who knew the truth but rejected or ignored it, they will surely suffer [a greater punishment than those who had less knowledge](#). But, those who place their faith in Christ will spend eternity with their Lord and God in heavenly bliss.

## Come to the wellspring of life

Which [path](#) are you on? Are you following Jesus, who said

I am the way, the truth and the life?

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Jesus is the Source of Our Good Works



### As our God, Jesus is the True Vine

Jesus uses the metaphor of the vine to describe Himself as the source of our good works. At the same time, He claimed deity as He used the sacred name of God, I AM, when He said, "I AM the true vine".

Our [good works](#) are very important to God. Just as a branch is dependent upon the vine for its life source, we are dependent on our [relationship with Jesus](#) to produce good works. Jesus is the source of our good works. He told his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he [prunes](#)."

Unfortunately, many Christians are confused about the role of works in the life of a believer. We are saved by grace through faith, not by works ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). Works cannot save anyone, but no one is saved if their faith doesn't produce good works. As James would say, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead ([James 2:17](#)). And Paul writes, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" ([Ephesians 2:10](#)).

### What did Jesus mean by the "true" vine?

The Old Testament refers to the House of Israel as the vine, which God planted in His vineyard. "You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it" ([Psalm 80:8](#)). "He dug it up, cleared it of its stones, and planted the choicest of vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it only produced bad fruit" ([Isaiah 5:2](#)).

So, God asks, "What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I'm going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it" ([Isaiah 5:4-6](#)).

However, the vine of the house of Israel foreshadowed the "true vine" that would come through Jesus Christ. Matthew confirmed this when he wrote about Joseph taking the child Jesus and his mother Mary to Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. "And so was fulfilled what the Lord said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son' " ([Matthew 2:15](#)).

Therefore, Jesus is the full embodiment of Israel. In this sense, true Israel represents the children of promise, those whose circumcision is of the heart, not every descendent of Jacob.

### The Gardener's true vine makes the fruit of the branches possible

In Jesus' metaphor, professing Christians are the branches that are expected to bear much fruit. However, in any gathering of Christians there is bound to be some who will produce many good works, some who produce less, and some who will produce none at all.

Any professing Christians who bear [no good works](#) are



not real Christians. The Holy Spirit hasn't done His supernatural work of [regeneration](#) in their hearts. God, who is the "Gardener", will cut those branches off the vine ([John 15:2,6](#)).

The spiritual productivity of the real Christian "branches" will vary based on how well each branch remains connected to Jesus Christ, who is the vine ([John 15:4-5](#)). We can remain close to Him by regularly practicing our spiritual disciplines, such as Bible-reading, prayer, worship, and fellowship with His people.

Jesus promised that as you remain in Him, you may ask for whatever you wish, and it will be given to you ([John 15:7](#)). God will then be glorified as His people bear much fruit, showing themselves to be His disciples ([John 15:8](#)). Jesus tells us this so that His joy may be in us and that our joy may be complete ([John 15:11](#)).

## How to become a fruitful branch abiding in Christ, the vine

Almost everyone wants to do good sometimes. But, what we deem to be good and what God deems to be good can be entirely different. It depends on your motivation. If you do good to feel better about yourself, for example, do you think God would consider that to be an act of loving Him or loving your neighbor as yourself? God may find your works useless if they're not motivated by your love for God and serving to please Him. Abide in Him, for Jesus is the source of our good works.

Without a personal relationship with God, you can do nothing that God would consider good. What is your relationship with God like? If you're not sure, ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Jesus is the Great I AM



*<em>Jesus claimed to have existed before Abraham and that Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to His coming</em>*

### Jesus claims to be greater than Abraham

Jesus told the Jews who rejected Jesus that He was greater than Abraham because He existed before Abraham. He claimed deity by calling Himself the sacred name God.

Jesus responded to the Pharisee's criticism that He couldn't possibly be who He claimed to be since He was just a man. He made it crystal clear that He was more than just a man. The Lord came from God, and God sent Him here. He further aroused their anger when He claimed to be God by saying, "before Abraham was born, I am!" ([John 8:58](#))

### Jesus claims to be the remedy to the enslavement of sin

Jesus made a claim about Himself that shocked the Pharisees who heard Him. He said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" ([John 8:31](#)).

The Jewish leaders took great pride in their ancestral roots. They were the physical descendants of the great patriarch,

[Abraham](#). Therefore, they were convinced they already had a special relationship with God and were in bondage to no one. So, why should Jesus say they will be set free when they are already free?

Jesus told them that everyone who sins is a [slave to sin](#) and a slave has no permanent place in God's family. But a son belongs to it forever. So if Jesus (who is the Son) sets you free, you will truly be free.

### Man is free to do what he desires, but only what he desires most

Not many people will argue that man doesn't have [free will](#). So if we do have free will, does it have its limits? Does our free will spring out of a neutral position, which is not influenced by any bias or predisposition? The problem lies with the nature of what we desire, even though we are completely free to choose whatever we desire the most. We all have a [sinful nature](#). So, our desires are limited to satisfying that nature. The Bible says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" ([Jeremiah 17:9](#))

What mankind naturally lacks is not free will, but the liberty to choose to do what is right for the right reasons. Therefore, if anyone would choose to believe and follow Jesus Christ, God must first place it in his or her heart to desire it ([Ezekiel 36:26-27](#)). This is integral to what Jesus calls the "[new birth](#)" in His dialogue with Nicodemus ([John 3:3](#)). This happens when Jesus sets us free from our enslavement to sin.

### We do the things our father does, whether he is the devil or God

We are by nature children of the devil until [God adopts us into His own family](#). Jesus' adversaries first claimed that Abraham was their father. But, Jesus objected to that claim by saying they weren't doing what Abraham did. They were trying to kill Jesus, but He said Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing His day, Abraham saw it and was

glad.

His adversaries protested and said, "The only Father we have is God himself." Then, Jesus told them plainly that they belonged to their father, the [devil](#), and they wanted to carry out his desire. He was a murderer from the beginning and is the father of lies. The reason they don't believe Him and don't listen to Him is that they don't belong to God.

Jesus explained that He was honoring the Father and they were dishonoring Him. But if anyone keeps His word, he will never see death. These Jews were enraged by this, and they claimed He was demon-possessed. They said Abraham and the prophets died, and yet Jesus made the audacious claim that if anyone keeps His word, they would never taste death. In disbelief they asked, "Are you greater than Abraham? Who do you think you are?" The Jews said, "you are not fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham!" Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

By saying this, Jesus was making Himself out to be equal with God, and His adversaries knew it. So, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus slipped away from them because it was not yet His time to die.

### Are you keeping Jesus' word?

There is an inseparable link between God the Father and God the Son. You cannot know the Father without knowing the Son, and you cannot honor the Father without honoring the Son. Likewise, you cannot love the Father without loving the Son. There is only one way to the Father and that is by way of the Son.

The world would like you to believe that there's [many different paths which lead to God](#), but that goes against Jesus' teaching in sacred Scripture. It's a lie straight from the pit of hell. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" ([John 14:6](#)).

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Miracles Validate Jesus' Message



*<em>Jesus said Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does But if I do it even though you do not believe me believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father John 10:37-38</em>*

### The miracles Jesus performed are His credentials as the Messiah.

#### The role of miracles

Miracles validate Jesus' message. They are designed to show the deity of Jesus Christ. They are God's way of attesting to the deity of His Son. God placed a [curse](#) upon mankind and all of nature following the fall of Adam and Eve into sin. But His plan is to ultimately [redeem](#) a people unto Himself by His grace. Jesus' miracles reveal the power of God to reverse the effect of the curse on sinners and nature itself.

The miracles are one more great affirmation of the [messiahship of Jesus Christ](#). In Matthew 1-9, the apostle presents how Jesus fulfills several categories of messianic qualifications. His [genealogy](#) attested to the legal qualifications of the Messiah. The [virgin birth](#) and fulfillment of [other prophecies](#) attested to the prophetic qualification of the Messiah. His [Baptism](#) attested to the divine approval of his messiahship. [Jesus' temptation](#) attested to His spiritual qualifications to be the Messiah. [His teaching](#) like "one who had authority" speaks to His theological qualifications. And [His miracles](#) prove the

most essential qualification that Jesus is God.

#### What are miracles?

A miracle is a special act of God that interrupts the natural course of events, according to Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

There are various views about what constitutes a special act. For example, Augustine did not believe it was contrary to nature, but that it was contrary to our knowledge of nature. Whereas, Aquinas took the position that a special act is an event outside of nature's power. In either case, however, a miracle is an unusual, irregular, specific way in which God acts within the world.

#### Miracles are possible, probable and have actually occurred

If God is the all-powerful Creator of the universe, as we have shown, then we know miracles are *possible*. After all, creation itself by definition is a miracle. The only question that remains is whether or not God has the desire to perform miracles. His desire to perform miracles is certainly congruent with His divine attributes of omniscience (all-knowing) and omnibenevolence (all good).

Here are some of the reasons why God would desire to perform miracles if He could:

- He is the kind of God who desires to communicate with His creatures and do good for them.
- Miracles heal, restore, bring back life, communicate God's will, and vindicate His attributes.
- Miracles befit the nature of the One performing them and the need of the one for whom they are performed.
- Miracles are God's way of confirming the Word of God through a messenger of God.

Therefore, we know miracles are not only possible but also probable. But did they actually happen? This question

can only be known by looking at the historical record. And what we conclude is that the New Testament records numerous miraculous event, which is based on the reliability of the New Testament documents and witnesses.

### **Belief in miracles undergird our faith**

There were three types of miracle witnesses. First, there were those who were *committed* to Jesus because they were convinced that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. They believed Jesus' claims of deity as they witnessed the power of God He displayed through His miracles. The apostle Peter is a good example of this type of witness.

Secondly, there were *curious* witnesses who intellectually knew that Jesus was doing things that only God could do. They knew Jesus had to be someone very special, but they weren't ready to believe He was divine. There was a lot of debate over who Jesus was. Some were saying that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead, others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life ([Luke 9:7-9](#)). Their commitment to following Christ was shallow at best.

Jesus confronted three such uncommitted followers and pointed out why they weren't ready for the kind of commitment He requires. One person was apparently not ready to sacrifice his comforts in order to follow Jesus ([Matthew 8:19-20](#)). Another person apparently wasn't ready to sacrifice his portion of the family inheritance to immediately follow Jesus ([Matthew 8:21-22](#)). While the third person apparently wasn't ready to break family ties to follow Him ([Luke 9:61-62](#)).

Jesus expects full commitment from His true disciples. He said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord. Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 7:21](#)). Jesus also said, "And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple...In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" ([Luke 14:27, 33](#)). Saving faith places Jesus first in the life of His people.

Thirdly, there were the *critics* of Jesus who witnessed His miracles. They never claimed that He hadn't performed them, but they hated Him for showing them to be the hypocrites they really were. So, they accused Him of doing these miracles by the power of Satan, rather than God.

## **Types of miracles:**

God ordained that man would have dominion over the earth ([Genesis 1:28](#)). But man fell into sin, and he lost his right to rule. God immediately placed a curse on the earth, and Satan usurped man's control over it. The Bible now refers to Satan as the prince of this world ([John 12:31](#)).

Paradise was lost as a result of the curse. Now the earth is subject to sickness, pain, death, strained human relationships, sorrow, injustice, lies, diseases, natural disasters, and demonic activity. But God has an amazing plan to redeem man and the universe in which he lives. He plans to reverse the curse.

The miracles Jesus performed are previews of the kind of power He will wield to redeem man and all of creation. God would first come to earth, in the Person of Jesus Christ, to die on a cross and rise from the grave for the redemption of man. Then, He would come back a second time in blazing glory to establish a millennial kingdom, followed by the creation of new heaven and new earth for eternity.

### **Miracles of restoration and redemption**

Jesus showed compassion for those who had illnesses of every sort. "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them" ([Matthew 4:23-24](#)).

The Lord's healing miracles foreshadowed His ultimate restoration of His redeemed people in God's eternal kingdom. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" ([Revelation 21:4](#)).

### **Miracles over nature**

All creation has been affected by man's sin and is in need of restoration. "For the creation was subject to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious

freedom of the children of God" ([Romans 8:20-21](#)).

Jesus demonstrated complete control over nature by performing miracles that only God could do. Jesus' could feed thousands of people with five barley loaves and two fish ([John 6:1-14](#), [Matthew 15:30-38](#)). He walked on water ([Mark 6:45-54](#)), and He calmed the fierce wind and sea by His command ([Luke 8:22-25](#)). On at least two occasions, Jesus caused great gatherings of fish to be caught ([Luke 5:1-11](#), [John 21:1-14](#)).

These and other miracles over nature that Jesus performed are previews of the power of God He will wield as He reverses the curse on all of creation. They affirm His authority over nature.

## Supernatural miracles

In the end, Jesus will restore all things back to their original state of perfection. But first, He must not only resist the demonic forces that keep them the way they are, He must also overpower them.

To demonstrate His power over the supernatural powers, Jesus cast out demons from people who were possessed. In one instance, Jesus gave orders to an evil spirit that possessed a man who was in a synagogue. Jesus sternly told the spirit to come out of him, and the evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek ([Mark 1:21-28](#)).

At another time, Jesus rebuked the evil spirit that had seized a boy. The demon threw the boy to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father ([Luke 9:37-43](#)).

These and other similar miracles clearly show that Jesus has power over Satan and his demons. One day, Satan's reign will come to a final end, and he will be thrown into the lake of burning sulfur. He and anyone else, whose name was not found in the book of life, will be tormented day and night for ever. ([Revelation 20:7-15](#)).

## Responding to the miraculous proof of Jesus' claims

### Responses of unbelief

The Bible describes the various ways people responded to the miracles Jesus performed. Nobody denied that Jesus was performing amazing miracles, but their reaction to them often led them away from faith in Him.

Some people were temporarily fascinated by what Jesus could do. It seemed like they wanted to follow Him, but their personal comforts, riches, and relationships were too important for them to commit fully to Jesus.

Multitudes of people marveled at what Jesus was doing, but for the wrong reasons. They were fine with following Jesus for what He could do for them. But when Jesus message demanded that they pay a personal price to follow Him, they soon lost interest and turned against Him.

The religious leaders hated Jesus. He was a threat to their privileged status. Jesus publicly denounced them and pointed out their hypocrisy. So, they attributed His power to Satan rather than God and wanted Him killed.

### Responses of Belief

Still others, who were often the outcasts of society and may have had little to lose, embraced Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When Jesus was just a baby, Simeon prophesied that the child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed ([Luke 2:34](#)). We see this coming true as we read the gospel narrative and as we witness the varied reactions to Jesus even today.

Jesus Himself is the dividing line that will determine every individual's eternal destiny. Either you place your full faith and trust in Him, or else you have rejected Him. There's no middle ground. My prayer for you is that you will follow the One, who is [the Way and the Truth and the Life!](#)

## Come to the wellspring of life

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you

## Jesus Christ's Claims of Deity

sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Believe in the Lord and His Resurrection for Salvation

The [historical evidence](#) for the Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection is compelling. It is so important to Christianity that a follower must believe in the Lord and His resurrection for salvation. His resurrection from the dead is evidence that God the Father accepted Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as an atonement for sin.



*<em>And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you he who raised Christ from the grave will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you Romans 8:11</em>*

### The Fact of the Resurrection of Christ

There is a universally-held belief among believers in Christ—Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead ([Romans 10:9-13](#)). If you don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you have no part in Him and you will never receive the forgiveness of sins that reconciles you to God and brings you eternal life. Fortunately, you have every reason to believe it, because there's overwhelming evidence that it happened.

“The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the crowning proof of Christianity. If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion. If it did take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth.” ~ [Henry M. Morris](#)

### Jesus death and resurrection were prophesied

The exact details of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was foretold hundreds of years in advance. Only God could have revealed such an unusual and significant event well before it happened.



## The Old Testament prophesied Christ's resurrection

### Job's prophecy and fulfillment

**Job's Prophecy.** "Oh, that my words were recorded,  
that they were written on a scroll,  
that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead,  
or engraved in rock forever!  
I know that my redeemer lives,  
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.  
And after my skin has been destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I will see God;  
I myself will see him  
with my own eyes—I, and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me!" ([Job 19:23–27](#))

### Fulfillment of Job's prophecy.

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned" ([John 5:24–29](#)).

### Psalm 16 prophecy and fulfillment

**Psalm 16 prophecy.** "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
my body also will rest secure,  
because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,  
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.  
You make known to me the path of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at your right hand" ([Psalm 16:9–11](#)).

**Fulfillment of Psalm 16 prophecy.** "Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay" ([Acts 2:31](#)).

### Isaiah prophecy and fulfillment

**The Messiah will conquer death – Isaiah 25 prophecy.**  
"On this mountain he will destroy  
the shroud that enfolds all peoples,  
the sheet that covers all nations;

## Jesus foretold His resurrection

The Lord knew why the Father had sent Him, and He told His disciples beforehand what was about to happen. Jesus told his disciples that he would be killed and be raised again on the third day on three occasions.

1. "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders and chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" ([Matthew 16:21](#)).
2. "As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus instructed them, 'Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead' " ([Matthew 17:9](#)). "When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.' And the disciples were filled with grief" [Matthew 17:22-23](#)).
3. "Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!' " ([Matthew 20:17-19](#))

## The tomb was empty

According to the Gospels , Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus' body down from the cross. (See [Matthew 27:57-28:8](#), [Mark 15:42-16:8](#), [Luke 23:50-24:8](#), [John 19:38-42](#)). Then he wrapped it in clean linen cloth and placed it in a new tomb cut in the rock. Then he rolled a big stone in front of the entrance of the tomb. The next day, the chief priests and Pharisees got Pilate's permission to further secure the tomb. They feared that Jesus' disciples may steal the body to start a rumor that Jesus prediction had come true. So they sealed the tomb and had guards placed nearby.

On the third day, Mary Magdalene, another Mary, and Salome went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. When they got there, they saw that the stone had been moved away and the tomb was empty. An angel appeared to them and

told them that Jesus has risen. The angel instructed them to go quickly and tell his disciples that He has risen from the dead. He was going into Galilee and He would meet them there.

[Lee Strobel](#), a former atheist who converted to Christianity, says the greatest evidence for the empty tomb is Jesus' opponents. "The best evidence for the empty tomb is that even the opponents of Jesus implicitly admitted the tomb was empty. When the disciples began proclaiming that Jesus had risen what the opponent said was, "The disciples stole the body." They're conceding that the tomb was empty, they're just trying to explain how it got empty. So, everybody's conceding that the tomb was empty. How it got empty is the real issue, and that goes to the fourth category of evidence, which is eyewitnesses."

## Jesus appeared to many eye-witnesses after He was risen

What better testimony to Jesus Christ's resurrection than many witnesses to the fact. Many of them were still alive when the disciples proclaimed it! They could have denied it if it weren't true, but nobody did.

As Paul wrote, "he [Jesus] appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born ([1 Corinthians 15:5-8](#)).

In Lee Strobel's book, [The Case for Christ](#), he quotes from his interview with [J.P. Moreland, PH.D.](#) "When Jesus was crucified, his followers were discouraged and depressed. They no longer had confidence that Jesus had been sent from God, because they believed anyone crucified was accursed by God... Then, after a short period of time, we see them abandoning their occupations, regathering, and committing themselves to spreading a very specific message—that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of God, who died on a cross, returned to life, and was seen alive by them."<sup>1</sup>

The apostles were ready to die for something they had witnessed firsthand. They not only believed Jesus rose from the dead, they knew it for sure. Eleven credible witnesses, who had nothing to gain and everything to lose,

agreed on what they had seen. So, how can you explain it away?

### **Jesus resurrection is the foundational basis for the church**

Christianity had a monumental effect on Judaism and the Roman empire in the first century. This was nothing short of miraculous considering the storyline. The message was that a crucified carpenter from an obscure village had triumphed over death. It all began at [Pentecost](#), when the Holy Spirit came powerfully upon a small group of praying disciples.

What could have caused skeptics like James, the half-brother of Jesus, to be stoned for his belief in Christ? Was it not that the risen Jesus had appeared to him? And what could have caused the chief persecutor of Christians to become the chief missionary to the Gentiles? Was it not that he had a remarkable encounter with the resurrected Christ?

Thousands of Jews turned their back on their cherished Jewish traditions that they had been taught from childhood. They knew something big was happening. They gave them away because they had seen miracles that they couldn't explain. Many of them had seen the risen Christ, or knew others that had seen Him.

## **The meaning of the resurrection**

Job asked the age-old question, "If a man dies, will he live again" ([Job 14:14](#))? It's a question we have all asked ourselves. Wouldn't you love to hear the testimony from someone who died and returned to life to give an account of what he had experienced?

That's exactly what Jesus Christ has done for us. The resurrection of Christ clearly shows there is life after death. Believing in Jesus' resurrection matters to us. For it demonstrates that God has the power to raise the dead, if Christ was indeed raised. It also validates the claims and credentials of Jesus Christ to qualify Him as our savior. By trusting Him to save us, our sure hope is rightfully placed in the One who is our only hope for salvation.

"No one can remain neutral regarding Jesus' resurrection.

The claim is too staggering,

the event too earthshaking,

the implications too significant

and the matter too serious.

We must either receive it or reject it as truth for us.

To remain indifferent or undecided is to reject it."

~

[Mark Driscoll](#)

### **Believers are justified by Jesus' resurrection**

The Old Testament reveals the necessity for a sacrifice that can atone for our sin against God. The sacrificial system that God instituted for Israel previewed the more perfect sacrifice for sin that Jesus would fulfill. Isaiah prophesied, "...but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him" ([Isaiah 53:5](#)).

But God would not allow His Son to remain in the grave. Isaiah continues, "...though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied" ([Isaiah 53:10-11](#)).

"Since we have been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life ([Romans 5:9-10](#))!"

### **Believers are identified with Jesus' resurrection**

Christians identify with Christ in His death and in His resurrected life. "... If we died with Him, we will also live with him" ([2 Timothy 2:11](#)). "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father; we too may live a new life."

### **Believers' hope is grounded in Jesus' resurrection**

Paul reasons that if there is no resurrection, then Jesus Christ could not have been raised from the dead. And if He was not raised, our faith is in vain. If we can have hope only for this life, we should be pitied among all men. If we're not resurrected, we might as well live it up and live as each one pleases.

But Christ was raised from the dead. Death came through the first man, Adam, who was our representative before God. Since Adam sinned through disobedience, his sin was imputed to all of his descendants. Each one of us inherited our own sinful nature from him. Just as sin came to us through Adam, so our resurrection from the dead also comes to us through Christ. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#)).

### **Believers' living high priest is now the resurrected Jesus**

Jesus Christ ascended to heaven after appearing to hundreds of people following His resurrection. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, serving as our high priest. He is our advocate before the Father, interceding for His people. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ..." ([Romans 8:1](#)).

### **Come to the wellspring of life**

We enter into the family of God by believing in Christ alone. There's nothing we can do to earn or merit God's grace. His grace is a free gift, but you must receive it for yourself by faith.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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- 1 Lee Strobel, *The Case For Christ*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, Copyright 1998, page 246

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# Authority & Majesty of Christ


It is only fitting that if Jesus is the Lord, He would participate in the Divine prerogatives that are unique to God alone. We find this is how Jesus conducted Himself throughout His public ministry. Such prerogatives include the divine authority to forgive sins, the expectation to be worshipped for who He truly is, and His worthiness to be obeyed by those who follow Him.

If Jesus didn't know He was God's Son, He certainly would not have exercised these prerogatives for fear of committing blasphemy and bringing down God's wrath upon Him. But He not only expected the obeisance due Him, as the Son of God, He also welcomed it. For example, He did not rebuke Peter when he said to Jesus, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus

replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven'" ([Matthew 16:16-17](#)).

This section of articles highlights a few examples of how Jesus conducted Himself in a manner keeping with His understanding of who He is and who He claimed to be.

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## Jesus has Authority to Forgive Sins

### Jesus meets the greatest need of man—the forgiveness of our sins.



*<em>When Jesus saw their faith he said friend your sins are forgiven Luke 5:20</em>*

### Jesus has the authority of God to forgive sins

Jesus knew the authority that had been given to him by his Father. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” ([Matthew 28:18](#)), just before he ascended into heaven. His miracles proved that He had authority over both the natural world and the supernatural world. And He also proved to everyone’s amazement that He had the authority to forgive sins.

The most important thing Christianity has to offer is the forgiveness of sins. This is unique among all the other religions of the world. Other religions try to teach its adherents how to win acceptance by God. This is usually done through some combination of good works, rituals, and piety.

Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that we are helpless to do anything for ourselves that can earn favor with God. We are sinners deserving of eternal punishment and

separation from God. But God graciously provided us with a sacrifice for sin that would justify sinners before a holy God. The only condition is that we must receive this free gift by faith alone in Christ alone. Only then will Jesus forgive our sins.

### Jesus forgives and heals the paralytic

[Matthew 9:1-8](#), [Mark 2:1-12](#), and [Luke 5:17-26](#) all record an event that proved Jesus had the authority to forgive sins. One day, Jesus was healing the sick in a crowded room of a house. Pharisees and teachers of the law from Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem were also there to presumably gather evidence against Jesus that could be used to get rid of Him.

#### Jesus forgives sin

Four men, who were carrying a paralytic on a mat, were trying to bring him before Jesus. But when they couldn’t do it because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him down, on his mat, through a hole in the roof tiles that they had made. When Jesus saw their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven” ([Luke 5:20](#)).

The Jews commonly believed that a disability, such as paralysis, must be associated with a serious sin. He not only would have to suffer from his physical condition and helplessness, but also from the shame he must have felt from the community in which he lived. He came to be healed, but his greater need was for his sins to be forgiven, and Jesus knew it.

#### Proof that Jesus is authorized to forgive sins

The Pharisees and teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ([Luke 5:21](#)) Jesus knew what they were thinking, and asked them, “Why are you thinking these things in your heart? Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or to say ‘Get up and walk’ “?

The religious leaders must have thought that anyone could just say, “Your sins are forgiven.” But how could Jesus

prove it? They would be right if Jesus were just a man, but everything is possible with God.

Jesus continued, “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....” he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ([Luke 5:22-24](#)) The man immediately got up, took his mat and went home praising God. The crowd was amazed by what they saw, and they also praised God.

### **Only Jesus can forgive sin**

We know that the whole world is under the control of the evil one ([1 John 5:19](#)). All of us have sinned and need to be forgiven to be reconciled to God. God has graciously provided a way that is both just and merciful at the same time by means of a [substitutionary atonement](#).

As the [God-man](#), Jesus is the only One who was qualified to offer Himself to God as a suitable sacrifice for sin. Jesus said, “[I am the way and the truth and the life](#). No one comes to the Father except through me ([John 14:6](#)). And the apostle Peter preached, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” ([Acts 4:12](#)).

God “wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men...”([1 Timothy 2:4-5](#))

### **The signs of unforgiveness:**

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” ([Proverbs 14:12](#)). Every soul will eternally exist, but there are only two destinations possible. Those who have been forgiven will inherit eternal life with God. But those who “[die in their sins](#)” will reap what their sins deserve, an eternity of conscious and unimaginable torment in the lake of fire.

Jesus gave His adversaries several warning signs that they were headed to the latter ([John 8:12-31](#)). Take heed that the following signs of unforgiveness do not describe you!

### **Self-righteousness**

Jesus told the Pharisees that He was going to a place they

could not come. But they scoffed at His remarks. They said to one another, “Will he kill himself?” In their minds, suicide was the worst possible sin, and those who killed themselves would end up in the darkest part of the pit of hell. They couldn’t imagine themselves, as self-righteous leaders of Israel, not going to be with God when they died.

However, Jesus was speaking of Himself going back to His Father, where they could never go. The Pharisees never recognized their need for forgiveness. They viewed themselves as being [self-righteous](#) and having a special relationship with God based on their Jewish heritage.

The apostle Paul lamented the Jews condition. He wrote, “the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were by works ([Romans 9:30-32](#)).

One sure way to miss heaven is to think that you have any right to it based on anything good you have done. God will not allow anyone to take credit for his or her salvation. All glory goes to the Lord!

### **Love of the world**

Jesus told the Pharisees, “you are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world” ([John 8:23](#)). Elsewhere, Jesus revealed the truth that what a person values most is where their heart is at ([Matthew 6:19-20](#)). Our time, attention, actions, and energy is focused on whatever we value above all else. For the Pharisees, they valued their privileged position and money above God.

The apostle John wrote, “[Do not love the world](#) or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ... The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever” ([1 John 2:15,17](#))

A sure way to miss heaven is by valuing the man-centered, sinful ways of the world more than you love God.

### **Unbelief**

The way of salvation is clear in both the Old and New Testaments: [The righteous shall live by faith](#). Jesus warned



the Pharisees, “I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am who I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins” ([John 8:24](#)). Christianity is about Christ. If you belong to Christ by faith, you will receive every benefit He has to offer. Without Christ, there is no hope for sinners.

Jesus told Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” ([John 3:18](#)).

### Willful and obstinate ignorance

The Pharisees kept asking Him, “Who are you?”, even though Jesus had repeatedly claimed to be God’s one and only Son. They knew who He claimed to be, but they had [stubborn hearts](#) and willfully dismissed His claims.

Before God remakes our hearts, we’re like the Pharisees. Sinners are naturally biased against the truth that condemns them. Jesus said, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed” ([John 3:19](#)).

We simply will not seek God on our own, and gradually our obstinate heart hardens to the point where we are unable to believe the truth unless God initiates a change of heart in us ([Romans 3:11](#), [8:43](#), [John 3:3](#)). Therefore, we are responsible for our decision, but God is sovereign in His call to the elect.

### The love generated by forgiveness

Those false teachers, who believe God’s grace is “[easy believism](#)” that only leads to more sin, have misunderstood the impact that saving faith has on true believers. To illustrate this, [Luke 7:36-50](#) records the following story of a sinful woman who loved the Lord because she had been forgiven of much sin.

#### Jesus anointed by a sinful woman

A Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to a dinner at his home. It was customary on such occasions for the invited

guests to recline as they ate and for others to gather around them so they could also take part. A woman who had lived a sinful life came and brought an alabaster jar of perfume. She stood behind Jesus at his feet weeping. Then she began to wet his feet with her tears, dry them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

#### The dialogue between Jesus and Simon the Pharisee

When Simon saw her, he thought to himself, if this man was a prophet, he would know what kind of sinful woman she is. Jesus, knowing Simon’s thoughts, told him a story about two men who owed money to a moneylender. One owed 500 denarii (about 16 months wage) and the other 50 denarii (almost 2 months wages). The moneylender cancelled both debts because neither of them could repay. So, Jesus asked Simon, which debtor would love the moneylender more? Simon said he supposed it would be the one who owed the larger debt. And Jesus told him that he was right.

Jesus then described how the woman had treated Him in comparison with Simon. He didn’t give Jesus any water for His feet, but she wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Simon had not given Jesus a kiss, but she hadn’t stopped kissing His feet from the time He had entered. And he did not anoint Jesus’ head with oil, but she poured perfume on His feet.

#### The relationship between forgiveness and love

So, Jesus told Simon, “Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.” Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace” ([Luke 7:47-48,50](#)). And the other guests were asking each other, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

This woman exemplifies the love, gratitude, and devotion of true disciples of Jesus Christ. Rather than treating grace as a license for sin, believers know they owe their whole lives to Christ and want to live to please Him as a token of their love. Their love for Christ is much more of a restraint upon their sinful desires than any set of rules and regulations could ever be.

## The way to forgiveness

For you to be forgiven by the Lord, you must first recognize your great need for forgiveness. Your guilt must be removed. God will not just overlook your sin since He is holy and just. He will either punish you directly if you die in your sins, or Jesus has taken the punishment in your place and will forgive you if you place your full trust in Him.

Forgiveness is the most important matter for a sinner. It will determine where you will spend eternity when you die. God wants you to be saved, not damned. But you must come to Jesus by way of the cross.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Jesus Expects our Worship



*Suddenly Jesus met them Greetings he said They came to him clasped his feet and worshipped him Matthew 289*

**If Jesus Christ, who loved the Father, welcomed others to worship Himself as God, He must have believed He was one with the Father. And we should also worship Him. For God alone is worthy of our worship. He expects His followers to worship Him as their Lord and God.**

### Jesus received the worship reserved only for God

#### Worship only God

The first of the Ten Commandments that God gave Israel was “You shall have no other gods before me” ([Exodus 20:3](#)) This [commandment](#) did not mean that God was to have first priority among other gods. It ruled out having any other so-called gods at all.

Jesus resisted Satan’s temptation to have Jesus bow down and worship him by declaring what God had commanded. Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’ ” ([Matthew 4:10](#)).

Men and angels also knew and strictly observed the commandment. For a Jew to worship any other god but the true God, in first century Israel, was considered

[blasphemy](#). It simply wouldn’t be tolerated.

For example, when Cornelius fell down in reverence before Peter, he told him to get up. “Stand up” he said, “I am only a man myself” ([Acts 10:26](#)).

And after Paul healed the man who was lame from birth, the people of Lystra began to believe Paul and Barnabas were gods. The people tried to offer sacrifices to them, but they tore their robes, rushed into the crowd and urged them to stop, because they were just men like the rest of them ([Acts 14:14-15](#)).

The angel, who had given John the vision of the end times, stopped John from worshipping him because it was not right to do so ([Revelation 22:8-9](#)).

### Jesus welcomed others to worship Him

By contrast, Jesus not only received worship from others, He welcomed it. There may have been times when people, who were asking Jesus for help, bowed down to him as a sign of respect, as they would do for anyone of importance. But there were numerous times when people clearly fell down to the feet of Jesus in worship of Him.

For example, the man born blind, who Jesus healed, believed in Jesus and worshipped Him ([John 9:38](#)). He did this even though he would have been subject to great personal risk of being excommunicated.

At another time, Jesus walked on water to reach the disciples, who were in a boat being tossed about by the waves. The disciples saw Jesus coming and were terrified, thinking He was a ghost. They cried out, and Jesus told them to take courage, it was Him. Once Jesus got into the boat, the wind calmed down and those who were in the boat, worshipped Him, saying, “Truly, you are the Son of God” ([Matthew 14:33](#)).

After Jesus’ resurrection, Thomas refused to believe the testimony of the other apostles who had been eye witnesses of the risen Lord. He told them, “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it” ([John](#)

[20:25](#)). Jesus later appeared to Thomas and invited him to do just what he had said. Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” ([John 20:28](#)).

## Jesus knew He was worthy of worship

Worship is defined as “showing honor or reverence for a divine being or supernatural power.”<sup>1</sup> And we know Jesus claimed to be divine, the Son of Man and the Son of God. He claimed to be from God, and that He was sent to us by God the Father. And Jesus said He was in the Father and the Father was in Him.

We know Jesus prayed for the Father to glorify Him by empowering Him to do the work of the Father. He did this so He could bring glory to the Father.

Jesus never rejected the worship of others as you would expect Him to do if He didn’t deserve it. Instead, He welcomed it. Jesus expects His people to give Him the glory and honor that He is worthy of receiving. We do this through our true worship of Him.

## Jesus is worthy of worship because He is the promised Messiah

Christianity began with Jewish followers of Jesus Christ, who only had the Old Testament Scripture as their Bible. “Jesus Christ, by word and deed, demonstrated himself as the fulfillment of the old covenant promises concerning the Messiah made to God’s people Israel. Hence, the Old Testament was the source book for early New Testament preaching and the apologetic of early Christianity preaching was essentially one of evincing Jesus as the Christ by appeal to this fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.”<sup>2</sup>

## Are you truly worshipping Jesus?

Jesus honored the Father through His willing obedience that led to His sacrifice for sin. Likewise, we worship and honor Jesus by showing our love for Him through obedience to His commands.

Worship involves every aspect of our lives, not just the songs we sing and the words we say. This would include knowing Him, communing with Him, serving Him, and trusting His promises to us.

## Come to the wellspring of life

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you’ll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don’t know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you’ll know where and how you’ll spend eternity.

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# If You Love Jesus You Will Obey Him

Does it matter how we live? Christians who have these thoughts haven't understood what Christ has done for them. But once they realize the enormous gift of grace they've received, they will want to please Jesus and live in a way worthy of the eternal gifts they have received. Yes, Jesus is Lord of all! Anyone who rejects His lordship or gives mere lip service to His sovereignty is not saved.



*<em>But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord 1 Peter 3:15a</em>*

## Turning to the Savior

### Our sin separates us from God

Salvation starts with an awareness of our guilt before God. Our conscience convicts us of sin. Yet, we are natural-born sinners and resist change, because we “love darkness instead of light” ([John 3:19](#)). So, we rationalize our sin. We may imagine that God loves everyone unconditionally. If that's the case, why change since He loves me just the way I am. Or we might think He'll give me favor when He sees that my good outweighs my bad. There's a host of rationales we may use to justify our sin so we don't have to deal with it. We can easily fall into a state of denial about the seriousness of our sin.

But if we have been chosen by God, He'll send the Holy Spirit to change the disposition of our heart toward sin. When that happens, the Spirit convicts us of sin and our sin becomes utterly sinful to us. Then we realize that we have offended our Creator by our disobedience to Him. We have, in effect, committed cosmic treason, and we know we deserve the worst He has to offer. We feel helpless and hopeless in our shameful state, and we feel deep sorrow.

### Genuine faith in Christ reconciles us with God

However, a ray of hope appears when we hear the Gospel and learn that God has loved us despite our sin. While he won't overlook the sin, He chose to show His mercy and love to us by sending His only Son to pay the penalty that we deserve. God had pity on us and chose to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. We can only believe God for His promises and receive His gift. God calls us to turn away from our past sinful life and commit our lives to Jesus Christ, who willingly gave His life for us.

It seems so easy, but why would God do it? Salvation by grace through faith alone would seem to be the most logical way for a holy God to relate to unholy humans. Humans could never reach the holy standards of God and God is so powerful He doesn't need our help. An all-wise God would also know that human efforts could only lead to prideful self-righteousness or despair. Neither of these outcomes are good. So, God extends salvation in a way that's entirely up to Him, so that nobody could boast in themselves.

## Following Christ as Lord

### Jesus calls His people to be whole-hearted followers

Saved people belong to Jesus Christ. He not only saves them, he leads them. He is their Lord. The Father has given Him all authority ([Matthew 28:18](#)). Submitting to Christ as Lord goes hand-in-hand with trusting Him as Savior. Submitting to Christ's authority over our lives is commonly referred to as [Lordship Salvation](#). This biblical principle is often contrasted with [easy-believism](#) or cheap

grace.

We are not saved by “[cheap grace](#)“. Salvation is a priceless gift that calls for full commitment by those who receive it. Though the gift of God’s grace is free, our faith commitment to Christ is tested to prove whether our faith is genuine. Saving faith is evidenced by obedience to Christ and it always produces a transformed life. Though genuine believers may stumble and fall, they will persevere in the faith.

Jesus spoke about the cost of being His true disciple. “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple ([Luke 14: 26-27](#)). He then spoke two parables that make the same overall point, namely that a person must carefully consider the cost of following Christ before he jumps into it ([Luke 14:28-35](#)).

Not everyone who professes Christ as Savior belongs to Christ. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven... Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers!’” ([Matthew 7:21,23](#))

### Jesus warns half-hearted followers

To illustrate Jesus’ requirements for being His disciple, three men came to Jesus willing to follow Him conditionally. The first man said he would follow him wherever He went. Knowing the man’s heart, Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. Jesus knew that this man wasn’t really ready to give up his personal comforts to follow Christ ([Luke 9:57-58](#)).

He [Jesus] said to another man, “Follow me.” The man replied, Lord, first let me bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God” (See [Luke 9:59-60](#)). That man’s request may sound very reasonable, but it’s not clear if this man’s father was even dead. He could have been waiting to receive his father’s inheritance when his father passed away. But regardless, there were enough who were still spiritually dead who could handle the burial. The lesson here seems to be that the call to discipleship has to

be accepted when issued, or it would be lost.

Still another said, “I will follow you Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God” ([Luke 9:61-62](#)). Perhaps Jesus knew that going back to his family would cause his family to talk him out of making such a commitment to Christ.

### Salvation is not by the works we do

The apostle Paul makes it very clear that we are not saved *by* our works, or *by* our works mixed in with our faith. We are saved by God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone. Paul writes, “All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.’ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, ‘The righteous shall live by faith’” ([Galatians 3:10-11](#)).

However, we are never saved apart from good works, because good works are a necessary outcome of genuine faith. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do ([Ephesians 3:10](#)).

James makes the point that “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do” ([James 2:17-18](#)). As the old adage goes, “We’re saved by faith alone but not by a faith that is alone.” A living faith, by its very nature, affects what we do.

Jesus said, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching” ([John 14:23-24](#)). Jesus explains that you’ll be able to recognize His true followers by the fruit of their lives ([Matthew 7:20](#)).

### Today is the day of salvation

Be reconciled unto God. Don’t put off your decision any longer if you acknowledge Jesus is Lord and [God raised Him from the dead](#).

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:5-11)

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

## Peter witnessed the risen Christ

Peter healed a crippled beggar in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. When the people saw what happened they were filled with wonder and amazement. They asked Peter what had happened to him. Peter explained to them:

<sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. <sup>14</sup> You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. <sup>15</sup> You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. <sup>16</sup> By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

[Acts 3:13-16](#)

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# Promises of God fulfilled in Christ

If Jesus is the “Christ, the Son of the living God” as Peter confessed, you should expect there to be “sign posts” throughout the Old Testament, which promise His coming. And to avoid the vagueness and ambiguity which characterize false prophecies, you would also expect predictions that are specific enough that they can’t be easily dismissed as wishful thinking.

This is exactly what we find in the Scriptures. The promises begin as early as the time of Adam and Eve, when God placed a curse on Satan and promised that there would be One coming who would crush him ([Genesis 3:15](#)). Promises were later made that this One, who is the Messiah, would be a descendent of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David. And to make it crystal clear that Jesus was God’s anointed One, Daniel was shown the exact time that the Messiah would appear on the scene.

As if that wasn’t enough, God spoke through His prophets to reveal specific details about the place of the Messiah’s birth and how He would uniquely be born by a virgin. Such prophecies include the threat on His life, His families flight to Egypt, and return back to Israel. There is also a reference to the killing of the toddlers in King Herod’s attempt to rid himself of Jesus, who he was told would become God’s

promised King.

The Old Testament also gives detail about the Messiah’s public ministry. These would include His purpose for coming, His humble manner, His accomplishments, and how He would be received by some and rejected by others.

There are also many details in the Old Testament surrounding the week of His crucifixion and details about His death, and His purpose in dying.

While the New Testament give us the four gospel narratives of Jesus’ life and ministry, the Old Testament does a remarkable job in painting a prophetic picture of the One who God would send. Both Old and New Testaments prove the veracity of each other, and clearly reveal Jesus to be the “Christ, the Son of the living God.”

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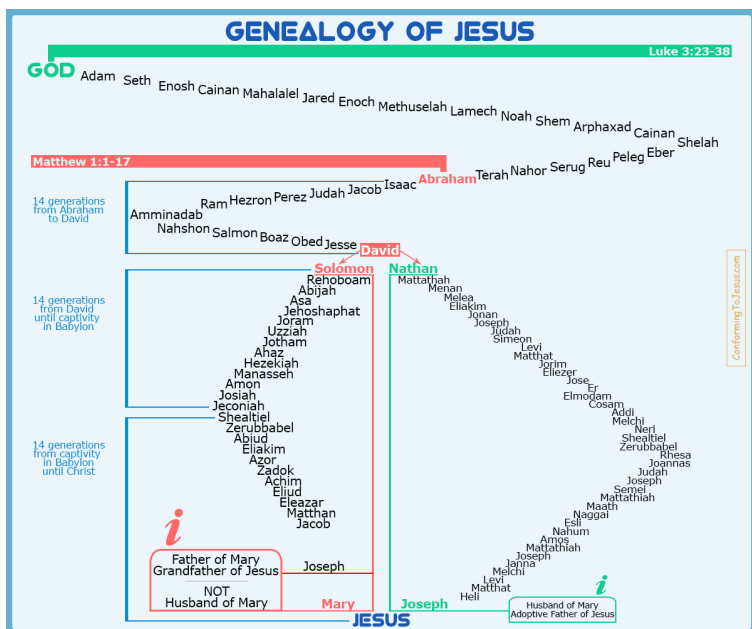
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# God Promised the Coming of the Messiah



Ever since the fall of Adam, God spoke of a Redeemer who would come. God said He would come to crush the head of our adversary, the Devil ([Genesis 3:15](#)). The Scriptures portrayed a Redeemer, from the line of David, who would reign forever ([2 Samuel 7:12-13](#)). Yet, He would also have to die for His peoples iniquities ([Isaiah 53:5,7-8](#)). This paradox mystified the Jews and they rejected Jesus. They weren't looking for a Messiah who had to first die and then rise again to live and reign forever.

## Why the genealogy of Jesus matters



The gospels of Matthew and Luke record two genealogies for Jesus. Matthew's gospel presents Jesus' genealogy

from the perspective of His kingly heritage. It begins with Abraham and traces the line through David, Solomon, and up through Joseph, the husband of Mary. (See [Matthew 1:1-17](#).) Matthew wrote to show Jewish readers how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. Jesus inherited the legal right to the throne of David through Solomon.

Luke traces Jesus ancestry backwards to David's son Nathan and then all of the way back to Adam. (Scholars generally agree that Luke recorded Mary's genealogy.) If Jesus is truly human, then He must have descended through Adam. (See [Luke 3:23-37](#).)

[Genealogies](#) were very important to Jews. They prove that Jesus had the legal right to rule Israel and that He was truly human. He would later prove He had the power of God to do the work of the Father. Not only did God send Jesus to us, He sent the Son of God ([John 1:1-2](#)).

## The redemptive plan of God before the world was created

Before God formed the world, He knew the whole world would be a prisoner of sin ([Galatians 3:22](#)). And yet, God chose a particular people for Himself, who would be redeemed from the curse of the Law ([Ephesians 1:4-6](#), [Galatians 3:13](#)). These people would be a love gift from God the Father to God the Son. As God's only Son, Jesus would be the redeemer who would come down to earth from heaven to save His people from their sins. He willingly took upon Himself the punishment for sin that we deserve and His perfect righteousness is credited to our account.

Jesus declared that all who come and believe in Him would never go hungry or thirsty. He also said, all that the Father gives Him will come to Him, and He will never drive away anyone who comes to Him. Jesus came to do the Father's will, and the Father wills that no one He gives to the Son will be lost. But everyone who believes in the Son shall have eternal life, and the Son shall raise him up at the last day. (See [John 6:35-40](#).)

## **The fall of man and the covenant of grace**

God created Adam as the first human being and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. God made all kinds of trees for the garden from which Adam could eat. But in the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And God told Adam that he could eat of any tree except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For when he eats of it, he will surely die ([Genesis 2:15-17](#)). Later, God formed Eve out of Adam's side.

### **Sin and the downfall of the human race**

The Devil used a serpent to entice Eve to eat from the forbidden tree, and she ate. She then gave some to Adam to eat, and he ate it too. This was the first act of sin of the human race. God created them in a state of innocence, but they had the ability to choose to sin or not to sin. So, God placed them on a probationary trial, to test their willingness to obey.

Adam's sin affected the entire human race. He was our human representative, and every descendant of Adam would be born with a sinful nature as a consequence of God's judgment on sin. This is what we call [original sin](#). As a result of original sin, the Bible declares, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:23](#)).

### **God's grace and Messiah's victory over Satan**

Since mankind is no longer able to keep from sinning, God graciously chose to send His Son, in our place, to perfectly keep the Law that we're unable to keep on our own. And God sent His Son to pay the penalty of death for our sin ([Romans 6:23](#)). God gave the first hint of His plan of redemption when He cursed the Devil. God said, "And I will put enmity between you [*Satan*] and the woman [*representing all mankind*], and between your offspring [*his agents*] and hers [*the Messiah*]; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" ([Genesis 3:15](#)).

Jesus decisively triumphed over the Devil and fulfilled this prophecy at Calvary. In turn, Satan would bruise the Messiah's heel through the crucifixion that led to death,

but not ultimate defeat.

## **God's promise to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob)**

### **Abram receives God's blessing**

God sovereignly chose Abram, later named Abraham, to father a nation through whom the Messiah would come. God called Abram to leave his country, his family, and his father's house to go to a land God would show him. He told Abram that He would make him into a great nation and make his name great. He would bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him. And He would bless all the peoples on earth through him, which points forward to Jesus Christ who would be Abram's descendent ([Matthew 1:2](#), [Luke 3:34](#)).

### **Isaac receives the blessing God gave to Abraham**

Isaac, the only child born by Abraham and his wife Sarah, inherited the blessing given to Abraham. God appeared to Isaac and said, "... I will be with you and bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws" ([Genesis 26:3-5](#)).

### **Jacob receive the blessing God gave to Abraham and Isaac**

Isaac had two twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Though Esau was the older son, God chose to pass the blessing He gave to Abraham and Isaac onto Jacob. Through Jacob's and his mother's deceitful scheme, Isaac unknowingly gave his blessing to Jacob. Isaac later sent him away to find a wife from among the daughters of his mother's brother, Laban.

On his way to Haran, he stopped for the night at a place he called Bethel. There, he had a dream in which he saw a stairway from earth to heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. At the top of the stairway stood the LORD. He said, "I am the LORD, the God of

your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring ...” ([Genesis 28:13-14](#)).

## **Jesus fulfills God’s promise to bless all the peoples on earth**

Of all the people in the world, Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He fulfills God’s promise to the patriarchs that all peoples on earth would be blessed through Him.

The apostle Paul wrote, “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two [*Jews and non-Jews*] one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility” ([Ephesians 2:14-16](#)).

## **Moses’ prophecy**

No prophet has risen in Israel like Moses. He did all the miraculous signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses predicts that a future prophet would come who would be like him. He would come from among the people and would lead them in all that God had commanded ([Deuteronomy 18:15, 17-19](#)).

The New Testament clearly identifies this prophet as Jesus. Peter preached to the people in Jerusalem and told them, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through the prophets. For Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people” ([Acts 3:19-23](#)).

## **God’s promise of an everlasting heir to the throne of David**

King David was Israel’s second king. During a time of peace, David let Nathan know that he intended to build a house for the ark. At first, Nathan told David to go ahead and do it for the LORD is with David. But the Lord had different plans. He told Nathan that He would make David’s name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.

“...The Lord declares to you [*David*], that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring [*Solomon*] to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me, your throne will be established forever” ([2 Samuel 7:11-13, 16](#)).

Now, we see how Jesus’ genealogy qualifies Him to reign forever on the throne of David and his son, Solomon. (See [Matthew 1:6-7](#))

## **Jesus came to save sinners**

The Bible declares that everyone needs salvation because all have sinned ([Romans 3:23](#)). And the consequences of sin is death ([Romans 6:23](#)). But the good news is Jesus Christ died for our sins. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died us” ([Romans 5:8](#)).

Nevertheless, we have to trust in God’s promise to save us, “for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” ([Romans 10:13](#)). Once we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ([Romans 5:1](#)).

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you’ll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don’t know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you’ll know where and how you’ll spend eternity.

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# Daniel's Vision of Time Before The Messiah Comes

The Old Testament is very specific about the timing of when Jesus, Israel's [Messiah](#), would appear. This prophecy, which the angel [Gabriel](#) delivered to the prophet [Daniel](#), rules out the possibility of mistaking an imposter for being the real Messiah. Jesus' ministry perfectly fits the heavenly timeline.

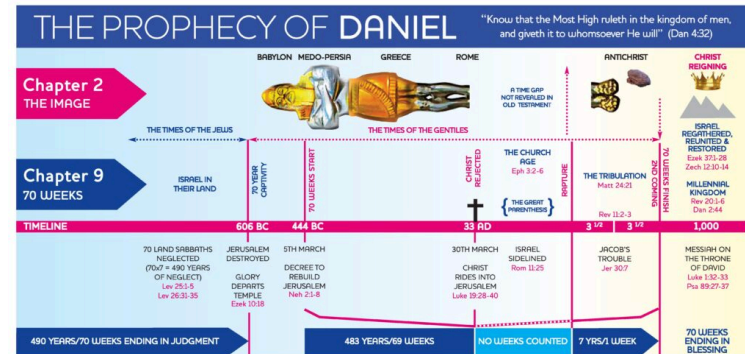
complete. So, he prayed to the Lord to forgive and restore Jerusalem and His people. While he was still praying, the angel Gabriel came to him to deliver a message concerning the future for Israel.

## The vision of seventy years

### Gabriel's message to Daniel

The angel told Daniel, "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him" ([Daniel 9:24-27](#)).



## The historical background of Daniel and his vision

Daniel was a prophet of God during the period of the [captivity of the Jews](#) in Babylon and Persia. He also authored the Old Testament book of Daniel. He was a very capable administrator and served as an advisor in the courts of foreign kings.

Daniel was a teenager when he was taken from Jerusalem into captivity by the Babylonians. He was in his 80s when he received the vision of the 70 weeks prophecy. Jeremiah prophesied that the Babylonian captivity would last [70 years](#) ([Jeremiah 25:11](#)). At the end of this time, [Babylon would fall](#) into the hands of the [Persians](#).

[Cyrus the Great](#) was the founder of the [Persian Empire](#). In 559 B.C., he ascended to the throne. He defeated the [Median King Astyages](#), then defeated [Lydia](#) around 546 B.C. and Babylon about 539 B.C.. Cyrus was humane and benevolent toward those whom he defeated. He was the Persian king who issued the decree restoring the Jews to their homeland.

Soon after the Persians conquered Babylon, Daniel knew, from Jeremiah's prophecy, that the time of exile was

### The timeframes explained

The first time period of seven 'sevens' is the time of rebuilding Jerusalem that [Nehemiah](#) was put in charge of doing. The second time period of sixty-two 'sevens' lasts until Israel's Messiah is presented to the people. This occurred at Jesus' [triumphal entry](#) on Palm Sunday, the same week as [His crucifixion](#). It is apparent that Jesus' ministry perfectly fits the heavenly timeline

The vision speaks about the people who will "destroy the city and sanctuary." This was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the [Romans destroyed the City of Jerusalem and the temple](#). Then, the vision picks up near the end of the [time of the](#)

[Gentiles](#) when the [Antichrist](#), a Roman, enters into a 7-year covenant with Israel, which he later breaks at its midpoint.

## The time of Messiah's coming

### When the Messiah is coming

The time period covers a period of 490 years ( $70 \times 7 = 490$ ). The annual unit of measure is based on other examples found in the Bible. For example, God decreed that the Israelites would wander in the desert for 40 years until the adult generation that sinned against Him had died. That amounted to 1 year for every day that the Israelite spies spent in the promised land.

One of the two most likely dates that have been assigned to Jesus' triumphal entry has been Palm Sunday, April 2, 30 A.D. So, from 445 B.C. to 30 A.D. there are 475 solar years, not 483 years. How can we explain the difference?

### Converting solar years to calendar years

We need to know how many days there are in a prophetic year since there are various kinds of calendars. In the account of the flood, the Bible uses a 360-day calendar to measure time. (Five months from the 17th day of the 2nd month until the 17th day of the 7th month are counted as 150 days.)

Therefore, the number of prophetic years is calculated by counting the number of solar years, inclusively, of 476 years, multiplied by 365 days = 173,740 days, adding 119 days for leap years, and adding 20 days inclusively from March 14 to April 2, for a total of 173,879 days. Then dividing 173,879 by 360 days = 483 years to the day, the exact number of days in 69 weeks, each day standing for a year.

Could there be anything more conclusive to prove that Daniel's 69 weeks ran out on April 2, 30 A.D., the day Jesus rode in triumph into the City of Jerusalem? Jesus' ministry perfectly fits the heavenly timeline.

## How should the fulfillment of this prophecy affect you?

Only God could reveal the future with such absolute precision and certainty. God revealed this message to Gabriel, who then delivered it to Daniel. (Gabriel is the archangel who also appeared to Zacharias ([Luke 1:19](#)) and the Virgin Mary ([Luke 1:26-38](#))). There's no doubt that this vision, written hundreds of years, before Christ was born, points directly to Jesus as the Anointed One, God's Messiah. There's no room for imposters to fit into this timeframe. And there's no good excuse for any of us to disbelieve that Jesus is the Christ.

The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" ([John 3:16](#)).

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## The Miraculous Birth of Jesus Foretold

Jesus miraculous birth was foretold hundreds of years before He was born. The Bible contains several prophecies about the birth of Jesus Christ, all of which were fulfilled. The odds of just these precise prophecies being fulfilled by coincidence is astronomically small. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that they would have to be orchestrated by God, who knows all things. This is, of course, further evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.



*<em> The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel Isaiah 7:14 </em>*

### The virgin birth of Jesus foretold

Once Matthew established Jesus' credentials to be the promised Messiah by means of His lineage, he turns to the uniqueness of His birth. Matthew establishes that Jesus is the promised King by virtue of His virgin birth. Jesus had no earthly father. He is the God-man, who was conceived in Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. So, Jesus was born as the Son of God.

Jesus is the only person who has ever been born without an earthly father. He is man because He came through the womb of Mary, but He is also God because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He had to be both [truly God](#)

[and truly Man](#) to fulfill His mission as the Savior of the world. This unique birth fulfilled the prophecy given by Isaiah about seven hundred years before Christ was born.

### Isaiah prophecy and fulfillment

Old Testament Prophecy ( <a href="#">Isaiah 7:14</a> )	New Testament Fulfillment ( <a href="#">Matthew 1:18-23</a> )
<p>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.</p>	<p><sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").</p>

### The place of Jesus birth foretold

God orchestrated that Mary and Joseph would travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem to fulfill Micah's prophecy that the ruler of Israel would come from Bethlehem. Caesar Augustus had issued a decree that a census be taken of the whole Roman world. So, they journeyed to Bethlehem, because Joseph belonged to the line of David. While in Bethlehem, she gave birth to Jesus, her firstborn Son.

Micah was a prophet from Judah, who served from 738-698 BC. He pronounced a message of judgment to both Judah (the southern Kingdom) and Israel (the northern kingdom), because their leaders were evil and corrupt. But



in the midst of this sad, weeping message, Micah gives them a message of hope. The eternal ruler to come (i.e., the Messiah) will come from the little town of Bethlehem.

### Micah prophecy and fulfillment

Old Testament Prophecy ( <a href="#">Micah 5:2</a> )	New Testament Fulfillment ( <a href="#">Luke 2:4-6</a> )
<p>“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”</p>	<p><sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,</p>

### A place of mourning over the slaughtered children foretold

#### The slaughtering of children

Soon after Jesus birth, the wise men from the East came to look for the child and worship Him as the king of the Jews. They came to Jerusalem to inquire where the promised Messiah would be born. King Herod called together the religious leaders and asked them where the Christ was to be born. Upon learning it was to be Bethlehem, Herod told the wise men and sent them on their way. He told them to carefully search for the child and report back to him so he could worship Him too.

But after finding Jesus and worshipping Him, the wise men were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod. So, they returned to their own country by another route. (Joseph was warned in a dream to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt, because Herod was actually planning to search and kill the child.)

When Herod realized he had been outwitted by the wise men, he was furious. So, he gave orders for all the boys, who were two years old or younger and living in the vicinity of Bethlehem, to be killed.

### A prophecy with double meaning

In Old Testament times, Ramah was a town located near the border between the northern kingdom and southern kingdom. It was a place where deportees would first be gathered before being taken into captivity and exiled by Assyria and Babylon. Rachel represented Jacob’s wife, who had two sons—Ephraim and Benjamin. Ephraim came to represent the northern kingdom of Israel in Scripture, and Benjamin is associated with the southern kingdom of Judah. So, the prophecy pictures how the two kingdoms would both mourn over their respective peoples being defeated and taken into captivity.

There was another town called Ramah, located near Bethlehem, at the time Jesus was born. This is the town where the tomb of Rachel is located. There was great mourning and weeping over the slaughtering of children by Herod in his attempt to kill the baby Jesus, who would become a rival king. Therefore, this prophecy contains similarities, but also has a double meaning.

### Jeremiah prophecy and fulfillment

Old Testament Prophecy ( <a href="#">Jeremiah 31:15</a> )	New Testament Fulfillment ( <a href="#">Matthew 2:16-18</a> )
<p><sup>15</sup> This is what the Lord says: “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”</p>	<p><sup>16</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: <sup>18</sup> “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”</p>

### The return of Jesus from Egypt foretold

This prophecy has both a historical reference and a hidden future meaning. In the prophet Hosea’s time, they would understand that this verse in Hosea ([Hosea 11:1](#)) refers to

God’s work in bringing Israel out of its slavery in Egypt to worship Him, to form a nation, and bring them to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But, God also had a future meaning in mind. When Herod began plans to kill all the boys, two-years old and under in the vicinity of Bethlehem, the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream to warn him about Herod’s plans to kill the child. The Lord, told Joseph to take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt until he was told to leave. Joseph obeyed the Lord, and the Lord appeared to him once again after Herod died and told him to take his family to the land of Israel. Thus, the prophecy’s hidden meaning was fulfilled.

### Hosea prophecy and fulfillment

Old Testament Prophecy ( <a href="#">Hosea 11:1</a> )	New Testament Fulfillment ( <a href="#">Matthew 2:13-15</a> )
<p>“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.</p>	<p><sup>13</sup> When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” <sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”</p>

### The hometown of Jesus foretold

This fulfilled prophecy is quite unusual, because it relates to a prophecy which is nowhere pronounced in the Scripture. However, Matthew’s gospel states that the prophets called the coming Messiah a Nazarene. So, how should we make sense of this? There is more than one [plausible explanation](#) for this apparent omission.

I believe one very reasonable explanation is that not everything spoken by the prophets of God were recorded in Scripture. There were most likely sayings that were commonly known and remembered by the Jews that were uttered by the prophets, but not necessarily canonized.

Matthew could be referring to such a saying. For example, we know that Jesus did many things which were never recorded in the New Testament. (See [John 21:25](#)) And the apostle Paul referred to a missing letter that he wrote to the Corinthian church. (See [1 Corinthians 5:9](#).) Regardless, this unrecorded prophecy should be considered fulfilled since Matthew, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, confirmed its fulfillment.

### Nazarene prophecy and fulfillment

Old Testament Prophecy	New Testament Fulfillment ( <a href="#">Matthew 2:19-23</a> )
<p>There are no direct Old Testament citations that Jesus would be called a Nazarene. However, there are plausible reasons why Matthew would say that Jesus going and living in Nazareth fulfilled what was said through the prophets. (See comments below)</p>	<p><sup>19</sup> After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt <sup>20</sup> and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.” <sup>21</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, <sup>23</sup> and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.</p>

### Jesus’ birth fulfills each of the Old Testament prophecies

Jesus has all the credentials to prove He is the Messiah. He is the seed of Abraham from the line of David as Scripture foretold. He was also born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem, called out of Egypt, became a Nazarene. And Herod killed the children in his attempt to kill Jesus, which caused great mourning in Ramah. All of these incidents fulfilled prophecies given hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

God had a good reason for proving that Jesus is the God-man sent from God to save sinners from their sin. His purpose was not just to satisfy our idle curiosity. He wants

## Promises of God fulfilled in Christ

everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and believe upon His Son for the forgiveness of their sins and hope of eternal life. How about you? Today is the day of salvation. The righteous will live by faith.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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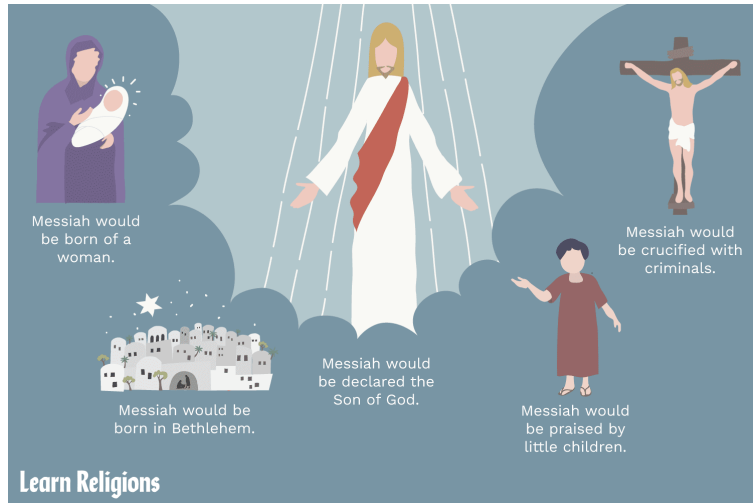
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# Christ's Life and Ministry Foretold

The life and ministry of Jesus Christ is foretold throughout Old Testament Scripture, proving He is the promised [Messiah](#).



## The prophecies of the life and work of Christ fulfilled in Jesus

One sure way to know if Jesus is the promised Messiah is to compare His life to what the prophets of old foretold about Him and His ministry. God assures us that He “does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets” ([Amos 3:7](#)).

But, how do we know if the message came to us through a [true prophet](#) or [false prophet](#)? We are told, “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God” ([1 John 4:1](#)). “If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed” ([Deuteronomy 18:22](#)).

The following prophecies have been fulfilled as recorded in sacred Scriptures. They portray the life and work of the most unique man in all of history. Only God could accomplish this. “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” ([2 Peter 1:21](#)).

## The Purpose of Jesus Life and Ministry Foretold

There is an invisible war going on between the forces of good and evil. This will last until the “[times of the Gentiles](#)” are fulfilled. In his revelation, John wrote: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” ([Revelation 21:3-4](#)).

### Table 1: Jesus came to save sinners and put an end to sin

## Jesus Blameless and Humble Life Foretold

Jesus had to be sinless to offer Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for sin. In the Jewish sacrificial system, animals that were sacrificed had to be ones without blemish. However, the blood of animals could never make perfect those who drew near to worship. It could only sanctify those who were ceremonially unclean so they would be outwardly clean. Those sacrifices were an annual reminder of sin. But the blood of the unblemished, sinless Christ cleanses the conscious from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God. (See [Hebrews 9:13-14](#), [10:3](#).)

Jesus had to be both [God and man in one person](#). He had to become a man to redeem mankind. Jesus had to have a body in order to pay the penalty for sin ([Hebrews 10:1-18](#)). Without the shedding of blood there is no removal of sin. And as God, Jesus has always existed. So, he had to humble and lower Himself to take on humanity and sacrifice Himself on a cross. (See [Philippians 2:5-11](#).)

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>He will crush your head.</b> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” (<a href="#">Genesis 3:15</a>)</p>	<p><b>Christ’s ministry will destroy the devil’s work.</b> The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work (<a href="#">1 John 3:8</a>)</p>
<p><b>Sacrifices and offering you did not desire.</b> Sacrifice and offering you did not desire— but my ears you have opened— burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require (<a href="#">Psalm 40:6</a>). (See <a href="#">Psalm 40:6-8</a>.)</p>	<p><b>Jesus would become the perfect sacrifice.</b> First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second (<a href="#">Hebrews 10:8-9</a>). See <a href="#">Hebrews 10:5-10</a>.</p>
<p><b>To put an end to sin.</b> “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place (<a href="#">Daniel 9:24</a>).</p>	<p><b>The Messiah will bring an end to sin.</b> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, (<a href="#">Galatians 1:3-4</a>)</p>

**Table 2: Jesus will live and serve in a Godly way**

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>Without defect.</b> The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats (<a href="#">Exodus 12:5</a>).</p>	<p><b>Jesus will have a sinless, blemish-free life.</b> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (<a href="#">Hebrews 9:14</a>)</p>
<p><b>You made them lower than the angels.</b> You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet (<a href="#">Psalm 8:5-6</a>)</p>	<p><b>Jesus will be humbled in order to serve mankind.</b> But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone (<a href="#">Hebrews 2:9</a>). (See <a href="#">Hebrews 2:5-9</a>).</p>

### The Forerunner of Christ’s Ministry Foretold

[John the Baptist](#) was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. He was a moral reformer and he preached a messianic hope. Both John and Jesus were announced, set apart, and named by the [angel Gabriel](#) even before their birth.

**Table 3: John the Baptist is the forerunner of the Messiah**

### Christ’s Place of Ministry Foretold

A large portion of the [ministry of Jesus](#) took place in Galilee. This precise prophecy alone gives incredible

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>A voice calling: prepare the way for the Lord.</b>                      A voice of one calling:                      “In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up,                      every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level,                      the rugged places a plain (<a href="#">Isaiah 40:3-4</a>).</p>	<p><b>The Messiah is preceded by a forerunner.</b>                      John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord’” (<a href="#">John 1:23</a>).</p>
<p><b>I will send Elijah to you.</b>                      “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction” (<a href="#">Malachi 4:5-6</a>).</p>	<p><b>Christ’s forerunner comes in the spirit of Elijah.</b>                      This is the one about whom it is written:                      “‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ ... And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. Whoever has ears, let them hear (<a href="#">Matthew 11:10,14</a>).</p>

evidence that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

**Table 4: Christ’s ministry in Galilee**

**Jesus’ Ministry of Preaching and Teaching Foretold**

The crowds that followed Jesus throughout His ministry were “... amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law ([Matthew 7:28-29](#)).

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>He will honor Galilee.</b>                      Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—                      The people walking in darkness                      have seen a great light;                      on those living in the land of deep darkness                      a light has dawned (<a href="#">Isaiah 9:1-2</a>).</p>	<p><b>Christ’s ministry would begin in Galilee.</b> When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ... (<a href="#">Matthew 4:12-14</a>) (See also <a href="#">Matthew 4:15-17</a>)</p>

**Table 5: Jesus would preach repentance and proclaim good new**

**The Miraculous Ministry of Jesus Foretold**

Jesus backed up His claims to be God’s Son by performing [miracles](#) to show He had the power of God. He told the unbelieving Jews, “Do not believe me unless I do what the Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father ([John 10:37-38](#)).

**Table 6: Jesus would have a miraculous ministry**

**The Hardness of the Hearts of Those Who Heard Jesus Foretold**

Jesus said, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed” ([John 3:19-20](#)). John explains, “He

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>I do not seal my lips.</b> I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know (<a href="#">Psalm 40:9</a>)</p>	<p><b>Jesus would preach repentance.</b> From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (<a href="#">Matthew 4:17</a>).</p>
<p><b>I will open my mouth with a parable.</b> My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old (<a href="#">Psalm 78:1-2</a>)</p>	<p><b>Jesus would teach in parables.</b> Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world” (<a href="#">Matthew 13:34-35</a>).</p>
<p><b>The Lord anointed me to proclaim good news.</b> The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners (<a href="#">Isaiah 61:1</a>)</p>	<p><b>Jesus would proclaim the good news.</b> “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” ... He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (<a href="#">Luke 4:16-19,21</a>)</p>

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>The eyes of the blind opened...</b> Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. <sup>6</sup> Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert (<a href="#">Isaiah 35:5-6</a>)</p>	<p><b>Jesus would have a miraculous ministry.</b> When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me” (<a href="#">Matthew 11:2-6</a>).</p>

[Jesus] was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” ([John 1:10-11](#)).

**Table 7: Jesus would be rejected by many**  
**Jesus’ Appeal to the Peoples of the World**  
**Foretold**

[God promised Abraham](#) that all the peoples on earth will be blessed through him. (See [Genesis 12:2-3](#).) Although there was a great divide between the Jews and the Gentiles, Christ is the “[Seed of Abraham](#)” who unites the two, abolishes the wall of hostility between them, and reconciles them both to God. (See [Ephesians 2:14-18](#).)

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>Make the heart of this people calloused.</b>                      He said, “Go and tell this people:                      “‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding;                      be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’                      Make the heart of this people calloused;                      make their ears dull and close their eyes.                      Otherwise they might see with their eyes,                      hear with their ears, understand with their hearts,                      and turn and be healed”                      (<a href="#">Isaiah 6:9-10</a>)</p>	<p><b>Jesus’ parables fall on deaf ears.</b>                      This is why I speak to them in parables:                      “Though seeing, they do not see;                      though hearing, they do not hear or understand                      (<a href="#">Matthew 13:13</a>).                      (See <a href="#">Matthew 13:10-17</a>)</p>
<p><b>He will cause people to stumble.</b>                      He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. (<a href="#">Isaiah 8:14</a>).</p>	<p><b>Jesus is a stone that causes people to stumble.</b>                      Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,                      “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”                      and,                      “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”                      They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for (<a href="#">1 Peter 2:7-8</a>)</p>
<p><b>He was despised and held in low esteem.</b>                      He was despised and</p>	<p><b>Jesus is despised and rejected.</b>                      All the people in the</p>

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p>rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.                      Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem (<a href="#">Isaiah 53:3</a>).</p>	<p>synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff (<a href="#">Luke 4:28-29</a>).</p>

**Table 8: Jesus draws Gentiles to Himself**

**Jesus’ Humble Claim of Messiahship to Israel Foretold**

When [Jesus rode into Jerusalem](#) on a donkey, He was making a public claim to be Israel’s Messiah and King. By riding on a donkey rather than a mighty war-horse, he was signaling His peaceful intentions. Just as the donkey’s true role is a work animal, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” ([Mark 10:45](#)).

**Table 9: Jerusalem will rejoice as the Messiah comes to her upon a donkey**

**The Betrayal of Jesus by a Friend Foretold**

Judas Iscariot is the disciple who betrayed Jesus. His name appears on three of the lists of the Twelve disciples. Judas served as their treasurer. During the week of the Passover festival, he went to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus for a reward. Judas’ motive remains a mystery.

**Table 10: He will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver**

**The Everlasting Reign of Jesus Christ Foretold**

God [promised](#) King David a descendent who would reign on David’s throne forever. The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! He now reigns at the



Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>The Messiah is a banner for the peoples.</b> In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious (<a href="#">Isaiah 11:10</a>).</p>	<p><b>The whole world goes after Him.</b> Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!” Jesus Predicts His Death Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus” (<a href="#">John 12:18-21</a>).</p>
<p><b>A bruised reed He will not break.</b> “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out (<a href="#">Isaiah 42:1-3</a>).</p>	<p><b>A smoldering wick He will not snuff out.</b> “Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope.” (See <a href="#">Matthew 12:18-21</a>).</p>

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>Your king comes riding on a donkey.</b> Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (<a href="#">Zechariah 9:9</a>).</p>	<p>... Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ... The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road (<a href="#">Matthew 21:1-2, 6-8</a>). (Also see <a href="#">Matthew 21:3-5,9-10</a>)</p>

right hand of the Father in heaven, [making intercession](#) for His people.

### Table 11: The Messiah will have a throne that is everlasting

## Jesus came to seek and to save what was lost.

Knowing about Jesus won't save anyone. You must acknowledge your need for Him, and trust His promise to save you from you sin, and commit yourself to following Him. You can't work for your salvation; you must believe in Jesus Christ. For He is the only way to God.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>They paid me thirty pieces of silver.</b> I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. <sup>13</sup> And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord (<a href="#">Zechariah 11:12-13</a>).</p>	<p><b>They used the money to buy a burial field.</b> The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.” So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me” (<a href="#">Matthew 27:6-10</a>).</p>

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Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>His dominion is everlasting.</b> “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (<a href="#">Daniel 7:13-14</a>).</p>	<p><b>The Messiah will have an everlasting throne.</b> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1 :31-33).</p>

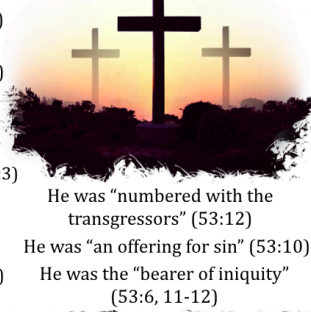
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# The Messiah is the Suffering Servant

## The Suffering Servant

*He was not violent "nor was any deceit in His mouth" (53:9), yet...*



He was "marred" (52:14)	He was "wounded" (53:5)
He was "undesired" (53:2)	He was "bruised" (53:5, 10)
He was "despised" (53:3)	He was "chastised" (53:5)
He was "rejected" (53:3)	He was scourged (53:5)
He was "acquainted with grief" (53:3)	He was "oppressed" (53:7)
He was esteemed not (53:3)	He was "afflicted" (53:7)
He was the bearer of sorrow (53:4)	He was "silent" (53:7)
He was "stricken" (53:4)	He was "taken" (53:8)
He was "smitten" (53:4, 8)	He was "cut off" (53:8)
He was "afflicted" (53:4)	He was buried (53:9)
	He was "poured out" (53:12)
	He was "numbered with the transgressors" (53:12)
	He was "an offering for sin" (53:10)
	He was the "bearer of iniquity" (53:6, 11-12)

*But suffering and death could not stop Him!*

He shall "see His seed" (53:10) \* He shall "prolong His days" (53:10) \* He shall "prosper" (53:10)  
 He shall "see the labor of His soul" (53:11) \* He shall be "satisfied" (53:11) \* He shall "justify many" (53:11) \* He shall "divide the spoil" (53:12) \* He is our Intercessor (53:12)

As the [Messiah](#), Jesus is the [Suffering Servant](#). He came to suffer and die for us. If He didn't offer Himself as a satisfactory sacrifice, we would still be under God's condemnation. But, it pleased God to raise Him from the dead on the third day, in accordance with Scripture. We have many eye witnesses to that incredible resurrection. So, that proves to us that God accepted His Son's sacrifice. Therefore, we can have our sins forgiven and join God's family if we believe in Christ as our Lord and Savior.

**The Messiah suffered to make atonement for sins**

**Prophecies of the suffering Messiah fulfilled before the crucifixion**

**Prophecies of the suffering Messiah fulfilled in Jesus' crucifixion**

**Prophecies of the suffering Messiah fulfilled upon His death**

**Prophecies of the suffering Messiah fulfilled in the resurrection and ascension**

### The final victory over death

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>Death will be swallowed up forever.</b>                      On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all people, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever (<a href="#">Isaiah 25:7-8</a>)</p>	<p><b>The Messiah will conquer death.</b>                      When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (<a href="#">1 Corinthians 15:54</a>).</p>

## Have you trusted Jesus to be your redeemer?

With so much prophetic evidence that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be, how can you reject Him without condemning yourself? God doesn't excuse ignorance, indifference, or indecision. Place your faith in Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins.

Atonement prophecies	Fulfilled atonement prophecies
<p><b>The suffering servant bore our suffering:</b> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering (<a href="#">Isaiah 53:4</a>). See also <a href="#">Isaiah 53:4-6, 11-12</a>)</p>	<p><b>He bore our sins.</b> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (<a href="#">1 Peter 2:24</a>)</p>
<p><b>The blood makes atonement.</b> For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. (<a href="#">Leviticus 17:11</a>)</p>	<p><b>The Messiah's blood poured out for the many.</b> Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "drink from it all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (<a href="#">Matthew 26:27-28</a>).</p>
<p><b>Moses lifted up a bronze snake.</b> So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived (<a href="#">Numbers 21:9</a>)</p>	<p><b>Everyone who looks upon Jesus will live.</b> Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life (<a href="#">John 3:14-15</a>)</p>
<p><b>The Passover lamb.</b> Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. ... (See <a href="#">Exodus 12:21-27</a>)</p>	<p><b>Christ is our Passover Lamb.</b> Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed (<a href="#">1 Corinthians 5:7</a>).</p>

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p><b>They conspire against me.</b> For I hear many whispering, "Terror on every side!" They conspire against me and plot to take my life (<a href="#">Psalm 31:13</a>)</p>	<p><b>They will plot to kill God's anointed.</b> Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed (<a href="#">Matthew 27:1</a>).</p>
<p><b>He did not open his mouth.</b> He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth (<a href="#">Isaiah 53:7</a>). See also <a href="#">Psalm 38:12-13</a>.</p>	<p><b>The Messiah will be quiet before his accusers.</b> When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor (<a href="#">Matthew 27:12-14</a>).</p>
<p><b>His close friend turned against him.</b> Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me (<a href="#">Psalm 41:9</a>).</p>	<p><b>The Messiah would be abandoned by one of his closest friends.</b> "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me (<a href="#">John 13:18</a>).</p>
<p><b>My closest friends flee from me.</b> Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors and an object of dread to my closest friends— those who see me on</p>	<p><b>Everyone will abandon the Messiah.</b> Then everyone deserted him and fled. (<a href="#">Mark 14:50</a>)</p>

Prophecy	Fulfillment
the street flee from me ( <a href="#">Psalm 31:11</a> ).	
<b>Why have you forsaken me?</b> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? ( <a href="#">Psalm 22:1</a> )	<b>The Messiah would be forsaken</b> About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “ <i>Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?</i> ” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) ( <a href="#">Matthew 27:46</a> ).
<b>I commit my spirit.</b> Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God ( <a href="#">Psalm 31:5</a> ).	<b>The Messiah will cry, “Into your hands I commit my Spirit.</b> Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last ( <a href="#">Luke 23:46</a> ).
<b>Do not break the bones.</b> “It must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones ( <a href="#">Exodus 12:46</a> ).	<b>Like the Passover Lamb, none of Christ’s bones will be broken.</b> The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs ( <a href="#">John 19:32-33</a> ). (See <a href="#">John 19:31-36</a> )

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Prophecy	Fulfillment
<b>They pierce my hands and feet.</b> Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet ( <a href="#">Proverbs 22:16</a> ).	<b>They would pierce Christ’s hands and feet.</b> “They will look on the one they have pierced.” ( <a href="#">John 19:37</a> )
<b>They divide my clothes among them.</b> They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment ( <a href="#">Proverbs 22:18</a> ).	<b>They would cast lots for Jesus clothing.</b> “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it” ( <a href="#">John 19:24</a> ) (See <a href="#">John 19:23-24</a> )
<b>I did not hide my face from mocking.</b> I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting ( <a href="#">Isaiah 50:6</a> ).	<b>The Messiah will be mocked and abused.</b> They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again ( <a href="#">Matthew 27:30</a> ). (See <a href="#">Matthew 27:27-31</a> )
<b>“Let the Lord rescue him.”</b> “He trusts in the Lord,” they say, “let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him” ( <a href="#">Psalm 22:8</a> ).	<b>The Messiah would be scorned.</b> “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him” ( <a href="#">Matthew 27:42</a> ).
<b>They gave me vinegar and gall.</b> They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst ( <a href="#">Psalm 69:21</a> ).	<b>The Christ’s thirst will be quenched with vinegar and gall.</b> There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it ( <a href="#">Matthew 27:34</a> ).

Prophecies	Fulfillment
<p><b>You will not let me see decay.</b> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. (<a href="#">Psalm 16:9-10</a>)</p>	<p><b>God's anointed will not see decay.</b> Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay (<a href="#">Acts 2:31</a>).</p>
<p><b>He hasn't given me over to death.</b> I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done. The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death (<a href="#">Psalm 118:17-18</a>).</p>	<p><b>The Messiah has risen.</b> "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" (<a href="#">Luke 24:5-6</a>)</p>
<p><b>I know my redeemer lives.</b> I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth (<a href="#">Job 19:25</a>). (See also <a href="#">Job 19:23-27</a>)</p>	<p><b>Christ has been granted life.</b> For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself (<a href="#">John 5:26</a>). (See also <a href="#">John 5:24-29</a>)</p>
<p><b>When he ascended on high.</b> When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people, even from the rebellious— that you, Lord God,</p>	<p><b>Christ ascended into heaven.</b> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train</p>

Prophecies	Fulfillment
<p>might dwell there (<a href="#">Psalm 68:18</a>).</p>	<p>and gave gifts to men" (<a href="#">Ephesians 4:7-8</a>). (See also <a href="#">Ephesians 4:9-13</a>)</p>

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# Reliable Witnesses of Christ

The Jews generally relied on the testimony of two or three witnesses to confirm disputable facts. It's no different in our country today. If a witness is to be believed in a court of law, their testimony is usually corroborated by other credible witnesses. It's no different when it comes to affirming that Jesus of Nazareth is God's promised Messiah. This section of articles highlights the testimonies of others, who can reassure us that Jesus is indeed God's chosen One to bring redemption to man.

The Scriptures prophesied that there would be someone coming, who would prepare the people to receive their Messiah. That person is the one who we call John the Baptist. When Jesus came to him at the Jordan river to be baptized, John saw the unmistakable sign of Jesus' identity. (He had been told that the man he saw the Spirit come down and remain is the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.) "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" ([John 1:29](#)).

God the Father was not silent either. Upon Jesus baptism, "a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" ([Mark 1:11](#)). God audibly spoke from heaven a second time when Jesus was transfigured while He was with Peter, James, and John. "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" ([Matthew 17:5](#)) On a third occasion, Jesus told Andrew and Philip that it was about time for Him to be glorified. He then prayed, "Father, glorify your name! Then a voice

came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again'" ([John 12:28](#)).

God also authenticated the message about Jesus, which was being preached by Jesus' apostles, by enabling them to do miracles. People would naturally place close attention to what was being preached as these apostles were displaying the power of God. They healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, and survived deadly snake bites. This could not have happened without God's full blessing of their message.

As a last example of reliable witnesses, there are angels of the Lord who possess supernatural power and foreknowledge of what was to come. God sent the angel Gabriel on a mission to inform Mary, the mother of Jesus, about the Son she would bear by the power of the Holy Spirit. And an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah to inform him that his barren wife, Elizabeth, would have a son and he will be great in the sight of the Lord. This son turned out to be John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. We see other times when angels deliver messages to various people, perform feats, minister to Christ, and worship the baby Jesus.

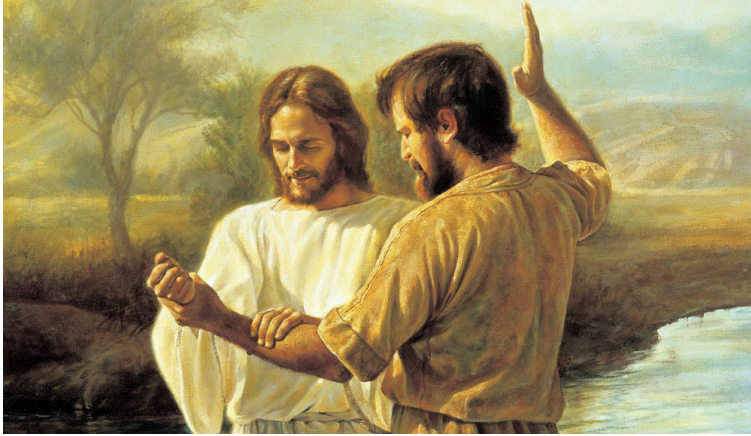
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## The Forerunner points to the Messiah

John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, points the people to Jesus, who is the promised Messiah, the Lamb of God.



*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John John 3:13*

### The foretelling of John's miraculous birth

#### Isaiah's prophecy about the forerunner who will point to the Messiah

The Old Testament prophets spoke a great deal about coming judgment, but it is often interspersed with words of hope. The book of Isaiah is no different. There are two major sections of the book. In chapters 1-39, God's sovereignty and His government is emphasized. In chapters 40-66, God's salvation and His grace is the main focus.

As Isaiah transitions to the second part, He quotes God saying, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God" ([Isaiah 40:1](#)). There will be coming a day when God Himself will provide a satisfactory sacrifice for the sins of His people. Those sins that have separated us from God will be pardoned. This sacrifice will not be made through the shedding of blood from an animal or by mere man. It will be made through Jesus Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh.

Through Isaiah, God foretold that He would send one who would be the bearer of such good news. He would be "A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'" ([Isaiah 40:3](#)). According to the gospels, this prophecy was fulfilled by John, the son of Zechariah (i.e., John the Baptist). See [Matthew 3:3](#), [Mark 1:2-3](#), [Luke 3:4-6](#), and [John 1:23](#).

#### Gabriel prophesies the birth of the forerunner who will point to the Messiah

One day when a priest names Zechariah was ministering in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him. Gabriel told him that his prayer had been heard and that his barren wife, Elizabeth, would bear a child. This child would be a very special child, and his father was to name him John. (See [Luke 1:11-17](#).) Upon hearing this, Zechariah asked Gabriel how he could be sure of this since he and his wife were well along in years. Therefore, because of his unbelief, Zechariah was told that he would be unable to speak until the angel's message came true at the proper time.

Sure enough, Elizabeth became pregnant and she remained in seclusion for five months. She acknowledged that the Lord had shown her favor and had taken away her disgrace among the people. In the sixth month, Mary visited her relative Elizabeth soon after the angel Gabriel had told her that she would become the mother of Jesus. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she was filled with the Holy Spirit and the baby inside her womb leaped for joy.

When the baby was to be circumcised, the people there were planning to name the baby after his father, Zechariah. But his mother spoke up and said his name would be John. Then they asked Zechariah, and he wrote out that "His name is John." And immediately his speech was restored.

Very little is known about John's early life before he began his public ministry. But Scripture does say, "And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel" ([Luke 1:80](#)).



## John prepares the people for the coming of Christ

John preached to the people of [Judea](#), Jerusalem, and the nearby vicinity who came out to the wilderness to hear him. His message was clear. “[Messiah](#)’s coming! [Repent!](#) Make sure your sins are forgiven so you’re ready when Messiah comes so we can receive His kingdom.” The people were ready to hear God’s message. They had been oppressed by the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, and now the Romans. They were looking forward to the arrival of the promised Messiah, who they believed would rescue them from being ruled by Gentile nations.

John preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And if you want forgiveness of sin you have to repent. So, John fulfilled what was written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Make ready the way of the Lord. Make His paths straight.”

The baptism that John required would be a very humbling act for the Jews. The only water baptism required in Jewish law, other than for ritual washing, was intended for Jewish proselytes. They would undergo baptism in order to become Jews. This baptism symbolized the washing away of their sins. Those who were Jews by birth already believed they were in good standing with God by virtue of their Jewish heritage. For Jews to be told they were unclean before God, just like the Gentiles, and that they needed to repent of their sins and be baptized, would be difficult for them to accept. Their willingness to undergo such a ritual would signify that a real change had taken place in their life in respect to sin.

### The way of repentance.

According to Isaiah, John is the “voice of one calling in the desert.” I believe the desert here is referring to the unrepentant heart of sinful man. So, he is calling his hearers to prepare themselves to meet their long-awaited Messiah by means of a full repentance. This includes taking the following steps:

- **“Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.”** We have all wrestled with crooked sins: the devious, the deceitful, the lying, and the perverse things that take us off course. We’ve got

to straighten out and deal with all the perverse, devious, deceptions of the heart.

- **“Every valley shall be raised up.”** Repentance involves an honest dealing with the depths of wickedness in your heart and mine.
- **“Every mountain and hill made low.”** Repentance also includes removal of the high points of pride and self-righteousness.
- **“The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.”** This could mean leveling off anything in your life that could be blocking the road of repentance. This could be self-love, it could be love of money, it could be love of the world, it could be lust of the flesh, it could be indifference, it could be apathy, it could be unbelief, or anything like that.

## John baptizes Jesus and confirms He is the Lamb of God

Besides preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins, John the Baptist, the forerunner, points to Jesus as being the long-awaited Messiah. Apparently, the day *after* Jesus had been baptized by John, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” ([John 1:29](#))

John had been sent to baptize with water. And the one who sent John told him that the one on whom you see the Holy Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. While John doesn’t report the baptism itself, the other gospels record the fulfillment of this unique sign. (See [Matthew 3:13-17](#), [Mark 1:9-13](#), [Luke 3:21-22](#).)

But why would John initially object to baptizing Jesus, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ([Matthew 3:14](#)). How could John have known Jesus was the Messiah before he baptized Jesus and witnessed the sign of the Spirit? It seems likely that John and Jesus would have known about each other since their mothers were related. (see [Luke 1:36](#).) But John didn’t recognize Jesus when He came to be baptized by John. So, Jesus apparently told John who He was and why He came. The sign of the Spirit would have been John’s way to confirm the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.

## Jesus puts John's later doubts to rest

[Herod, the tetrarch](#) arrested John the Baptist sometime later, after Jesus had begun His public ministry. He did this because John had rebuked him for taking his brother Philip's wife to be his own. So, he locked John up in prison. (See [Luke 3:19-20](#).)

As John was languishing in prison, he soon began to wonder if Jesus was the one who was to come, or should they expect someone else. So, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus. John may have wondered while there seemed to be so much failure in Jesus ministry. After all, John was still in jail and Jesus was experiencing wide-spread opposition from the religious leaders. Jesus may have also appeared meek and mild rather than as a powerful political or military leader who would someday rule over Israel.

Jesus reply was that He was doing exactly what Scripture had foretold. He said, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight ([Isaiah 35:5](#)), the lame walk ([Isaiah 35:6](#)), those who have leprosy are cured ([Isaiah 53:4](#)), the deaf hear ([Isaiah 35:5](#)), the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor ([Isaiah 61:1](#)). Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me" ([Matthew 11:4-6](#)).

## Is your heart prepared to embrace Jesus Christ?

If you want to see the salvation of God and God's power to forgive sins, then you have to prepare a path in your heart, a path of repentance of sin, the low sins, the high sins, the crooked sins, the clutter of sins and embrace Christ and His work for you with an attitude of repentance.

God calls us to be like Himself. Once we are saved, His will for us is our [sanctification](#). [1 Peter 1:15-16](#) says, But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." Our works can never save us, but faith without accompanying works is dead, according to James. (See [James 2:14-25](#).)

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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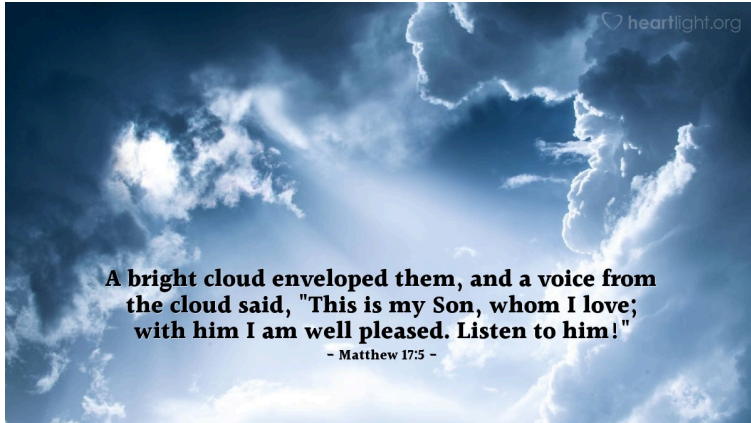
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## God declares Jesus to be His Son

God spoke from heaven three times during the public ministry of Jesus Christ. He declared Jesus to be His Son in whom He was well pleased.



*God the Father declared Jesus to be His Son at the time of His transfiguration*

Having good references from others play an important role in life. Our trust in others often begin with the reliable references we receive from people we already trust. But if we can trust the word of reputable people, how much more should we be able to trust God when He speaks? God made it unmistakably clear during Jesus' public ministry that Jesus is His Son and we should listen to Him.

### God speaks from heaven at Jesus' baptism

#### Jesus arrives from Galilee to be baptized by John the Baptist

John's public ministry began about the time he was age 30, around 26 AD. God had anointed him to be the one who would be the forerunner of the Messiah. Many people from Judea and nearby came to hear John's preaching and be baptized by him. About six months after John began his ministry, Jesus left [Galilee](#) and came to the [Jordan River](#), where John was baptizing repenting sinners. Jesus had been living in relative obscurity for the first 30 years of His life. But it was now time to launch His public ministry.

So, Jesus identified Himself to John, and asked John to baptize Him. John didn't recognize John even though their mothers were relatives, since they grew up far apart. (John lived in the wilderness, southeast of Jerusalem, while Jesus lived His life about sixty or seventy miles north, in the region of Galilee.)

### John's reluctance to baptize Jesus

John knew that the Messiah had to be the Holy One, who is without sin. So, he was surprised by Jesus request to undergo a baptism of repentance since He had no need to repent. John's reaction seems reasonable. But Jesus explained that it was necessary to do so in order to fulfill all righteousness. Whatever God required of people, Jesus did, because He would have to live a life of perfect righteousness to qualify as an acceptable sacrifice for sin.

John was apparently concerned that if Jesus was baptized, it might lead others to believe He was an acknowledged sinner. But, that wouldn't happen because at the very time Jesus is praying and coming out of the water, the Holy Spirit descends upon Him and the Father declares, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". There is no need to protect Jesus from false accusations.

### Each member of the Trinity bears witness to Jesus' Messiahship.

Two things happen when Jesus comes up out of the water and heaven opens up. First, God appears in a visible way as the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus and remains with Him. Secondly, God audibly confirms Jesus to be His Son and declares His approval of Him.

Therefore, each Person of the [Trinity](#) simultaneously performs a unique role in Jesus' baptism. This is evidence that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, as opposed to [Modalism](#). (Modalism, or [Sabellianism](#), is the heretical teaching that God is a single person who has eternally existed and yet He has revealed himself in three modes or forms.)

The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus to officially anoint

and empower Jesus for the duties that belong to Him as Messiah. He was always in perfect harmony with the Holy Spirit because He had always yielded His humanness to the power of the Holy Spirit. But here, God put His power on Jesus in a way all could see. This is a special anointing of power connected to the public ministry Jesus was about to launch.

## **Jesus' deity is affirmed by the Father when He calls Jesus His Son**

The Jews could not mistake what was meant when the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". They knew what Scripture said about the Son. [Psalm 2:1-12](#) is a great messianic Psalm about the Messiah, the Son of God who will come and rule the nations with a rod of iron.

Jesus' adversaries maintained that Jesus was a mere man, and His supernatural power came from [Beelzebub](#). (See [Matthew 12:24](#).) They were enraged when Jesus would refer to God as his Father and Himself as God's Son. They knew Jesus was claiming equality with God. (See [John 5:18](#), [John 10:32-33](#).)

God's witness of the Son means that Jesus is of the same essence and nature as God. He is equal with God, and He is one with God. Just as a son is the same nature as his father, because he carries the same genetics, so the same divine nature is conveyed when Jesus is identified as the Son.

## **God speaks from heaven at Jesus' transfiguration**

### **Jesus strengthens the disciples' faith after the highs and lows of ministry**

At a highpoint in Jesus ministry, He asked the disciples who do the people say He is. They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." Then Jesus asked, "What about you? Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the [Christ](#), the [Son of the living God](#)." Then Jesus announced His blessing on Peter, for this was not revealed to him by man, but by the Father in heaven.

From then on, Jesus began to explain that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, and be killed and be raised to life on the third day. Peter couldn't handle this revelation, and he began to rebuke Jesus saying, "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Jesus knew how devastated the disciples had become after hearing this news. He knew it was time to strengthen the disciples faith. Up to this point, their faith was built upon Jesus' words and actions, not by His outward appearance. However, it was now time to build their faith by visibly revealing His inner glory.

## **The transfiguration of Jesus reveals His true glory**

So, He took his inner circle of disciples (Peter, James and John) up to a high mountain to pray. While there, Jesus was [transfigured](#) before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became dazzling white. And there appeared before them, Moses and Elijah, in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke to Him about His departure, which He was about bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem.

As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone.

After hearing God's voice, surely these disciples understood that the death of Jesus was a part of God's perfect plan. As they came down the mountain, Jesus told them not to share what they had seen, until the Son of Man had been raised from the dead. So, they kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time.

## God speaks from heaven during Jesus' prayer

### Jesus heart was troubled by the thought of suffering the terrible wrath of God

Sometime during the week before Jesus was crucified, Jesus told Andrew and Philip that the time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. He likened His upcoming death to a seed that must die so it can produce many seeds. Paradoxically, He said that a man who loves his life will lose it, and a man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves Him must follow Him, and the Father will honor the one who serves Him.

But at the same time, Jesus said His heart was troubled. From the very beginning, He knew that He had come to this world to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. He was never forced to do this. He was willing to humble Himself to accomplish this redemptive work. But as the time grew nearer, the terror of enduring the terrible wrath of God for the sins of His people became more pronounced. It was not the physical pain of the crucifixion that He was dreading, it was the spiritual pain of separation from His God.

### Jesus came to do His Father's will and to glorify Him once again

Yet, He was not about to refuse to follow through with His mission. It was the reason for His [incarnation](#). He could call down thousands upon thousands of angels to prevent His death. But it was the will of His Father that He offer Himself as a ransom for sin. So, he prayed, "Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." God glorified His name through the entire public ministry of His Son. He came to do His Father's will. He spoke the words the Father gave Him to speak, and He only did what the Father told Him to do. In every respect, Jesus fulfilled His Father's will and this glorified the Father. Now, He would glorify His Father once again by becoming the [Lamb of God](#) and dying for the sins of everyone who would believe in Him.

Jesus' heart was lifted up by being reminded about what His obedience would ultimately accomplish. First, the evil

world system would be judged. Secondly, [Satan](#) would be driven out. And thirdly, once He is lifted up (i.e., [crucified](#)), He would draw all kinds of people to Himself.

## God speaks to us through Jesus, who is the Word of God

So, we see that God the Father is the greatest witness of the Son Jesus Christ. The Father loves the Son with a perfect love. He came into the world to save sinners and establish God's kingdom. It's because of Jesus that we have salvation. He condescended to set aside the prerogatives of His deity and submit himself to being human. Jesus fulfilled the Father's will through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. It's through His condescension and ultimate sacrifice as our substitute that provides for us salvation.

## Come to the wellspring of life

God speaks to us today through His written Word. He's telling us to repent of our sin and believe in His Son Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all our sin. This is His free gift of love for us. Don't ignore such a great salvation as this.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## The Apostles' Preaching Backed with Power



*<em>One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Acts 3:1-2, 6-8</em>*

God authenticated the [apostles'](#) preaching through [miracles](#), which testified that Jesus is Lord. Specifically, Jesus gave power and authority to drive out [demons](#) and heal the sick to those He sent to preach. Their power gave the apostles great credibility, as they produced astonishment and wonder in those who were present. And God continued to give the apostles this power and authority following [Christ's ascension](#) into heaven.

### Jesus endowed His apostles with power and authority

One day Jesus called the twelve apostles together and He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases. He then sent them out to preach the [kingdom of God](#) and heal the sick. So, they left and went

from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere ([Luke 9:1-2, 6](#)).

### Jesus appoints 72 to announce the kingdom of God is near

At another time, Jesus appointed seventy-two others and sent them out two-by-two ahead of Him to every town and place He was about to go. He told them to "Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you'." The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." ([Luke 10:1, 9, 17](#)).

### The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples on Pentecost

#### The apostles received the Holy Spirit and spoke in foreign languages

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave the apostles His Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

But Jesus warned them, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" ([Acts 1:4, 8](#)).

When the day of [Pentecost](#) came (ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven), "they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" ([Acts 2:1-4](#)).

“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language...Amazed and perplexed, they asked each other, ‘What does this mean?’ ” ([Acts 2:5-6, 12](#)).

### **Peter’s message to the Jews, and three thousand of them believed in Christ**

Then Peter took this opportunity to address the crowd. (See [Acts 2:14-41](#).) He quoted Joel’s prophecy that God would pour out His Spirit and the people would prophecy. (See [Joel 2:28-32](#).) He also told them how the Jews put Jesus to death by nailing Him to a cross, but God raised Him from the dead. He assured all Israel that “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” [Acts 2:36](#)).

So, the people were cut to the heart and asked what they should do. Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” ([Acts 2:38-39](#)).

“Those who accepted the message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day” ([Acts 2:41](#)). Therefore, God authenticated the Galilean apostles’ preaching through the miracle of speaking in foreign languages.

### **Peter’s miraculous healing amazed the crowd**

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him ([Acts 3:1-10](#)).

Then, Peter spoke to the onlookers and told them that God had glorified Jesus, the One whom they handed over to be killed, but God raised Him from the dead. He said, “By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see” ([Acts 3:16](#)).

### **Stephen’s great wonders and miraculous signs**

“Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke” ([Acts 6:8-10](#)). God authenticated Stephen’s preaching through divine wisdom and the miracles he performed.

Stephen was then falsely accused of blasphemy against Moses and against God. So, he was taken before the Sanhedrin to answer the accusations against him. He gave a brief history of the Jews, including their forefathers’ disobedience against Moses and their persecution of the prophets who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. “And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it ([Acts 7:52-53](#)).

The Jews became furious with Stephen, so they stoned him to death. On that day, the Jerusalem church experienced



a great persecution, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. And those who were scattered preached the word wherever they went.

## The impact of Phillip's preaching and miraculous signs

“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city” ([Acts 8:4-8](#)).

## Paul's miracles affirm His preaching ministry

“At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders” ([Acts 14:1-3](#)).

The Book of Acts records numerous miracles performed by Paul or upon him. Here are some examples:

- Ananias restores Saul's (Paul's) eyesight ([Acts 9:17-18](#));
- Paul blinds Elymas, the sorcerer, for turning people away from faith ([Acts 13:7-12](#));
- Paul and Barnabas heal the man crippled from birth ([Acts 14:8-10](#));
- Paul casts a demon out of a fortune-telling slave girl ([Acts 16:16-18](#));
- Paul performs special miracles curing diseases and driving out demons ([Acts 19:11-12](#));
- In Troas, Paul raises Eutychus from the dead ([Acts 20:8-12](#));
- Paul was unharmed by poisonous snake bite in Malta ([Acts 28:3-6](#));

- Paul heals Publius' father of fever and dysentery ([Acts 28:7-8](#));
- Paul heals the sick people on the island of Malta ([Acts 28:9-10](#)).

## The astonishing growth of the early church

The church grew rapidly in the [apostolic age](#). This was due, in part, to the bold preaching of the apostles following their encounter with the risen Lord. They were so convinced of their faith in Christ that they were willing to be martyred for it. (According to church tradition, all the apostles except for John were martyred.)

They preached the resurrection of the dead and that salvation is in the Name of Jesus Christ. The early church was a praying church. They believed in the power of prayer, and they were unified in purpose.

And as we have seen, those the Lord sent to preach received authority and power to do signs and wonders. These miracles captivated the onlookers and gave credibility to the apostles' message.

With such a great crowd of empowered witnesses of Jesus Christ, there's no reason to doubt that He is Lord and God.

## Come to the wellspring of life

If you don't have a personal relationship with Him, today is the day of salvation. Don't harden your heart by ignoring what you know to be true.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## Angels Know Jesus Is Lord



*Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him and gave Him strength Luke 22:43*

**We can be sure that Jesus claims about Himself are true, because the angels knew Jesus even before He was born. They knew Jesus is Lord.**

### The angels give us a peak into the spiritual world

Both the Old and New Testaments reveal that angels play a significant role in the whole course of history. The angels are created beings, with individuality, that exist in a [spiritual dimension](#) that touches, but is apart from, our material universe. While we should not give overdue attention to such beings, we can get a glimpse of an [invisible war](#) that is being continually waged between the forces of good and evil. The war impacts both our material world and the hidden spiritual dimension, for God is the creator of both.

The invisible war is Satan's (i.e., the Devil's) effort to thwart the purposes of God. The Bible reveals that Satan was created as [Lucifer](#), meaning "light bearer". He was a powerful angel in God's original creation. But His pride

led to a sinful desire to be like God. So, he led a rebellion, which incited a defection of many angels. And this led to that host of fallen angels being expelled from heaven. Now, Satan and his fallen angels are free to trouble humanity, within the limits that God permits.

Though the fallen angels spread lies to derail our faith, they know exactly who Jesus is and they feared Him. (See [James 2:19](#).) It wasn't unusual for these unclean spirits to possess and dominate a person. So, when Jesus encountered someone who had one or more demons, the demon(s) would acknowledge Jesus' authority over them. They would declare His true identity as the Son of God and obey His command for them to depart.

[Mark 3:11](#) says, "Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, 'You are the Son of God'."

### The angels role as messengers

The holy angels know Jesus is Lord and were affirming it through their messages to others, including Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, the shepherds, the disciples, and the apostles.

### The Angel Gabriel predicted the birth of Christ to Mary

God would often send angels to communicate special messages to specific people. For example, He sent the angel [Gabriel](#) to tell Mary that she would be having a very special baby, conceived in her by the Holy Spirit, even though she was a virgin.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and

he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail" ([Luke 1:28-37](#)).

### **An angel of the Lord warned Joseph about Herod's plot to kill Jesus**

"When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him'" ([Matthew 2:13](#)).

### **An angel of the Lord told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus back to Israel**

Once again, God was looking out after the welfare of His Son. So, He had an angel tell Joseph when it was safe for the family to move back to Israel.

"After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead'" ([Matthew 2:19-20](#)).

### **An angel rolled the stone away from the tomb and announced the resurrection of Christ**

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and

became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you" ([Matthew 28:1-7](#)).

### **Two angels appeared to the apostles as Jesus ascended into heaven**

"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven'" ([Acts 1:9-11](#)).

### **The angels appear before the shepherds to praise God**

An angel of the Lord appeared to them [the shepherds living out in the field], and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." ([Luke 2:9-14](#)).

### **The angels role as ministering spirits**

Since the angels knew Jesus is Lord, they came to minister directly to Jesus at crucial times in His public ministry.

## Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation by the Devil

“Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him” ([Matthew 4:11](#)).

## An angel ministered to Jesus when He was praying at the Garden of Gethsemane

“An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him” ([Luke 22:43](#)).

## Believe the angels who know Jesus is Lord!

As we have seen here and elsewhere that there are impeccable witnesses about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist identified Him at Jesus’ baptism. God audibly declared it from heaven three times. The apostles preached about Jesus, and backed up their messages through miraculous signs and wonders. Finally, the angels testified about Him through words and actions.

The writer of Hebrews asks, “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? We must pay careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape such a great salvation?”([Hebrews 1:14-2:1-3a](#))

## Come to the wellspring of life

We are saved by grace through faith in Christ ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). We are told to repent of our sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you’ll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don’t know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you’ll know where and how you’ll spend eternity.

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# Arguments Against Unbelief

The one thing that will condemn sinners to an eternity of punishment in hell is unbelief. If you reject Christ, you reject God Himself. The Bible is clear, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus” ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). Jesus Himself proclaimed, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” ([John 14:6](#)).

This section of articles addresses three common objections to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The first objection is that Jesus thought He was God’s Son. But He was just mistaken at best or delusional at worse. Or, He knew He wasn’t God’s Son, but declared He was anyway. If this is true, He would either be a lunatic in the first case or a liar in the second case. However, when you consider Jesus’ remarkably good life, profound teaching, and positive impact He’s had on countless multitudes of people throughout the last 2,000 years, rational people would normally conclude that He is Lord.

Another common objection to faith is an assumption that science will ultimately explain what appears to us as being supernatural. With this mindset, any sort of miracle the Bible records is automatically dismissed as being someone’s explanation of something they don’t

understand. The big problem with this is there is no possible way to validate the Bible’s truth claims if you refuse to believe God’s way of authenticating the message He is trying to communicate to us.

The last common objection is to believe that the life of Jesus has been told and retold so many times, with embellishments added along the way, so that the account we now have is nothing less than legend. If you believe that, there’s nothing about Jesus life that will hold any real meaning for you.

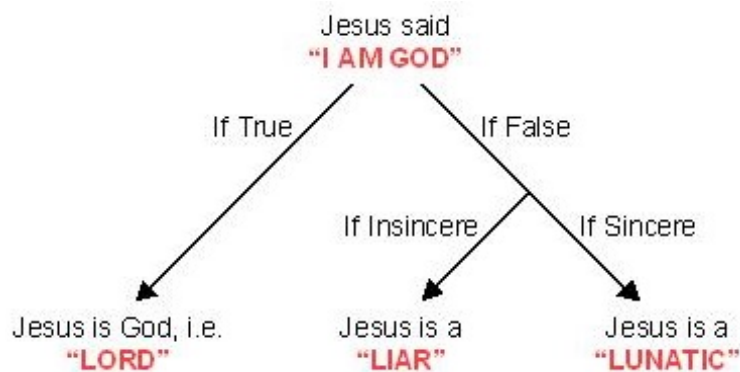
The fatal error is to fall into one these traps of unbelief. There is a real spiritual danger in quickly dismissing what you ought to know is true. God has a way of allowing you to harden your own heart against the truth if you play loose with His Word to man.

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## Liar, a Lunatic, or Jesus is Lord!



*<em>Christ was either God or He was a bad man He cant be a good moral teacher unless He is who He claimed to bethe Son of God<em>*

Above image courtesy of [GodVoter.org](http://GodVoter.org)

**Jesus is a Liar a Lunatic or He is Lord. The doctrine of Christ's divinity is the central Christian doctrine. For if He is divine, He can be trusted to be infallible in everything He said. The argument that if Jesus' claim of divinity is false, then He must be either a liar or a lunatic was popularized by C.S. Lewis. Based on the historical record, the alternative views of Jesus Christ are surely untenable.**

### The argument as stated by C.S. Lewis

The renowned Christian apologist, [C.S. Lewis](#), popularized the argument for the deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ in his book, [Mere Christianity](#). After providing reasons for his conversion to theism, Lewis explains various conceptions of God. [Pantheism](#), he argues, is incoherent, and [atheism](#) is too simple. Eventually, he arrives at Jesus Christ, and invokes a well-known argument now known as *Lewis's trilemma*.

Lewis, arguing that Jesus was claiming to be God, uses logic to advance three possibilities: either He really was God, was deliberately lying, or was not God but thought Himself to be (which would make Him delusional and likely insane). The book goes on to

say that the latter two possibilities are not consistent with Jesus' character and it was most likely that He was being truthful.

C. S. Lewis, speaking in 1942 (and published in *Mere Christianity* in 1952), gave the argument its most memorable formulation:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.

*(Mere Christianity, 55-56)*

### Josh McDowell's defense of the argument

**Was he a liar?** If Jesus made his claims knowing he wasn't God, then he was lying to his followers. If he was a liar, he was also a hypocrite—a guy who told others to be honest even while he taught and lived a colossal lie.

This view of Jesus, however, doesn't jive with what we know of Jesus or the results of his life and teachings. Whenever Jesus has been proclaimed, lives have been

changed. Nations have repented. Thieves have gone straight. Alcoholics have tossed their bottles. Hateful individuals have become channels of love. Someone whose life had results like that couldn't have been a phony.

**Was he a lunatic?** If someone told you he was God, you would believe him about as much as if said he was Santa Clause. You would call him one deluded and self-deceived dude. Yet Jesus didn't display the abnormalities and imbalances that usually go hand in hand with being crazy, Jesus was a guy who spoke some of the most profound words ever recorded—words that have set free many individuals, even some in mental bondage. Jesus Christ was no lunatic.

**Was he Lord?** If Christ isn't a liar or a lunatic, you only have one option. He is who he claimed to be—the Son of God.

(See [Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?](#) for the full version of Josh McDowell's devotion on this topic)

## Earlier versions of the argument

The earliest known use of this approach was by the Scottish preacher [John Duncan](#) (1796-1870) who was quoted in 1870 saying: "*Christ either deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or He was Himself deluded and self-deceived, or He was Divine. There is no getting out of this trilemma. It is inexorable.*"

[Watchman Nee](#) (1903-1972) made a similar argument in his book, *Normal Christian Faith*. He frames his argument as follows:

A person who claims to be God must belong to one of three categories:

First, if he claims to be God and yet in fact is not, he has to be a madman or a lunatic.

Second, if he is neither a God nor a lunatic, he has to be a liar, deceiving others by his lie.

Third, if he is neither of these, he must be God.

You can only choose one of the three possibilities.

If you do not believe that he is God, you have to consider him a madman.

If you cannot take him for either of the two, you have to take him for a liar.

There is no need for us to prove if Jesus of Nazareth is God or not. All we have to do is find out if He is a lunatic or liar. If He is neither, He must be the Son of God.

## Critical attacks on the logical formulation of the argument

Critics have argued that *Lewis' trilemma* presents too few options for consideration. For example, the logical syllogism limits the possibilities to three; He either lied, He was delusional, or He was telling the truth. But some have argued that there are other possibilities, such as the following:

- **Jesus never existed.** (see the following [article](#) that refutes this claim)
- **He never said what He is claimed to have said.** (See this [article](#))
- **His life has evolved into a legend and is not historically accurate.** (see this [article](#)) C.S. Lewis rebutted the idea that Jesus' followers exaggerated the story and the legend grew that he really said these things. He noted how unlikely it would be for the Jews to invent God becoming man since they were convinced there was only one God. Lewis also noted that he was perfectly convinced that whatever the Gospels are they are not legends. He then goes on to discuss the major differences between known legendary works and the Gospels.
- **He was simply a great moral teacher.** This is the explanation that C.S. Lewis insisted that you should not conclude since Jesus' reported sayings would then be those of megalomaniac, not a great moral teacher, if they were accurate. Lewis said, "We may note in passing that He was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He produced mainly three effects — Hatred — Terror — Adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild approval."

However, If you affirm the historical accuracy of the



biblical record, you may reasonably accept the logical soundness of Lewis' argument.

## The Lordship of Jesus demands our love

Jesus came to earth to give His life as a ransom for many. He traded His life for our release from the curse of the law, our bondage to sin, and the condemnation that goes with it. In return, God requires that we love His Son by believing in Him, trusting Him, and obeying His commands. If you haven't already done so, you can change your eternal destiny right now. By faith, turn from your sinful way of life to follow Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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# Why belief in the supernatural really matters



*God sent His only Son to save sinners Jesus took upon Himself humanity He lived a perfect life He died as a substitutionary sacrifice for His people and God raised Him from the dead Faith that denies these essential facts cannot save anyone*

**Biblical truths are supernatural at their core and are essential to the Christian gospel. Naturalism, on the other hand, is opposed to supernaturalism, because it asserts that all reality can be explained in purely natural categories without any appeal to the supernatural. The fundamental idea at the root of religious liberalism was the influence of the philosophy of naturalism. This brand of Christianity, which calls itself Christian, is not only a counterfeit Christianity, it is anti-Christian.**

## What is theological liberalism

There's a difference in meaning between liberalism and religious liberalism. The suffix "ism" at the end of liberal denotes the idea that there is a group of beliefs that make up a life and world view.

Generally speaking, liberal implies a "free thinker", someone who is free from the trappings of all human thinking and traditions. As long as our thinking is under the authority of God, we should be free to pursue truth. In this respect, liberalism is commendable. However, if liberalism is taken to the extreme, it could mean that the liberal is completely open to any novel idea and never comes to

any convictions. This, of course, would set it apart from Christianity, which is a religion built on the foundation of convictions and affirmations. Take away assertions and you take away Christianity.

In theology, however, liberalism has a much narrower definition than the way the term is normally used. It refers to a specific movement that has a specific agenda and a defined theology that surfaced in Europe in the nineteenth century.

## How theological liberalism got started

### Influence of the Enlightenment period.

[J. Gresham Machen](#) wrote that Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religion, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology.<sup>1</sup> He argues that the modern scientific methods have been applied broadly to the other areas of knowledge, which has led to a searching investigation of every inheritance from the past. This has led to so many convictions being abandoned that sometimes men have concluded that all convictions must go. And no institution is faced by a stronger hostile presumption than the institution of the Christian religion.<sup>2</sup>

As technology increased, following the late [Enlightenment](#) period, advances in transportation seemed to shrink the size of the world. Ready exposure to different cultures from around the world opened up a new avenue of investigation—The science of comparative religion.

## Opposition to the supernatural

This whole movement in German theology had certain basic commitments philosophically and theologically. The one that is the most obvious and evident is that it was fundamentally anti-supernatural in its orientation. It was seeking to get beyond the myths and legends that are contained in religious stories of various faiths so they could identify the common theme among the various religions of

the world.

The conclusion was that at the core of all religions was basically a concern for ethics. They considered prayer, symbols of redemption, and the precepts of salvation to be the externals—the negotiable peripheral matters that are not of the essence.

### Redefining Christianity

The work of [Adolph von Hornack](#) (1851-1930) illustrates this new “modernism” approach to theology. Hornack was a German theologian and prominent church historian. His book, *What is Christianity*, is a history of early Christian literature. Harnack called on Christians to question the authenticity of doctrines that arose in the early Christian church. He rejected the historicity of the gospel of John in favor of the synoptic gospels, criticized the Apostles’ Creed, and promoted the Social Gospel.

Christianity, at its core, was said to be reducible to two foundational concepts, according to Hornack: The [universal Fatherhood of God](#); and the universal brotherhood of man. What’s striking about this conclusion is that neither concept is biblical. Only those who belong to Christ by faith are members of His household. And the New Testament sees the brotherhood as something that is restricted to those who are “in Christ”. As the Parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates, the Bible teaches the universal “neighborhood” of man, not the universal “brotherhood” of man.

### Biblical truths are supernatural at their core

#### The Fundamentalists’ reaction to liberalism

There was a strenuous reaction in church history to this 19th century liberalism, especially in the United States. The reaction was called fundamentalism. The original debate recognized that there can be differences among Christians on some matters of doctrine, but there are certain foundational precepts that are so fundamental to historic Christianity that if you deny those, you have denied the very essence of the faith.

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th

century, fundamentalism sought to identify certain cardinal precepts and principles that are the non-negotiables of Christianity. For example, if you deny the resurrection of Jesus, you have denied Christianity.

### Forms of theology

There are three basic forms of theology according to church historians:

- **Pelagianism.** A belief that denies the view of [original sin](#) and the necessity of [grace](#), asserting that man is capable of achieving salvation by his own efforts.
- **Semi Pelagianism.** A belief that humanity is tainted by sin, but not to the extent that we cannot cooperate with God’s grace on our own. [Semi-Pelagianism](#) is, in essence, partial depravity as opposed to total depravity. We are sinful, but we can still recognize the truth, cooperate with God’s grace, and choose to seek Christ. Semi-Pelagianism was promulgated in the fifth century AD by [John Cassian](#) and some other church leaders in France.
- **Augustinianism.** [Augustinianism](#) holds that, due to the Fall, mankind is unable to avoid sinning. His nature has been overrun by sin to the extent that man does not truly have freedom of the will; rather, he is in bondage to sin. Only an act of God can release him. Augustinianism also teaches that no one can be saved apart from God’s grace. In fact, grace is necessary for the performance of any righteous act, including the exercise of faith. Without that saving grace, no sinner can ever make a decision for Christ. In agreement with the *I* of Calvinism’s [TULIP](#), Augustinianism teaches that grace is irresistible and effectual.

### The significance of clashing theologies

The debate between semi Pelagianism and Augustinianism has been going on for much of church history and will continue. But it’s a [debate](#) within the Christian church between [Calvinists](#) and [Arminians](#). These concerns are important, but not generally considered essential matters. However, Pelagianism is fundamentally not Christian. In fact, it is opposed to the central tenets of Christianity. Liberalism belongs to this category.

## Differences between theological liberalism & Christianity

The following are some of the core differences between theological liberalism and historic, biblical Christianity:<sup>3</sup>

### Doctrine

Christianity is based upon an account of something that happened, and the Christian worker is primarily a witness. Liberalism objects to this and claims teachings are unimportant, unless it happens to be a liberal doctrine, such as the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man.

### God and man

Concerning the knowledge of God, liberalism says that we should seek not to know God, but should merely feel His presence. Christianity teaches that the knowledge of God is the very basis of religion. Regarding liberalism's conception of man, it has lost all sense of the gulf that separates the creature from the Creator. Liberalism has a supreme confidence in human goodness. Christianity, however, is the religion of the broken heart; it is conscious of its guilt before God.

### The Bible

According to the Christian view, the Bible contains revelation from God to man, which is found nowhere else. In addition, general revelation is given to all people by the things God has made and by the conscience of man. Within the Bible, there is a way that is revealed by which sinful man can come into communion with the living God. On the other hand, the modern liberal rejects the inspiration of the Bible. The only authority for the liberal is the Christian experience. Therefore, truth can only be that which helps the individual man. Liberalism is founded upon the shifting emotions of sinful men.

### Christ

For the apostle Paul, Jesus was primarily the object of faith. He committed the destiny of his soul to Jesus. But modern liberalism regards Jesus in a totally different way. For them, Jesus is an example of faith, not the object

of faith. The New Testament presents Jesus as both an historical Person and a supernatural Person, but for modern liberalism a supernatural person is never historical. Since they reject His miracles, they also reject the entirety of the supernatural Person of our Lord. Therefore, Jesus' deity is denied, which leaves Jesus differing from us only in degree, not in kind.

### Salvation

Liberalism finds salvation in man; Christianity finds it in an act of God. For liberals, the death of Jesus is regarded as an example of self-sacrifice for us to emulate. It shows how much God hates sin. Rather than facing the dreadful reality of guilt, liberalism makes a mere persuasion of the will all that is needed for salvation. They ask, "How can one man suffer for the sins of another?" Of course, Jesus could do so because He was not a mere man but the eternal Son of God.

### The essence of liberal theology

The Swiss theologian, [Emil Brunner](#), wrote a book entitled *The Mediator* (1927), in which he canvassed the teaching of liberal theology. He said you could reduce the driving force of 19th and 20th century liberal theology down to just one word—unbelief. Hostility to Scripture and hostility to the core teaching of the New Testament of the Person and work of Jesus Christ cannot be seen as a mere difference of opinion on negotiable issues of biblical Christianity.

## The danger of theological liberalism

### The supernatural aspects of historic Christianity is the battleground

[Benjamin Warfield](#) said that liberals did not reject just peripheral matters but foundational principles such as the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection. If you negotiate resurrection, you negotiate Christianity.

Rudolph Bultmann (a neo liberal) typifies the kind of thinking which is commonplace among liberals. He remarked that nobody can live in the 20th century and make use of modern conveniences like electricity, etc. and still believe in a world where angels appear to virgins and talk about babies born without sexual intercourse, and

where a corpse goes into the grave and come back three days later.

### The beginning of “modernism” in the Christian church

So, what caused such a tidal wave of unbelief in historical Christianity in such a short period of time? There was a generation of ministers who were educated in 19th century liberalism. Consequently, they had no gospel to preach. They didn't believe it themselves. But they had to justify their jobs and their profession, so they tried to substitute the 19th century concept of the universal Fatherhood of God and a social agenda for biblical Christianity. As a result, all we have left are ethical issues. For the liberals, that's the reason for the church's existence, not for questions of personal salvation.

Furthermore, the ethical issues that may be raised would be easily settled by the Bible. But instead of trusting what the Bible has to say about such ethics, liberal churches and denominations will wrestle with such basic principles as to whether it is ethical for people to be engaged in sexual activities outside of marriage.

### The effects of Liberalism

Liberalism is having the effect of emptying the pews. In Scotland, for example, it's been reported that only 4% of the people are members of the church, and 95% those people attend liberal churches.

We're living in what contemporary historians are calling the age of new-liberalism. Now, there's an outright hostility to historic Christianity. New Testament scholars are saying that 95% of the statements attributed to Jesus are fabrics of the authors' imagination. Liberalism denies the deity of Jesus, the divine Trinity, an inerrant Scripture, the fall of man, the wrath of God, and the only salvation through the atoning blood of the cross of Christ.

Most of our mainline seminaries are training our youth to go into all the world to undermine the gospel.

Satan appears as an angel of light when he who is the messenger of eternal death pretends to be the way of eternal life.

## Responding to theological liberalism

### Beliefs of professing Christians

The Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University reports their findings from their [American Worldview Inventory 2021](#) about the beliefs of those who call themselves Christian. Here are some of their findings:

- The meaning of “Christian” in America today is far from monolithic, with a number of diverse and often conflicting theological views—even beliefs that are thoroughly unbiblical perspectives—among those who embrace the label.
- The vast majority of American adults (69%) self-identify as “Christian” and embrace many basic tenets of the faith. But a closer look shows that at the same time, many in this group hold views clearly in conflict with traditional teachings and only 9% actually possess a biblical worldview, according to George Barna, CRC Director of Research.

### Unbiblical beliefs

While a large share of this population embraces various biblical principles and truths, this large group entertains a wide range of perspectives that are not in harmony with biblical teachings. Among the errant perspectives most widely embraced are:

- **The basic nature of man.** 72% argue that people are basically good
- **Moral authority.** 71% consider feelings, experience, or the input of friends and family as their most trusted sources of moral guidance
- **Validity of all faith.** 66% say that having faith matters more than which faith you pursue
- **Inclusivity of faith.** 64% say that all religious faiths are of equal value
- **Salvation by works.** 58% believe that if a person is good enough, they can earn their way into Heaven.

- **Denial of the Trinity.** 58% contend that the Holy Spirit is not a real, living being. He is merely a symbol of God's power, presence, or purity.
- **Fate or destiny resulting from one's previous actions.** 57% believe in karma.
- **Moral relativity.** 52% claim that determining moral truth is up to each individual. There are no moral absolutes that apply to everyone, all the time.

### Warning the world of false teaching

True Christians must never weary of warning the world of this false teaching. Rather, they should always be trying to win the world to its only Savior. [John Gerstner](#) has said, "True Christians must raise an objection against false Christianity. If the world goes on calling that Christianity, the world will go on perishing, but their blood will be on their own head, and ours." He adds, "There's got to be an opposition to this phenomenal attack on Christianity in the name of Christianity, wounding Christ in the house of His friends, not his enemies, who are avowed opponents...from people who bear the name of Jesus. We've got to be to blame..."<sup>4</sup>

### Belief in the biblical Christ brings real hope and joy

By its very nature, Christianity is historic. It reveals the love of God, who would send His only Son to the world to save rebellious sinners. It tells us that Jesus, the God-man, brought salvation to us by sacrificing His own life so we can be forgiven and have eternal life. This act of God brings peace, hope and joy to the soul of a repentant sinner. And the Bible warns us that there is no other way to be reconciled to Him other than by faith in His Son.

Don't miss God's free gift of grace through unbelief.

Liberalism denies all that God has promised. Jesus invites you to come to Him by faith and enter into His rest.

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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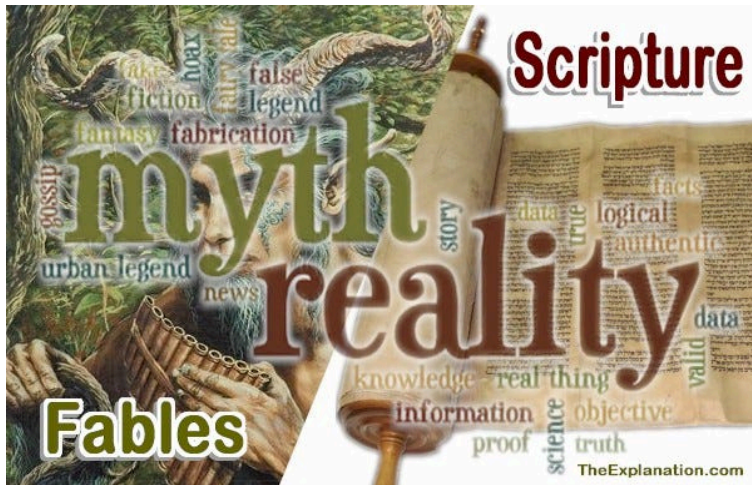
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## How We Know Jesus is not a Legend



*<em>The trustworthiness of Scripture points to its authority as well Scripture is far more than a history book as good and trustworthy as that history is It is a book that calls us to examine our lives and relationship to God<em> Darrell Bock*

**We know Jesus is not a legend. His life and ministry, as recorded in the gospels, are substantially rooted in history. There would be no basis at all for Christianity if Jesus never existed, or His life was embellished by legend. Our faith depends on believing the biblical assertions about Jesus and His atoning work for us on the cross.**

### **The importance of having a reliable record of Jesus**

#### **Belief in the historical record about Jesus assures us that Jesus is Lord**

The Christian faith is based upon placing our trust in the Person and the work of the true Son of God as God has revealed Him in Holy Scripture. Therefore, we must have confidence that Scripture accurately portrays the life and work of Jesus. He is man, but He is not mere man. The apostle Paul writes, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the

cross” ([Colossians 1:19](#)).

Once we believe Jesus is both fully man and fully God, having two natures in one Person, we can understand how He can be our substitutionary sacrifice for sin. Since God cannot lie, Jesus cannot lie. He knew that all Scripture is divinely inspired of God, with no exceptions. If He lied or was mistaken, He would no longer be sinless, and that would disqualify Him to be the Savior of sinners. He said, “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of the pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished” ([Matthew 5:17-18](#)).

Jesus believed that He was the climax and focus of all of Scripture. He told the Jews, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” ([John 5:39-40](#)). Therefore, If we dismiss the story of Jesus as being a legend, we too are refusing to come to Him to have life.

### **Belief in the myth or legend theory about Jesus prevents us from having saving faith**

As we have previously seen in the [trilemma argument](#), either Jesus is a liar, a lunatic, or he must be Lord. So, there are no other logical choices if we believe the Biblical record to be reliably accurate. However, if we assume the myth or legend theory about Jesus is true, then we have lost any hope of finding and knowing the truth. Consequently, we won’t have a Savior and we will be condemned by God and die in our sins.

### **Does the legend theory explain the facts?**

#### **The legend theory makes no sense of Jesus’ death by crucifixion or His burial<sup>1</sup>**

The Bible says that the story of Jesus, who claimed to be equal with God but who was put to death by crucifixion

and buried, was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. So, who would consider such a person worthy of devotion? Such a story would never make Jesus out to be worthy as a legendary figure.

### **The events occurred in an unnatural place for a legend to begin**

The general religious environment of first-century Jewish Palestine would not have provided a natural environment for birthing a legend/myth centered around a recent, [Torah](#)-trumping, cruciform-messianic God-man.<sup>2</sup>

### **The gospels do not omit embarrassing features of Jesus' story**

Fundamental countercultural and embarrassing features of the Jesus story provide further evidence against the [Synoptic](#) portrait(s) being significantly legendary. The claims that Jesus's identity was inextricably bound up with that of [Yahweh](#)-God and that he should receive worship, the notion of a crucified messiah, the concept of an individual resurrection, the dullness of the disciples, the unsavory crowd Jesus attracted, and a number of other embarrassing aspects of the Jesus tradition are difficult to explain on the assumption that this story is substantially legendary.<sup>3</sup>

### **The legend theory doesn't explain the change in the disciples**

Legend doesn't explain the change in the disciples of why they began preaching resurrection. If the disciples were preaching a risen Jesus where none existed, the movement would have died out quickly.<sup>4</sup>

And why would Jesus' disciples have been willing martyrs for what they recognized as mere legend?<sup>5</sup>

### **The conversion of Paul and James makes no sense if Jesus never existed**

The conversion of Paul and James, the brother of Jesus, following the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, makes no sense if Jesus never existed or His resurrection never occurred. They would not have deserted their beliefs for a

know legend.<sup>6</sup>

### **The story originated and was accepted while eye witnesses were still alive**

The fact that this story originated and was accepted while Jesus's mother, brothers, and original disciples (to say nothing of Jesus's opponents) were still alive renders the legendary explanation all the more implausible.<sup>7</sup>

No historians or 1st century contemporaries of Christ (except Jewish religious leaders) apparently disputed the New Testament accounts of Jesus' supernatural claims and feats, although such accounts were being widely circulated during their lifetime.<sup>8</sup>

### **The early church wouldn't have grown in Jerusalem where the events could be proven true of false<sup>9</sup>**

The religious leaders in Jerusalem led Jesus to be crucified. Therefore, they would have been quick to dispel any false report about Jesus rising victoriously from the grave if they had any proof that He didn't. Instead, Peter preached about the risen Lord soon after Pentecost and multitudes began to believe in Jesus and were filled with the Holy Spirit.

On another occasion, Peter healed a crippled beggar and when the crowds saw what happened they were filled with wonder and amazement. Peter took this opportunity to attribute the miracle to Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him. The leaders were deeply disturbed because the apostles were proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead, so they seized Peter and John and put them into prison until the next day. "But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand" ([Acts 4:4](#)). If the leaders could have shown that the apostles were wrong, they could have prevented this so called disturbance.

### **It's very unlikely a non-historical story could come about in a short span of time**

In our view, it is hard to understand how this story came about in this environment, in such a short span of time, unless it is substantially rooted in history.<sup>10</sup>



Legends typically require a significant period of time to develop and gain credibility. In this case, within 20 years of Jesus' death, Christian doctrine, conviction, churches, creeds, martyrs, and sermons—every one unequivocally confessing Jesus as Lord—can all be documented.<sup>11</sup>

A legend takes time to develop. Buddha lived in 500 B.C., his sayings were written in 900 A.D. But with Jesus, the letter to the Galatians circulated in 48 A.D., 19 years after Jesus died.<sup>12</sup>

### **The alleged silence of Paul and ancient secular writers is inaccurate**

Moreover, attempts to argue against the historicity of the Jesus tradition on the basis of the alleged silence of Paul or ancient secular writers have not been forceful. Paul's letters reveal that Paul and his audience believed Jesus lived in the recent past and that they knew a good deal about the events of Jesus's life, as well as his teachings. And while there is little found in ancient secular writings that pertain to the early Christian movement, there is more than we might expect, and what does emerge tends to confirm aspects of the Jesus tradition.<sup>13</sup>

### **Oral traditions support the view the writers wrote with historical intent & competency**

Much of what we have learned about oral traditions in orally dominant cultures over the last several decades gives us compelling reasons to accept the earliest traditions about Jesus as having been transmitted in a historically reliable fashion.<sup>14</sup>

### **The biblical Synoptic Gospel writers wrote with historic intent and competency**

Considerations from studies on ancient historically oriented traditions support the view that these authors wrote with historic intent and, by ancient standards, historic competency.<sup>15</sup>

### **A legend cannot account for the tremendous ongoing impact for good of a single individual**

Can one realistically attribute near legend to the historic, worldwide, ongoing impact of the life of this one individual, including the faith profession of many of the world's most respected and wise people?<sup>16</sup>

In their book, *What if Jesus had never been born?*, D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe quoted a passage entitled *One Solitary Life*.<sup>17</sup>

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies and went through a mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

While He was dying, His executioners gambled for His garments, the only property He had on earth. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life.

*Some have attributed this to Philips Brooks, the writer of "O Little Town of Bethlehem."*

## Evidence for the reliability of the gospels

### How the experts judge the reliability of history in ancient documents

There are several criteria at the disposal of literary experts as they assess the historical reliability of ancient documents. According to Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, coauthors of the book, *The Jesus Legend*,<sup>18</sup> they include the following:

- Did the author write with historical intent?
- Was the author in a position to report reliable history?
- To what extent did the author's bias affect the reliability of the report?
- Is there self-damaging details included in the document?
- Does the document include incidental details and/or casual information characteristic of historical reminiscences?
- Is there evidence of a broad internal consistency within the document?
- Are there inherently improbable events contained in the document?
- Is there external literary evidence that corroborate the document?
- Does external archeological evidence corroborate the document?

### Eddy's and Boyd's assessment of the historic reliability of the Synoptic Gospels.

“...the Synoptics themselves give us plausible grounds for accepting that the basic portrait(s) of Jesus they communicate is substantially rooted in history. Yes, they are “biased”, but no more so than many other ancient or modern historical writers whom we typically trust. They include a wealth of self-damaging detail, as we have noted. They also contain the sorts of non-ideologically driven incidental details and casual information historians typically look for as evidence of historical interest. They are seen to be reasonably consistent once we understand them as texts operating with an oral rather than a literate

conception/register, and when assessed within the constraints of the precision standards of ancient orally oriented cultures. The claims they make are not implausible, unless, of course, one rules out the possibility of the supernatural from the beginning. And while... there is relative little literary or archaeological evidence that unambiguously supports the reliability of these works, there is some, which is more than we might reasonably have expected for texts of their date and sociocultural provenance.

*Eddy, Paul Rhodes; Boyd, Gregory A.. The Jesus Legend (p. 453). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

### Where does the evidence lead?

After making a thorough analysis of the Biblical records, Rhodes and Boyd reach their conclusion:

Where does this leave us? We suggest that these lines of evidence, viewed from the standpoint of an “open” historical-critical method, provide reasonable grounds for the conviction that the portrait(s) of Jesus in the Synoptic gospels substantially is rooted in history. At the very least, this probability is greater than the probability of any competing hypothesis, which leads us, at minimum, to the conclusion that the posteriori burden of proof should be born by those who claim the Synoptic Gospels are unreliable vis-à-vis their essential representations of Jesus.

*Eddy, Paul Rhodes; Boyd, Gregory A.. The Jesus Legend (p. 453). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

Their final point is also worth remembering.

Our historiographical conclusions, of course, do not yet come close to the surrendered, trusting relationship to the living Christ that lies at the heart of the Christian faith. But no amount of strictly historical reasoning or evidence can take one to that point. At best, historical reasoning can point in a more or less probable direction. To speak now as Christian theologians: The Holy

Spirit, personal commitment, and covenant trust must carry one the rest of the way.

*Eddy, Paul Rhodes; Boyd, Gregory A.. The Jesus Legend (p. 453). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

## Come to the wellspring of life

Scripture must go from your head to your heart in order to be saved. So, if you believe He came to save you, settle your eternal destiny right now. You can be reconciled to the One who created you and who has the power to place you in heaven or hell. Therefore, take the next step and cry out for His mercy on you, a sinner. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

And for crystal clear YouTube presentations of the gospel message from several trusted sources, click [here](#).

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# Be Reconciled Unto God

The knowledge of truth can either help you or harm you. It all depends on what you do with it. The more you know, the more God will hold you accountable for it. If you know all the facts about Jesus Christ, but you reject Him anyway, your punishment will be more severe than someone who has less knowledge than you have. Therefore, I implore you to reconcile yourself to God. Don't reject Him outright and don't be indifferent to Him. You have a decision to make. Be sure you make the correct one.

This section of articles address the knowledge of our personal sin. As we look to our conscience and examine how much we have transgressed the law of God, we should tremble with fear about the punishment we deserve. The purpose of the law is to reveal how sinful we really are in the sight of God. If we are convicted of the seriousness of our sin and the holiness of God, that fear should drive us to cry out to God for His mercy to save us.

We also look to see how the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross at Calvary, in our place, was all that was needed to carry the full punishment that our sins deserve. And we note that God regards everyone according to which category of man they belong to. They are either represented by Adam, who disobeyed God's command, and brought sin and death into the human race, or they are represented by Christ, who brings mercy, forgiveness, and every spiritual blessing to those who repent and believe in Him.

There is a strong warning that our works cannot save us. If we rely on God's favor because of anything we regard as good about ourselves, we miss out on God's grace. The only way our apparent goodness could save us is if we could keep every single law of God without fail at all times. In other words, we would have to be as perfect as God to earn our salvation. It is simply impossible for any of us to do.

When we trust Jesus to be our Savior and Lord, there is a great exchange that God promises will take place. First,

our sin nature and every sin we will ever commit is placed on the cross of Jesus. He took the punishment for them all. Our sins are removed and God's justice toward us is satisfied. We have no more guilt. Secondly, the perfectly righteous and sinless life that Christ led is counted toward us. That means, when God sees us, He views us as having the same proven righteous perfection that belonged to Christ. We are righteous because He is righteous, and we are united to Him by our faith in Him.

Although our good works cannot save us, they must be a result or byproduct of our faith. We cannot live just any way we want, because that would show we don't really care about the Lord. He wants us to be like Him. The Holy Spirit is given to believers to enable them to grow into Christ-likeness. Our motivation for doing good works should be to love the Lord and please Him through our obedience to His commands.

When your ready to commit your life to Jesus, be sure to read the article, *How to Begin Your Life Over Again*. It should help you better understand God's message of reconciliation to sinners.

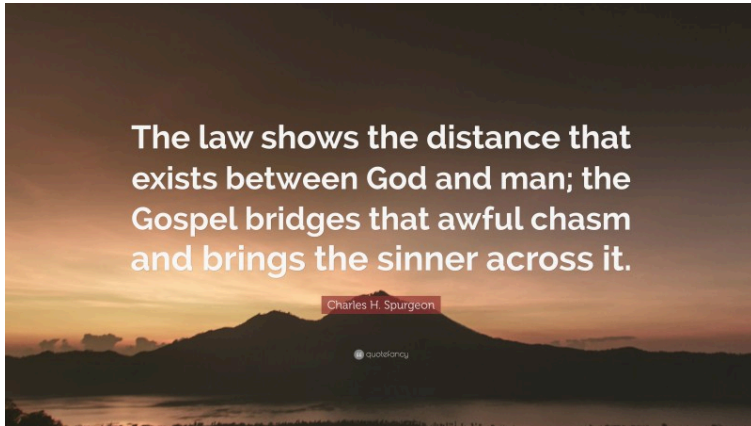
Lastly, we need to treasure God's gift of grace as the most important gift we could ever receive. God achieved through Christ what we needed most, but was impossible for us to do for ourselves. Once we belong to Christ by faith alone in Him alone, it's time to start growing from being a babe in Christ to being a mature member of God's family. There are some guidelines discussed that should help you get off to a good start in your precious new life.

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## The Curse of the Law of God



*<em>All who rely on observing the law are under a curse for it written Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law<em>  
<em>Clearly no one is justified before God by the law because The righteous will live by faith Galatians 3:10  
11<em>*

**The Law of God is good, but it could never save anyone. It was never intended to do so. The law shows the distance that exists between God and man. The primary purpose of the law was to reveal to the sinner his or her inability to keep the law. As the law exposes the seriousness of sin, it should drive the sinner to despair. And this acknowledgment of sin, in turn, should lead the penitent sinner to receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The Jews misunderstood the role of the law. They thought they could earn favor with God by keeping it. They didn't realize that they were under the curse of the law of God because they were sinners and the law could not change who they were.**

### **Abram believed the LORD, and was made right with Him**

### **The LORD calls Abraham to leave his country and follow Him**

[Abraham](#) plays an important role in the Christian faith. He is one of the most important figures in the Bible apart from Jesus. It is through his genealogical line that the Savior

of the world comes. (See [Matthew 1:1-2](#) and Luke [Luke 3:34](#).) The story of redemption begins with God's call to this patriarch. He was the first man chosen by God for a role in the plan of salvation. The story of Abraham contains the first mention in the Bible of God's righteousness credited to man as the only way of salvation ([Genesis 15:6](#)). God chose Abraham to be the father of many nations, just because it was His will to do so.

Abraham's name was Abram before God entered into a covenant with him. Abram was a pagan who was born in the city of [Ur of the Chaldees](#). After one of his brothers died, Abraham and his wife, Sarai, his father Terah, and other family members moved from [Ur to Haran](#). And when Abram was seventy-five years old, The LORD said to him, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go the [land I will show you](#)." The LORD promised that He would make him into a great nation, make his name great, and that all peoples on earth would be blessed through him ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)). So Abram did as he was told to do and set out for the [land of Canaan](#).

### **God promises Abraham great blessings and Abraham believes God**

Sometime later, the LORD came to Abram in a vision and told him, "I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram asked Him what He could give him since he remained childless. His servant stands to inherit his estate. But the LORD answered, "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." He told Abram to look up to heaven and count the stars if he could. Then He said, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD and he credited to him as righteousness ([Genesis 15:6](#)). The LORD confirmed his promise with a sure sign that what He promised, He would do. (See [Genesis 15:8-20](#).)

Believing God is the way Abram, a sinner, was counted as being righteous before the Lord. And this is the way it will always be. The [prophet Habakkuk](#) states it so succinctly. He writes, "...the righteous shall live by his faith" ([Habakkuk 2:4](#)). In emphasizing the idea that righteousness by faith is for both Jews and Gentiles the apostle Paul

writes, “For in the gospel a righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written, ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” This redemptive principle of being justified by God by faith is repeated many times throughout the New Testament.

## **The law of God was given to Israel through Moses**

### **God gives his laws to Israel and commands them to carefully follow all of them**

About 500 years after Abraham left Haran to go to Canaan, [Moses](#) led the Israelites out of their bondage in Egypt through the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground. God led them through the desert to [Mt. Sinai](#), where He gave Moses [His Law](#) for the people. The law included His moral law, the ceremonial law, and the civil law.

Moses told the people, “The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.” He then enumerated the great number of blessings that will come upon them if they obey the LORD their God ([Deuteronomy 28:1-14](#)). He also enumerated the great number of curses that would befall them if they do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees ([Deuteronomy 15-68](#)).

### **The nation of Israel is judged for its disobedience to the law**

Over the course of time in the Old Testament, Israel would experience repeated cycles of obedience, which led to God’s blessings, and disobedience, which led to God’s promised judgments. Eventually, God uprooted them from the land they had inherited due to their disobedience. The northern kingdom was conquered by Assyria in 722 B.C. and the southern kingdom was conquered and exiled to Babylon in 586 B.C.

### **The Rabbinic tradition amplifies the law**

Throughout the Old Testament, the Jews slowly learned the importance of obeying God’s commands and decrees. A group, known as the [Pharisees](#), emerged shortly after

the [Maccabean Revolt](#) (165-160 B.C.). Around this time, the Pharisees brought together scribes and laymen who believed in the importance and authority of the [Oral Torah](#), which the [Sadducees](#) and ruling class dismissed as traditions of men, rather than the wisdom of God.

While the Pharisees affected Judaism in many positive ways, in the New Testament, their adherence to oral tradition is often portrayed as overly legalistic, and in some cases a means of circumventing the Law. By the time of Jesus and Paul’s ministry, the rabbis had summed up the Old Testament law into 613 commandments. There were 248 things you had to do and 365 things you were prohibited to do. It was indeed a yoke upon the neck of Israel “that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear” ([Acts 15:10](#)).

### **The law was too burdensome for anyone to bear**

But they knew the law, in its original giving, was divine since God had given them. And of course they believed that since God gave them, they needed to follow them. It was also important because [Deuteronomy 27:26](#) says, “Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.” And [Deuteronomy 28:15](#) drives the point home further by saying that if you don’t do all of this, you will be cursed. Now this is a heavy burden that no one can bear.

Yet, the Jews didn’t want to come by faith. They thought their self-righteousness could earn them their way. So, they hung onto their system of works righteousness and ignored the faith principle. And so they were all under a curse.

### **The futility of trying to earn God’s favor through the law**

As a Jew, Paul understood that Deuteronomy was really saying. No one can perfectly keep all of God’s law. But that was what the religious leaders were trying to do. They believed that the way they would please God and make it to heaven was by meticulously following a long list of religious rules and regulations.

Not only did Paul know this would be impossible, he added that anyone who would try to win God’s approval by

keeping the law, is under the curse of God. He wrote, “For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law’” ([Galatians 3:10](#)). He goes on to say, “Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because ‘the righteous will live by faith’” ([Galatians 3:11](#)).

James made the same point in his epistle. He wrote, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” ([James 2:10](#)). In other words, if you keep the law of God perfectly in every respect but make even the slightest mistake, it’s as if you broke every rule. You’re guilty of it all and deserve God’s just condemnation.

### **The law leads us to Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the law for us**

The question arises, why would God command us to keep the entire law that He knew we couldn’t keep? What good is the law? There are some things the law cannot do for us and there are other things it can do. Let’s look at it from God’s perspective.

#### **God’s law reveals sin**

First, the law reveals how sinful we are by our inability to keep the law. The law has convicting power. It is God’s standard by which we are judged. The Jews had pushed the law to the external dimension and had reinterpreted it to accommodate their sinfulness. Before his conversion, Paul took great pride in his righteous zeal, but when he looked inside himself, all he saw was dung ([Philippians 3:1-11](#)).

The law was not just to be applied externally, but the law applied internally as well. Paul recognized it when he understood the tenth commandment against coveting ([Romans 7:7](#)). This law applies exclusively to the internal condition of man and prohibits coveting (lusting) or evil desires. Jesus spoke about the internal dimension of the law as well when He joined anger with one’s brother to breaking of the commandment not to murder and looking lustfully at a woman as committing adultery in one’s heart ([Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28](#)).

You might be able to control your external behavior by

means other than by grace, but the only way you’ll change the evil desire of your heart is by a transformation by God. By looking at the inside, you can begin to see the reality of sin that the law reveals.

#### **God’s law rouses sin**

Secondly, the law works in us to stir up even more sin. Until you’re really convicted, sin is dead in the sense that it doesn’t overwhelm you. But when the law of God comes in, and you really see what sin is, sin then rises to become some kind of monster that you see in your life. That’s when a person really comes to Christ, because they’re overwhelmed by their sin.

When someone sees the law of God for what it really is, then the forbidden thing becomes all the more desirable. For example, Paul explains his natural response to the tenth commandment not to covet. “For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting” ([Romans 7:7-8](#)).

Consequently, the law is good in respect to revealing the utter sinfulness of sin within the sinner’s nature. As long as sin doesn’t seem to be much of a problem, the desperate need for a savior will not be recognized.

#### **The law puts our sense of self-righteousness to death**

Thirdly, the law devastates and destroys us. It ruins the sinner. Everything seemed to be fine before the convicting power of the law exposes our sin for what it really is. But when the law becomes clear to us, all of our hopes and dreams, and everything we counted on are shattered and destroyed. Paul wrote about his own experience: “Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died” ([Romans 7:9](#)).

John Bunyan’s book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, gives us a helpful analogy. The main character, Christian, is taken into Interpreter’s house. In this house is a large room (representing the heart) that’s full of dust (sin). A man (who represents the law) comes in with a broom and furiously goes about dusting the room. And, of course, the dust has no where to go, so the room fills itself with dust

and nearly suffocates Christian. This is what God's law does. That's what the law is intended to do, so you see what a sinner you really are.

### **God's law exposes the sinfulness of sin**

Fourth, the law reflects the sinfulness of sin. We might think there is something wrong with the law if it brings us to despair, but God's law is good, holy, just, and spiritual. Paul writes, "For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" ([Romans 7:11-12](#)).

The law deceived Paul by promising God's blessing if he would keep it, but showing him there was no way he could keep it when he tried to do so. So, the law's good work can be seen by its power to drive us to despair and out of despair comes salvation. The law can't save us. The law can't sanctify us. But the law can convict us to lead us in desperation to Jesus Christ.

### **Believers are able to keep the law imperfectly through the power of the Holy Spirit**

Genuine hope only comes after a sinner despairs in his own ability to do what God requires. When the sinner finds himself falling short, his proper response should be to cry out for God's mercy.

Jesus told a parable about two men who prayed, a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee thanked God that he wasn't like the other sinners. But the tax collector humbled himself. He wouldn't even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me a sinner." Jesus made the point that the tax collector, not the Pharisee, went home justified by God. He said, "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (See [Luke 18:9-14](#).)

Once we come to believe that Jesus came to fulfill the law on our behalf, we're clothed with His righteousness before God. We're reconciled to Him, and the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us. By His Spirit, our love for Jesus grows and we delight in pleasing Him by obeying His

commandments.

We will not be without sin, but God will forgive us as we confess our sins. (See [1 John 1:8-10](#).) And as we follow Him, we become beneficiaries of the promised blessings for those who obey His commandments. What initially became a curse to us led us to Christ has now become the source of our blessing. Praise be to God!

### **There's no room for self pride or boasting in oneself**

The apostle Paul longed for the salvation of his people, the Jews. He wrote, "Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" ([Romans 10:1-4](#)).

The hymn, [Rock of Ages, cleft for me](#), captures the humble spirit of the Christian. He knows that through Jesus Christ, God has done everything needed to be reconciled to Him. We can add nothing of merit to our salvation. Meditate on the following lyrics from the hymn:

“Not the labors of my hands  
Can fulfill thy law's commands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress,  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace:  
Foul, I to the fountain fly,  
Wash me, Savior, or I die

### **Come to the wellspring of life**

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are



## Be Reconciled Unto God

you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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# Made Holy Through the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ



*Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them Hebrews 7:25*

**We have all sinned and stand guilty before God, who requires us to be perfect as He is perfect. And God has declared that we must die as a result of our moral debt that we cannot repay. But God is also a merciful and loving God. So, He graciously provided a perfect sacrifice for us, One who would suffer and die for the punishment that we deserve. This substitute was none other than God's only Son, Jesus Christ. By faith in Him and what He did for us, we have God's forgiveness for all our sins and the promise of eternal life.**

**A substitutionary atonement is necessary to save sinners**

**All have sinned against God**

The Bible makes clear that we are all guilty of sin, even from our birth. (See [Romans 3:23](#), [Galatians 3:22](#), [Psalm 58:3](#), [Proverbs 22:15](#)) As a result of Adam's sin, all of his descendants would inherit a sin nature.

We are not sinners because we commit sins, rather we commit sins because we are sinners by nature. As evidence of this, sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Yet, all died after Adam and before the law was given because they were guilty by their very sinful nature, regardless of any individual sins they may have committed. (See [Romans 5:12-14](#).)

**The penalty for sin**

As sinners, we have a penalty to pay. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Romans 6:23](#)). This verse appears to be speaking not only about physical death but also spiritual death (separation from God) and eternal death (a never-ending separation from God's blessings).

We will all live forever. What matters the most is where and in what condition will we live. Those who refuse to be saved in this life will live in hell forever. Jesus knew about the reality of hell and taught a great deal about it. He warned that hell is a place of eternal torment prepared for the devil and his fallen angels. In addition, human beings who rebel against God will also have a place in hell. It's a place of unquenchable fire. It is full of darkness, suffering, and terrible pains. (See [Luke 16:23](#), [Matthew 5:22](#), [8:12](#), [10:28](#), [11:20-24](#), [25:41](#), [25:46](#).)

**The remedy for sinners**

The verdict for sin is death. God requires that a life must be given, and its blood be shed. However, God has also graciously allowed a substitute to die in the place of the

sinner under certain circumstances. “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life ([Leviticus 17:11](#)).

The good news is that sinners don’t have to go to hell when they die. There is One who has suffered and died in the place of those who are willing to repent of their sins and believe in God’s promise of forgiveness. That Person is God’s own Son, Jesus Christ the Lord. We’ll see how Jesus’ one act of sacrifice could benefit so many people who would ever believe in Him and what He did for them.

## **The sacrifices required to cover sins before Jesus Christ came**

### **Early signs that animals would be sacrificed for man’s benefit**

Before the fall of Adam, he and his wife Eve were both naked, and they felt no shame ([Genesis 2:25](#)). But after they had sinned, then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves ([Genesis 3:7](#)). And after God pronounced His curses for their disobedience, the LORD made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them ([Genesis 3:21](#)). This was the first time a sacrifice of animals for the sake of humankind is recorded in Scripture.

Eve gave birth to Cain and then to Abel. They both brought offerings to the LORD. Since Cain worked the soil, he brought some fruits of the soil as his offering. But Abel kept flocks, so he brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD was pleased with Abel’s offering, but He did not look with favor on Cain’s offering. Apparently, the sacrifice of the best of the flock was well-pleasing to the LORD, but the offering produced by the work of Cain’s own hands were not.

From the time of Adam until the flood, man did not eat meat. “Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food’” ([Genesis 1:29](#)). But after the flood, God blessed Noah and his sons. He told them, “Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now

give you everything” ([Genesis 9:3](#)). For the first time, man was allowed to kill animals for food.

## **The blood of the Passover Lamb spared the firstborn males of the Israelites**

After Joseph brought his father’s and brothers’ families, seventy in all, to Egypt, the Israelites greatly multiplied. Eventually, a new king, who didn’t know about Joseph, came to power and became threatened by the Israelites due to their numbers. So, he enslaved them and put slave masters in charge of them. The oppression became so great that they cried out to the LORD for relief. He heard their cries and then appointed Moses to lead them out of Egypt into the promised land.

Through Moses, the LORD afflicted Egypt with ten plagues so that His wonders would be multiplied in Egypt. After each of the first nine plagues, the king refused Moses’ request to leave Egypt. But the tenth plague would be so devastating to the Egyptians that the king would finally consent to Moses’ demand. The LORD planned to go throughout Egypt at midnight and strike down the firstborn male of every household, including the firstborn of all the livestock.

But the LORD would make a distinction between Egypt and Israel. He told Moses and Aaron to tell the whole community of Israel to slaughter a lamb for each household and place its blood on the doorframe. When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the doorframe and will pass over that doorway. He will not let the destroyer enter into the house and strike down their firstborn. This act of deliverance by the LORD is a day that God ordained would be commemorated by the Jews every year.

## **God establishes a system of sacrifices for the Israelites**

God condescended to use the sacrifice of animals to cover the sins of His people until the perfect sacrifice could be made. God’s own Son, Jesus Christ, is the only Person who could qualify to make the sacrifice since He alone was sinless. (Had He sinned just once, His death would have only been for Himself.) These sacrifices were a picture and foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice that was yet to come. We’re saved the same way in both the Old and New

## Be Reconciled Unto God

Testament—the righteous shall live by faith.

When God gave Moses the ten commandments at Mt. Sinai, He also instituted various sacrifices to be made at various times and for various reasons. There were mandatory and voluntary sacrifices. Some sacrifices required the blood of an animal, and some involved the fruit of the land (e.g., grain, wine, oil). There were sacrifices that were split into two or three portions—God’s portion, the portion for the Levites or priests, and possibly a portion for the person offering the sacrifice. In some cases, the whole animal sacrifice, including the meat and bones and organs, belonged only to God and was totally burnt.

The following table describes the basic characteristics of the prescribed individual sacrifices.

### Types of Old Testament Sacrifices for Individuals

## The perfect sacrifice willingly offered by Jesus Christ

While God forgave the sins of those, who by faith, offered their bloody sacrifices as the law demanded, the sacrifices themselves were inferior to the ultimate one to come. When Christ came into the world, He said, “... Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” ([Hebrews 10:8-10](#)).

Before the cross of Christ, it may have seemed that God was being lenient in overlooking the sins of those who were saved. But Paul insists that was not the case. The Lord knew that Christ would make full expiation (removal) of their sins, and so He saved them on that basis. (See [Romans 3:25](#).) So, the Old Testament period was a time of forbearance, as He held back His judgment of their sin. Then, when it came time for Christ to be crucified, God unleashed the full fury of His righteous wrath on the Son He loved.

The writer of Hebrews explains how the Person and priestly ministry of Jesus Christ was far superior to that

Name	Purpose(s)	Offering	Portion(s)
Burnt offering (Voluntary)	An act of devotion and commitment to God	Male cattle, male sheep, male goats, doves, pigeons	Blood, flesh, and fat poured and placed on the main altar for God to be burnt
Grain offering, accompanied by a drink offering (Voluntary)	Express thanksgiving in recognition of God’s provision and unmerited good will	A cake or baked bread made with grain, fine flour, and oil and salt; about a quart of wine	All was placed or poured into the fire on the altar
Fellowship offering or “peace” offerings, including vow offerings, thanksgiving offerings & freewill offerings (Voluntary)	A sacrifice of thanksgiving and fellowship, followed by a shared meal	Any unblemished animal from the worshiper’s herd, and/or various grains or breads.	Fat, kidneys, lobe of liver burnt for God; breast to high priest; right foreleg to priest; remainder to participants
Sin offering (Mandatory)	Atone for sin and cleanse from defilement.	A young bull, male goat, female goat, dove/pigeon, or 1/10 ephah of fine flour, depending on the identity & financial status of the giver	Fatty portions & lobe of the liver & kidneys were given to God (burnt); the rest was either totally burned or eaten within the tabernacle court.
Guilt offering	Atonement for	Normally a ram from	Fatty portions &

Name	Purpose(s)	Offering	Portion(s)
(Mandatory)	unintentional sins that required reimbursement to an offended party. Also, cleansing from defiling sins or physical maladies.	the flock	lobe of the liver & kidneys were given to God (burnt); the rest had to be eaten within the tabernacle court.

which proceeded it. The following table illustrates some of the key differences.

### Comparison of the Old Testament sacrificial system to Jesus Christ's sacrifice

#### How the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice are received

Though Jesus sacrifice is sufficient to save all people, it is only efficient (effective) for those who meet God's condition. To receive forgiveness, we must believe in the Jesus who is revealed in the Bible and in His work of atonement for us. The apostle John wrote, "Then they [the crowd] asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent'" ([John 6:28-29](#)).

Our works play no part in earning God's acceptance. We are saved solely by grace, a totally unearned gift of God. Jesus told Nicodemus, the Pharisee, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" ([John 3:3](#)). He later told the disciples, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away... For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" ([John 6:37, 40](#))

To believe in Christ is not only a belief in the facts about Jesus Christ, it is also a deep trust and reliance on what He has done for you personally. It is a commitment that you humbly make to follow Him as Lord of your life. When

Jesus Christ Superior in His Person	Jesus Christ Superior as Our Priest	Jesus Christ Superior for Life
The Father has chosen His Son to minister. ( <a href="#">Hebrews 1:1-3</a> )	Jesus, the High Priest is better than Aaron, the first high priest. ( <a href="#">Hebrews 5:1-10</a> )	Faith to believe God ( <a href="#">Hebrews 10:19-39</a> )
Christ is superior to the angels. ( <a href="#">Hebrews 1:4-14</a> )	Jesus is our Priest forever in the order of <a href="#">Melchizedek</a> . ( <a href="#">Hebrews 7:1-28</a> )	Hope to endure trials by faith ( <a href="#">Hebrews 11:1-40</a> )
Jesus is compared to Moses and is declared to be greater than Moses. ( <a href="#">Hebrews 3:1-6</a> )	The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. ( <a href="#">Hebrews 8:5-13</a> )	Encouragement and God's discipline to live a godly life ( <a href="#">Hebrews 12:1-29</a> )
	The heavenly sanctuary and its sacrifice of God's own Son is better than the earthly sanctuary and its animal sacrifices. ( <a href="#">Hebrews 8:1-2, 9:1-28, 10:1-18</a> )	

you believe in Christ, you honor the Father who sent Him! If you know and believe this to be true, surrender your life to him this very day, and settle your eternal destiny once and for all.

### Come to the wellspring of life

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you

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don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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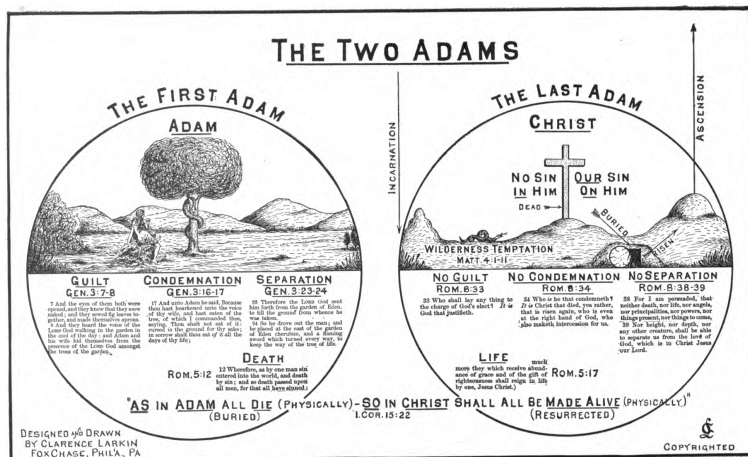
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# We Are Dead In Adam Or Made Alive In Christ



which was lost in Adam is gained, and much more, in Christ.

## How sin, condemnation and death spread to all mankind

Paul writes, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone’s account where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come” ([Romans 5:12-14](#)).

**One man’s deed can affect many. Through one act of sin, Adam affected the whole human race. By his one act of disobedience, sin entered into the entire human race, and death reigned through sin. But through His one act of obedience, Christ brings righteousness and life to all who follow in Him.**

There are the following four steps in the logical progression of Paul’s argument:

## Adam and the reign of death

### The claim of consistency between the effect of Adam’s disobedience and Christ’s obedience

The good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ can best be understood in light of the hopeless condition mankind is in without it. The apostle Paul explains how the whole human race is guilty of sin and destined for God’s condemnation and death. His explanation serves to prove that one man’s single act can have an imputed spiritual effect on many others. The argument makes the claim that if Adam’s sin has brought guilt on all of us, then it’s logical to conclude that Christ can be justly punished for our sin and His righteousness credited to all of those who believe in Him.

## Sin entered the world through one man.

God created Adam, who was the first man, in His own image. He was created in a state of innocence, but not yet proven to be righteous. For that to happen, Adam would have to be tested. God put Adam in a garden in Eden to work it and take care of it. The garden provided everything Adam needed to live. God only placed one restriction on Adam. He was forbidden to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God forewarned him saying “...for when you eat of it you will surely die” ([Genesis 2:17](#)).

Paul makes an analogy between the universal effect of Adam’s disobedience on all of mankind with the universal effect of Christ’s atonement on all of those who believe in Him. He then points out the differences between the results secured by Adam and those secured by Christ. Everything

After Eve was created, the serpent (Satan’s agent) tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden tree even though she knew better. Then she gave some to Adam and he ate it too. Their eyes were then opened and they were ashamed because they realized they were naked. They also hid from the LORD God when He called for them because they were afraid.

Consequently, Adam disobeyed God, and sin entered into the human race through Adam’s transgression of God’s explicit commandment.

## **Death entered the world through sin.**

We might have expected that God would have struck them down immediately for their sin. Surely, however, the process of dying began right away and would eventually lead to their physical death. Though death now reigns over human life, it is the result of sin. If there had been no sin, life would go on forever. Death is an unnatural part of life and will ultimately be conquered.

Most importantly, Adam's disobedience led immediately to spiritual death, which is a separation from God. This cause us to be estranged from God. We are in fact apart from Him and left without eternal hope.

## **Death spread to all men because all sinned.**

### **We sin because we have inherited a sinful nature**

This concept may be difficult to understand so let's follow Paul's argument. There is a distinction to be made between "sin" and "sins". We are not sinners because we commit individual "sins". Rather, we commit individual "sins" because we are sinners by our very nature. We inherited that sinful nature from our first Father, Adam. Our natural disposition is to sin, because we place our self-will above the will of God and do not submit to His authority. In other words, we're all born sinners. Even a newborn baby is a sinner by virtue of being a member of the human race, even though that baby has not yet committed any "sins".

So, Paul is arguing that the spiritual death that Adam and Eve experienced has been passed onto their progeny. Therefore death reigns over the whole human race because God treats us all as guilty of sin on account of our sinful nature, not because of the specific "sins" we commit.

### **How every person can be held responsible for Adam's disobedience**

If this concept seems unfair, we must understand that we may never fully comprehend it. However, the Bible reveals there are times when God judges people corporately for the sin of an individual. For example, when King David sinned by deciding to count the fighting men of Israel, seventy thousand people died of the plague because of his disobedience ([2 Samuel 24:1-17](#)).

Also, after Achan took forbidden plunder, the LORD's anger burned against Israel. So, the men of Ai prevailed against Israel and thirty-six men died. Not only was Achan destroyed for his sin, but his whole family and all of his belongings, including the plunder, were destroyed as well ([Joshua 7:1-26](#)).

Finally, Jesus is shown to be a more superior priest than [Aaron](#), who was Israel's first high priest, because God likened His priesthood to the order of [Melchizedek](#) ([Hebrews 5:6](#)). By way of contrast, Aaron and his priesthood descended from the line of Levi, the son of Jacob whose great grandfather was Abraham.

It was [Abraham who gave his tithes to Melchizedek](#), who then gave Abraham his blessing. Beyond doubt, the lesser person is blessed by the greater. "One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor ([Hebrews 9:7-8](#)). Likewise, when Adam sinned, you could say that every human being was still in his body. He represented the human race before God. So, through our common bond, his guilt corporately passed on to us, because we have inherited our sinful nature from him as a just consequence of his act of disobedience.

## **History proves it to be true.**

Paul then proves the point that our guilt as sinners is attributable to our nature and not because of our individual sinful acts. He points out that sins were in the world but not held against those who committed them before the law was given. Yet, they all died. But, unlike Adam, who disobeyed God's commandment, his posterity had no law to break because the law had not been given until the time of Moses. Therefore, the cause of the sinful acts (i.e., the sinful nature) must have been the reason for the penalty of death to universally occur when there is no law to condemn the acts themselves.

## **Christ and the reign of life**

Having argued that all men inherited the sin nature from Adam, Paul then makes the analogy between Adam and "the one to come", who is Christ.

"But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many



died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

“Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

“The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” ([Romans 5:15-21](#)).

### **The provision of Christ's gift is greater than Adam's offense**

Let's first notice that Christ's act of obedience unto death had a greater effect than Adam's single act of disobedience. Adam's act brought death, Christ's act accomplished much more. Christ's act didn't just return men back to the same condition of innocence that Adam was in before he sinned, instead it took men from death, beyond the innocence of Adam, to the very righteousness of Christ.

Christ's redemption is not limited to redemption. He brings the gift of salvation, justification, and righteousness. We receive power over our sins now and a full release from the presence of all sin when we are glorified. Christ's redemption is so much more than just cancelling sin. So Christ's gift is greater than Adam's offense.

### **Adam's one sin damned everybody, but Christ's gift forgives all believers' sins**

Although one sin brought the condemnation that came

upon us all, the free gift of grace brings forgiveness of all the sins of all the people who believe in Him. Just think that God considers a single act of sin so serious that He would condemn the entire race because of Adam's sin. So, how much more does God express his grace by freely forgiving the multitude of sins that everyone of us who believe in Christ commits?

### **Grace overpowers the consequences of sin**

Adam expected one result but he received another. He apparently joined Eve in anticipation of becoming like God. But instead, he and his progeny received God's curse of death. On the other hand, Christ's act of obedience brought exactly what was expected, which includes fully reigning in life. We are blessed with eternal life; we are kings and priests who inherit all God's possessions, and our lives go on forever.

Not only do we live forever if we belong to Christ, God transforms our lives to be like His. He also gives us authority and power to overcome sin and darkness. We don't have to be the victim of sin any longer. God calls us to live a holy and triumphant life. Righteousness in Christ makes us right with God and we reign. So, when grace comes through Christ, it overpowers the consequences of sin.

### **Adam's one sin made us sinners, but Christ's life of obedience brings us righteousness**

Through one man, Adam, comes sin, condemnation and death. But through one man, Christ, comes righteousness, justification and life. So, the essence of Adam's act was his disobedience, and the essence of Christ's act was obedience.

When Adam sinned once, the whole human race were made sinners. All of us became children of disobedience since we were born into a disobedient race. Disobedience became a part of our make-up. So, all of us will sin.

But when Christ came, His whole life was one act of obedience, even unto death. As a result, we not only are credited with His perfect righteousness, but our nature has also changed. We have become new creations in Christ Jesus. God has planted in us a heart of righteousness that

## Be Reconciled Unto God

must bear fruit. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#))

We now desire to live for Him. “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” ([Galatians 2:20](#)). And we now have a newfound love for Christ, so we long to please Him. Jesus said, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” ([John 14:23](#)).

## Grace is greater than our sin

God’s law not only revealed our inability to keep it, but it also incited us to sin even more. It had no ability to restrain sin due to our nature as sinners. We naturally rebel against the authority of God and the dictates of our conscience. The law was unable to change our inherited sinful nature. It just made known how desperately we needed righteousness.

But to those who are redeemed by Christ, the law restrains sin because the law becomes the pleasure of their hearts. So, the law excites sin to the unregenerate but restrains sin to the regenerate. Therefore, where sin abounded, grace did much more. The energizing force behind sin is the law, whereas the greater energy behind righteousness is God’s grace.

## Choose Christ and live

Death is inevitable. It awaits us all. It can be the beginning of a worse death forever without God and without those who are alive forever. But it can also be the beginning of

eternal bliss in the presence of the living God. The choice is yours. The truth is that you were there with Adam, and you sinned and you’ll die. But you can have joy in knowing that your sins have been forgiven and you have peace with God. Which will you choose?

## Come to the wellspring of life

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you’ll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don’t know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you’ll know where and how you’ll spend eternity.

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## No One is Good Enough to be Saved



*<em>For it is by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not from yourselves it is the gift of God not by works so that no one can boast<em> <em>Ephesians 2:8-9<em>*

**The Bible teaches that there is only one way to be saved from God’s wrath. We are saved by grace not by works. Anyone who relies on his works to gain God’s favor is actually under the curse of God’s law. The law was intended to show us that sinners can’t keep His law. When we despair in our own efforts, we open ourselves up to discover the beauty of God’s grace. We can do nothing to earn it, and once we have it, we can do nothing to fall out of it.**

### **The apostle Paul placed no confidence in his own goodness**

Most of the people in the world believe they will attain eternal life by living a good life. Paul once thought so too. He had accumulated one of the most impressive records of religious heritage and achievement among the Jews. If anyone should be able to open the doors of the kingdom of God by their credentials, it would surely be Paul. But when he encountered the risen Lord on his way to persecute Christians in Damascus, his perspective was turned upside down.

Paul writes, “If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of

Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ” ([Philippians 3:4-8](#)).

He discovered that salvation is by grace through faith. It has nothing to do with what you have received by way of heritage, it has nothing to do with human effort or religious duties, but it has everything to do with Christ.

### **The Jews relied on their own righteousness for salvation**

Paul lamented his fellow Israelites’ rejection of Jesus Christ, their Messiah. His heart’s desire and prayer was that they would be saved. In his letter to the saints at Rome, Paul explained why the Jews rejected his central message that we are saved by faith in Christ, not by our works.

Paul wrote, “... the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone... I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness” ([Romans 9:31-32](#), [10:2](#)).

They were ignorant of how holy God was. They didn’t know how absolutely pure and intolerant of sin He was. So, they conceived of a God who was less holy than He truly is, and they made themselves out to be more holy than they actually were. Therefore, they imagined they could meet God’s holy standards by their own perceived self-righteousness. God’s standard damns the soul of man since His standard is nothing less than perfection.

## Submitting to laws and customs for salvation is condemned

As the church in Galatia was getting started, a group of Jewish Christians, known as the Judaizers, were spreading a different gospel that Paul said was really no gospel at all. They argued that faith in Christ alone was insufficient by itself to save anyone. Instead, they taught that in order for a Christian to be truly right with God, he must conform to the Mosaic Law. Circumcision, especially, was promoted as necessary for salvation. Gentiles had to become Jewish proselytes first, and then they could come to Christ.

To counter this pernicious lie, Paul wrote, “For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.’ Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because ‘the righteous will live by faith.’ The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, ‘The person who does these things will live by them’” ([Galatians 3:10-12](#)).

The point is that if someone is going to trust, even in part, in his ability to keep God’s law for salvation, he would have to obey it perfectly. This is impossible for sinful man to do, and it detracts from what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross.

## St. Augustine prevails over Pelagius’ view of man’s free will

St. Augustine is widely regarded as “perhaps the most significant Christian thinker after Paul”<sup>1</sup> Like the apostle Paul, he taught that human beings cannot attain righteousness by their own efforts and are totally dependent upon the grace of God.

Pelagius objected to the theological implications of Augustine’s prayer, in which he said, “O God, command what you will and give what you command.” The prayer’s meaning was for God to command whatever He wants and for Him to grant the grace needed to obey His commands. Pelagius believed God would not command believers to do the impossible, and therefore it must be possible to satisfy all divine commandments.

Pelagius claimed that Adam’s sin did not affect the rest of humanity. This countered Augustine’s teachings that humanity was totally depraved in his very nature due to Adam’s sin. He rejected the notion that people are born corrupt and sin because of their own fallen nature. He taught that people are like Adam when he was created; they can sin because of free will. Pelagianism emphasizes a person’s responsibility for their own sinful nature. According to this view, people are not lost in their sin, but rather they have the ability to control themselves. Although a person could theoretically live a sinless life, in practice nobody does.

Pelagius’ antibiblical views were decisively condemned by the church at the 418 Council of Carthage. However, they still maintain a popular following among liberal religious institutions.

## The controversy over works between Catholics and Protestants

There is a fundamental difference between the Roman Catholic view of righteousness and the Protestant view. For the Roman Catholic, the believer is made righteous by his or her cooperating with God’s grace. For the Protestant, the believer is *declared* righteous when he comes to faith, based on the righteousness of Christ credited (imputed) to him.

## The Roman Catholic doctrine of infused righteousness

**Infused righteousness**<sup>2</sup> refers to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Justification, i.e. right standing before God. Within the Roman Catholic view, Justification is seen as a “process” as contrasted to the Protestant view of a moment-in-time forensic declaration by God that the sinner is righteous. The instrumental cause of infused righteousness are the sacraments of baptism and penance, whereas the instrumental cause of imputed righteousness is faith.

Roman Catholicism maintains that the righteousness of the saints and of Christ is gradually “infused” into the believer through the sacraments. For the Catholic, infused righteousness either gradually dissipates as the believer takes part in worldly sins or is enhanced by good works.

If the believer dies without having the fullness of righteousness, coming in part from the last rites, he or she will temporarily spend time in purgatory until the sinful status is purged from his or her record.

### **The Protestant Christianity doctrine of imputed righteousness**

**Imputed righteousness**<sup>3</sup> is a theological concept directly related to the doctrine of [Justification](#). It is particularly prevalent in the Reformed tradition.

“Justification is that step in salvation in which God declares the believer righteous. Protestant theology has emphasized that this includes the imputation of Christ’s righteousness (crediting it to the believer’s “account”), whereas Roman Catholic theology emphasizes that God justifies in accord with an [infused righteousness](#) merited by Christ and maintained by the believer’s good works,” (Elwell Evangelical Dictionary). Imputed righteousness therefore means that upon repentance and belief in Christ, individuals are forensically declared righteous. This righteousness is not the believer’s own, rather it is Christ’s own righteousness ‘imputed’ to the believer.

Imputed righteousness is one of the classic doctrines of [Protestantism](#) and traces back through the Reformers – chiefly [John Calvin](#) and [Martin Luther](#). These men stood against the Roman Catholic doctrine of *infused righteousness* where the righteousness of the saints and of Christ is gradually infused to the believer through the sacraments. For the Catholic, infused righteousness either gradually dissipates as the believer takes part in worldly sins or is enhanced by good works. If the believer dies without having the fullness of righteousness, coming in part from the last rites, he or she will temporarily spend time in [purgatory](#) until the sinful status is purged from his or her record.

### **The reason this doctrine divides Roman Catholics from Protestants**

The Bible claims “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). Any religion, like Roman Catholicism, that incorporates the believer’s cooperating works, in whole or in part, to achieve an illusion of self-righteousness will

always fall woefully short of God’s perfect standard. Moreover, it would give a good reason for human boasting and diminish the value of Christ’s atoning work. There’s no discernable difference between the false gospel promoted by the Judaizers and this Roman Catholic doctrine.

### **The unsettled debate between Calvinism and Arminianism**

#### **The two main branches of evangelical Christianity**

**Calvinism**, the theology advanced by [John Calvin](#), a Protestant reformer in the 16th century, and its development by his followers. The term also refers to [doctrines](#) and practices derived from the works of Calvin and his followers that are characteristic of the [Reformed churches](#). The Calvinism form of [Protestantism](#) is thought to have had a major impact on the formation of the modern world.<sup>4</sup>

**Arminianism**, a theological movement in Protestant Christianity that arose as a liberal reaction to the [Calvinist](#) doctrine of predestination. The movement began early in the 17th century and asserted that God’s sovereignty and human free will are compatible.<sup>5</sup>

#### **History of the debate**

The **Arminian movement**<sup>6</sup> began when [Jacobus Arminius](#), who was a Dutch Reformed theologian became critical of the Calvinist doctrines of election and reprobation. His teaching at the University of Leiden between 1603 and 1609 became a point of concern with the reformed church.

The movement was named for [Jacobus Arminius](#), a Dutch Reformed theologian of the [University of Leiden](#) (1603–09). He became involved in a highly publicized debate with his colleague Franciscus Gomarus, a rigid Calvinist, concerning the Calvinist interpretation of the divine decrees respecting election and reprobation. For Arminius, God’s will as unceasing love was the determinative initiator and arbiter of human destiny. The movement that became known as Arminianism, however,

tended to be more liberal than Arminius.

## Key differences between Calvinism and Arminianism

	John Calvin* Foundation laid by Augustine	John Wesley Foundation laid by Arminius
T	<b>Total Depravity</b> - Human beings are so affected by the negative consequences of original sin that they are incapable of being righteous, and are always and unchangeably sinful; human freedom is totally enslaved by sin so we can only choose evil.	<b>Deprivation</b> - Human beings are sinful and without God, incapable (deprived) on their own of being righteous; however, they are not irredeemably sinful and can be transformed by God's grace; God's prevenient grace restores to humanity the freedom of will.
U	<b>Unconditional Election</b> - Since human beings cannot choose for themselves, God by His eternal decree has chosen or elected some to be counted as righteous, without any conditions being placed on that election.	<b>Conditional Election</b> - God has chosen that all humanity be righteous by His grace, yet has called us to respond to that grace by exercising our God-restored human freedom as a condition of fulfilling election.
L	<b>Limited Atonement</b> - The effects of the Atonement, by which God forgave sinful humanity, are limited only to those whom He has chosen.	<b>Unlimited Atonement</b> - The effects of the Atonement are freely available to all those whom He has chosen, which includes all humanity, "whosoever will."
I	<b>Irresistible Grace</b> - The grace that God extends to human beings to effect their election cannot be refused, since it has been decreed by God.	<b>Resistible Grace</b> - God's grace is free and offered without merit; however, human beings have been granted freedom by God and can refuse His grace.
P	<b>Perseverance of the Saints</b> - Since God has decreed the elect, and they cannot resist grace, they are unconditionally and eternally secure in that election.	<b>Assurance and Security</b> - There is security in God's grace that allows assurance of salvation, but that security is in relation to continued faithfulness; we can still defiantly reject God.

- Your **peace in God and joy** will skyrocket when you're fully secure in God's unfailing love. He will never disown a true believer in Christ.
- Your **love for God** will soar as you realize He did for you what you could not do for yourself.
- God knew you by name. He didn't just hope to save an uncertain group of people. **He chose you** individually before the world began.
- God didn't violate your **free will**. We're in bondage to sin. We're free to do what we want, but we don't have the liberty to do what we ought.

## Can you contribute anything to your salvation?

### The reason this debate matters

Not everyone who would label themselves as a Calvinist agrees with all five points above. Those who would call themselves four-point Calvinists usually have trouble believing Limited Atonement. Likewise, many Arminians hold a view very similar to Calvinism's view of Total Depravity. And many of them deny the last point of conditional security and holds to the view of eternal security.

### The peace and joy that comes by faith alone in Christ alone

As a Calvinist, I want to be clear that I believe there are many true Christians in both theological camps. This debate is primarily a debate among Christians. However, it's important that we dig deep within Scripture to receive the full peace and joy that it holds. In that spirit, I would like to offer the following thoughts:

- There is **logical consistency** between the five points within each side of the debate. So, if you pick and choose which points to affirm, your views become inconsistent.
- If you're trusting in yourself at all for salvation, you've risked falling into the "**faith plus works category**" of belief. We have seen that this is a disastrous false gospel. Do not rob God of the *full* credit for your salvation. He doesn't allow boasting when it comes to salvation. He wants and deserves all the glory and praise for it.

Can you answer the question, "Why did God save you, but not someone else"? That should truly be an unanswerable question. If you answered it was because of your faith, then why did you have saving faith when another person didn't? Faith is a gift of God, so why did He grant it to you but not to another? If you think you can answer these questions, I think you've missed the meaning of grace. Grace is a completely undeserved gift from God. Man normally recoils at the idea that salvation fully depends on the sovereignty of God.

Yet, God holds man responsible for his moral choice to believe in His Son, whom He sent to save us. Would God hold us accountable for doing what we can't do for ourselves as sinners? It may seem like a contradiction, but it's really a paradox (an apparent contraction) that's difficult for us to understand.

Many people believe their good works will help them earn their way to heaven. As we have seen, that belief damns countless millions of people. According to the State of Theology 2022 survey, 33% of US Adults don't believe the truth that God counts a person righteous only because of faith in Jesus Christ, not because of one's work. Just because someone lives in this country, we can't assume that they know what Jesus Christ has done for them. It's up to God's people to share the truth with them.

## Come to the wellspring of life

Ask yourself two very important questions. First, are you sure that you'll go to heaven when you die? Secondly, are

## Be Reconciled Unto God

you certain why God should let you into heaven? If you don't know for sure, you can settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity.

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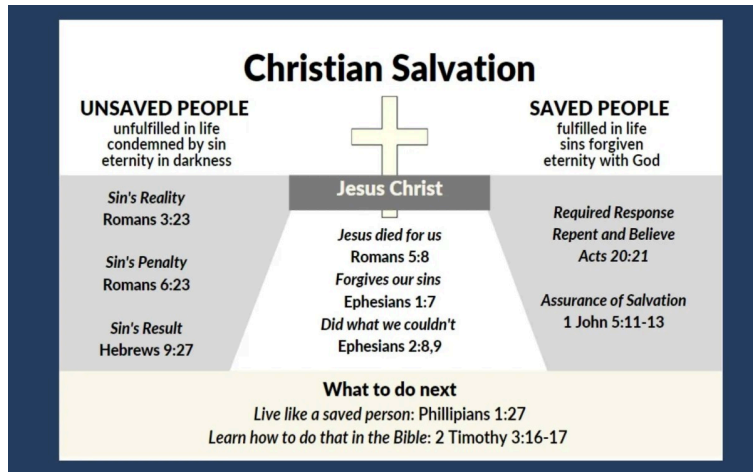
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- 5 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Arminianism>
- 6 For more in-depth historical background, go to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Calvinist%E2%80%93Arminian\\_debate#endnote\\_6-Pict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Calvinist%E2%80%93Arminian_debate#endnote_6-Pict)

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# Make the Great Exchange



*<sup><sup>God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God 2 Corinthians 5:21*

**By grace through faith, we make the great exchange. Jesus took upon Himself the punishment for our sins and He credited His perfect righteousness to our account. But we have to be willing to turn from our sinful ways and abandon our sense of self-righteousness to receive Christ as Savior and Lord. Jesus tells us that we should count the cost of following Him, because He demands our whole heart.**

## Christ was willing to make the great exchange for us

Jesus willingly humbled Himself for you and me by offering Himself as a substitute in our place to meet the just demands of God for our iniquities. The Bible beautifully describes the nature of His work on behalf of sinners.

“... have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ([Philippians 2:5-11](#)).

He has given His all for you! He would not have come to die for you if it wasn't absolutely necessary to reconcile you to the Father. The question remains whether you have received His free gift of mercy. Will you reject your only hope for eternal life in order to hold onto the momentary pleasures of sin and pride? Let's consider what we must be willing to give up so we can gain the treasures only found in Christ.

## Surrendering our past way of life to Christ

Salvation is like making a transaction. We must be willing to give up something in order to gain something we value more. As sinners, we must be willing to humbly admit our guilt before God, seek His mercy and receive His forgiveness on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done for us. This part of the transaction calls for repentance, which consists of a change of mind and heart about the future direction of our life. And it results in a commitment to turn away from our former sinful way of life.

Not only do we turn away from those areas of life we know to be wrong, but we also turn away from relying on the prideful areas we counted on to win favor with God. They may be good in some respects, but they will never measure up to the standard of perfection God requires.

The apostle Paul knew this very well when he was converted. Many of us know about [Paul's conversion](#) when he encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus ([Acts 9:1-19](#)). This is the historical record. However, it doesn't describe his state of mind. (You can read about that



in [Philippians 3:4-11](#).)

## The confidence Paul had in himself before he considered it all a loss at his conversion

Paul had a great deal that he could be proud about. He wrote, “If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless” ([Philippians 3:4-6](#)).

Before his conversion, Paul trusted that these areas would ensure a good standing before God.

- **Ritual.** [Circumcision](#) was a strict Jewish rite, by which you are initiated into the covenant people. So, Paul started his life with the most essential rite and sacrament which they felt was absolutely necessary for salvation.
- **Race.** Paul was not a proselyte who became a Jew later in life. He was a natural born member of the nation of Israel. And the children of Israel were the covenant people, chosen by God.
- **Rank.** Paul was from the [tribe of Benjamin](#), which was a prestigious tribe of Israel to belong to. Benjamin was Jacob’s youngest son, born to his favorite wife Rachel.
- **Tradition.** Paul says he was a “Hebrew of [Hebrews](#)“. This may have been his way of saying that even though he grew up in Gentile territory, both his parents were Hebrews, they spoke Hebrew, and they followed the traditions of Judaism.
- **Religion.** Paul had achieved the highest level of religious achievement in Judaism. He had become a [Pharisee](#).
- **Sincerity.** He loved God, He loved the law of God, and he love the community of God. He loved Judaism so much he that he hated anything that threatened it, and Christianity threatened it.
- **Righteous works.** Outwardly speaking, he lived according to the law, though he knew he wasn’t sinless. He admits to fighting sin in [Romans 7:5-11](#).

## Committing our future to the Lord

We have to believe that our gain in coming to Christ is worth far greater than what we must give up to become His disciple. Paul was willing to give up his impeccable credentials and reputation in order to gain Christ. He wrote, “But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ” ([Philippians 3:7-9](#)).

## The treasures Paul found in Christ

Here’s what’s really of the utmost importance for Paul. “What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of *knowing* Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the *righteousness that comes from God* on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the *power of his resurrection* and *participation in his sufferings*, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, *attaining to the resurrection from the dead* ([Philippians 3:9-11](#)).

Paul mentions the following five things that were worth more to him than everything he had been formally trusting in for salvation.

## The knowledge of Jesus Christ

Paul is not referring to just an intellectual knowledge about Christ. He’s referring to a transcendent experience of communing love with Christ. It’s a bond of love that’s intimate, supernatural, and transcendent. It’s an otherworldly experience of seeing Jesus in His priestly role as the Savior, Christ in His prophetic role as God’s messenger, and also as King in his role as Lord. And yet, experiencing Him in an intimate personal relationship.

## The righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Paul worked his whole life trying to gain a righteousness of his own derived by the law. It’s a great burden to bear and a deception that it is even possible. Instead, Paul was more than willing to trade his failed past efforts for the righteousness of God that comes by faith in Christ.

## **The power of Jesus Christ as displayed in His resurrection.**

Paul wanted to experience the same power that Christ displayed in His resurrection from the dead. He knew there was no power in the law. He had no power to overcome sin in the flesh, no power for spiritual service in the flesh, no power for witnessing in the flesh, and no power for victory in the flesh. He'd already experienced resurrection power in his salvation, but he wanted more. He also wanted the power to continue to be a useful resource for Him.

## **Fellowship with Jesus Christ by participating in His sufferings**

Paul needed a companion in his suffering. He needed someone who could be strong for him when he was weak. Where do we go when we suffer. In Christ, Paul gained someone to fellowship with when he suffered. He finds in Christ a sympathetic merciful high priest who cares. He is a friend who feels his pain and was tempted just like he was.

## **Attaining to the resurrection of the dead when Christ returns in His glory**

Paul also longed for the resurrection from the dead. This would take place at the Rapture when Christ comes in His glory to gather His children to be with Him. He eagerly awaited for the Savior who will come again and transform his body and end the conflict of the flesh and the spirit.

## **Counting the cost of following Christ**

While God's grace is a free gift, it comes by means of a genuine faith, which is willing and committed to following Christ as one's Lord. In that respect, we no longer choose to rule ourselves. Instead, we place Christ as King over our life. We become like a willing bondservant to Him, someone who is in a permanent position of servitude to Him. We obey Him because we love Him.

## **The Cost of Being a Disciple**

Jesus warned that His way would not be popular or easy.

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)). Which road are you on?”

“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me’” ([Luke 9:23](#)). Christ's demands will take top priority.

“Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.’

‘Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.’

‘Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples’ ([Luke 14:25-33](#)).

## **Jesus rebuked three would-be followers of Christ (Luke 9:57-62)**

**The path is not easy.** “As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’ Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.’”

**Go when when He calls.** “He said to another man, ‘Follow me.’ But he replied, ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’”

**Don't be uncertain.** "Still another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.' Jesus replied, 'No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.'"

## What is most important to you?

Are you ready to make the exchange? What's so important to you that you wouldn't gladly let it go to save your soul for eternity? Your life is like a vapor, here today and gone tomorrow. As compared to your eternity, whether in heaven or hell, your present life is like a single grain of sand in a beach full of sand. Don't let this moment slip away without making a decision.

Jesus Christ is our peace. He's the only one who can bridge the gap between a perfectly holy and just God and an unholy sinner like you and me. Don't be separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship in heaven, without hope and without God. Cry out to Him to be merciful to you, a sinner. Receive Him as your Lord, who was risen from the dead. Don't let another day go by until your destiny is settled.

If you aren't sure that you will go to heaven when you die, and you're not certain why God should let you into heaven,

settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know how to answer the ultimate question, where and how you'll spend eternity.

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## A Dead Faith Saves No One



*<sup><sup>For we are Gods handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do Ephesians 2:10*

**The faith that saves is a free gift from God. It's also a living faith, a faith which inevitably produces good works. A dead faith, devoid of good works, saves no one, because it did not come from God. No human efforts can win God's approval, but the indwelling Holy Spirit within all believers ensures that every true Christian will bear much fruit. This is the evidence of a living faith.**

### **We are saved by grace through faith in Christ – Not by works**

Both the Old and New Testament say that man is saved by faith—by believing God. For example, the LORD had told Abram that He was his great reward, but Abram questioned Him about what He could do for him since he had no heirs. The LORD told him that he would indeed have a son and said his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Of course, this promise would seem preposterous from a human standpoint. But, “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as

righteousness ([Genesis 15:6](#)).

God is too holy to lie, and He can do whatever He promises to do. To not believe what God says is sin, deserving of punishment, and it separates you from Him. God was honored when Abram believed that God would do what He promised. As a result Abraham was reckoned as righteous and has become known as the “father of the faithful.”

The role of God's law is often misunderstood with respect to salvation. The Jews generally believed that if they kept the law, then they would be in good standing with God. But the law was only meant to be temporary measure that would reveal the true sinfulness of man. Man's inability to fully keep the law should have pointed to the need for God's mercy to forgive sin. Paul writes, “For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law” ([Romans 3:28](#)).

The [reformers](#) consistently believed and affirmed the [five solas](#), one of which is that we're saved by *faith alone*. This sola stated that salvation is a free gift to all who accept it by faith ([John 3:16](#)). Salvation is not based on human effort or good deeds, as stated in [Ephesians 2:9](#).

### **Our faith must be alive—a faith which is evidenced by works**

Salvation through faith alone can also be misunderstood in respect to God's law and its role in the life of a Christian. Although Paul used the example of Abram to prove his point that salvation is by faith alone, James uses the same illustration to say, “You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone ([James 2:24](#)). Though these two interpretations may appear contradictory at first glance, they actually complement one another.

Paul and James are actually “circling the wagons” against those who would oppose the true gospel. On the one hand, Paul wants us to understand that no works of man will have any salvific value to it. God's not impressed by what we do to earn His favor, because we always fall short. On

the other hand, James is saying you can't dismiss works altogether, because they're the very evidence, or results, that derive from that saving faith.

In other words, if the faith you claim saved you is devoid of good works, it must not be real faith. Faith involves a lifelong surrender and commitment to the Lord, which brings forth obedience to Him. Lives change because the central love of a Christian is Christ Himself, and He says, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them" ([John 14:23](#)).

Christians enjoy the abundant life Jesus promised when they are living to please the Lord. "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

## The faith that saves is a gift from God

Salvation is of the Lord. It is a monergistic work of God. We do not cooperate with God to initiate salvation. That is not to say, however, that we play no part. We must believe in Christ, but that faith is a faith that is given to us from above. It is not a faith that we can muster up for ourselves.

Jesus explained it to Nicodemus, a leading Pharisee, this way: "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again" ([John 3:3](#)). This shook up Nicodemus. He asked, "How can a man be born again when he is old? So, Jesus explained, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" ([John 3:8](#)).

The Holy Spirit remakes our heart when we are born again. God sovereignly chooses who He will save, just like the metaphor He uses of the wind that blows where it pleases. We didn't choose to be physically born, and likewise, we didn't choose to be born again.

## The three aspects of faith

Theologians usually speak of three aspects of faith. Faith

always has an object, namely, Jesus Christ. To believe in Jesus, we must first know something about Him. This content comprises the *notitia* of faith.

Knowing a body of content, however, is not enough for saving faith. We must also affirm the truth of this content. Saving faith requires *assensus*, the conviction that the content is true.

Finally, even knowing the facts and believing them to be true are not enough in themselves to make us Christians. Demons affirm the truth of what God has said, but they do not trust Him ([James 2:19](#)). *Fiducia* — the entrusting of ourselves into the hands of Christ, the Living Truth — must also be present for our justification. Faith is only effectual if, knowing about and assenting to the claims of Jesus, one personally trusted in Him alone for salvation.

The Holy Spirit takes the gospel message we hear and works in us to produce this three-fold kind of faith. We may be able to know the facts and believe them apart from the Spirit's work, but without the Spirit's regeneration, we would never have all three essential aspects of saving faith.

## The convicting work of the Holy Spirit

The night before Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples that He was going back to Him who sent Him. He knew they were filled with grief, so He comforted them by telling them He would send them a Counselor, the Holy Spirit.

He said, "But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned" ([John 16:7-11](#)).

Sinners must be made aware of the sinfulness of their unbelief, which has alienated them from God. They must also know that Christ's righteousness pleased God. And they must know that they stand to be condemned for their sin just as the devil now stands condemned. When the Spirit illuminates these spiritual realities into the hearts of

people, the faith that He gives will be activated, and they will pass from spiritual death to spiritual life.

### What's left for unbelievers

God sends the Holy Spirit to some people, but not all people. Not everyone will be saved. It's possible to know you are a sinner destined to be condemned to Hell. At the same time, you may not have any love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Some church leaders might just shrug their shoulders and say to themselves, "Well, at least I tried. Oh, well!" But is this really the loving way?

The advice I would have for someone who knows they aren't saved and are concerned about it is to do their best to seek the Lord while He may be found. Work hard to follow God's commandments, even if you can't do it from the heart. At worst, your suffering in hell will be less than it would otherwise be. At best, God may in time have mercy and compassion over such a pitiful soul like you. Only time will tell.

### Come to the wellspring of life

If you aren't sure that you will go to heaven when you die, and you're not certain why God should let you into

heaven, settle that matter today. Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know how to answer the ultimate question, where and how you'll spend eternity.

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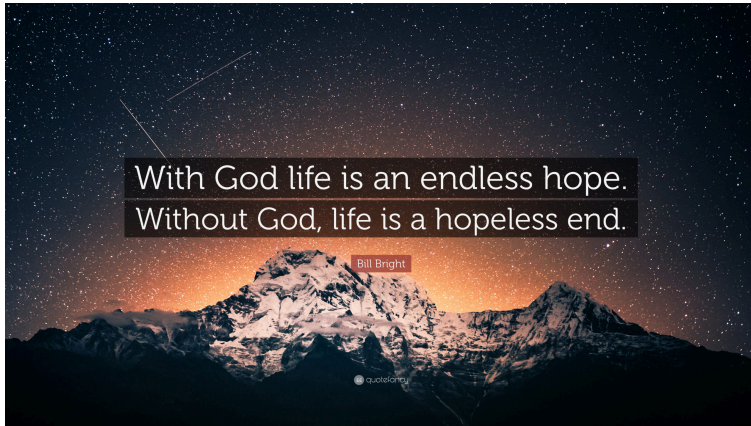
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# How To Begin Your Life Over Again



*Why my soul are you downcast Why so disturbed within me Put your hope in God<br> for I will yet praise him my Savior and my God Psalm 42:11*

**Life is meant to be a joyous journey on our way to an eternity with God. Those who have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ can enjoy an unexplained peace and contentment despite the troubles they encounter every day. The apostle Paul explains it this way, “and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” ([Romans 8:28](#)). If there’s something which is profoundly missing in your life, it’s time to begin your life over again with the living Christ.**

## What is the ultimate question?

When it comes to eternal matters, mankind is usually short-sighted. We tend to think a great deal about the here and now, but pay little attention to the hereafter. There may be a host of reasons for this, but when it comes right down to it, where and how you’ll spend eternity is the most important question you’ll ever have to settle. And the truth is, you don’t have to guess about it, and you don’t need to dismiss the matter as unknowable. In this post, you’ll find out all you need to know to finally settle the matter for yourself.

## Two questions everyone should ask themselves

Everyone falls into one of four categories as it relates to their relationship with God. People are either reconciled with God, and are at peace with Him, or they’re estranged from Him, and subject to His fierce wrath and condemnation. And within each of these groups, they either know where they stand with God, or they don’t. The most troubling category of the four possibilities are those people who think they are at peace with God, but in reality they are not. They are living under the false assurance of their salvation. To guard against the danger of being found in this group, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are you absolutely certain that if you died today you would go to Heaven?
2. Suppose you were to die today and stand before God, and He were to ask you, “Why should I let you into My Heaven?” What would you say?

Please don’t continue reading further until you answer these questions. They will help you effectively compare your current beliefs with what the Bible has to say about them.

## Do you believe in God?

Our perceptions and reason should lead us to the inevitable conclusion that [there must be a supreme being](#), who we call God.

### The case for an eternal Being

First, we can rule out the possibility that everything we perceive is an [illusion](#), because the very act of doubting the existence of what I perceive requires a doubter. And doubting is one aspect of thinking. So if I’m thinking, I know that at least I must exist in order to think.

Secondly, if anything exists now, we can conclude that [something or someone must have always existed](#). For it is inconceivable that something could come out of nothing.

Therefore, that leaves only two possibilities. Either the material universe itself is eternal or there is an eternal Being who is responsible for creating it. Science itself has shown that the material universe had a beginning point. So, this leads us to conclude there must have been a Being who started it.

### Further proofs of the existence of God

Our conclusion that there must have been a starter is further supported by other reasons. For example, a material universe, which exhibits clear signs of intelligent design, requires an [intelligent Being](#) to have created it.

Also, the law of cause and effect, by definition, demands that every effect must have a cause. And since the material universe is an effect, there must have been a [first cause](#) for it to even begin.

We also know that if [true justice](#) exists, there must be a perfect Judge that has the knowledge, wisdom, and power to execute it. Otherwise, civilization would inevitably break down, because we know there is injustice in this world. And without hope for ultimate true justice, civilization would be solely dependent upon subjugating self-centered masses of people under the the will and preferences of a small minority of fallible people who have attained power.

The theologian, Anselm, argued that we can know [God exists by thinking about Him](#). He said that God is that God which nothing greater exists, and therefore that God must also exist both in thought and reality, since that God is greater than one who could only exist in thought alone.

Finally, our innate ability [to think and reason logically](#) about the existence of God among ourselves requires shared rules of thinking that our Creator God must have implanted within us. For example, rational thought always excludes the possibility of contradictory truths, but allows for paradoxical truth claims.

## What's God like?

### What nature and reason reveal about God

Nature reveals that God is the only Being who could create and sustain the universe in which we find ourselves.

#### The essence of God

As we think about our own existence, we know we did not create ourselves. We also know our parents and their parents didn't create themselves. Therefore, we can safely assume that no human being was ever self-created. So, there must be a Being, an [Originator](#), who caused the origination of all other dependent beings. This Being must not be dependent on anyone or anything else for its own existence—an eternal Being who had no beginning. This we can know from sheer reasoning.

Nature also reveals important aspects of the [nature of our Creator](#). This eternal Being must essentially be one Being, since everything else was originated from Him. This Being alone possesses pure actuality, because He is not dependent on anything else for His existence. Therefore, He is infinite. He also has the power to create and sustain everything that has ever come into existence. With full knowledge and wisdom, He alone (sovereignly) directs His power. In light of these attributes, we can reason that He exhibits all the characteristics of what we know about a person. He thinks; He feels; He decides; He judges; He deliberates; He plans; and He is morally sensitive.

### God is a moral and virtuous Being who creates us with a moral conscience to follow

[God must be a moral being](#). Since He is the source of our being, we have no characteristics that essentially don't come from Him. We have been created with a conscience, and we operate according to moral principles. This could not have come from us and yet be alien to the nature of God.

Though we have a moral conscience, we don't necessarily act accordingly. We are born with a greater desire to please ourselves than to follow the dictates of our conscience. Though God, by nature, can't approve of our vice, He



## Be Reconciled Unto God

created us out of desire to love us and bless us. We know that by the way nature has been designed to sustain life and our bodies were designed to function well. So, God must relate to His creation by showing His approval when we do what's good and showing His disapproval when we do wrong.

God must then judge rightly. He has the wisdom to judge fairly and the power to execute His perfect justice with finality. Therefore, to make God's love of righteousness and hatred of wickedness all the more visible to all creation, He must have separate places where the wicked will eternally suffer together and the righteous will eternally flourish together.

### **We are all guilty of violating God's will and deserve His punishment, but God has left us with some hope.**

When we understand how guilty we are before our Creator, and yet, we have not been punished for it yet, we should be amazed and wonder why not. God has been unexpectedly patient with us, though we deserve to be punished. There must be a reason for it.

It must be that God has patiently endured our defiance for one reason alone. He is giving us time to repent of our wicked ways and submit ourselves to His will over our own stubborn ways. Yet, [how can a holy God rightly overlook our past disobedience?](#) The answer is that He cannot do so if He chooses to hold us personally accountable for it. The Bible reveals the good news that God graciously provided a suitable sacrifice to take our place and endure the punishment that our disobedience deserves.

## **What the Bible reveals about God**

### **God is the righteous Lord of glory**

God is the great and glorious King. He is holy and altogether righteous. "The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all" ([Psalm 103:19](#)). "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" ([Isaiah 6:3](#)).

There is only one God and there will never be another. "The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and

everlasting king" ([Jeremiah 10:10](#)). "Before me no god was formed nor shall there be any after me" ([Isaiah 43:10](#)).

There is a plurality within this one true and living God. He exists in the form a Trinity. God the Father is fully and truly God ([Ephesians 4:6](#), [1 Corinthians 8:6](#)). Jesus, the Son, is fully and truly God ([Titus 2:13](#), [Colossians 1:15-16, 19-20](#)). And God the Holy Spirit is fully and truly God ([Acts 5:3-4](#), [2 Corinthians 3:17](#)). All three Persons of the Godhead are equal in power and glory. God's revelation of His triune nature is of paramount importance in understanding the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is both truly divine (i.e., God the Son) and human (born of a Virgin). He is one Person with two distinct natures.

### **God is the glorious creator**

God created the universe for His own glory. He did not create it out of need, because He is complete within Himself. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" ([Genesis 1:1](#)).

Mankind was created by God "in His own image." He created us to glorify Him by: Loving Him as our Father, Worshipping Him as our Creator, Serving and obeying Him as our King, Delighting in Him as our greatest Treasurer, Loving others as fellow image-bearers, Governing the earth as His representatives, and Reflecting the goodness of His perfect character in everything we do.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" ([Luke 10:27](#)). "You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him" ([Deuteronomy 13:40](#)). "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God" ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)).

God created the first man and first woman, and they were in a right relationship with God. They were innocent and pure, able and happy to give God the perfect and unbroken love, loyalty, worship, obedience, and trust He deserves—and rightly demands from those made in His image.

## Is something wrong with us?

### Our conscience is our moral barometer

God has equipped all of us with a conscience, which is an indicator of the moral quality of our behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes. Our conscience is designed to pain us when we do what's morally wrong and make us feel good when we do what's morally right.

Most people believe they're basically good people. Sure, they know they're not perfect, but they think they try their best and try not to harm anyone. They know they make "mistakes", but their excuse is "doesn't everybody?" They live life assuming God will accept them just as they are, but they couldn't be more wrong.

The Bible teaches just the opposite. The first man and woman foolishly rebelled against God. This defiance caused the whole human race to become [radically corrupt](#) by their very nature. This reality is continually proven by the sins that mark our daily lives.

The Bible says, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." ([Romans 3:10-18](#)).

### The curse of the law

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin" ([Romans 3:19-20](#)).

[God's law becomes a curse](#) to us if we deceive ourselves and believe we can please God by keeping it. God always intended for it to shine a light on ourselves so our sin could be exposed to us for what it truly is, an egregious affront to God. "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of

God" ([Romans 3:23](#)). The apostle John writes, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" ([1 John 1:8](#)).

Jesus taught it's not just what you do externally that defiles you, it's also what's inside of you as well. For example, if you look after a woman lustfully, you have already committed adultery with her in your heart ([Matthew 5:28](#)). And anyone who is angry with his brother is subject to judgment ([Matthew 5:22](#)). The apostle Paul testified how he came face-to-face with his own sin problem when he became aware that he was inwardly violating the commandment against coveting ([Romans 7:7-8](#)).

### We cannot hide our sin from God

God is omniscient, which means He knows it all. He hears every word, sees every action, and knows every thought and motive. He knows everything about you and me. "The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good" ([Proverbs 15:3](#)). "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account" ([Hebrews 4:13](#)).

## What will happen to us when we die?

### A Day of Judgment is coming

Left to ourselves alone, God, who is perfect in His judgment, will sentence us to an eternity of punishment in the place He has reserved for the devil and his fallen angels. Once we die, there will be no more chances for us. "just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" ([Hebrews 9:27](#)).

If God, who is the perfect Judge and knows you inside and out, cannot lie and cannot tolerate injustice, how will He judge you? Imagine the public outrage that would arise if a judge were to find a person guilty of murder and then let him go with no penalty to pay, or declaring him innocent when he clearly is not. While this could happen in a human court of law, God must administer true justice.

He has told us how He feels about injustice. "Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent—the Lord detests

them both” ([Proverbs 17:15](#)). Therefore, God must judge and condemn the evil of sin because He is a good Judge.

### **The penalty for sin is death**

The verdict is already in. Jesus said, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil” ([John 3:19](#)). And the punishment for our guilt has been declared, “For the wages of sin is death...” ([Romans 6:23](#)).

There are three aspects to this death sentence. First, there is alienation from God. Adam and Eve experienced that break in their fellowship with God once they rebelled against Him. He removed them from the garden of Eden, which would have given them access to the Tree of Life.

Secondly, the death penalty includes physical death. “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—” ([Romans 5:12](#)).

Thirdly, there is an eternal judgment in a place called Hell for sinners. “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne... The dead were judged according to what they had done... Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” ([Revelation 20:12-15](#)). “And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night...” ([Revelation 14:11](#)). So, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” ([Matthew 10:28](#)).

## **Is there any hope for us?**

### **God Himself provided His only Son as an acceptable [sacrifice](#) to save His people from their sins**

While God is a just Judge, He is also merciful and loving. In love, He provided a remedy to rescue sinners from eternal punishment, as we deserve, and bring them to Himself. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” ([John 3:16](#)). He sent His Son to earth to save His people from their sins.

In Christ, God Himself provided everything He requires of us to bring us into a right relationship with Him. He demands perfect righteousness, but through sin we have become utterly unrighteous. So, God gives us the very righteousness he demands from His people.

God is also just, and our sins must be punished for justice to prevail. God cannot simply overlook our sins and remain true to His holy and just nature. Unless a substitute is found who is willing to take the punishment we deserve, we ourselves must bear God’s judgment and wrath forever. So, God Himself has provided His people with an acceptable substitute, His very own Son, who would be willing to suffer the sacrifice and payment for sin that He demands from us.

### **God the Son took to Himself a human nature**

God the Father has given us His very own Son to take upon Himself humanity and He lived among us. Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. Only a sinless man, who fulfilled the law of God, could be a [suitable substitute](#) to represent man before God. And only God could endure the terrible punishment that the sin of His people deserves and survive it. Therefore, God’s substitute for sinners had to be both God and Man, coexisting in one Person. Jesus is the only Person, who has ever lived, that could met these requirements.

### **As the God-man, Jesus lived a perfectly sinless life and His righteousnesses is given to us by faith**

Jesus lived the kind of sinless life that God demands from us, but [we failed](#) to do. He lived a life of absolute perfection. He displayed unwavering faithfulness toward God and man, and unbroken obedience to God’s law in thought, word, deed, and motive. His life was impeccable in the sight of God.

If He’d sinned even once, He would have been disqualified to be a suitable substitute to represent man before God. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” ([1 Peter 2:22](#)). Jesus did and said only what the Father gave Him to do and to say. Jesus said, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” ([John 5:19](#)).

## Be Reconciled Unto God

If Jesus' death only removed sin, we would be just like Adam and Eve before they sinned. We would be in a state of "innocence" before God, but having no proven righteousness of our own. Righteousness is proven through obedience, and Jesus was obedient unto death for our sake ([Philippians 2:8](#)).

### **Jesus Christ offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for us to satisfy God's demand for justice**

God's love for His people cost Him dearly. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" ([Romans 5:8](#)). Therefore, God is shown to be both just and the justifier of the ungodly. "God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith... he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" ([Romans 3:25-26](#)).

On the cross, Jesus paid for the sins of His people. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). Jesus exercised His royal authority by taking the form of a servant and suffering in the place of His people in order to remove their guilt before God.

The prophet Isaiah foretold that this would happen nearly 700 years before the birth of Christ. He wrote, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" ([Isaiah 53:5-6](#)).

### **Jesus Christ proved He is the Son of God by rising from the dead**

Jesus defeated sin and death. He proved He is the Son of God by [rising from the dead](#). He now reigns with God in heaven as the King of kings, Lord of lords, and the future Judge.

[Matthew 28:1-10](#) recounts the story of the women, who went to see Jesus' tomb on Sunday morning after His

crucifixion. They were met by an angel, who told them Jesus had risen as He said He would do. (See [Mark 8:31, 9:30-31, 10:33-34](#), and [John 2:19-21](#)). On their way back, Jesus appeared and told them to tell his disciples that they would see Him in Galilee. He appeared to more than 500 of His disciples before He ascended into heaven. (See [Acts 1:3, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Acts 1:9-11](#)).

### **Jesus Christ is the Lord, God's resurrected King of glory**

Upon His ascension, Jesus assumed his rightful position as Lord over the eternal Kingdom that He was destined to rule. The prophet Daniel speaks of a vision he was given. "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" ([Daniel 7:13-14](#)).

As the reigning Lord, Jesus is now building His church ([Matthew 16:18, John 10:27-30](#)). As our High Priest, He intercedes for His people before God ([Hebrews 7:25](#)). He watches over and guards His church ([Revelation 1:12-16](#)). He also works to subdue the sin that remains in their lives ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)). And when all of His people have been redeemed, Christ will return in power and glory. He will judge the world in righteousness ([Act 17:31, Revelation 19:11-16](#)), remove the curse from the earth ([Revelation 22:3](#)), and establish His kingdom in its final form ([Revelation 21:3-4](#)).

## **How will you decide?**

### **Salvation comes as a free gift from God**

Since our salvation is a free gift, we must receive it as such to please God. If we count on anything we've done to earn salvation, then we've no longer relied on God's grace. However, if we give Christ all the credit for our salvation, He's honored and we honor our heavenly Father.

## We must repent of our sins

The decision you make to trust Christ for your salvation shouldn't be made lightly. It's a lifelong decision of turning away from your self-serving life and giving yourself wholeheartedly to the Lord. You must agree with God concerning your guilt, confess your sins to God, and turn away from all sin.

The word "repent" means a changing of the mind. When we repent, we know that we must change the direction of our life. We have to leave our former self-centered life and commit ourselves to pursue the life Christ has for us. He is now our Lord and King. To show our gratitude for what He has done for us, we strive to obey His commandments.

Our repentance shouldn't be just a one-time event. It needs to be a continuous conviction of our heart throughout the Christian life. Although Christians do experience victory over sin, it's often a hard fought battle. The battle is won through persistence, prayer, and with the help of the Holy Spirit. Sin may lose its complete dominance that it once held, but it doesn't automatically disappear once someone becomes a Christian.

As we confess our sin before God, He is faithful to forgive us. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" ([1 John 1:8-10](#)).

## We must believe the good news of the Gospel

Sinners must not just turn away from sin, they must turn to Christ, who can save them from their sin. This turnaround from the former sinful life to following Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord completes the act of repentance.

Our faith alone in Christ is the means through which we are united with Him. God not only invites us to believe in His Son, He commands us all to believe in His Son.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." ([Acts 16:31](#)),

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you

believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, 'Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame'" ([Romans 10:9-11](#)).

Our union with Jesus Christ calls for a [genuine faith](#) in Him and what He has done for us. He is the Son of God who gave His life for us on the cross. (Much of this blog site is dedicated to give you the reasons to affirm that Jesus is Lord.) But it's not enough to just believe the facts about Christ. We must wholeheartedly trust and rely on His sacrifice to satisfy the demands of God's justice. If we're trusting in anything else, our trust is misplaced, and it could even be damning.

## God forgives us of our sins and counts His righteous as our own

When we repent and believe in Jesus Christ, there is a "[great exchange](#)" that takes place spiritually in our lives. Everything Christ did for you becomes yours. God forgives you of your sins based on Christ's sacrifice, and counts His righteousness as your own! "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

## Since we're justified in God's sight, we have peace with God through Christ

The moment the "great exchange" of our sin for God's righteousness takes place, God cancels our guilt. He dismisses His case against us and declares us righteous in His sight. [Our sin has been removed \(expiation\) and God's wrath toward our sin has been satisfied \(propitiation\)](#). We have been made just (just as if I had never sinned). "...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" ([Psalm 103:12](#)).

Since we have been made just, there is nothing standing in the way between God and us. "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have [peace with God](#) through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand" ([Romans 5:1-2](#)). "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..." ([Romans 8:1](#)).

## God has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ

### We have a new family

Once we have been justified and reconciled unto God, we become part of His divine family. God becomes more than our Creator to us. He is now our gracious heavenly Father, who is worthy of all of our praise. Jesus becomes more than just an interesting historical figure, He is now our Friend, Elder-Brother, Redeemer, Lord, and God. The Spirit becomes more than a mysterious force. He now indwells us, comforts us, guides us, sanctifies us, empowers us, and preserves us in the faith.

We also are joined into the family of fellow believers, from throughout the ages. Jesus has built His church and He is the Head of the church. “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” ([John 1:12-13](#)).

There is a special bond between true believers in Christ. Paul writes, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” ([Ephesians 4:3-6](#)).

### We have a new direction

God restores us to the purpose He had for us when we were created. True believers desire to live for God as their Father and Christ as their Lord and Savior. They’re also called to love one another as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

### We have a glorious destiny

True believers have a glorious inheritance waiting for them when they get to heaven. All who die without Christ will bear God’s wrath in hell forever. But Christians will ultimately live in a perfect creation. And there will be no more presence of sin. Life will be painless, joyous, and we will have eternal fellowship with God and one another.

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” ([Revelation 21:3-4](#)).

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## Once Dead but Now Alive



*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me The life I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me Galatians 2:20*

**When we place our faith in Jesus Christ we become a new person. The Bible says we're born again. We were once dead but now alive. Christ reconciles us to the Father and we have peace with God. We experience the abundant life Jesus promised to all who follow Him. Since we have discovered the great treasure of His love, we naturally respond by striving to live up to the position we have already attained.**

### Finding the treasure worth giving all you have to attain

What is the one thing in your life that you would never give up, no matter what? It's something that defines your very identity. Have you found it? Many people have not. They go day after day in a sort of survival mode. For them life seems to be a series of compartments. There's work, there's leisure, there's education, etc. They all have more or less equal value to them.

But that's not how God intended for us to live our lives. He wanted us to have something so valuable at our very core of being, that everything else would pale in comparison to it. This would be the treasure worth giving everything we have to possess. Jesus spoke about this in His parables of

the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field" ([Matthew 13:44](#)).

### Finding the pearl of great price

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" ([Matthew 13:45-46](#)).

**Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."**

Have you recognized your great need for God's forgiveness and hope for eternal life? Are you aware of the terrible hell awaiting you for eternity if God judges you rightly? Have you been convinced that God recognized your dilemma and made a way for you through the sacrifice of His one and only Son? Do you see that this is the "treasure hidden in a field" and the pearl of great value described in Jesus' parables?

He's waiting for you to heed the warning and avoid the looming judgment and condemnation. He says to you, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" ([Matthew 11:28-30](#)).

Visit my post, [How to Begin Your Life Over Again](#) and you'll know where and how you'll spend eternity. And for crystal clear YouTube presentations of the gospel message from several trusted sources, click [here](#).

## You are a new creation

### Your new [identity](#) in Christ

Once you commit your life to Jesus by faith, you leave the kingdom of darkness and enter into the kingdom of light. Jesus has redeemed you. He has purchased you with His own precious blood to become a member of His body, the church, in which He is the head. God has forgiven you of all your sins. He has reconciled you to the Father, and you now have peace with God. You have been adopted as a true son or daughter into the family of God, and you will always remain so.

The Holy Spirit comes to indwell you so that you become a new person. Your old life is now past and the new life has come. You no longer live to please yourself. Instead, your highest aim in life is to live and please Christ, your Lord. Your greatest joy in life now is to walk with your Lord in fellowship with Him. You trust Him and follow Him in obedience to His Word. You also want others to experience the same joy you now have. So, you'll want to share with them the certain hope you now have in Christ.

You will battle against sin, but sin will no longer have its full reign in your life as it once had. The Lord will help you grow in holiness day by day. He wants you to be like Him. So, you'll want to stop indulging in your sinful desires and start conforming to His will for you.

## Living by faith in the Son of God

When you first come to Christ, you begin like a baby. There's so much to learn and experience before you become a mature Christian. It's important to know how you can live your new life in such a way that fosters your growth in Christ. Here are some of the areas to focus on.

### Growing in the knowledge of the Lord

Daily [Bible reading](#) is a good spiritual discipline to adopt. There are many different reading plans you can find online. I suggest reading the New Testament every year to begin with. You can complete it by reading one chapter each day for five days each week. Be sure to set a plan to also read through the Old Testament. Some parts will probably be harder to get through than others, but don't give up. It will be worth it. You might want to set a two-year goal to read

through the Old Testament.

Find a version of the bible that is understandable to you. I generally use the NIV version, but there are many very good versions to choose from. I recommend highlighting verses in your bible that are particularly meaningful to you. You should also commit to memorizing verses that will remind you of important truths as you encounter life.

### Persistence in Prayer

God wants to hear from us, and we need to hear from Him. We need to address God as our heavenly Father. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He loves us and cares for us. Our [prayers](#) should include expression of adoration, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication (petitions or requests). You can remember this through the acronym [ACTS](#). We pray with respect and expectation that He hears us whenever we pray in accordance with His will.

### Worshipping God in spirit and in truth

God is worthy of all our adoration. There are a variety of ways we can [worship God](#). Some people worship best by meditating on God's Word. Others find that walks through nature give them the closest connection to God. Still others may discover that Christian music brings them close to God. Of course, worship services at church are designed to use various means to corporately worship God. Open yourself up to try various ways to worship God and develop a regular pattern or worship.

### Enjoying intimate [fellowship](#) with your Lord and His people

As Christians, we all belong together as one family, under the headship of Jesus Christ our Lord. As such, we should gather together as family and practice our love for each other. It's important that we select a [church](#) where we can develop close relationships with other Christians. Our spiritual growth is enhanced when we can regularly practice our Christian life together. The Bible tells us not to forsake meeting together. So, make it a priority to be an active part of a Bible-believing congregation.

### [Hungering and thirsting for righteousness](#)

Though you are a new creation in Christ Jesus, your sinful



## Be Reconciled Unto God

nature hasn't disappeared. You will still experience sinful desires. The good news is that you now have the indwelling Holy Spirit to help you battle against those desires and experience victory over them.

It may be surprising to learn there will continue to be a battle in your mind between indulging in your sinful desires and choosing to do what's right. This is the natural condition for the Christian, and it should keep us aware and alert of our dependence on God to overcome evil.

### Giving and receiving forgiveness

God requires us to [forgive](#) others, just as we have been forgiven by God. Forgiveness is a choice we make not to hold anything against anyone who has wronged us. It's not easy. It may require persistence in choosing to forgive. But God requires it from His children.

### Enduring your trials with patience and endurance

It should not be surprising when you encounter troubles and trials of all sorts. This happens to be one of the most effective ways God uses to grow our faith in Him. He is always faithful and we can only understand it from the heart when we experience it. So, God wants us to patiently [endure our trials](#), because He is developing our character and hope in Him as we go through them.

### Putting the needs of others above yourself

God is a God of love, and He wants us to love our

neighbors as ourselves. Our neighbors are anyone in need that we have the ability and opportunity to help. So, look for where God is presenting opportunities for you to [serve others](#), just as Christ came to serve and not to be served.

### Sharing your hope and faith with others

One major way you can practice love toward others is to learn how to [share your faith](#) with them. If Christ has made a difference in your life, He can make a difference in theirs too. You have a personal story to share about how God has delivered you that nobody can deny. Therefore share the story and be ready to give reasons for the hope you have. This blog site should be able to help you do that.

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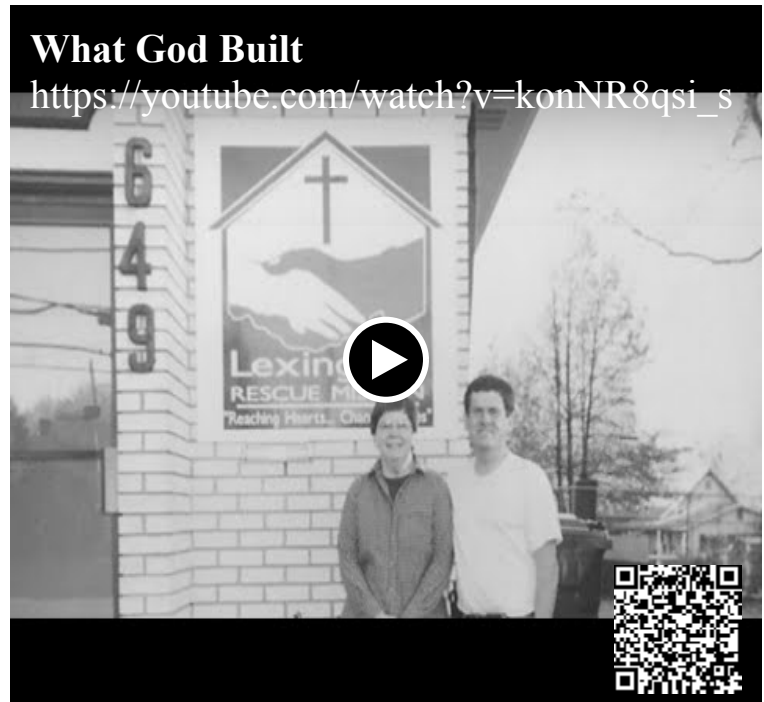
## About the Author

Jim Connell created the JesusIsLordBlog.com site to present many of the good reasons for believing in God and His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. There is both an objective and subjective aspect to saving faith. You cannot believe without knowing and affirming the essential content of the Christian faith. And yet, mere knowledge won't save anyone, because saving faith involves a personal reliance on what you know to be true. And this requires a changed heart that the Holy Spirit creates in us. Our faith is God's free gift to us.

Jim lives in Lexington, Kentucky with his wife, Becky. They have two adult children, Brian and Laura. Brian lives with his wife, Maya, and their two children, Indira and Margo, in Washington DC. Laura lives in Lexington, just a few blocks away from Jim and Becky, and is married to Jason Carr.

Jim graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Business and a major in Accounting. He has worked as a CPA, a Certified Financial Planner, a financial officer for a mental health center, a project manager for a free health clinic, a fundraiser for a regional hospital foundation, and the founder and Executive Director for a rescue mission in Lexington, KY. Jim retired in 2020, after serving nearly 20 years at the Mission. (The videos below tell much of the story of this part of Jim's life.)

Jim's passion is social outreach and evangelism. He has served the church in various capacities, including holding the office of trustee, serving as an elder, being a mission team member and team leader, a benevolence counselor, a Sunday School teacher for adults and children, and a devotions writer.



### What God Built

[https://youtube.com/watch?v=konNR8qsi\\_s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=konNR8qsi_s)

*The story of starting a Rescue Mission*



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