

Who Is God?

What Is God Like?

The Bible is all about God. In it we find the answers to the most important questions: Who is God? What is God like? Listed below are special words that answer these two questions. Words that describe God are often called **attributes**. Look at each word and read the meaning of the word. Next, look up the verses listed after the word and its meaning.

Attribute	Meaning	Verse(s)
ALMIGHTY	God is all-powerful	Jeremiah 32:17 Revelation 15:3
CREATOR	God made everything	Isaiah 44:24 Psalm 24:1-2
ETERNAL	God has no beginning or end	Psalm 90:2
FAITHFUL	God always does what he says he will do	Numbers 23:19 Deuteronomy 7:9
GOOD	God is good in everything he is and does	Mark 10:18b Psalm 145:9
HAPPY (BLESSED)	God delights in being God	Psalm 115:3 1 Timothy 6:15-16
HOLY	God is like nothing else; he is completely perfect; he is pure and separate from all sin	Isaiah 40:25 Habakkuk 1:13a
INCOMPREHENSIBLE	God is more than we can fully understand	Psalm 145:3 Romans 11:33-34
JEALOUS	God will not share his glory or the praise he deserves	Exodus 34:14 Isaiah 42:8
LOVE	Love is the overflow of joy that God has in himself and gives to others	John 15:9,11 1 John 4:8
MERCIFUL	God is kind to undeserving sinners	Psalm 145:8 Psalm 103:10
OMNIPRESENT	God is everywhere all the time	Jeremiah 23:24 Psalm 139:7-10
OMNISCIENT	God knows everything: past, present, and future	Isaiah 46:9-10 1 John 3:20 Psalm 139:2-4
PATIENT	God is slow to anger and slow to punish	Exodus 34:6 2 Peter 3:9

Attribute	Meaning	Verse(s)
RIGHTEOUS	Everything God thinks, says, and does is right	Deuteronomy 32:4 Psalm 11:7
SELF-SUFFICIENT	God doesn't need anything	Acts 17:25
SOVEREIGN	God has the right, wisdom, and power to do all that he pleases	Isaiah 46:10-11 Ephesians 1:11
TRINITY	God is three persons in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit	Deuteronomy 6:4 Matthew 3:16-17 Matthew 28:19 John 1:1-2
UNCHANGING	God never changes in who he is or what he is like	Malachi 3:6 Psalm 102:25-27 Hebrews 13:8
WISE	God causes everything to work out perfectly	Psalm 104:24 Job 12:13

There are many more words we could use to describe God. But God is so great that we can't even begin to describe him! He is a **GLORIOUS** God!

GLORIOUS? What does glorious mean? It means that in everything God is and does, he is beyond comparison. When you see something amazing, stop and think, "This is nothing compared to God!" Do you think that a lion is strong? God is stronger! Do you think a rainbow is beautiful? God is more beautiful! Do you think that a thunderstorm is awesome? God is more awesome!

In thinking about how amazing God is, the hymn writer Walter Chalmers Smith said this:

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Everything that God does, he does in order to show us how great he is (**Romans 11:36**). When God created the world, he did it for his glory (**Psalm 19:1-2**). When God created people, he did it for his glory (**Isaiah 43:7**). When God sent Jesus into the world to save sinners, he did it for his glory (**John 17:4**).

We were all created with a special desire—a desire to be amazed and satisfied in something. What can amaze you and make you truly happy forever? Only this glorious God. He is more than enough to satisfy all your deepest longings. And he wants to make himself known to you!

. . . in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right
hand are pleasures forevermore. —*Psalm 16:11b*

God Makes Himself Known

If we are to know the holy God, he must first reveal himself to us. There are several ways in which God has chosen to do this:

1 God makes himself known through his creation

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. —*Psalm 19:1*

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. —*Romans 1:20*



2 God makes himself known through our conscience

Because God has made himself clearly seen through what he has created, all people have a deep inner knowledge that God exists. We have been created with a **conscience** that tells us, "There is a God who made all of this." That is why **Romans 1:20** (from above) ends with these words:

So they are without excuse.



3 God makes himself known through his Word, the Bible

Even though God has made himself known through his creation and in our conscience, in order to come to know, trust, love, and enjoy God in a personal way we must have the Bible.

So faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. —*Romans 10:17*



4 God makes himself known through his Son, Jesus

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son. —*Hebrews 1:1-2a*

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. —*John 1:18*



Jesus' life, words, and actions most fully explain to us who God is and what he is like. Why is Jesus able to do this? Because he is God! (John 1:1) Not only did Jesus come to show us who God is and what he is like, Jesus came to make a special PEOPLE for God—a people who would know, trust, love, obey, and enjoy God and forever be a part of his family.

God Chooses a People for Himself

God created all people, and all people belong to God. The Bible tells us that God is good to all people (Psalm 145:9). But God also chose a people with whom he desired a very special relationship.

Think of your own family for a moment. Your parents probably are good to other children in your church, neighborhood, or any child they meet. However, your parents have a very unique and special relationship with you—their own child.

In a similar way, God has chosen a people with whom he has a special relationship. These people are a **covenant** people. God's covenant people not only enjoy the privileges of being in God's chosen family but also the responsibilities of living in a way that shows their uniqueness as God's people.

What is a **covenant**? A covenant is a formal agreement that God makes between himself and a person or group of people. In a covenant, **God decides** the conditions of the relationship. One of the most important covenants in the Old Testament is the covenant that God made with Abram (later called Abraham).

God's covenant with Abraham from Genesis 12–17

God's conditions for the covenant:

1 God said that Abraham must . . .

“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.”

“I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be blameless.”

2 God promised to Abraham . . .

“I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. . . . in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

“I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

3 Abraham's response . . .

“So Abram went, as the LORD had told him.”

“And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”

4 How God kept his covenant promises . . .

God gave Abraham and Sarah offspring, a son named Isaac.

God gave Isaac a son named Jacob.

God gave Jacob twelve sons. These twelve sons became the nation of Israel.

In the New Testament we see that God fulfills his covenant through Jesus, Abraham's offspring, and through all who have faith like Abraham (**Galatians 3:7, 16**).

Through the nation of Israel, God gave his holy and righteous law which included the TEN COMMANDMENTS.

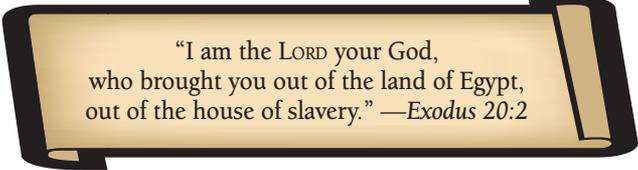


The Ten Commandments

Many people think of the Ten Commandments as just a list of “do’s and don’ts”—DO this but DON’T do that! But the Ten Commandments are much more than a list of do’s and don’ts. The Ten Commandments show us what God is like . . . and what we are like.

What God is Like:

Exodus 20:2 is called the PROLOGUE to the Ten Commandments.



“I am the LORD your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery.” —Exodus 20:2

It comes before the commands of God and is like an introduction. It tells us who is giving the commands—God—and why God can give the commands. By studying the prologue carefully, we can understand a lot about God.

In the prologue God says three things about himself:

- ❖ I am the LORD
- ❖ I am your God
- ❖ I brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery



I am the LORD

The name LORD in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, is the name JEHOVAH. Jehovah is a special name for God. It shows God’s **authority**—it shows that he is in charge. God gives commands, he doesn’t take commands from anyone.

Jehovah means that God is **sovereign**. He has the “right, wisdom, and power to do all that he pleases.” Jehovah means that God is **self-sufficient**. He doesn’t need anything or anyone. Jehovah means that God is **eternal**. He has no beginning and no ending. He lives forever. The name Jehovah means that God is **unchanging**.

Because God made the world and everything in it, he owns all things and has the right to do whatever he pleases with it. He is the King of all creation. The name Jehovah shows us God’s greatness.



Your God

A king is in charge of all things and is to be highly respected. Ordinary people usually cannot visit with a king. But God is more than the King of the universe, he is also the God of his people. He has a relationship or friendship with his people. He invites people to be a part of his family. He invited Israel and he invites us, through trusting in Jesus, to be his people. The words of the prologue, “your God,” show us God’s goodness.

Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery

God showed the Israelites—and us—that he is almighty and sovereign. He showed that he is great and powerful and in charge by bringing Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. He showed the



Israelites—and us—that he is good and that he is the God of his people by freeing the Israelites from slavery and bondage in Egypt. God is the Liberator—the One Who Frees His People. He freed his people from being slaves to Pharaoh. God is still the Liberator, because he is unchanging. He still frees his people. He frees them from being slaves to sin. He is the Savior of his people.

God's Commands:

After the PROLOGUE, God gave his commands or his law. They show God's character and they show God's people how they are to live. The Ten Commandments tell us what is right and what is wrong.

GOD

These first four commandments show us what our heart should be toward GOD

GOD



<p>FIRST COMMANDMENT</p> <p>You shall have no other gods before me.</p> <p><i>Exodus 20:3</i></p>	<p>SECOND COMMANDMENT</p> <p>You shall not make for yourself a carved image.</p> <p><i>Exodus 20:4</i></p>	<p>THIRD COMMANDMENT</p> <p>You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.</p> <p><i>Exodus 20:7</i></p>	<p>FOURTH COMMANDMENT</p> <p>Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.</p> <p><i>Exodus 20:8</i></p>
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OTHERS

The final six commandments show us what our heart should be toward OTHERS



OTHERS

<p>FIFTH COMMANDMENT</p> <p>Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land.</p> <p><i>Exodus 20:12</i></p>	<p>SIXTH COMMANDMENT</p> <p>You shall not murder.</p> <p><i>Exodus 20:13</i></p>	<p>SEVENTH COMMANDMENT</p> <p>You shall not commit adultery.</p> <p><i>Exodus 20:14</i></p>
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God's commands show us what he is like:

- ❖ "You shall have no other gods before me" shows us that God is greater than all other gods. He is worthy to be praised.
- ❖ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image" shows us that God is so great that his greatness cannot be shown by anything that man could make.
- ❖ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain" shows us that God's name and reputation is precious because God is most valuable and worthy.
- ❖ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" shows us that we can rest because God is able to provide for his children.
- ❖ "Honor your father and your mother" shows us that God wants us to honor those who are in authority—those who have a position above us—because God, the greatest authority, is worthy of honor.
- ❖ "You shall not murder" tells us to respect the life of others because God is the Creator of life.
- ❖ "You shall not commit adultery" commands us to be faithful because God is a faithful God.
- ❖ "You shall not steal" tells us that God gives us all things and knows just what to give us. We do not need to take from others because God is wise and knows how much each person should have.
- ❖ "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" tells us not to lie because God is not a liar.
- ❖ "You shall not covet" teaches us that God is the greatest treasure. When we have God, we have all we need.

What We Are Like:

The Ten Commandments also show us what we are like. First take this simple "law-keeping test" and then we will find out how the Ten Commandments show us what we are like. Ask your mom or dad to go through the test with you when you have finished it.

DIRECTIONS: Mark every commandment you have ever broken even one time. For example, if you lied even one time, you should mark the Ninth Commandment box. The questions in the parentheses might help you to know whether to check the box.

- “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Has anything ever been more important to me than pleasing God? Have I ever wanted something so much that I was willing to sin in order to get it?)
- “You shall not make for yourself a carved image.” (Have I ever made God to be different in my mind than he really is? For example: Have I ever thought, “God is not a God who would punish **this** sin or send anyone to hell”?)
- “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.” (Have I ever used God’s name carelessly or said that I am a Christian but acted wrongly? Have I ever complained about what God is doing in my life or prayed to God without believing that he would answer?)
- “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” (Have I ever failed to rest in God and his provision?)
- “Honor your father and your mother.” (Have I ever spoken disrespectfully or disobeyed my parents?)
- “You shall not murder.” (Have I ever had angry thoughts toward my brother or sister, insulted another person, or called someone names? Have I thought like a murderer and “murdered in my heart”?)
- “You shall not commit adultery.” (Have I ever had impure thoughts about another person?)
- “You shall not steal.” (Have I ever taken something that did not belong to me?)
- “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” (Have I ever lied?)
- “You shall not covet.” (Have I ever wanted something that was not mine so much that I have pouted and been unhappy until I got it?)

How many marks are on your law-keeping test? Remember, if you ever broke a commandment even once, you must mark that commandment.

This is what the Bible says about law-keeping:

For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. —*James 2:10*



God expects PERFECT law-keeping—perfect obedience! If you have broken even one of God’s commandments, you are a LAW-BREAKER! Has anyone—other than Jesus—ever been able to keep all the commandments? No. We are all law-breakers. We cannot keep the commandments. We are all guilty of breaking God’s commands. The law, God’s commands, shows us that we are SINNERS.

Try to answer the following questions:

**How did we become sinners?
Why can’t we keep God’s law?
Can this problem be solved?**

From Old To New Testament

How did we become sinners? Why can't we keep God's law? The problem began a long, long time ago with our very first ancestors—Adam and Eve. You should read Genesis 2 and 3 to find out exactly what happened and then read the summary below to find out how their first act of disobedience became your greatest problem also.

- ❖ God was Adam and Eve's Creator. God decides what is true and right for his creatures. God gave Adam and Eve a command: Don't eat from the one tree (**Genesis 2:16-17**). If Adam and Eve had obeyed this command, they would never have died.
- ❖ The serpent came to tempt Eve. He said that God was a liar and could not be trusted (**Genesis 3:1-5**).
- ❖ Adam and Eve decided that they could choose for themselves what is true and right instead of God deciding what is true and right. They decided to believe the serpent's lies instead of God. They ate from the one tree and disobeyed God's command. What had happened in their thinking? What had changed in their hearts?

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God
or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking,
and their foolish hearts were darkened. —*Romans 1:21*



A darkened heart = a sinful heart.
A sinful heart does not want to obey God.
A sinful heart cannot please God.



What does this have to do with me? Why is their sin my problem? Because YOU are a descendant of Adam and Eve! Descendants inherit things from their **ancestors**. For example, you inherit from your parents things like the color of your hair and eyes and the shape of your ears and nose. In a similar way, you have inherited something that your parents and grandparents inherited from Adam and Eve: a darkened heart. Because all people are descendants of Adam, all people have inherited a darkened, sinful heart from him (**Romans 5:19a**).

- ❖ This explains why . . . Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Rachel, Moses, King David, Esther, Mary, Joseph, Peter, and Paul were ALL SINNERS! (**Roman 3:23**).
- ❖ This explains why Israel could not keep the Ten Commandments.
- ❖ This explains why YOU cannot keep God's law.

Why does this matter? Because God has decided that the right punishment for sin is death. This is true for you also!

Death → Experiencing God's anger forever in hell.

What can we do? Is there a way that this problem can be solved? Yes, there is! That is what the message of the Bible is all about! The story of the Bible is about God's plan for saving his sinful and helpless people. Not only does the Old Testament tell us how the problem began, it is also filled with clues that point to how God was going to solve the problem. Here is an example of one of these clues:

But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. —*Isaiah 53:5*



Jesus: God's Righteous Son

Who is the man described in **Isaiah 53:5**? JESUS. Who is Jesus? To begin with, here are three important things to know about Jesus:

1

Jesus is fully God

John 1:1

Colossians 1:19

Jesus is God. That means that all the things that are true of God are also true of Jesus. He is eternal and the Creator of all things. He is almighty, omniscient, wise, sovereign, eternal, righteous, and holy.

2

Jesus became fully human

John 1:14

Hebrews 2:14a

When Jesus came to earth, he came in a real human body just like you have. Jesus had skin, hair, eyes, arms, and legs. He needed to eat and sleep. He felt happiness, sadness, and pain, just like you.

3

Jesus is God's Son

Luke 1:35

Mark 1:10-11

Unlike all other descendants of Adam, Jesus did not have a human father. He came to earth as a human baby whose Father was God. Therefore, he did not inherit any sin. He was sinless and did not have a darkened heart.

Because these three things are true about Jesus, he was able to do something that Adam and Eve and all of their other descendants were not able to do: he was able to live a sinless life! Read **Matthew 4:1-11** and then answer the following questions:

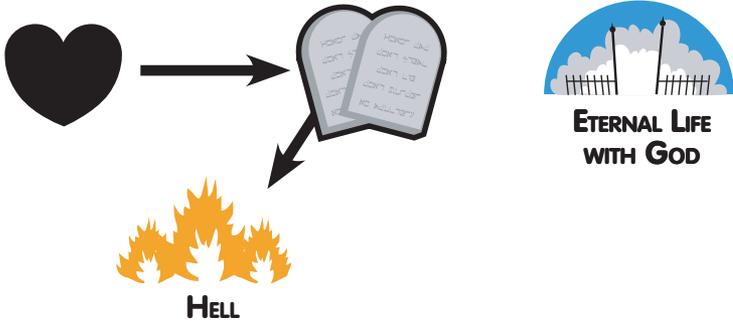
- 1 Who was tempting Jesus? Who had been tempted in a similar way in the garden of Eden?
- 2 What did Jesus do differently than Adam and Eve?

Jesus was tempted in every way we are but did not sin! (Hebrews 4:15)

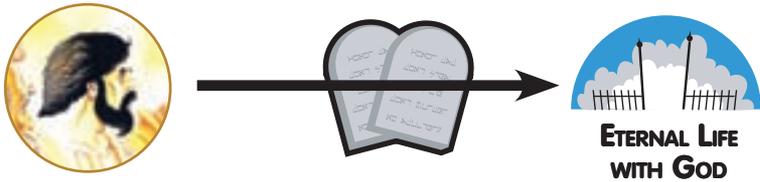
and

Jesus perfectly obeyed God's laws!

For us, God's holy and righteous commands act like a roadblock—blocking us from eternal life with God. God's law shows us that we are sinners just like Adam and Eve and are deserving of death and hell.



For Jesus, God's holy and righteous commands were not a roadblock because he was able to keep them perfectly. Jesus' perfect obedience shows us that he was deserving of eternal life in heaven.



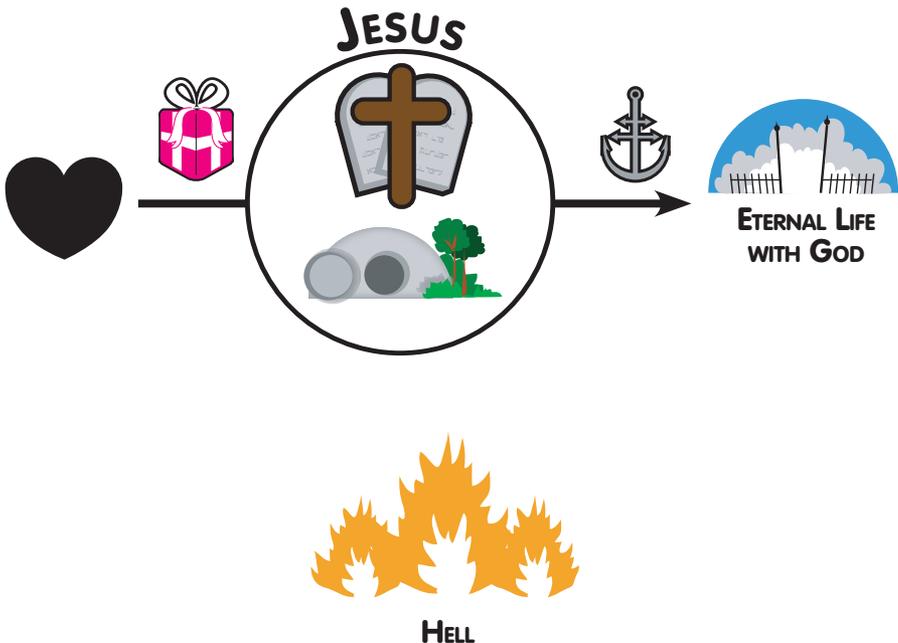
**How does this help us,
people with darkened and sinful hearts?**

Good News!

Look carefully at the picture that is at the bottom of the previous page. Is there any bad news for sinners? What do all sinners deserve because of our disobedience to God's holy and righteous law? Death and hell. This is really **BAD NEWS** for us. However, here is some really **GOOD NEWS: THE GOSPEL OF JESUS!** The word "gospel" means "good news." What is the good news of Jesus?

- 1 **JESUS** came to **SEEK** and **SAVE** sinners. (Luke 19:10)
- 2 **JESUS** came to **FORGIVE** sinners. (Matthew 26:28)
- 3 **JESUS** came to give His **RIGHTEOUSNESS** to sinners. (Romans 5:19)
- 4 **JESUS** came to **DIE** for sinners. (Matthew 20:28)
- 5 **JESUS** came to give **ETERNAL LIFE** to sinners. (John 11:25-26)

Look at the picture below. This picture uses symbols in order to explain the gospel of Jesus. Some of these symbols you have already seen on the previous page. But look very carefully at this new picture. Can you guess what each symbol means? According to the picture, is there a way for a sinner to receive eternal life? How? Study the picture carefully and then look at the next page for an explanation of the each symbol.



The Gospel of Jesus

Looking at the picture on the previous page, can you explain the good news that Jesus has for sinners? Here is an explanation of each symbol on the picture:



= The darkened heart describes each of us. We are all sinners. (**Romans 3:23**)



= The flames describe death and hell. This is the right punishment for our sin. Hell is a place where sinners will experience God's anger forever. (**Matthew 25:41, 46**)



= This describes heaven. Heaven is a place where God's people will be able to enjoy the greatness and worth of God forever and ever. (**Revelation 21:1-4**)



= This shows what Jesus has done for us. First, he kept all of God's holy and righteous commands. Second, even though he never sinned, he went to the cross and took the place of sinners. Jesus became a **substitute** for sinners so that he received the punishment of death and experienced God's fierce anger at sin. Finally, because God was **satisfied** with what Jesus had done, Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven. (**Philippians 2:8-11**)



= The arrow shows that there is one way for sinners to be saved so that they can receive eternal life—through what Jesus has done! (**John 14:6**)



= The gift shows that it is BY GRACE that a sinner is saved through Jesus. What is grace? Grace is God's kindness to undeserving sinners. Grace cannot be earned or worked for. When God chooses to save a sinner, it is because he is giving that sinner an undeserved and wonderful gift—the gift of eternal life! (**Ephesians 2:4-6**)



= The anchor shows that a person is saved THROUGH FAITH in what Jesus has done. Faith is believing, trusting, and depending on Jesus. In faith, a sinner understands that he is helpless to save himself and must turn and hold on to Jesus as his one and only hope (just as a ship depends on an anchor to "hold fast"). Faith is believing with all your heart that what Jesus has done is enough to save you and give you eternal life. (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)

What is the gospel of Jesus? It is the GOOD NEWS that there is SALVATION IN JESUS! How should YOU respond to this good news? This is what Jesus says:

Repent and believe in the gospel. —*Mark 1:15*

What does this mean? How can you find out more about SALVATION? Turn to the next page.

What Is Salvation?

The word salvation means “being saved.” Through the act of salvation, God saves a sinner from the judgment of death and hell and then begins to make that sinner holy and righteous like Jesus. Salvation is the most important thing that can happen to you! It is the only way in which you can go to heaven and enjoy Jesus forever. How does salvation happen?

BY **GRACE** ALONE

THROUGH **FAITH** ALONE

IN **CHRIST JESUS** ALONE

There are also some important things that you need to know about how God **works out** that salvation in the lives of his children. On the opposite page is a special visual to help you understand the different **parts** of salvation. Just as the word “salvation” is made up of certain letters that are put together in a certain order, in a similar way there are certain parts to salvation that God works out in a certain order. The visual can help you to understand the different parts of salvation. Carefully read through the visual and then read the next three pages to find out what each part means.

<p>1 Chosen by God</p>	<p>He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. <i>Ephesians 1:4</i></p>
<p>2 The gospel call</p>	<p>So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. <i>Romans 10:17</i></p> <p>And those whom he predestined he also called. <i>Romans 8:30</i></p>
<p>3 New spiritual life</p>	<p>But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. <i>Ephesians 2:4-5</i></p>
<p>4 Conversion</p>	<p>“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” <i>Mark 1:15</i></p>
<p>5 Justification</p>	<p>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 <i>Corinthians 5:21</i></p> <p>Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <i>Romans 5:1</i></p>
<p>6 Adoption</p>	<p>In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ. <i>Ephesians 1:4b-5a</i></p>
<p>7 Sanctification</p>	<p>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. <i>Romans 8:29a</i></p>
<p>8 Perseverance of believers</p>	<p>He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. <i>Philippians 1:6</i></p>
<p>9 Death and glorification</p>	<p>But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body. <i>Philippians 3:20-21a</i></p>

Salvation Explained

1 CHOSEN BY GOD: **Ephesians 1:4** says that before the creation of the world, God **chose** the people that he would save. How can God do this? Because he is God! He alone created all people and all people belong to him. No one deserves salvation. It is a gift from God, and God is free to give this wonderful gift to whomever he pleases. (Romans 9:14-16).

2 THE GOSPEL CALL: Suppose your friends were playing at your house and your mom said the following: **“I have some oatmeal and raisin cookies for anyone who would like some.”** Was this invitation for all of your friends? Might some of your friends decide not to take the cookies because they don’t like oatmeal and raisins? The gospel of Jesus is also like an invitation. It makes this offer, **“Trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.”** But sometimes people hear this invitation and don’t like it. But in salvation, God makes a very special invitation to the people that he has chosen to save. It is the gospel call. In the gospel call, God makes sure that his chosen people **HEAR** the message of the gospel and then respond to that message in **BELIEF**. Read the story of Lydia from **Acts 16:13-14** to see the gospel call in action.

3 NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE: This is sometimes called “regeneration” or being “born again.” Let’s use an illustration to help us understand what this means. Suppose a lion had to choose between eating meat or an apple for dinner. What would he choose? The meat. Why? We can predict the right answer because we know that lions have an inborn nature—something inside them that makes them want meat and not fruit. Next, suppose that a fish had to choose between eating a worm on a hook or eating a weed. What would it choose? The worm. But what about the hook? Doesn’t it understand that it will get caught and die? No, because of its inborn nature it will eat the worm even though that choice will lead to death.

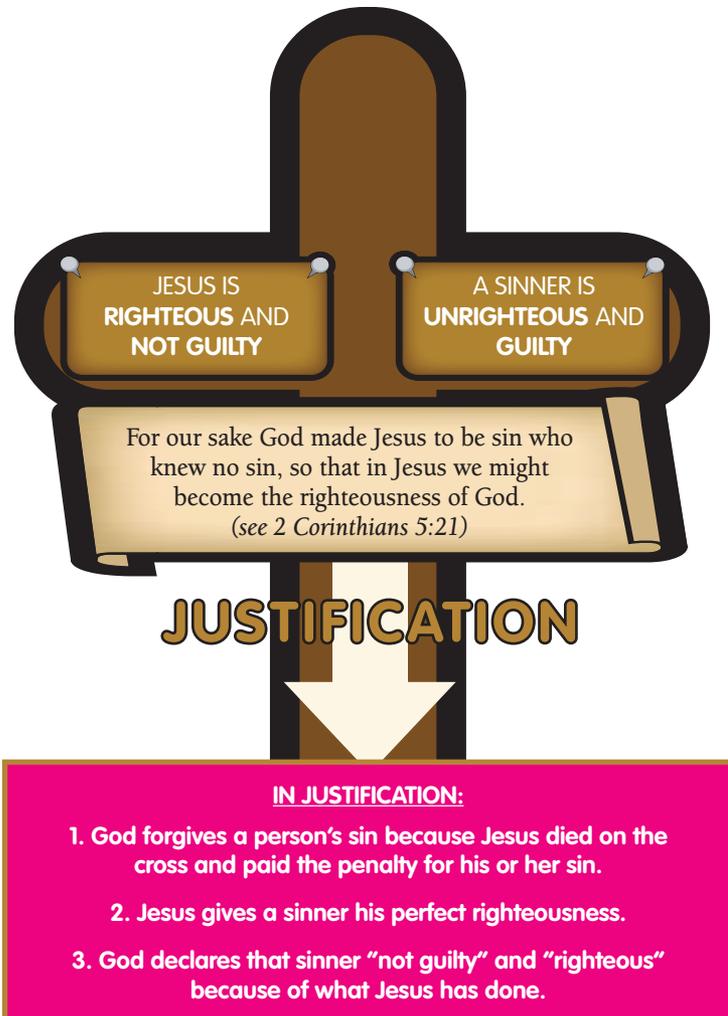
Do you know that people also have an inborn nature? What is this nature? Our **sin nature**. Our sin nature is fighting against God (**Romans 8:7**). Our sin nature doesn’t see the gospel of Jesus as being a wonderful thing. If left to our own choices, none of us would respond to the gospel of Jesus with belief. Can we solve this problem? Here is what Jesus said: **“No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father” (John 6:65)**. That means that in order to hear the gospel and believe, God must change our inborn sin nature so that it is not fighting against God. It is like getting a brand new heart that has new kinds of desires and feelings. New spiritual life is the fulfillment of a special promise that God made long ago in **Ezekiel 36:26**:

And I will give you a new heart, and a
new spirit I will put within you.

4 CONVERSION: Conversion is two things added together. If you were to write it as an addition problem it would look like this: **REPENTANCE + FAITH = CONVERSION**. What is repentance? Repentance is feeling sorrow for your sin in such a way that you have a change in heart. This heart change causes you to hate your sin and want to turn away from your sin and look to Jesus for forgiveness. What is faith? Faith is trusting in Jesus alone for all that he is (your Savior, Lord, and God), for all that he has done (his perfect

obedience and his death on the cross in your place), and for all that he has promised to do (save you and give you eternal life).

5 JUSTIFICATION: Justification is a really big word! And it is a very important Bible word that you should understand. What does this big word mean? Well, the simplest way to explain it is that justification is what Jesus did on the cross for sinners. Let's use an illustration that may help you: Suppose your dad was caught speeding while driving and had to go to court. In court there is a judge. Your father stands before the judge and the judge rightly says that your father is "Guilty" of speeding. Then the judge rightly pronounces the penalty that your father must pay. However, just then, a man stands up and says to the judge, "I do not have a speeding ticket. I am willing to take his ticket and treat it as my own. I am also willing to pay his penalty." To the amazement and joy of your father, the judge says, "I will accept this" and now pronounces your father "Not Guilty," and your father is cleared of any penalty. This is something like justification. Look at the following picture:



6 ADOPTION: You might already be familiar with this word since sometimes a husband and wife will **adopt** a child into their family. This is very similar to what the Bible means by adoption. Through adoption, God makes sinners members of his chosen people—God’s special family. This means that when Jesus justifies a person through his work on the cross, he also makes that person a part of God’s own people. So that person can now be called a CHILD OF GOD. Why is this so special? Because children of God enjoy wonderful privileges and gifts from their heavenly Father. And only children of God will be able to enter heaven and enjoy God forever.

7 SANCTIFICATION: Do you remember when you were a little baby? When your parents brought you home from the hospital after you were born or were adopted into their family, did they expect that you would remain a baby forever? Why not? They expected you to grow up so that someday you will be an adult—just like them. Sanctification is another very big and important Bible word. It is about growing up. Growing up to be like what? Growing up to be like Jesus! When God justifies a sinner, God expects that person to grow up and become righteous and holy like Jesus. How does this happen? Read the next four pages to find out more about sanctification.

8 PERSEVERANCE OF BELIEVERS: If you run a race, are you given a prize for finishing before the race begins? What about during the middle of the race? What if you’re almost to the finish line? Why must you wait to finish the race in order to receive the prize? Because only those who **persevere**—continue and keep on—and finish the race will receive the prize. Now think of the Christian life as a race. Only those who actually finish the race will receive the prize of heaven and eternal life. The perseverance of believers means that God will make sure that this happens for every one of his children. That means that if a sinner is truly trusting in Jesus today, God will make sure that he or she will continue to trust in Jesus tomorrow, next week, next year, . . . to the end of life and all the way to heaven. And just as finishing a race requires good training and hard work, so does perseverance. To find out more about persevering in faith read pages 1577-1581.

9 DEATH AND GLORIFICATION: Remember the race we talked about above? If you were running in a race, how would you recognize the finish line? What might it look like? God also has a finish line for his children. It is what God’s children are running toward as they seek to finish the race. What does this finish line look like? DEATH! But wait a minute. Isn’t death something terrible and sad? Isn’t death the punishment for sin? For people who have not experienced salvation, death is indeed a terrible thing. But for God’s children, death becomes the finish line, and beyond the finish line there is a prize that is more valuable than anything else you could ever receive. What is it? GLORIFICATION. Glorification means being made like Jesus, righteous and holy. God promises his children that after they experience death, God will give them new bodies—bodies like Jesus’ own body. This new body will be perfect: no sin, no pain, no sickness, no sadness. In heaven, God’s children will finally be able to know, love, trust, obey, and enjoy God as they should.

Remember: Salvation is the most important thing that can happen to you! It is a wonderful gift from a great and loving God and it happens . . .

BY GRACE ALONE—THROUGH FAITH ALONE—IN CHRIST JESUS ALONE

Sanctification: Becoming More Like Jesus

Sanctification is a big and very important Bible word. Sanctification is the **process** by which a Christian (someone who is trusting in Jesus alone for salvation) grows to become more and more like Jesus. Why is this important? Because God wants his children to be righteous and holy (**Ephesians 4:24**) just as he is righteous and holy. Secondly, sanctification is proof that a person has been justified by Jesus and is truly a Christian. What does sanctification look like?

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. *Ephesians 5:1*

And by this we know that we have come to know him,
if we keep his commandments. *1 John 2:3*

Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the
same way in which he walked. *1 John 2:6*

If you have come to know Jesus as your Savior and Lord, what must you do? What does it mean to **imitate** someone? What commandments are Christians to keep? How can you walk as Jesus walked? The answers to these important questions can be found in the Bible!

Below and on the next page is a visual of some hearts. The hearts show some examples from the Bible of what it means to imitate God, keep his commands, and walk as Jesus did.



**GUARDING YOUR
HEART**

Proverbs 4:23

**LOVING YOUR
NEIGHBOR**

Mark 12:31

**HONORING
YOUR PARENTS**

Ephesians 6:1-3

SHOWING MERCY

Luke 6:36

**LOVING YOUR
ENEMIES**

Matthew 5:44-45

**SEEKING LOST
SINNERS**

1 Peter 3:15

FORGIVING OTHERS

Ephesians 4:32

**BEING A HUMBLE
SERVANT**

Philippians 2:3

**GIVING GENEROUSLY
AND CHEERFULLY**

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

**CARING FOR
ONE ANOTHER**

John 13:34-35

**GOING INTO ALL
THE WORLD**

Mark 16:15

**LETTING YOUR LIGHT
SHINE**

Matthew 5:16

**REJOICING IN
SUFFERING**

Matthew 5:11-12

**LOSING YOUR
LIFE FOR JESUS**

Luke 9:23-24

GOD'S PROMISE

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. —Ezekiel 36:26-27

If you are trusting in Jesus for your salvation, God expects your heart to become more and more like the hearts in the visual. How does this happen? Do you just sit back and wait for God to change you?

In sanctification, a Christian **cooperates** with God in becoming more and more like Jesus. To cooperate means that you work together with God. Suppose your dad gives you a flashlight to keep in your room in case the lights go out during a storm. He has given you a tool to use. If the lights go out, what will he expect you to do? Turn on the flashlight! By doing this, you would be cooperating with your father in order to do what he expects you to do. That is something like sanctification. God gives His children tools and then expects them to use those tools in order to become more and more like Jesus. What are these tools?

THE TOOLS OF SANCTIFICATION



If you are trusting in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, he has given you the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. God sent his Spirit to live within his children. The Spirit is always present and ready to help God's children understand God's Word and do what is right. God wants us to listen to the Holy Spirit as he gives guidance and strength.

God's Word works together with the Holy Spirit to help God's children grow in faith. The Bible is necessary for understanding what is true, right, and pleasing to God. The Bible convicts you of sinful attitudes and actions and shows you how to correct them. Finally, the Bible trains you in righteousness—giving instructions for godly habits that will make you more like Jesus.



God has made a very special way in which his children can come into his presence and speak to him: prayer. Through prayer you can come to God and praise him for being your Father. You can confess your sin and ask for forgiveness. You can ask him for the things that you need. You can tell him about things that are hard for you. You can ask him to change your heart so that you become more and more like Jesus.

There is another very important thing that you should know about sanctification:

SANCTIFICATION IS NOT ABOUT PERFECTION, IT'S ABOUT DIRECTION

Sanctification is not about PERFECTION (never sinning). Christians will not be without sin until they are in heaven. Sanctification is about DIRECTION. Are you going in the right direction? In other words, are you becoming little by little more like Jesus? Are you becoming slowly but surely more obedient to his commands? Day by day, are you growing in your love for him? If you are trusting in Jesus alone for your salvation, then these things will be true for you as God works in you to complete what he started.

Will sanctification be easy? No! It is hard work even with all the tools that God provides. The apostle Paul referred to it as a battle—a spiritual battle. And every Christian needs to learn how to fight in this battle. Read the next section and learn how to FIGHT THE FIGHT OF FAITH.