

I died, and behold  
I am alive forevermore

— Revelation 1:18



# the gospel

The word “gospel” means “good news.” If there’s good news, then there also must be bad news. In short, the bad news is that we are all “sinners” and deserve “death” and everlasting punishment for our God-hating and void of God condition. Whether one believes in God or not is irrelevant. You can believe all you want that you won’t die, but the facts are, everyone dies. Let’s examine how all of this works, what this means, why it should matter—and also, whether or not we can know if any of this is true.



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# what is the gospel

## **Good news versus bad news**

The gospel is called the ‘good news’ because it addresses the most serious problem that you and I have as human beings, and that problem is simply this: God is holy and He is just, and I’m not. And at the end of my life, I’m going to stand before a just and holy God, and I’ll be judged. Years ago, if someone committed treason against their government or their monarch, the death penalty would have been given. How much more then, if each one of us has rebelled against the One Who made us and Who enables us to exist, is this a treasonous act, worthy of the death penalty? We may think this is harsh, but that’s because we’re not biased. We’re the ones who deserve to receive God’s justice, and His justice demands that we die for our sins because He is holy and just.

## **The bad news first**

That’s the crime each one of us is guilty of and the punishment does fit the crime. So why can’t God just let us off? Why can’t He ignore sin? It’s not because He lacks compassion or mercy or a desire to forgive—it’s because God is a God of justice and He is always fair in His judgments.

## **Now the good news**

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus lived a life of perfect righteousness, of perfect obedience to God, not for His own well being but for His people. God is the One Who made us and gave us life, and continues to give us life and breath each moment; He is our Creator. He has done for me what I couldn’t possibly do for myself. But not only has He lived that life of perfect obedience, He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to satisfy the justice and the righteousness of God on my behalf.

# in the beginning

## **1. God created us to be with Him (Genesis 1-2)**

God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve sinless, they had no sin, no shame, therefore nothing to hide before God or each other. They regularly communed with God with unadulterated joy and fulfillment. This is how God had intended for all people to live. God's plan was for us to be in absolute and perfect relationship with Him and each other in total unity.

# the problem

## **2. Our sins separate us from God (Genesis 3)**

But that plan was disrupted by one evil act thousands and thousands of years ago. The only command God gave to Adam and Eve was not to eat from the fruit of the tree of *"the knowledge of good and evil."* When Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan, they chose to disobey God and do what they wanted to instead. That is when sin entered the human race.

“ *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—*”

– Romans 5:12

Adam and Eve's souls became immediately polluted by sin and selfishness. As a result, all of their offspring (and that includes you and me) were born sinful and selfish. Through Adam every person ever born is born depraved and deprived of God's fellowship to the core.

Every war, famine, argument, sin and tragedy can be traced back to the garden of Eden where Adam and Eve chose to turn their backs on God. Every time you lied, lusted, gossiped, complained or argued, that's sin. Everyone is a sinner because everyone sins.

“ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*”

– Romans 3:23

In other words, everyone has missed the mark of God's holy standards and we all stand as lacking in God's intended perfection and standards.

**The penalty for sin is death.**

“ *The soul who sins shall die.*”

– Ezekiel 18:20a

Spiritual death is when a person is alive physically, but dead spiritually. All of us are born spiritually dead, separated from God. The LORD said to Adam: “*But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die*” (Genesis 2:17). Adam and Eve died spiritually at the time that they sinned—they became different beings than the ones God had originally created. They also began to die physically. Because of that spiritual death, humanity is now separated from God by nature (called spiritual death).

### **3. Our Sins cannot be removed by good deeds (Genesis 4 – Malachi 4)**

To be completely fair and just, God told us what sin is. God gave the people the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). If you could live up to His holy standards as outlined in His Commandments (called the Law), then you would be justified by them and you would not die—but no one could. Even the best of our good deeds are corrupted by selfish motives when trying to follow them. So God in all fairness and mercy gave the people (the Israelites) the sacrificial system to ensure that they had a means by which to be forgiven by.

“ *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*”

– Hebrews 9:22

There had to be some form of payment for the penalty of sin and this was how that penalty was paid for—by the very payment of an others life. In Biblical times, the people would offer a sacrifice of bulls, goats and lambs. It was by the shed blood of the lamb that the payment for the sins of the people were paid or atoned for. However, these sacrifices had to be offered year-after-year, and would only “cover” the payment of sin, but could never completely take the sin away. This is where God’s Son, the “Lamb of God” comes into the picture next.

“ <sup>1</sup> *For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.* <sup>2</sup> *Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?* <sup>3</sup> *But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.* <sup>4</sup> *For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*”

– Hebrews 10:1-4

# the solution

## **4. Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again (Matthew – Luke)**

When Jesus came to the earth He came as the fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17) and the ultimate sacrifice (Luke 24:46).



*<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”*

– Hebrews 10:11-14

### **Only a sinless man could pay for the sins of a sinner**

Christ lived the perfect life that we could not live and died in our place, for our sin. When He died upon the cross he screamed the words “*It is finished*” (John 19:30). What he meant by these three words was that the price for our sins was paid completely. He was fully God and entirely man. As a perfect human He could die for other humans. As the true and living God His payment for sin was infinite. Jesus is the sinless Son of God, and now He gives Himself up to die in my place: the substitutional dimension of the death of Christ for my sins.

## The payment was fulfilled in Christ

Jesus rose from the dead three days after He was murdered on the cross (Mark 16:6). He was seen by over 500 witnesses (I Corinthians 15:6) on at least 12 separate occasions over the course of forty days (Acts 1:3). Because He died our sins are paid for entirely. Because He rose from the dead we know that Jesus was Who He claimed to be, God in the flesh.

## 5. Everyone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life (John)

Jesus paid the price for our sins when He died on the cross and all we must do is receive the gift of forgiveness through faith. When we believe that Jesus died for our sins and trust in Him alone we receive eternal life, are passed out of death into life and are guaranteed a home in heaven (John 5:24).

Eternal life is not achieved by good deeds but received through faith. It's not a matter of trying but trusting. We can believe that we have received the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life.

Lets clear something up:

- You didn't *get* saved – God *saved* you!
- You didn't *get* clean – God *cleaned* you up!
- You didn't *get* right with God – God *made* you righteous by faith in Him!
- You have *absolutely nothing* to brag about! – because it was all *accomplished and provided* by the Lord Jesus Christ!  
He is Your Salvation!



*You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary.”*

– Jonathan Edwards

This is a condensed version of the entire gospel summarized in two verses of the Bible as follows:



*<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”*

– 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

The resurrection is essential in the gospel presentation because it proves that Jesus has overcome sin and death. Jesus would still be dead if just one sin was left in Him, because the wages of sin is death.

Therefore, the gospel is the hard truth that we are all sinners and criminals before God; sentenced under the Law to be separated from God and everything that is good. In His love for us, God the Father sent God the Son to earth to become a man. Jesus was born without a sin, and lived a sinless life. He allowed Himself to be crucified, and as He hung on the cross, God the Father took all of our sins, put them on Jesus and punished him in our place instead.

Jesus took the wrath of God for you and me, and He died. His body was placed in a tomb, and on the third day He came back from the dead, never to die again. God in His love and grace has overcome our two enemies of sin and death—and those who acknowledge to Jesus that they are sinners, and trust Him to save them from eternal condemnation are forgiven their sins and given the gift of eternal life with God.



## 6. Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever

### (Acts – Revelation)

Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead we will be with Jesus forever in heaven. When we trust in Jesus we enter into a personal, permanent relationship with God called “eternal life.”

Part of the reality of eternal life is that it doesn’t start after you die but as soon as you believe (John 10:10). This life is the joy of a real, exciting relationship with Jesus every single day through prayer, worship and living in the strength that God provides through His Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

The other part of the reality of eternal life is that all who have it will be with Jesus forever and ever in heaven someday. Once we receive God’s free gift of eternal life, it is ours forever and we are His forever!

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\* All Bible quotes are from the English Standard Version (ESV)

## additional resources

### See Coffee Scribe’s:

#### Would the real Jesus please stand up!

<https://coffeescribe.ca/would-the-real-jesus-please-stand-up/>

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### And also:

#### How to become born again

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