

# The Christian Message

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The content of the Christian message is found in the book that Christians believe was given by God as a revelation of Himself – **The Bible**. The Bible tells us things about God that we could not know otherwise. What follows is based solely and completely on that book.

## WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

The Bible's message begins with God.<sup>1</sup> The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God – it simply states it, assuming that man knows that God exists.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Bible says that the created Universe around us is enough evidence to show the existence of God.<sup>3</sup>

**God is One.** The Bible says



there is only one God.<sup>4</sup>

**God is the Creator of Everything.**<sup>5</sup> He is not a part of creation, but is distinct from creation. God existed before the Universe was created, and He was under no compulsion or obligation to bring the universe into existence.

**God is Spirit** and He has always existed – He never 'started' at some point in time.

**God is Eternal.**<sup>6</sup> Because God has created all things, and because God Himself is personal and creates with a reason, then all things have purpose and meaning.

**God is Holy.**<sup>7</sup> He is the

absolute standard of goodness itself – there is nothing evil or corrupt in God.<sup>8</sup> Because God is holy, He must punish evil.

**God is Personal** – the Bible tells us that God is tri-personal; that is, that the one being of God is shared by three eternal persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

This would be contradictory if we said that God was one being and three beings, or one person and three persons, but as long as one remembers that being and personality are different things, the Bible's teaching is quite clear.<sup>9</sup>

And, though it is one of the greatest mysteries of all, the Bible tells us **God is Loving, Merciful, and Kind**<sup>10</sup> – even though man has rebelled against Him!

## THE PROBLEM WITH MAN

One of the main problems with man is the fact that he refuses to see himself as God sees him.

God has given us guidelines by which we can see if we are 'functioning' properly. Many of these guidelines have to do with how we behave – such things as that we should worship only the one true God,<sup>11</sup> that we should not murder<sup>12</sup> or commit adultery,<sup>13</sup> steal<sup>14</sup> or lie.<sup>15</sup>

The Bible summarizes all of these commandments by giving us the highest standard – **'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'**<sup>16</sup>

Any honest person, when faced with God's standard, will admit to falling short. The Bible calls this rebellion or sin. The Bible

says '**All have sinned ...** ' and no one can escape that charge.<sup>17</sup>

Sin separates us from God, and because God is the source of all life, the result of our sin is death<sup>18</sup> – both physical death on this earth as well as spiritual death. Sin isolates and separates us from God, both now and in eternity. God's wrath (great anger) is revealed against sin, and against sinners.<sup>19</sup>

Man, separated from God, even while he is physically alive, is spiritually dead, and he is incapable of seeking after God.<sup>20</sup>

Man, on his part, desperately tries to avoid having anything to do with the Holy God. He does this by suppressing the truth that he can see all around him. He becomes self-centered and self-seeking, and instead of worshipping God He worships

or idolizes himself or some other created object.<sup>21</sup>

Every conceivable sin finds its origin in the condition of man as sinner.

## **GOD'S MEANS OF SAVING MAN**

Because men have rebelled against God and have disobeyed and broken His laws, men deserve to suffer the punishment God's laws require. In the Bible, we are told that **'the soul who sins shall die.'**

God is not obligated to offer men a chance to be saved from His great anger and punishment. But, because God is loving and merciful and kind, He has not left us in our lost situation. On the contrary, God has an eternal plan to bring the greatest good out of man's evil. That plan is centred on a person – the person of Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ** was unique. He was unlike any other person who has ever lived. He was not just a prophet or a good man. He was God the Son in human flesh – the God-man.<sup>22</sup>

He was completely without sin<sup>23</sup> – He perfectly obeyed all of God’s law. Consequently, He was not under the sentence of death. Death had no power over Him. Despite all this, He died. Why?

The Bible says Jesus Christ came 'to give His life as a ransom for many.' Jesus voluntarily laid down His life as a substitute.<sup>24</sup> Since He did not have to die, He voluntarily took the place of all those who believe in Him throughout the ages. By dying in their place, He takes their punishment upon Himself – He died their death so that they can live His life. In fact, the Bible says that God sees us as if we died with Christ

upon the cross of Calvary!<sup>25</sup>

Since the penalty of sin is death, and Christ has died that death, then sin is forgiven for all those who die with Christ! This is how God has decided to bring about forgiveness of sins – in the death of Jesus Christ.

All sin will be punished – either on the cross of Calvary, or in eternal Hell. Where a person’s sins will be punished is dependent upon whether or that person is **in Christ**.

God has decided to save a people for His own sake.<sup>26</sup> In His grace He has joined these people from all eternity to Jesus Christ, so that His death is their death.<sup>27</sup> Jesus did not die for everyone – He died only for those who believe in Him. Not only this, but the Bible says that on the third day after His death, Jesus rose from the dead – He was resurrected, never to die

again.<sup>28</sup> And, since those who are saved died with Christ, they also have the promise of being raised up with Him in eternal life.<sup>29</sup>

But who are these people who are **'in Christ'** who have died with Him? How can an individual personally take advantage of God's great plan of salvation? Doesn't the Bible say that man does not even seek after God?<sup>30</sup>

Yes, it does say that. The answer is found in the grace of God. God's grace is something He gives because He wishes to give it, not because we earn it, or deserve it, or buy it. Man has no claim upon God's grace. Grace, by definition, is given freely, without cost.<sup>31</sup>

Jesus taught, **'No man is able to come to Me unless the Father, who sent Me, draws him, and I will raise him up at the last**

**day.'**<sup>32</sup> God is loving and merciful and kind and He has no pleasure in the death of anyone. Because of this, God has made it possible for people who are dead in sin to be forgiven and to receive new life.

And to whom does God give His forgiveness and new life? The Bible calls them **'the Elect.'** **The elect** are people who are no more deserving than any others, who are chosen by God, completely on the basis of His own will and mercy, to be united with Christ, forgiven of their sins, and given eternal life.<sup>33</sup>

When God gives spiritual life to the people He has chosen, the Bible says those people have been **'born again.'**<sup>34</sup> God also gives to them the gifts of repentance<sup>35</sup> and faith.<sup>36</sup>

**These people respond to these**

**actions of God by repenting and believing in Christ.** But God's choice of these people is based completely upon grace and mercy – nothing else.

## **TRUSTING CHRIST**

What does it mean when the Bible speaks about a person 'believing' in the Lord Jesus Christ? It is much more than just having facts and information about Him. It is much more than just knowing and agreeing with the Bible when it says Jesus is Lord and Saviour – even though that is an essential part of believing in Him.

It also involves making a life-long commitment to Him as Lord in your life – a willingness to turn all of your life, including your dreams, goals, and ambitions, over to the Lord Jesus, to follow Him wherever He leads. This kind of commitment can only come

from the work of God in man's heart, as we have already seen.

'But,' a person might say, 'if God is the one who saves, and if it is only on the basis of His mercy that anyone can be saved, how can I personally be saved?'

If the true desire of your heart is to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and to commit yourself to Him as your Lord and as your Saviour, such a desire can only be placed in your heart by the Spirit of God.<sup>37</sup> 'What then, must I do?'

'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved' is the Bible's answer.<sup>38</sup>

In faith toward the Lord Jesus, and with a sincere intention to turn from anything which is against God's will, commit yourself to the Lord Jesus, knowing that His death is sufficient to cleanse you from

all your sin. Hold only to the Lord Jesus and nothing else – trust Him to save you and to give you eternal life. He has promised to do so.<sup>39</sup>

Pray an honest and sincere prayer of repentance and commitment. God has promised, ‘Every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’<sup>40</sup>

## **SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

### **Can we earn Salvation?**

No, we cannot. Because man, is dead in sin, he is unable to save himself, or to contribute anything toward his own salvation. God’s way is to save completely and fully in Jesus Christ, and in no other way. Any other teaching is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>41</sup>

### **Are there any who are too sinful to be accepted by**

### **Christ?**

No, none at all. Each of us was at one time dead in sin before we were raised up by God.<sup>42</sup>

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cleanse us from all sin.<sup>43</sup>

### **What about the Cost of following Jesus?**

Yes, there is a cost – not a cost to being saved, but a cost of living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. He calls us to live a holy life, separate from the sinful attitudes and ways of the world.<sup>44</sup>

The standards of Christian living are very different from those of the world. As men and women who have died with Christ, our outlook on life should be different – the glory of God should be our highest priority, rather than fulfilling our personal desires.<sup>45</sup>

## How can I Persevere?

What if I fail? When God saves, He does so completely. It is not in our power that we persevere, but in the power of God. It is His promise that He will complete the work He has begun in us.<sup>46</sup> The Bible says, ‘God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.’<sup>47</sup> It is the faithfulness of God that brings about the faithfulness of the Christian.

## WHAT NEXT?

The Bible speaks of Christ’s ‘church.’ The church, in its most general sense, is not a single organization or group or denomination – it is the entire company of God’s elect that is to be found in every organization that worships God, teaches and preaches the Bible, and leads others to the true

Jesus Christ.

It is extremely important for you to find a local church that believes the Bible alone is God’s Word, a church, that teaches the truth about God and Jesus Christ). The pastor of such a church would be happy to speak with you about the work the Lord has begun in your life.

It is also extremely important for you to read and study God’s Word, the Bible, regularly.

Find a good, modern translation of the Bible such as the **English Standard Version (ESV) Bible** or the **New International Version (NIV)** and read from it every day.

A good place to start is with the Gospel of John.

## **BIBLE REFERENCES**

1. Genesis 1:1
2. Psalm 14:1
3. Romans 1:18-20, Psalm 19:1
4. Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 43:10, 44:6-8, 46:9-10, Psalm 86:9-10
5. Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:16-17, John 1:3, Jeremiah 10:12
6. John 4:24, Psalm 90:2
7. Isaiah 6:3, 5:16, Psalm 99:3, 5, 9
8. 1 John 1:5, Psalm 92:15
9. This teaching is based on three Biblical truths: There is one God (Isaiah 43:10). There are three divine persons described in Scripture (Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19-20). Each of the divine persons has equality with the others (Colossians 2:9, John 20:28)
10. Psalm 86:15, Lamentations 3:22-23
11. Exodus 20:3-4, Exodus 34:14
12. Exodus 20:13
13. Exodus 20:14
14. Exodus 20:15
15. Exodus 20:16
16. Luke 10:27
17. Romans 3:10-18, 23, Ecclesiastes 7:20
18. Romans 6:23, Ezekiel 18:4
19. Romans 1:18, John 3:36
20. Ephesians 2:1-14, Colossians 2:13, Romans 3:11
21. Romans 1:21-25
22. John 1:1-18, 1 Timothy 3:16, Colossians 2:9, Philippians 2:5-11
23. 1 Peter 2:22, Hebrews 4:15
24. John 10:14-18, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:18, Isaiah 53:4-6
25. Galatians 2:20, Romans 6:1-10

26. Titus 2:14, Matthew 1:21
  27. Ephesians 1:4-6, Romans 8:31-34
  28. Luke 24:1-36, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
  29. John 5:24, Romans 6:8-10
  30. Romans 3:11
  31. Romans 11:6, Ephesians 2:8-9
  32. John 6:44
  33. John 6:37-40, Romans 8:28-9:24, Ephesians 1:3-11, 2 Timothy 1:9
  34. John 3:3-6
  35. Romans 2:4, 2 Timothy 2:25
  36. Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 12:3
  37. Romans 8:5-8
  38. Acts 16:31
  39. John 5:24, 6:40, 8:12
  40. Romans 10:13
  41. Romans 4:1-5, Galatians 1:6-9, 2:21, 3:24
  42. Ephesians 2:1-6
  43. 1 John 1:7
  44. 1 Peter 1:13-16, 1 John 2:15-17
  45. Romans 6:11-18, Colossians 2:7-8
  46. Philippians 1:6, 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, John 10:25-29, Romans 5:1-2
  47. 1 Corinthians 1:9
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## NOTES

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Taking the Message of life to Seafarers



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