

## The Bible's Message Summarized

radically changes all who truly believe. Not only did Jesus die to deliver us from the penalty of sin (hell), He also died to deliver us from slavery to sin! It was God's plan all along to create holy people who love and obey Him. The natural way of living insults God. Are you are living for yourself and pursuing happiness your way rather than living for God and seeking His desires? God considers this independent lifestyle rebellious and insulting. If you insist on living that old way, you will end up in hell. This is why you must repent and begin relating to God as your King. The following words of Jesus show that this is a serious, all-or-nothing situation. *Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.* (Mark 8:35) *Whoever is not willing to die for me cannot be My disciple.* (See Luke 14:27) Your part in this is to trust Him. You must let go of your life and surrender it completely to Jesus and begin following Him. If you want to begin following Jesus, heed His invitation: *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.* (Matthew 11:28-30) If you surrender your life to Jesus and follow Him, He will begin to change you inside. You will increasingly hate the sins you once loved. And you will increasingly love to do the things that please God. We strongly urge you to heed Jesus' invitation and begin following Jesus right now. Let us help you learn more about following Jesus.

**1. *Because of who God is and what He has done, all people have a duty to Him.*** There is no other God. He answers to nobody! (Isaiah 45:6) God created all things and therefore owns all things, including you. This means that He alone has the right to rule over your life. God has made Himself known through the creation. (Psalm 19:1-4) The creation proves that God is all-powerful and therefore has all authority. As a result, He expects all people everywhere to acknowledge Him as their ruler. God has also made His desires known to people by placing a conscience in them that convicts them when they violate His will. (Romans 2:15) God commands that all people love, honor, obey and fear Him in response to all that He has done for us. (Deuteronomy 6:5) How have you responded to what the Almighty God has done? Please take this seriously because God holds your life in His hands and He is very serious about these matters.

**2. *All people (including you) have failed to respond properly to the things that God has shown through the creation and conscience.*** People should fear and respect God. Instead, all people have lived as if God does not care how they live. God says that people purposely block the truth about Him out of their minds and He takes offense at it. People (including you) tend to live for themselves rather than for Him. They do not give Him the credit He deserves for all the things He does for them. Living this way causes people to form distorted thoughts about God and themselves.

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**2. *All people (including you) have failed to respond properly to the things that God has shown through the creation and conscience.*** People should fear and respect God. Instead, all people have lived as if God does not care how they live. God says that people purposely block the truth about Him out of their minds and He takes offense at it. People (including you) tend to live for themselves rather than for Him. They do not give Him the credit He deserves for all the things He does for them. Living this way causes people to form distorted thoughts about God and themselves.

People tend to compare themselves with other people to

measure their own goodness rather than consider what God thinks about them. But God has a different assessment. God says that all people are guilty of sexual immorality, wickedness, greed, murderous treatment of others, deceit, being haters of God, proud, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, and unmerciful. (Romans 1:29-32) He declares that in themselves, there are none who are righteous. There are none that He considers good. Try to imagine what this must look like to God. He graciously brought us into existence and provides for us. He makes Himself known to us through creation and through conscience. Instead of fearing Him, people live as if He does not even exist. God considers this to be hostile toward Him (like enemies).

**3. Because God is a righteous judge, He must punish all people who die with their sins. (Hell awaits.)** God's wrath is stored up against every human unless and until they repent and receive God's salvation. (Habakkuk 1:13, Psalm 92:15, Nahum 1:3) God is a righteous judge who must punish each and every sin! If He were to let just one sin go unpunished, He would cease to be absolute in His justice. (He would not be righteous!) But can't our good deeds make up for our sins? This thought assumes God can excuse your sins. It makes Him out to be less than absolute in His righteousness. The Bible says that it is impossible to make up for our past sins by trying to do things that are good. (Romans 3:20) Our past sins already make us unacceptable to the holy God. (No sin can come into God's presence.) Also, if you think that your good deeds can make you acceptable to God, it shows that you do not yet comprehend just how vile your sins are to God.

You need to realize that God considers you guilty of vile sin. Jesus said that if you ever have gotten mad at someone or called

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You need to realize that God considers you guilty of vile sin. Jesus said that if you ever have gotten mad at someone or called

them a name, you are guilty of murder within your heart. (Matthew 5:22) If you ever looked upon another human with desire, you have committed adultery with them in your heart. (Matthew 5:28) Thousands of times throughout your life you have done things that you knew God did not want you to do but you did it anyway. Every time you did this, you took God off His rightful throne and you sat down in it as if you have the right to be king. In this way, you have made yourself out to be God, the same sin that Satan committed. You might now be thinking, "If all of this is true, what hope is there for anyone since everyone has sinned?" If you are wondering this, you are finally understanding important truth. All people are rightly condemned and on their own, are not able to make themselves right with God!

**4. At great cost to Himself, God made a righteous way to save guilty sinners.** All people are rightly condemned and on their own, are not able to make themselves right with God! But because God is merciful, He made a righteous way for guilty sinners to be saved! To remain perfectly just, God had to punish all the sin. So, He sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment that we deserve! (Isaiah 53:5-6) If Jesus had not died in our place like this, everyone who ever lived would have to go to hell forever because of God's absolute righteousness! But when Jesus died on the cross, God accepted Jesus' death as full payment for our sins. God demonstrated His acceptance of it by raising Jesus from the dead within three days. Now, *Everyone who believes in Him receives remission of sins.* (Acts 10:43) Because He died as a substitute sacrifice for our sins, God can offer salvation while upholding perfect righteousness because every sin was punished.

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