

## What is salvation?



### In the beginning....

In the beginning, God created man and made him perfect. He gave him a perfect home. He in that home (called Eden) was in continuous fellowship with the man (and his wife).

Start

They saw God's face and talked to him.

God gave the man every good thing except with one warning: Do not eat of the fruit of knowledge in the middle of the garden (the man's home). The day you do, you will die.<sup>i</sup>

Grow

The enemy of man and God (in the form of a serpent) came and deceived the couple (Adam and Eve they were called). They disobeyed God - ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and that day, they died - they didn't immediately die physically but spiritually.

Mature

The enemy manipulated them for they didn't know that spiritual death is infinitely worse than physical death.

Because God is holy and Just, justice must be done. A perfectly just God had to then judge man and the punishment for sin is death.

A perfectly just God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands and forgiving<sup>ii</sup> however also realised that man could never meet his perfect standard of Holiness - so he offered a redemption plan.

This really is the Good News of the bible – God's redemption plan for us!

This redemption plan started unfolding the day the man and his wife rebelled (God started by clothing them and promised that the man's offspring would crush the enemy) but it took time - hundreds of years passed and that is the core of what is called the "Old Testament", starting in a book called Genesis.

Men in those days multiplied in number, languages were born, cities were built but with good came evil, for now man was inherently sinful - murder, sexual immorality, jealousies, homosexuality, adultery, covetousness, lies and all other forms of evil.

### The Old covenant

God in his mercy eventually established what is called the "Old Covenant". This was given through a man called Moses who rescued his people Israel from Egypt where they had eventually become slaves for over 400 years.

This covenant introduced the "10 commandments", laws given by God to man and in addition a number of rules and regulations to govern the life of the Israelites including worship of God and how to seek forgiveness for sins.

The old covenant however resulted in men not walking in the "Spirit of the law" but rather fulfilling it "legalistically". Men missed the point of the laws and thought that by offering sacrifices they would "earn redemption".

Men therefore continued to sin against the Lord in their hearts - despite offering "sin and other offering". God was always interested in obedience not sacrifices<sup>iii</sup> and time after time a game of "cat and mouse" took place. God threatened judgement, men repented, God being merciful forgave them, then they forgot and went back to their old ways.

Men's hearts were, men's hearts are made of Stone.

During this time God in his mercy sent his messengers (prophets) - men and women who strived to live Holy lives. They warned the people to repent in their hearts (which means to genuinely/sincerely turn from sin, seek God and get his forgiveness and live a life of righteousness).

In one example the prophet Jeremiah records a message from God like this:

*"He told me to go and say to Israel, "Unfaithful Israel, come back to me. I am merciful and will not be angry; I will not be angry with you forever. Only admit that you are guilty and that you have rebelled against the Lord, your God. Confess that under every green tree you have given your love to foreign gods and that you have not obeyed my commands. I, the Lord, have spoken. "Unfaithful people, come back; you belong to me. I will take one of you from each town and two from each clan, and I will bring you back to Mount Zion."iv*

Human hearts are rebellious and because God has given them free will, they ultimately choose whether to respond to this call or not.

**God however promised** that there would come a time when instead His laws would be written on men's hearts, not on tablets of stone (as the Ten Commandments had been). He said this through another prophet:

*"I will give them a new heart and a new mind. I will take away their stubborn heart of stone and will give them an obedient heart. Then they will keep my laws and faithfully obey all my commands. They will be my people, and I will be their God."v*

He had previous to this also promised King David a descendant who would be king forever:

*"When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"vi*

But how would this be possible where the Old Covenant seemed to have failed?

## The promised saviour ...

This promise would eventually be fulfilled many hundreds of years later when God decided to come and save men himself (hence the concept of salvation).

This is what God further said many years before about this promised saviour:

*"Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will bring justice to the nations.  
He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.*

*A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;  
he will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
In his teaching the islands will put their hope<sup>vii</sup>*

This saviour was the second member of the triune God - Jesus Christ, also known as the son of God.

In Christianity, there is only 1 God – but he exists in what is called a “Holy Trinity<sup>viii</sup>” – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Distinct but one essence. If you like, think of it as 1x1x1 = 1.

So Jesus’ coming was also heralded by another prophet called John the Baptist (his second cousin, born 6 months before him). This cousin was also spoken of in prophecy as follows:

*“This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began as the prophet Isaiah had written: “God said, ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.’ Someone is shouting in the desert, ‘Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!’” So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. “Turn away from your sins and be baptized,” he told the people, “and God will forgive your sins.”<sup>ix</sup>*

Jesus was born to a human mother but he had no earthly father. Mary, his mother, a virgin became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit (the 3rd member of the triune God) coming upon her and hence the concept of “immaculate conception”.

The bible tells it as follows:

*“In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary.*

*The angel came to her and said, “Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!” Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant.*

*The angel said to her, “Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.*

*He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!”*

*Mary said to the angel, “I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God.”<sup>x</sup>*

Thus Jesus was born and was called by various names - Immanuel (God with us), The Christ - the promised messiah (saviour) and Son of David.

About 30 years after his birth, he was baptised by a prophet called John the Baptist (his second cousin who had been sent ahead of him as mentioned above) and at his baptism, the Holy Spirit rested on him, confirming that he was “God’s Son” in whom God was pleased.

Jesus then began his about 3 year ministry whose core message was “Good News”:

*“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”<sup>xi</sup>*

Jesus being the promised messiah spoken of by the prophet Isaiah said this about the purpose of his ministry when he had begun it:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.” Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, as he said to them, “This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read.”<sup>xii</sup>*

## The life and times of Jesus.

Jesus himself summed up who he was, his ministry and purpose as follows (when asked by a teacher called Nicodemus):

*“And no one has ever gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from heaven.” As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

*For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.*

*For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour. Those who believe in the Son are not judged; but those who do not believe have already been judged, because they have not believed in God's only Son.*

*This is how the judgment works: the light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil. Those who do evil things hate the light and will not come to the light, because they do not want their evil deeds to be shown up. But those who do what is true come to the light in order that the light may show that what they did was in obedience to God.”*

<sup>xiii</sup>

## The death of the saviour.

Jesus' purpose in coming to earth was to be the perfect sacrifice (and so fulfil the Old Covenant) for sin. It was absolutely necessary for him to die - but then resurrect.

After his death and resurrection, His disciple Peter explained it as follows in a sermon to many people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost:

*“Listen to these words, fellow Israelites! Jesus of Nazareth was a man whose divine authority was clearly proven to you by all the miracles and wonders which God performed through him. You yourselves know this, for it happened here among you.*

*In accordance with his own plan God had already decided that Jesus would be handed over to you; and you killed him by letting sinful men crucify him. But God raised him from death, setting him free from its power, because it was impossible that death should hold him prisoner.*

*For David said about him, ‘I saw the Lord before me at all times; he is near me, and I will not be troubled. And so I am filled with gladness, and my words are full of joy.*

*And I, mortal though I am, will rest assured in hope, because you will not abandon me in the world of the dead; you will not allow your faithful servant to rot in the grave.”<sup>xiv</sup>*

## The new covenant..

Jesus had promised his disciple Peter (the one who gave sermon above) that:

*“Upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”.<sup>xv</sup>*

This started happening in full force after the disciples received the Holy Spirit (day of Pentecost) and this church grew and multiplied and it's during this period of growth that Jesus' disciples and early followers wrote down the things he had taught them and supplemented them with teachings (often letters to churches set up or early believers) to clarify his message.

These letters (to early churches or believers) eventually became what is called the “New Testament” as they covered the New Covenant of Jesus (or God) with man for the redemption of sin as represented by his body and his blood. This covenant is celebrated by what is called “Holy Communion<sup>xvi</sup>”.

## The message of salvation is therefore this...

None of us is good for we have all sinned against a Holy God and for that we deserve death in everlasting fire (hell), for eternity - but God is just and has provided an escape - a redemption, his son Jesus who had to die - so you could live, if you believe in him (put your faith in him).

Jesus was the promised messiah, the son of God who died and was buried but 3 days later rose again, by the power of the Holy Spirit - the same Spirit he promises to all who believe in him - who then become children of God. For these, the second death has no hold - they will be with God, as it was in the beginning - no sorrow, no tears, no pain.

God will be our salvation and on that day when God's saving grace comes to us, we will be so happy!

*“But for you who obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun and bring healing like the sun's rays. You will be as free and happy as calves let out of a stall.”<sup>xvii</sup>*

In another place a disciple says this about the new life:

*“See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children—and so, in fact, we are. This is why the world does not know us: it has not known God.*

*Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure.*

*You know that Christ appeared in order to take away sins, and that there is no sin in him. So everyone who lives in union with Christ does not continue to sin; but whoever continues to sin has never seen him or known him.”<sup>xviii</sup>*

And this:

*“In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From the very beginning the Word was with God.*

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.*

*This was the real light—the light that comes into the world and shines on all people.*

*He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him. Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God's children. They did not become God's children by natural means, that is, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their Father.”<sup>xix</sup>*

To find salvation, you need to believe this and seek him... he is not far as this verse says:

*“God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands. Nor does he need anything that we can supply by working for him, since it is he himself who gives life and breath and everything else to everyone.*

*From one human being he created all races of people and made them live throughout the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places where they would live. He did this so that they would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt around for him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us;”<sup>xx</sup>*

How shall you respond? Shall you respond to God’s call? Will you respond as those people who first heard Peter’s message:

*“When the people heard this, they were deeply troubled and said to Peter and the other apostles, “What shall we do, brothers?” Peter said to them, “Each one of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit. For God's promise was made to you and your children, and to all who are far away—all whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”<sup>xxi</sup>*

## Next steps

If this message speaks to you and you would like to know more about salvation, We have some content to help you. You could start there:

1. [Understand what it means to fear God](#)
2. [Become a Christian](#)
3. [Learn about the bible and how to read it](#)
4. [Learn how to pray \(better\)](#)
5. [Learn how to Fast \(more effectively\)](#)
6. [Find more help and resources to grow](#)

If you are however ready to become a Christian, then skip straight to step 2 above where you can find messages to give you assurance as well as a prayer to say to enable you step over the line of faith. You can then get next steps: [Become a Christian](#)

Write here

## NOTES

---

- <sup>i</sup> Genesis 2: 17
- <sup>ii</sup> Exodus 34: 5 - 7
- <sup>iii</sup> 1 Samuel 15: 22
- <sup>iv</sup> Jeremiah 3:12-14 GNT <http://bible.com/68/jer.3.12-14.gnt>
- <sup>v</sup> Ezekiel 11:19-20 GNT <http://bible.com/68/ezk.11.19-20.gnt>
- <sup>vi</sup> 2 Samuel 7:12-13.
- <sup>vii</sup> Isaiah 42:1-4
- <sup>viii</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity>
- <sup>ix</sup> Mark 1:1-4 GNT <http://bible.com/68/mrk.1.1-4.gnt>
- <sup>x</sup> Luke 1:26-35 GNT <http://bible.com/68/luk.1.26-35.gnt>
- <sup>xi</sup> Matthew 3: 2 KJV
- <sup>xii</sup> Luke 4:18-21 GNT <http://bible.com/68/luk.4.18-21.gnt>
- <sup>xiii</sup> John 3:13-21 GNT <http://bible.com/68/jhn.3.13-21.gnt>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Acts 2:22-27 GNT <http://bible.com/68/act.2.22-27.gnt>
- <sup>xv</sup> Matthew 16: 18 (KJV)
- <sup>xvi</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist>
- <sup>xvii</sup> Malachi 4:2 GNT <http://bible.com/68/mal.4.2.gnt>
- <sup>xviii</sup> 1 John 3:1, 3, 5-6 GNT <http://bible.com/68/1jn.3.1,3,5-6.gnt>
- <sup>xix</sup> John 1:1-2, 5, 9, 11-13 GNT <http://bible.com/68/jhn.1.1-2,5,9,11-13.gnt>
- <sup>xx</sup> Acts 17:24-27 GNT <http://bible.com/68/act.17.24-27.gnt>
- <sup>xxi</sup> Acts 2:37-39 GNT <http://bible.com/68/act.2.37-39.gnt>