

Through his death, Jesus gained victory for God!

Within three days after He died, Jesus rose from the dead (not just His Spirit, but His body too). During the next forty days, He was seen by over five hundred people before God raised Him up to sit at His right hand as Lord and Judge over all. Before He left, Jesus promised He would come back to raise all the dead (bodily) and judge all people. He will re-create the heavens and the earth where His people will live with Him forever in bliss, and all who do not know Him will be cast into hell forever.

God's loving invitation to you:

If you believe you are a sinner condemned by God and unable to save yourself, then God invites you to receive His gift of eternal life through Jesus His Son. Jesus said, *"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)."* To receive Jesus, you must stop relying on your own righteousness and begin following Him. You must let go of your life completely and let Him have complete control. Jesus said, *"Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it (Luke 17:33)."* You must believe that God is good and that He knows what is best for you. If you don't come to God through Jesus believing these things, you simply cannot come. *If you truly wish to follow Jesus, you can prove your allegiance to him by being baptized.*

The joy of following Jesus!

Because of Jesus, you can begin enjoying a personal relationship with God, your creator. Your life will be changed forever! *"To all who received Jesus, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of*

God (John 1:12)." In response to God's free offer of forgiveness in Christ, I urge you to surrender yourself to Him today! If you have decided to surrender your life to Jesus, start reading the Bible to learn about God and His promises to us. (Perhaps start with John, the fourth book of the New Testament.) To be strengthened in your faith, you should begin spending time each week with other believers.

If you persist in viewing yourself as "ok" and reject the viewpoint of God, then heed His warning: *"no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:26-29)."*

This gospel message is provided by:

It's Your Choice!

You can choose to ignore it or you can accept it. The choice is yours and the consequences are eternal. If you are brave enough to face the truth, then read on to find out what God has said about you and Himself.

You most likely will agree that you have "sinned" in some way. In other words, you have broken God's laws. The Bible says that you have broken every one of the Ten Commandments. For example, you have failed to love God more than everything. You have failed to reverence His name continually. You have loved other things more than God. You have disobeyed your parents. In your heart, you have murdered people in your hatred for them. In your heart, you have committed adultery by having lust for other people. You have stolen that which is not yours. (Even cheating on a test qualifies as stealing.) You have lied. You have desired to have things that do not belong to you. If you are reading this, you are probably saying to yourself, "nobody is perfect," or, "everyone has done these things." But you cannot escape the fact that you are guilty of breaking God's law and the Bible says that **God will not leave the guilty unpunished (Nahum 1:3).**

You might be falsely thinking that God will weigh the good things you have done against the bad things you have done in order to render a judgment against you that is favorable. This thinking makes God out to be unrighteous and it dishonors Him. Most people think that God is a God of love. This is true (*1 John 4:8*). What most people fail to understand is that God is also a God of **perfect** righteousness. (*"The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him...Psalm 92:15"*) This makes it impossible for sinful beings to dwell in His presence. (*Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong...Habakkuk 1:13"*)

He cannot judge according to human standards. He cannot accept plea bargains. *For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes* (Deut. 10:17).

What does God deserve and demand?

The Bible says that God demands and deserves perfect obedience from His creatures for every moment of their life. Do not assume that this is unfair. After all, God created us and provided everything we need to exist all the days of our lives. He gives us each breath we take. We assume that food, water and shelter are things we provide for ourselves. While this may be true in some respect, God insists that He is ultimately the one who is providing the opportunity for us to get what we need to live. *(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. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food. (Genesis 1:29&30)."* We take for granted the air we breathe but the Bible says that it is a gift from God. *This is what God the LORD says--He who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it (Isaiah 42:5).* The Bible says that all these things we take for granted are gifts, not rights. Since God created all things, He has the right to call the shots. And because we have all dishonored Him through direct disobedience, God would be perfectly just to destroy us all in an instant. According to the Bible, this is what we truly deserve and He has the power and right to do it at any time. This is why the Bible says that the only proper response is to "fear God."

Is there any hope?

You may be wondering, if God expects us to live in perfect obedience with a heart of love for Him all of our lives, how can there be any hope for us since none of us have lived that way? If this thought has crossed your mind, you are starting to see things as God sees them. God has made a way of escape but before you can have it, you must agree with His assessment of you.

God has declared the following about you:

- You are not righteous.
- You do not seek Him (You have been the lord of your life.)
- You have turned away from Him rather than move toward Him.
- Your heart has a tendency towards violence and cursing.
- You do not know peace.
- You have not feared Him as the righteous judge who has given you life and preserved it. *(see Romans 3:11-17).*
- You deserve God's condemnation because you have refused to let God rule over your life *(because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will give to each person according to what he has done...Romans 2:5-6)".*
- You cannot escape God's wrath by trying to keep God's law. **No one will be declared righteous in his sight by trying to keep the law** *(Romans 3:19-20).*
- You cannot make up for your bad deeds by trying to do good deeds. *All of your righteous deeds are as filthy rags in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6)*
- Since your chief sin has been the rejection of God's rule over your life (rebellion), the just and reasonable punishment is to be cast away from His presence forever in a place called hell. **He**

will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power...II Thess 1:8&9).

Until you feel the weight of this reality, there is no hope for you. But if you feel a desperate need for God's mercy because of your sins against Him, consider yourself one of the blessed people on earth because **Jesus came to save sinners**, not people who think they are righteous. *(Matthew 9:13).*

But there is still a problem!

Even though God is merciful, He still cannot simply excuse sin. His perfect righteousness will not allow Him to simply "sweep your sins under the carpet." God's perfect righteousness demands that punishment must be applied for every single sin you ever committed.

The good news:

God made a way for someone else to take that punishment instead of you! God loves you so much that He sent His own Son (Jesus) into the world to take your punishment for you! Two-thousand years ago, Jesus was whipped, beaten and then hung on a cross to die even though He had never sinned. Though He was completely innocent, He willingly hung there, taking your sins upon Himself and He bore the wrath of God as your substitute. This voluntary sacrifice He made for you satisfied the righteous demands of God. Now, all who place their trust in Jesus as their only way to God receive forgiveness of sins once and for all. . *"Of Him (Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that through His name, everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43)."*