

THE GOSPEL

How a loving
and just God
saves people
who think they
can make it
on their own





Hopefully you would never jump from a plane 30,000 feet in the air without a parachute!

If you were going on a flight to Europe and as you got on board I gave you a big, itchy, bulky parachute to wear on the flight, you probably would look at me funny and put it in your overhead storage compartment.

But if I told you that I knew for certain that your flight was going to end 30,000 feet up and that you would need a parachute to save you, would you have the same reaction? Or would you put it on and cling to it because it would be the only thing that would save you?

The Bible tells us that we all have an “appointment” with death and that one day we will stand before God to give an account of our lives.

What happens at that time will depend on both the bad news and good news that we find in the Bible. Over the next few pages we will unfold the message of the GOSPEL, and see the need to “put on” Jesus...



God created us to be with him. (Genesis 1-2)

In these two chapters God creates all of the universe and everything in it (Genesis 1:1), including the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. God created Adam and Eve with purpose. He called them to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28) and fill the earth with their offspring. He gave them the mission of taking care of the earth and tending the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15).

God made them to be in complete fellowship with Him and with each other. Their nakedness (Genesis 2:25) represented the fact that they had no sin, therefore no shame, therefore nothing to hide before God or each other. They regularly communed with God in the garden and had sheer bliss, pure happiness and unadulterated joy. It was during this time that they were living everyday as God intended, in right relationship with each other, God and His creation. The only command God gave to them was not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In the same way God made us to be in fellowship with Him. His original plan was that you and I were in absolute and perfect relationship

with Him and with each other in total unity. God created us to be in harmony with all of heaven and all of earth. But that plan was disrupted by one evil act thousands and thousands of years ago.

Our sin separated us from God. (Genesis 3)

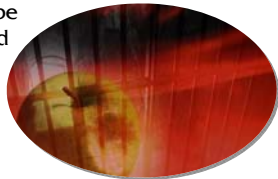
O When Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:6), and thereby sinned, they immediately became aware of their "error." They sewed fig leaves together to cover their shame and hid in the garden from God (Genesis 3:7,8). Now they were hiding from the one that they used to fellowship with regularly.

Men and women have been hiding from God ever since, covering their sin and shame with the fig leaves of religion or philosophy.

God confronted them face to face. As a result of their sin there were immediate and future consequences. The immediate consequences were being banished from the garden (Genesis 3:23,24), having difficulty in childbirth (Genesis 3:16) and our work turning from a joy that we love to a job that we hate (Genesis 3:17-19).

The future consequence for Adam and Eve was physical death. God had promised in Genesis 2:17 that the day he sinned by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that he would "surely die." Spiritually Adam and Eve died the day they sinned in the garden. Their 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 deprived and depraved, deprived of God's fellowship and depraved to the core (Romans 5:12-14).

When confronted by God the blame game begins. Adam blames Eve (Genesis 3:12) and Eve blames the snake (Genesis 3:13). Humanity has been playing the blame game ever since. What began as paradise unraveled with a single choice to disobey God and listen to Satan instead. 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 for a taste of fruit.



S **Sins cannot be removed by good deeds. (Genesis 4 - Malachi 4)**

From the beginning humanity has attempted to remove the stain of sin by good deeds. When Cain offered God vegetables as an appeasement for his sin God rejected it (Genesis 4:1-4). Cain was infuriated and killed his brother Abel.

In Exodus, the second book of the Bible, God gave the Israelites the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), not to save them from their sin, but to show them that they couldn't live up to his perfect standards on their own (Galatians 3:23-24). Instead of looking to Him in faith many of the Jews looked to themselves and thought they could please God in their own strength. But God saw their "righteous" deeds like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Even the best of their good deeds were corrupted by selfish motives.

In Leviticus, the third book of the Bible, God gave the Israelites the sacrificial system. Every time a Jew sinned he or she was to sacrifice a goat without any blemishes (Leviticus 4:27-31). Think about that. If you were a Jew in the Old Testament and had to make a sacrifice every time you lied,

lusted, gossiped, complained or argued you would soon run out of goats. Other offerings included offerings of bulls and sheep.

The sacrificial system was meant to point inward, upward and forward. It pointed inward to convince you of your sinfulness. If you were honest before God then you would soon realize that you could never make enough sacrifices for your sin. It pointed upward to make you trust in God for your salvation instead of sacrifices that you could make (Psalm 51:16,17). It pointed forward to the ultimate sacrifice of the lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who would someday come to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

The rest of the Old Testament tells the story of the Jewish people, some of whom realized they were sinners and needed God to save them (Psalm 51:1,2) and most of whom trusted in their own goodness instead of the mercy and grace of God (Isaiah 64:6).

The Burnt Cake

Let's say that I baked you a cake and burnt it badly.



If I were to cover it in white frosting and give it to you, the cake would still be burnt even though you couldn't see it. As soon as you bit into it you would know. Putting white frosting on a burnt cake doesn't change the fact that the cake is ruined. Covering our sinful lives with good deeds doesn't change the fact that we have sinned. God sees right through the "frosting."

P **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 24:45). He 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 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.

The Truck

Let's say that you are walking across a busy street and not paying much attention. All of a sudden a big, speeding truck comes out of nowhere and is headed straight at you. But you don't see it coming. Somebody standing on the street corner sees what is about to take place and with blazing speed runs into the middle of the street and pushes you out of the way right at the last minute. The speeding truck hits them instead. They absorb the full impact of the truck in your place. They die in your place. They sacrificed their life for you. In the same way the anger of God was headed straight at us because of our sins. Jesus pushed us out of the way and absorbed the full impact of God's anger for our sin. He died in our place. He sacrificed his life for ours.



E Everyone who trusts in him alone has eternal life. (John - Jude)

The amazing thing about eternal life is that it is a free gift given to us by God through faith alone and not by any of our good deeds (Ephesians 2:8,9). 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. When we believe we receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. Almost the entire New Testament is dedicated to talking about this eternal life and the implications of it in our everyday lives. From John through Jude the disciples of Jesus show us how to live like Jesus intended, serving each other in love. This is the heart of eternal life!

Life that's eternal means we will be with Jesus forever.

(Revelation 22:5)

L 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). This daily living will not be free from pain or struggling, but God's faithfulness will be with you throughout all of life—times of joy and sorrow and everything between.

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 it is ours forever and we are his forever! The Bible tells us that one who repents and believes is born again (John 3) and becomes a child of God (John 1:12). God's love for you is a invitation to leave a life of sin that separates us from Him and enter a life of freedom to be loved by and to love a real family—the family of God.

Like the soldiers learned in the program tonight, you can believe a parachute will save you, but unless you put it on it will do nothing to rescue you as you fall from a plane to ground.

The Bible tells us that all people will face the Lord one day to answer for their own life—every sinful word, thought, and action. Much like falling from a plane with no parachute, this means certain death (separation from God forever) for those without a rescuer.

But Jesus has offered His life to rescue yours. The parachute illustration falls short because a parachute doesn't choose to save the wearer. Jesus chose to leave heaven to become fully human to save those who were still sinners and therefore enemies of God. He said that He "came to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10) He came seeking you, and offers to stand on your behalf on that day of judgment we will all face. He has paid the price for your sins—taken your death upon Himself—to rescue you from the fall.

If the problem of your sin is convicting you right now of your need for God's salvation through Jesus, you need to respond. God's salvation is a free gift to everyone—that is, you cannot do anything to earn it. It is not a cheap gift—it cost the life of Jesus. But it is not a gift that you receive and put down either—it will change your whole life. Jesus calls people to follow Him with their whole life—not as a requirement for salvation, but in response to it. And He will give you the power to live a good and righteous life.

So how do you respond? The Bible said it best in **Acts 3:19**:

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...”

Repenting means to turn away from your own way of doing things, good or bad, and turning to God's way.

Acknowledge that you are a sinner in need of being saved by God

Believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead after He died on the cross for your sin

Confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord (Master) of your life

If you have decided to accept the gift of salvation and life from God through Jesus, we would encourage you to:

- Share your decision with someone you trust who also is a believer in Jesus so they can help you learn and grow in your trust of God in all aspects of life
- Spend time studying the Bible to discover the new life God has given you and how you can live in response to Him
- Get together with other followers of Jesus at a place where they teach the Bible and build each other up in knowing God and living out their lives to honor God. If you don't currently attend a church gathering like this, we invite you to join us. If you do, we encourage you to share your decision with your pastor and discover ways to serve God there!

Thank you for joining us for our Christmas Program!



Booklet prepared by:



ya@eastchain.com

www.eastchain.com/ya

Discipling Students to Love and Serve God Passionately and to Reach Their World for Christ