

MESSAGE TO THE WORLD!

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Published On : October 13, 1997

Last Updated : January 30, 2020

In the world today, there are so many different religions; each one of which has their own churches, temples, mosques or other places of worship. Because of this religious diversity, many people often find themselves wondering which one is the correct one to believe in and follow. They feel overwhelmed, and completely lost amidst the multitude of choices available to them. Perhaps you are one of such people. What creates this confusion in the first place, is the fact that each of these religions has a set of beliefs which may differ with, and contradict what is being taught by some of the others. The reasons why this is so are many, but the end result is that many people don't know in which direction to turn in order to find the truth.

One idea which is shared by Christianity, Judaism and Islam, is the belief in one God, Who created the Earth and all life on it; in fact, the entire universe; a Supreme Being. This is why they are referred to as monotheistic religions. This belief in one supreme God sets these three religions apart from other belief systems, being as some of the others do not teach that there is one Supreme Being. Instead, they worship many different gods and goddesses, each with its own power and authority. For example, such is the case with Hinduism, from which different popular forms of meditation are derived. Other religions worship the forces of nature, such as Wicca, or dead relatives, such as Shintoism.

In the case of certain religions, an ordinary human being is elevated to the status of a god, through the erection of temples and statues in that person's honor, and through the widespread teaching of his belief system. Such is the case with Buddhism. While Buddhists don't claim that Buddha is a god, there extreme reverence of him pretty much puts him in that category anyway.

Some belief systems go as far as to say that we are gods. They rely upon the self-help technique, and claim that all

answers are to be found within oneself. They teach that we have the power to control our own destinies without any intervention from a Higher Power. These kinds of belief systems often embrace any number of New Age concepts, and will also employ different forms of meditation.

And yet a number of other religions, such as the African derived Santeria, bow down to Satan and the wicked forces of darkness. Tragically, Satanism and devil worship are alive and well, even in self-proclaimed Christian nations such as the United States of America, where they no longer even hide their rejection of the Christian God, and boldly flaunt their misguided beliefs in music, and via other art forms as well.

In certain developed countries, people also worship power, money and materialism. Basically, it is Satan's whole grab bag. Such individuals will do whatever it takes in order to climb to the pinnacle of success; even if it means using and hurting other people, and stepping all over them. People are just viewed as pawns, in a calculated game where position or a fat salary are the ultimate prize.

Of course, there are also those misguided people who claim that they do not worship any god or spirit. In fact, they deny the existence of the spiritual world altogether, and view such things as mere fairy tales. This current life is all there is, such people claim. There is nothing else to follow death they insist. We simply cease to be, and rot in the ground, kept alive only in the memory of our loved ones.

Even between Christianity, Judaism and Islam, there are some differences of which you should be aware. Just because a religion promotes the belief in one Supreme Being does not necessarily mean that it is safe to follow. What makes the Christian faith different from all other religions, is the fact that it is the only one which is honest enough to speak of our need for a Savior, Who offers us the free Gift of Eternal Life, in a new and better world where all suffering, pain and sorrow will be removed. Other belief systems, such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, erroneously teach that we can gain Eternal Life, and be a part of this wonderful new world, even if we don't believe in the Savior. According to their doctrines, Salvation is based upon doing good things, or perfecting ourselves by living many times, or keeping many rules. In other words, they would have us to believe that we can gain Eternal Life through our own good merits. Even though it shares some common history with the Christian

faith, Judaism likewise rejects basic Christian beliefs.

Exactly what are these beliefs?

As I noted a moment ago, Christianity teaches that we cannot save ourselves. We need some outside help. We need a Savior. Why is this so? According to the Bible, we are all sinners. We aren't perfect. We have all made mistakes, regardless of how young or how old we may be. Our greatest mistake, or sin, is that we don't love God or each other as much as we should. That is why there are so many problems in the world today. Many people simply do not act out of love for God, or out of love for others, but only out of love for themselves. They live self-centered lives, instead of God-centered lives. "Me" must come first, and whatever is good for "Me", is good for everyone else. It is this kind of sick attitude which results in war, murder, rape, abortion, theft, the oppression of the poor, and many other social crimes.

This misguided attitude also results in our being dishonest with others, as well as with ourselves, because we are not willing to face up to the truth regarding ourselves. So we each wear a hypocritical mask, and then promote an image of ourselves to others which is often very different from the way we actually are. We live a life of lies and deception. Such things are all motivated by pride, selfishness, and the evil which lurks within our own heart.

Not only do such acts hurt others, but they hurt God as well. Furthermore, they keep us separated from Him, just as parents are sometimes not too happy to see their children when they have been disobedient. In fact, because we do not obey God's Laws of Love as we should, and because we rebel against His Will for our personal lives, it forces Him to punish us; just as responsible parents will punish their children when they too do something wrong. In this case, the Biblical law is very clear regarding the penalty for the sins of rebellion and unbelief. It states such things as the following:

"For the wages of sin is death . . ."

Romans 6:23, KJV

". . . he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John 3:36, KJV

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to

kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Matthew 10:28, KJV

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God . . . For our God is a consuming fire."

Hebrews 10:31, 12:29, KJV

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Revelation 20:15, KJV

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Revelation 21:8, KJV

That is a heavy price to pay, but we choose it through our own continual stubbornness and unbelief. God does not choose it for us, as some false accusers would have you to believe. Moreover, we can have peace in our hearts, knowing that no matter how bad we have been, or how rebellious we have been, all is not lost. Just as most parents eventually embrace their children in love once again, God too does not remain mad at us forever. He does not cast us away forever; unless that is what we truly want. He is mindful of the fact that we are weak, human flesh. Thus, as King David wrote, God has pity upon us, as we see here:

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

Psalms 103:13-14, KJV

In His mercy, God, is willing to give us time to acknowledge our errors, to ask for forgiveness, and to repent. That is why in the midst of the great affliction which engulfed his nation -- ancient Israel -- the Prophet Jeremiah wrote the following wonderful verses:

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22-23, KJV

So you see, God's love and mercy are renewed every single

morning; and because they are, He has purposely made a way for our sins to be forgiven, so that our relationship with Him can be fully restored, and peace can reign between us; that is, between God the Father and ourselves. Consider the following group of verses which confirm this point:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

John 14:27, KJV

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33, KJV

"Therefore being justified by faith, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Romans 5:1, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For HE IS OUR PEACE, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Ephesians 2:13-18, KJV

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:7, KJV

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:"

Colossians 1:19-22, KJV

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

Jeremiah 29:11, KJV

As the previous group of verses reveals, the manner in which God made a way for our sins to be forgiven, and our broken relationship with Him to be restored, is by allowing His own Son, Jesus Christ, to take our punishment for us. It is as if one of our brothers or sisters or friends decided to take the blame for something that we did, and be punished for it; even though we really did it. This is true love. This is putting others before self. And this is exactly what Jesus did for us. The Bible informs us that He took upon Himself our sins, as we can determine by the following verse:

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

2 Corinthians 5:21, KJV

In other words, even though Jesus was sinless, and without spot or blemish just like a sacrificial lamb, God the Father allowed His Son to take upon Himself the sins of the world. He allowed Jesus to be punished for us, so that we could find Atonement, or forgiveness and reconciliation with the Father, through His Sacrifice. In case you were not aware of it, that is exactly what the word "atonement" means in the Biblical sense. That is, to become one with the Father once again. The word was in fact invented by William Tyndale to describe this state of oneness with the Father through reconciliation. That is why John the Baptist said the following upon recognizing Jesus as the Savior of all mankind:

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world . . . And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God . . . And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"

John 1:29, 34, 36, KJV

Why was Jesus obligated to die such a gruesome death in the first place? Couldn't it have been avoided? In a word, no. According to the laws of the Old Testament, the remission of the people's sins could only be achieved through the altar sacrifice of an unblemished goat or lamb. That is why we find the ritual sacrifice of animals throughout the Old Testament. It was a foreshadow of better things to come in

Christ. Thus, as the Apostle Paul and other writers explain, Jesus became the Lamb of God of the New Testament. By His dying on the Cross, He became the Author of the New Covenant -- or the New Testament -- between God and man. He became the Final Sacrifice. There needs to be no more. These clear Biblical truths are revealed in verses such as the following:

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Isaiah 53:7, KJV

"The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:"

Acts 8:32, KJV

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,"

1 Peter 1:18-20, KJV

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:28, KJV

"And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."

Mark 14:24, KJV

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Luke 22:20, KJV

"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11:25, KJV

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

2 Corinthians 3:6, KJV

"But now hath he [Jesus] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

Hebrews 8:6-13, KJV

"And for this cause he [Jesus] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance . . . And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Hebrews 9:15, 22, KJV

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Hebrews 12:24, KJV

Jesus accepted the guilty verdict of His accusers. He took the whipping for us. He took the death sentence which we truly deserve; by His own loving choice. We were all held hostage by sin, and Jesus paid the ransom price for our freedom, through His sufferings upon the Cross. This truth becomes evident by verses such as the following:

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY."

Matthew 20:28, KJV

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY."

Mark 10:45, KJV

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD."

Acts 20:28, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

"YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE; be not ye the servants of men."

1 Corinthians 7:23, KJV

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION, unto the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 1:13-14, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL, to be testified in due time."

1 Timothy 2:5-6, KJV

As you can see, what an expensive price it was indeed! In other words, Jesus did not look out for Himself first as so many people are inclined to do today. He was not concerned with His own wellbeing. He was only concerned about our wellbeing, and our future in the Kingdom of His Father. He was concerned with liberating us from the chains of death, and from the fear of death, which at the time were in the hands of the Devil. Jesus came to fulfill a mission, but He had to be willing to temporarily forsake His place in Heaven, and His life on Earth, in order to fulfill it. That is why the Apostle Paul also writes the following:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:5-11, KJV

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through FEAR OF DEATH were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Hebrews 2:14-15, KJV

To reiterate, a main part of Jesus' mission on Earth was to free us not only from eternal death due to sin, but also to free us from the very fear of death itself. He wanted us to know that there was something after death -- an Afterlife in the Kingdom of His Father -- for those who believe in Him. Consider the following additional verses where this freedom is discussed:

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, YE SHALL BE FREE INDEED."

John 8:31-32, 36, KJV

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, TO PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES, and recovering of sight to the blind, TO SET AT LIBERTY them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Luke 4:18-19, KJV

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to

fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father . . . Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD."

Romans 8:15, 21, KJV

Thus, through His own Death and Resurrection, Jesus offered solid proof of the life to come, and gave hope to us all. He removed the fear of death from the hearts of all Believers. This hope of the Eternal Life to come is expressed over and over again in the pages of the Epistles. Consider this group of verses where the Apostles reveal their expectations:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Romans 8:18-25, KJV

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"

Colossians 1:25-27, KJV

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;"

1 Timothy 1:1, KJV

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal

life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:1-2, KJV

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

Titus 2:11-13, KJV

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Titus 3:7, KJV

"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Hebrews 3:5-6, KJV

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:"

Hebrews 6:11, KJV

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ . . . Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

1 Peter 1:13, 21, KJV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

1 Peter 1:3-5, KJV

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself,

even as he is pure."

1 John 3:2-3, KJV

As I pointed out earlier, Jesus' life was not self-centered, but rather God-centered. He wanted to please His Father first and above all. Thus, He gladly laid down His life for us as acceptable Atonement for our sins. Jesus did not have to do it, but He did it anyway, out of love for us, and love for His Father. He obeyed His Father's Will, because He knew that it was absolutely necessary for our Salvation and our Redemption. In His moments of agony while in the Garden, you may recall that He said the following:

". . . Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Luke 22:42, KJV

So there was a choice, but Jesus acquiesced to His Father's Will, as I explain in articles such as "So You Really Think You Are So Humble?". Thus, that same night, He took the path that led to the Cross, when He was betrayed into the hands of sinful men. Would any of us have had the same degree of love which must have been required in order to make such a difficult choice? Let there be no doubt. It was indeed an act of love. As the Apostles John and Paul both inform us:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16, KJV

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8, KJV

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

1 John 3:16, KJV

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 4:10, KJV

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38-39, KJV

Many so-called wise men, holy men, philosophers and teachers have come and gone down through the centuries. They have each impressed men with their wisdom, and inspired men with their various esoteric teachings and examples of love, patience and tolerance. However, none of them, not one single one of them, ever did what Jesus Christ did. None of the others paid the Ultimate Price. None of them opened the way to Eternal Life. Only Jesus could do that, and He willingly did so. That is precisely what sets Christianity apart from all other world religions. That is, God's love expressed to the world through the Sacrifice of His own dear Son. Not only that, but Jesus warned of those false prophets who had come before Him, and of those who would undoubtedly come after Him. In the Gospels He said the following:

"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them."

John 10:8, KJV

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

Matthew 24:24, KJV

Jesus knew from the very beginning that there was no other way, but the way of the Cross. Thus, by going the torturous way of the Cross, He in fact became the Way -- the only Way -- to Salvation and Eternal Life. That is why in the Gospel of John He stated the following:

". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

John 14:6, KJV

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

John 10:28, KJV

Some time later in the Book of Acts, and after they had been filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles affirmed Jesus' own teachings when they said such things as the following:

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none

other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Acts 4:12, KJV

". . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . ."

Acts 16:31, KJV

The Apostle Paul also tells us that Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Jesus started it all, and without Him, it would have never been, so praise the Lord:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 12:2, KJV

As I partially explained earlier in this article, the Scriptures repeatedly state that we are all sinners. The Bible plainly teaches us that we simply cannot ever be good enough, or perfect enough, to deserve God's love and mercy. How much less the Salvation, and the Heavenly Life which He offers us? The Apostle James plainly states that anything good we have in our lives, is a gift come down from God above. That most certainly includes the Gift of Salvation. Consider the following verse:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

James 1:17, KJV

So as we have seen, Salvation is purely a token of God's great love, as well as His grace. All we have to do is to accept His love through Christ's Sacrifice. If we are really honest with ourselves, then contrary to what certain other religions may teach regarding meriting Eternal Life through our own good works or good deeds, we know in our hearts that our very best is never going to be good enough. In other words, we cannot possibly save ourselves from ourselves and from our personal sins, no matter how hard we try, and no matter what we do. Only the love, grace and mercy of God can truly save us, because we are imperfect in the flesh and always will be, simply because we are humans born with a sinful nature. We already know how to do wrong and evil from a young age, but we must learn to do good. Consider the

following verses which show the contrast between God's grace and our own self-righteous works:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . ."

Titus 3:5, KJV

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Romans 11:6, KJV

Before his conversion to the Christian faith, the Apostle Paul -- then known as Saul -- was an extremely zealous and self-righteous Jewish Pharisee who did his best to uphold the Mosaic Law. He was probably very confident that his own so-called goodness and dutiful observance of the Mosaic Law made him a prime candidate for Heaven. At least until that fateful day on the road to Damascus when he had his dreadful encounter with the risen Jesus Christ! As many of you will know, the Lord greatly humbled Paul, and opened his spiritual eyes, so that he could finally see the truth regarding his miserable, sinful condition. It was after that, that we find Paul writing such things as the following in his Epistles:

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Romans 7:24, KJV

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

1 Corinthians 15:9, KJV

What a change of attitude after God had time to deal with Saul's pride. Sadly, there are a lot of Sauls in the world today. Such people tend to possess a lot of self-confidence. They have inflated egos and high opinions of themselves. Quite often they will look down upon others who they feel do not meet their standards and expectations. Those people who are religiously zealous, sometimes have a tendency to think that they are a little better, perhaps a little more holy, and just a bit more righteous than others. This is not the

real righteousness which comes from God alone through faith in Christ. Rather, it is in reality self-righteousness, and the Bible does not speak well of it. In fact, it says that it stinks. For example, the Prophet Isaiah wrote this:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Isaiah 64:6, KJV

King Solomon likewise offered some wise advice regarding proud people who have such high opinions of themselves, and who are filled with their own false sense of righteousness. In the Proverbs he wrote the following:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

Proverbs 16:18, KJV

Please take a moment now to consider your own life. If you can be honest with yourself, whether you are young or old, rich or poor, you know in your heart that you haven't always led an exemplary life. Perhaps you have lied in order to cover for yourself. Perhaps you have said cruel things which have hurt others. Or perhaps you have stolen something which did not belong to you. Maybe you have even lusted after some woman who belonged to another man. Or maybe you did something even worse. The point is, you have undoubtedly done certain things of which you are ashamed, which would embarrass you if they ever came to light. In short, you have not fully lived according to God's Laws of Love, which Jesus emphasized in the following set of verses:

". . . The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:29-31, KJV

What you need to understand, is that while we can hide our misdeeds from our friends and family, we cannot hide them from God. He sees all, and He knows all; and He certainly knows the evil thoughts that dwell in our hearts. That is

why He inspired the Prophet Jeremiah to write the following:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

In fact, way back in Genesis -- the very first Book in the Bible -- shortly before the Great Flood had occurred, God observed the evil nature of man; and He was sorry that He had ever created him. Thus, He chose to destroy man, because that was the only way to purge the Earth of man's iniquity. In the Book of Genesis we read the following sad verses:

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

Genesis 6:5-7, KJV

Shortly after the Genesis Flood had occurred, God again confirmed the evil nature of man's heart when He said the following to Himself:

". . . I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."

Genesis 8:21, KJV

The Prophet Isaiah was also keenly aware of our fallen, sinful condition, and our need for a Savior. That is why in one of his prophecies regarding the coming sufferings of Jesus Christ -- referred to as the Messianic Prophecies -- he too wrote the following:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah 53:6, KJV

King David of old likewise recognized the fallen state of rebellious men. In his fourteenth Psalm he laments how evil the hearts of unbelieving people have become, as we see by

the following set of verses:

". . . The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Psalm 14:1-3, KJV

Turning to the New Testament, on one particular occasion, Jesus and His followers were self-righteously judged by the Scribes and the Pharisees, because they failed to wash their hands before eating. Exactly how did Jesus respond to their ridiculous accusations? Consider the following:

"Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Matthew 15:17-20, KJV

"And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

Mark 7:20-23, KJV

A number of years after his own conversion to the Christian faith, the Apostle Paul paraphrased parts of King David's fourteenth Psalm when he wrote the following in his Epistle to the brethren at Rome:

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Romans 3:10, 21-23, KJV

Over and over again, in both the Old and the New Testaments, we are reminded that we are sinners. We are told that evil lurks in our hearts, and that we are fallen creatures. It should be obvious then, that it is utterly useless for us to try to hide our sins from God. As the old saying goes, "Be sure that your sins will find you out". This is in fact a verse that is found in the Book of Numbers. Following are a number of verses where this same truth is revealed:

". . . behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

Numbers 32:23, KJV

"For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings."

Job 34:21, KJV

"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."

Psalms 51:3, KJV

"O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee."

Psalms 69:5, KJV

"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."

Psalms 90:8, KJV

"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

Proverbs 15:3, KJV

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 23:24, KJV

"He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him."

Daniel 2:22, KJV

". . . Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was

any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad."

Mark 4:21-22, KJV

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

Luke 12:2, KJV

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."

John 15:22, KJV

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Hebrews 4:13, KJV

In their Epistles, as well as in the Book of Revelation, the Apostles make it very clear that every single one of us has a future appointment with the Lord, where we will have to give an account for ourselves, and be judged. Consider the following group of verses:

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Romans 14:12, KJV

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

2 Corinthians 5:10, KJV

"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

1 Peter 4:4-5, KJV

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

Hebrews 9:27, KJV

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in

the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Revelation 20:11-13, KJV

So as you can see, we can fool others, but we simply cannot fool God. He knows the real score, and the Day of Reckoning is coming for each one of us, whether we choose to believe it or not. We will each have to acknowledge our sins.

"Exactly what is sin?" you might be wondering. "I have led a rather decent life", you might be tempted to say. "I have never killed anyone. I have never robbed a bank. I have never raped anyone. I really fail to see how I am a sinner, or why I need to believe in this Jesus of yours. I am a good person."

Let us address the last remark first. Are you really as good as you claim to be? On one particular occasion, a certain person addressed Jesus as "Good Master", and inquired of him what good thing he must do in order to have Eternal Life. How did the Lord respond to this man's respectful remark? It may surprise you to know that Jesus answered by saying the following to that man:

". . . Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

Matthew 19:17, KJV

So with one statement, the Lord informed that man that there is only One good; that is, our Father in Heaven. But that is not all. The Lord then told the young man something which He knew the man would not be able to fulfill. Jesus said "keep the commandments". In other words, it appears that Jesus was trying to show the man the error of his ways, when he falsely assumed that he was good, and erroneously believed that he could merit Eternal Life by his own good deeds, particularly by keeping the Commandments.

How much this sounds like many people today. Sadly, it even includes quite a few people who belong to organized religion of one kind or another. They have the mistaken idea that they have to give God a little help in saving them. Indirectly, such people are stating that Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross is not sufficient Atonement for our sins. The idea seems to

be that we need to add our human endeavors to the finished work at Calvary. If Jesus said that it was finished in John 19:30, then it was indeed finished. Thus, nothing needs to be added to His Sacrifice in order for us to gain our Salvation. That is, nothing but faith in what Jesus did for us. As we learned earlier, we cannot mix our works with God's Grace. As the Apostle Paul wrote, it is either one or the other.

Returning to the definition of sin, in his first Epistle, the Apostle John offers us a very short, clear-cut, precise definition of exactly what sin is. The Apostle states:

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

1 John 3:4, KJV

Exactly what does the word "transgression" mean? In the New Testament, this word is derived from two Koine Greek words. That is, "anomia" -- an-om-ee'-ah" -- and "parabasis" -- par-ab'-as-is. These words mean to be without the law, or to violate the law. In other words, they mean to be lawless, or to break or disregard the law. So sinning means to break the law. But exactly what law is John referring to in that verse? Obviously, being as he was an Israelite, he was referring to the greatest laws of human conduct the world has ever known. In other words, the Laws of Moses, as laid down in the Old Testament. Jewish life centered around the Laws of Moses, as is quite evident in both the Old and the New Testaments.

As we saw a moment ago, while there are literally hundreds of laws contained in the Old Testament -- 613 "mitzvoth" according to the experts -- Jesus summed them up when He said that the greatest laws, or commandments, are to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Let's face it. We most certainly love ourselves more than anyone else. "Me" is number one in most people's lives. The survival of self is the rule which governs this current world. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Ephesians:

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it . . ."

Ephesians 5:29, KJV

If we each loved our neighbor as much as we love ourselves, the world would most certainly be a wonderful place in which to live. Sadly, that is far from being true in our modern times. In fact, Jesus stated that because of an increase in

iniquity, or lawbreakers we could say, the end of that age of which He spoke would be marked by a lack of love in the world. The Apostle Paul likewise wrote that the citizens of that age would be lovers of their own selves, more than lovers of God, as we see by the following two verses:

"And because iniquity shall abound, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD."

Matthew 24:12, KJV

"For men shall be LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD;"

2 Timothy 3:2-4, KJV

So to reiterate, as I state in my article "The Royal Law: Thou Shalt Love", the greatest of all the Biblical laws is in reality, simply love, exactly as Jesus said; because all of the other laws are encompassed by it. James referred to the commandment to love as the "Royal Law" in the following verse:

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:"

James 2:8, KJV

So if we truly wish to please our Heavenly King, we need to obey His Royal Law: love. Any time that we do something which is not motivated by love for God, or love for our fellow man in some way, but only by a selfish love which will bring us some personal advantage or gain, we are in fact breaking God's Laws. If you find that difficult, consider that James also informs us that even if we keep all of the Biblical laws -- that is, the Mosaic Law which is contained in the Torah -- and only break one of them, nevertheless, we are guilty of breaking them all in God's eyes, as we see here:

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

James 2:10, KJV

So as you can plainly see, the Apostle James wrote that if a person keeps the entire Mosaic Law, but breaks even one of the 613 mitzvot, or commandments, he is guilty of breaking

all of them. Just like Jesus and the Apostle Paul, I believe that the main point that James was trying to make with his readers, is that absolutely no one can establish their own righteousness through keeping the Mosaic Law. It is a total human impossibility. No one has ever done it, and no one will ever do it, except Jesus Christ himself. This is why He was able to make the perfect Sacrifice for our sins. He was as a lamb without spot or blemish, as required by the Mosaic Law.

Tragically, this is precisely what the unbelieving Jews of Jesus' and Paul's era tried to do. As we learned earlier in this article, due to their fear of death, they were under complete bondage to the Laws of Moses; every jot and tittle of it. Because they rejected the righteousness which comes through Christ alone, they went about trying to establish their own righteousness, by supposedly observing all of the mitzvot. Thus, the Apostle Paul wrote as follows. I have added a few words in brackets for the sake of clarification:

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness [through Jesus Christ], and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Romans 10:3, KJV

And that is why they were lost and damned. They thought that they were righteous, but they were not; because there is no righteousness without Christ. In fact, as I explain in other articles, after Paul's eyes were opened, and he was converted to the Christian faith, he spent a large portion of his life fighting against those same self-righteous Jews, who still maintained that they could establish their own righteousness through observing the Laws of Moses. In his Epistles, over and over again, Paul argued that no one could be justified by the Mosaic Law any longer. Only faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ could possibly save them. Consider the following verses where this point is made so very clear:

"And by him [Jesus] all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Acts 13:39, KJV

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be

justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

Romans 3:19-27, KJV

"For if by one man's offence [Adam] death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) . . . That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5:17, 21, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Romans 7:4, KJV

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Romans 8:10, KJV

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Romans 10:4, KJV

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Galatians 2:16, 21, KJV

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

Galatians 3:11, KJV

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Galatians 5:4, KJV

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"

Philippians 3:9, KJV

Such is the futility of trying to keep the Law. Such is the futility of trying to attain Salvation through our own good deeds. As we have already seen, we cannot be good enough of our own accord. We have transgressed the Law; and that makes us sinners; every single one of us. There is simply no way around it. There are no loopholes. There are no bargaining chips. We are all guilty as charged.

However, as we have also already learned, not everything is lost. There is a way out of this mess. There is a way to be exonerated of guilt. There is a way to avoid the punishment we deserve. There is a silver lining to the sin which clouds and overshadows our lives. Guilt, condemnation, judgment and punishment do not have to be the end of this story, if we don't wish for them to be. We are not without hope. There is a way of escape. We have already been condemned by our own selfish and sinful actions. What we clearly need now is a Savior, and Jesus is that Savior. He offers us freedom from the bondage of sin. He offers us the hope of Redemption. And He offers us the gift of Eternal Life, through His Sacrifice of Love on the Cross. As the Apostle Paul explains it:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Romans 5:6, KJV

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 2:12-13, KJV

So you see, as I explained earlier, through accepting Jesus Christ's sufferings on the Cross as Atonement for our sins, we can be reconciled with, and reunited with the Father. Our fellowship and close relationship with Him can be restored. That is why only a few verses later, the Apostle Paul also adds the following:

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"

Ephesians 2:19, KJV

Why does Paul say this? Because that is precisely what God has wanted all along. He has wanted His wayward children to return to Him, just like in the story of the Prodigal Son which is found in Luke chapter fifteen. In fact, at the very beginning of the Gospel of John, we are plainly told that we can each become a part of God's Household. We can become His adopted children, simply by accepting the Sacrifice of His Son, as we see by this well-known verse:

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"

John 1:12, KJV

This idea of being adopted into God's Family through faith in Jesus Christ is mentioned in other verses as well. Not only that, but the Apostle Paul informs us that this great Adoption Plan was put into motion before the foundation of the world. Consider the following verses and rejoice at your Father's great love for His children:

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Romans 8:15-17, KJV

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:26, KJV

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from

the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved . . . That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"

Ephesians 1:2-6, 10-11, KJV

So by simply believing in what Jesus did for us, and by repenting of our sins, we can find forgiveness, and we can be reunited with God, both in this life, as well as in the life to come. God is very willing to forgive us for our mistakes. He is able to blot out our sins from the Book. He is able to remove the stain of guilt from our lives, if we choose to believe in and accept the Sacrifice of His Son as the perfect Atonement for our sins. In fact, He pleads with us to make the right choice. As the Prophet Isaiah wrote over twenty-five hundred years ago:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Isaiah 1:18, KJV

There is no other way. God knows that we cannot be perfect enough. We cannot be righteous enough. We cannot do enough good deeds in order to merit Salvation and Eternal Life. We cannot keep every single one of His holy Laws. We will fall short of the goal every time. We will never meet His standard of perfection. By ourselves, we are simply a hopeless case. So we must humble ourselves, and be willing to admit that we can't do it alone, and that we need His help. If we cry out to Him and confess our sins, confess our need, and believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Savior we long desire, God the Father promises that He will hear us, and He will save us. Again, the Prophet Isaiah wrote:

"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:"

Isaiah 59:1, KJV

As the previous verses from Isaiah state, we can be cleansed of our sins. We can be washed clean and made white as snow by the Blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

If you have never heard it before, this is the central message of our Christian faith: You are a sinner, but God loves you anyway. He wants to forgive you, and He wants to bring you into His Family, and give you Eternal Life. But first, you must be willing to meet the conditions which He has established. That begins with the realization that you are a sinner, and then repenting of your sins, whatever they happen to be. If you are willing to do this, and if you are willing to admit your personal need for a Savior, and if you recognize Jesus Christ as that Savior, you will gain both forgiveness and Eternal Life. God is waiting on you to make the right choice. As the Apostle Peter wrote so many years ago:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

2 Peter 3:9, KJV

In other words, God keeps His promises. He does not go back on them and He does not lie. As Peter writes, it is not God's Will for any of us to perish; so He patiently waits for us to repent of our sins, so that He can extend His hand of Salvation to us. Consider the following verses:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Numbers 23:19, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

Romans 3:4, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:2, KJV

God the Father, and Jesus His Son, have kept their part of the bargain. Their word is good. It can be trusted. They will deliver the promised blessings of forgiveness, as well as Eternal Life to those who believe. As we learned in part one, Jesus paid with His earthly life as a ransom for our sins. He purchased us with His very own blood. He died for you, for me, for all of us. That is why in the Gospel of John He said the following:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

John 12:32, KJV

"All men" means exactly that: all men; because we are all sinners before God, and in need of a Savior. It does not matter of what national origin you might be. It does not matter of what religious persuasion you might currently be, or even if you profess no faith at all. The bottom line, is that without Christ, you are hopeless, and you are utterly lost. As we read earlier, the Apostle Paul wrote "having no hope, and without God in the world". So again, Jesus Christ fulfilled His Mission on the Cross. He did His part. Now it is up to you to do your part. If you have not yet accepted Jesus Christ, are you prepared to do it now? If you are one of His children, you will know it, and you will hear the Voice of His Spirit speaking to your heart. As Jesus also said:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:"

John 10:27, KJV

The Apostle Paul also informs us that the Lord knows those who are His. Perhaps that is why we are predestinated from the very start. In other words, because God already knows what decision we are going to make. Consider the following verse:

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

2 Timothy 2:19, KJV

As we read earlier, in Romans chapter ten, after explaining

that none of us can establish our own righteousness through observing the mandates of the Mosaic Law, or by performing good works and doing nice things, the Apostle Paul plainly states that Jesus "is the end of the law for righteousness." He then tells his readers exactly how one can be saved with the following two verses:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 10:9-10, KJV

So, as you can see, we must not only believe in our hearts, but we must also confess our faith in Christ with our mouths. In other words, we must demonstrate our faith through an act of verbal confession. So again I ask, are you prepared to do this? Is your heart ready? Have you reached a point in your life where you are ready to let go of your pride and your vanity, and your "I can do it alone" attitude? Are you now willing to humble yourself before God and admit your need for a Savior?

If you feel God's Spirit tugging at your heart right now, and if you have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I would like to invite you to do so right now. It is not advisable for you to put it off for another day. After all, you may not have that long. As the old saying goes, "We are all old. We could die tomorrow". God forbid that this should happen to you, but if it did, can you say with absolute certainty that you have the assurance of Salvation and Eternal Life? Quoting from the Prophet Isaiah, the Apostle Paul wrote:

". . . I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

2 Corinthians 6:2, KJV

In speaking of the brevity of the human life span, the Apostle James also wrote the following:

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

James 4:14, KJV

Considering then the uncertainty of your future, would it not be wise on your part to make the decision to accept Jesus Christ today; in fact, right now? If you feel that you are ready, but are not quite certain regarding how to go about doing it, allow me to suggest the following small prayer as a guide. Please remember that prayer is not just a dead ritual that you repeat over and over again as is taught by certain religions. Prayer is talking heart to heart with our Heavenly Father. Through the following prayer, or a similar one, you are expressing your acceptance of your sinful condition, your need for a Savior, and recognizing that Jesus Christ is that Savior.

Please understand that Salvation is a matter of belief and acceptance. The words of this prayer are only the vehicle, or the means, of demonstrating that acceptance before God. The words themselves do not save you. What saves you is the faith and belief in your heart in God's promises, as I have explained them to you in this message. You might want to pray something like the following:

"Heavenly Father, I know that I am not perfect. I admit that I have made my share of mistakes. I know that I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus is your Son, and that He gave His life on the Cross for my sins. Heavenly Father, I ask You to please forgive me for my sins through the Sacrifice of Your Son, and to grant me Eternal Life. Please fill my life with Your Spirit, and help me to understand Your Word, the Bible. As I do, help me to submit myself to Your Will for my life; help me to live a life which is pleasing in your sight; and as much as is within me, help me to also begin telling others about Your Son, Jesus, so that they may have Eternal Life as well. Thank-you Father for hearing my prayer. In Your Son, Jesus's name, I humbly ask. Amen."

If you have just prayed this prayer, or a similar prayer with sincerity, then the Spirit of Jesus Christ has come into your life, and you have been forgiven for your sins. Your slate has been washed clean by the Blood of the Lamb, and you have been given a fresh start. For as the Apostle Paul also wrote:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV

Jesus Himself spoke of this new spiritual birth, or rebirth. One certain night, a noble Pharisee came to Jesus to inquire of Him regarding His doctrine. During the conversation, the Lord said the following to Nicodemus:

". . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

John 3:3-7, KJV

By accepting Christ as you have just done, your spirit has been renewed, and you have received Eternal Life. Someday it will become a reality for all of us when we each receive our Glorified Body. We know this is so, because the Bible says so, and that is all we have to know. You may not have heard a loud clap of thunder, or even felt some grand onslaught of emotion. Nevertheless, everything you have just asked for has been granted to you by faith, simply because God says so in His Word. As we have already seen, God is not a man that He should lie. He keeps His word. He keeps His promises, more than any human being you will ever know.

So you have great reason to rejoice, because you have just been admitted into the eternal Family of God! You belong to Him by right of adoption through Jesus Christ. In fact, at this very moment, the Angels in Heaven are rejoicing with you. We know that this is so, because Jesus said so Himself. In the Gospel of Luke He said the following:

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance . . . Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Luke 15:7, 10, KJV

May God truly bless you in your New Life with Him! To assist you in your new-found faith, I suggest that you immediately begin to read your Bible. As a new Believer in Christ, it would be good for you to begin by reading the four Gospels which describe in great detail the Birth, Life, Message, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, I also advise you to seek out some sort of fellowship with other

like-minded Christians who can help you with your walk of faith.

Lastly, I also encourage you to continue reading the many Scripture-filled articles -- such as this one -- which can be found on the Bill's Bible Basics website. These articles will answer many questions you have regarding the Bible and our Christian faith. If you are interested in reaching some of your friends with this very same Gospel message, you will be happy to know that it is available in PDF format, in seven different languages at the following URL. Each language is a separate PDF file:

<https://www.billkochman.com/Message-To-The-World/Message-To-The-World.html>

With these thoughts I will bring this article to a close. I hope that you have found it informative, and I pray that it has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life. If you have enjoyed reading this article, please consider sharing its URL with your online friends. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social networks, I would also appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of them are also located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server:

All Are Given a Chance, But . . .
Beholding the Evil and the Good
Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace
Holy Qur'an and Islam: A Doctrine of Devils?
Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?
Not Everyone is a Child of God
OSAS: Are We Once Saved, Always Saved?
Salvation is Free Through Jesus Christ
Selfishness: A Prophesied Sign of Our Times
So You Really Think You Are So Humble?
The Lamb of God Was a Goat!
The Marriage of the Lamb
The Royal Law: Thou Shalt Love

All references were taken from the Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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