

Planned

Redemption

Christ



The Gift From God



Planned Redemption

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Christ – God's Plan For Redemption

1. Did everything that exists just happened out of nothing, not even a vapor?

The Hubble Constant (a factor used by some scientists to measure (estimate) supposed expansion of the universe) has hovered around 50, which implies that the universe is about 20 billion years old. ¹ In 1999 the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) estimated that there were 125 billion galaxies in the universe, and recently with the new camera HST has observed 3,000 visible galaxies, which is twice as much as were previously observed with the old camera. ² Even though we cannot actually count the number of stars in the galaxy, we can estimate the number of stars in the galaxy as roughly 100 billion (100,000,000,000). ³ The sun is just an ordinary star. Its energy makes all life and surface processes possible. Minor changes in its energy output can have a major impact on the earth. ⁴ Our earth is one of eight planets and a large number of smaller objects orbiting the Sun. ⁵

Does it appear possible that something so large and complex and so perfectly integrated could just happen and be formed from nothing?

The Bible states “In the beginning God (*'elohiyim*-plural - divine ones) ⁶ created the heavens and the earth and ... mankind, male and female” (Genesis 1:1 ... 28). But man was created in God's likeness “in our image and in our likeness” thus they were different from all other creation.

How could by accident or by a non-intelligent being coordinate the complexities of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch without some minute detailed planning and design? Have you ever wondered about God's image or likeness? We learn in the Bible that God is love, truth, faithful, merciful, just, peace, holy, righteous and able to decide or make choices.

Is it easier to believe such complex universe occurred by design or to believe everything just happened by chance **without** plan or design?

2. Is the Bible is God's message to man?

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:1-2 NIV).

The Jews referred to the law, the prophets and the psalms as the scripture.

“And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them” (Deuteronomy 17:17-18 ASV).

And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44 - ASV).

¹ archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/Cyberia/Cosmos/ExpandUni.html

² magine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/ask_astro/answers/021127a.html

³ curious.astro.cornell.edu/question.php?number=31

⁴ jersey.uoregon.edu/~mstrick/astronomy/Astro_Lectures/sun.html#Intro

⁵ nineplanets.org/sol.html

⁶ Thayer's Greek Lexicon and Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, Woodside Bible Fellowship,

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21 NIV).

Paul stated “All Scripture is God-breathed [inspired (ASV)] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV).

“He [Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor’ [Isaiah 61:1-2]. Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’ ” (Luke 4:16-21 NIV).

It should be obvious from the above scriptures that God speaks to man through His inspired Word, the Bible?

3. Who controls man's actions?

Does God prevent man from sinning? Or, does Satan force man to sin?

The answer to these questions can be found in the study of Adam and Eve in the third chapter of Genesis.

God placed man, Adam and Eve, in Eden [paradise (rd)]. He then put him to work instructing him to tend [take care of, dress] and keep it. Just think, at this moment in man's life, he was in the perfect place and in a perfect relationship with God, his creator. Remember man was made in God's image, likeness not His exact nature. Taking care of the Garden of Eden was not the only thing God required of Adam. God instructed, commanded, Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden. But you must never eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because when you eat from it, you will certainly die” (Genesis 2:16-17 GWT).

“God blessed these humans by saying to them, ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it! Be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, and every living thing that crawls on the earth’ ” (Genesis 1:28 ISV)!

If God had made man without the ability to make decisions, He would not have given him instruction requiring him to make the choices, not to eat of the fruit of the tree, to “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue” or to tend the Garden of Eden.

Now Adam and Eve may have looked at the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil many times. It was not a sin to look at the tree. But they looked upon the tree differently when Satan, the deceiver, in the form of a serpent asked “Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'”... “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3). This time when they looked it was with the desire to become as wise as God. Notice God did not tempt them neither did He prevent them from desiring to be wise. In fact, it was all up to them. They had a choice. They could have said “I will not eat.” But they chose to satisfy their desire to try to be as wise as God and yielded to their desire.

In Genesis 3:8-10 you will notice that after their sin of rebellion God talked to Adam. It is doubtful that this was the first time God had spoken to them.

Even so Adam and Eve looked [were lured] at the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they wanted to become wise as God [enticed] and they understood what God had commanded. Their choosing to yield to their desires [conceived] rather than obey God clearly shows they had the ability to make decisions. Did Satan force them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? **No!** Did God prevent them from choosing to yield? **No! It was their choice to obey or disobey God.**

Centuries later James stated “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each one is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. Then when desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is full grown, it gives birth to death” (James 1:13-15 NET). James was right.

They yielded to their desire to be as wise as God. They rebelled against God by not honoring His command! They sinned! This severed that perfect relationship with the eternal all loving and merciful God. The consequence was harsh but just. Their guilt was heavy and there was not a thing they could do to earn a way back to that relationship. God gave a hint of something He had planned to occur in the future, something that would allow man to return to that relationship. “And I will put enmity [hostility] between you and the woman, and between your offspring [seed] and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15 NIV).

Later this lesson will examine God’s plan for redeeming man so he can return to that previous perfect relationship.

4. God becomes angry with the wickedness of man.

Years passed after Adam and Eve chose to disobey and man’s relationship with God grew worse. In fact it became intolerable. “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry (repented – KJV) that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, ‘I will blot out (destroy - ASV) man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them’ ” (Genesis 6:5-7 RSV).

But there was hope for mankind for “Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD” (Genesis 6:8 RSV). “By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark [boat, ship] for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith” (Hebrews 11:7 RSV). Noah did what God desired not what he wanted to do even while all those around him continued to live wickedly. I am sure you took note that God punished the rebellious and wicked but had mercy and saved the righteous.

So far we have seen that God planned for man’s seed, at some time, to crush the head of the great deceiver (the accuser, Satan). He promised also, but not necessarily at the same time, to punish the wicked and have grace and mercy on the righteous.

5. God’s Promise to Bless All Nations

About 350 years following Noah and the flood that destroyed all living except for Noah and his family, Abraham was born and seventy-five years later God called Abraham. “The LORD said to Abram, ‘Leave your land, your relatives, and your father's home. Go to the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse. Through you every family on earth will be blessed.’ [In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (NKJV)] So Abram left, as the LORD had told him” (Genesis 12:1-4 GWT). “He [Abraham] believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Galatians 3:6 NIV).

When He stated all families of the earth, obviously He was not referring only to the nation of Israel which was yet to come for it states all families of the earth. “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ ... The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ” (Galatians 3:8, 16 NIV).

Hundreds of years passed and the descendants of Abraham, estimated to be over 2 million men, were slaves in Egypt. “A man from the family of Levi took a woman also descended from Levi as his wife. When she conceived and had a son, upon seeing what a fine child he was, she hid him for three months” (Exodus 2:1-2 CJB). “Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. ‘This is one of the Hebrew babies,’ she said. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, ‘Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?’ ‘Yes, go,’ she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, ‘Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.’ So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, ‘I drew him out of the water’ ” (Exodus 2:5-10 NIV).

“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin” (Hebrews 11:24-25 NKJV).

“But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well” (Exodus 2:15 ASV). Having been trained in the luxuries of Egyptian royalty Moses was 40 years old when he fled Pharaoh and Egypt. For the next forty years of his 120 year life he was a lowly shepherd, a profession despised by the Egyptians but honored by God.

“Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up. When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ He said also, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God” (Exodus 3:1-6 NASU).

“Then the LORD said, ‘I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians ... Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt’ ” (Exodus 3:7-11 RSV).

“When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, ‘If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.’ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea” (Exodus 13:17-18 NIV). But Pharaoh, desiring to keep the Israelites as slaves, changed his mind and pursued after them with his mighty army. “Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.’ ... But the Lord said ‘The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.’ ... The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen — the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived” (Exodus 14:13-14; 17; 14:28 NIV).

As they continued their journey toward the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they came to Mount Sinai. When they left Egypt they were slaves living under Egyptian laws and leadership but they now needed to become a nation. Here God through Moses gave them many commandments (including those commonly referred to as the Ten Commandments), rules and regulations to govern them as they took their place among other nations. These laws created an awareness of sin. Thus “the law was our schoolmaster [tutor-(ASV); custodian-(RSV); guardian-(ESV)] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24 KJV).

Is this law giver, Moses [Abraham’s seed], the person that would bless all families of the earth?
NO, Moses was not the Messiah.

6. Law and Covenant

Moses died never entering the land promised to Abraham. He did not take credit upon himself for what God did. God through Moses did not bless all nations - only the nation of Israel. Joshua became God’s leader for them. One can read all about the trials and tribulations of the Children of Israel, Abraham’s descendants from the son of promise, Isaac. It was a constant battle for them to live faithful to God. They constantly allowed their desires to lead them astray. But God always welcomed them back when they became aware of their wickedness, repented and turned back to keeping his commandments. The law given by God through Moses did not offer any forgiveness; it only pointed to a redeemer, the Messiah (Greek *Christos*), who was to come who would save man from his sins.

“The LORD your God will raise up a prophet like me for you from among your relatives. You must listen to him.” “I will raise up a prophet like you from among their relatives, and I will place my words in his mouth so that he may expound everything that I have commanded to them. But if someone will not listen to those words that the prophet speaks in my name, I will hold him accountable” (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19 ISV).

Are you like the Children of Israel being constantly bombarded with temptations, sometimes yielding and in need of forgiveness?

7. A New Covenant

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt” (Jeremiah 31:31-32 NKJV).

“You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant’ (Hebrews 12:23-24 NIV).

“Therefore he [Christ – (NIV)] is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15 RSV).

How is one called and what must be done in order to receive this promise of eternal life?

“It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure.’ Then I said, ‘Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,’ as it is written of me in the roll of the book. When he said above, ‘Thou hast neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings’ (these are offered according to the law), then he added, ‘Lo, I have come to do thy will.’ He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified [made holy - NIV] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:4-10 RSV).

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Even angels long to look into these things” (1 Peter 1:10-12 NIV). “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8 NIV).

“And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you’ ” (Luke 22:19-20 NIV).

Therefore, the pouring out of Christ’s blood, the giving of His life and body as the atoning sacrifice by crucifixion, and His resurrection from the grave established the New Covenant. This blood sacrifice, sin-offering, of the incarnate God provides what the sin-offering of blood of bulls and goats of the covenant given by God through Moses was not able to do. Christ did not remain dead [His physical body did not see corruption; i.e., decay and return to dust Psalm 16:10 (rd)] as God raised Him from the grave thereby overcoming the only hold Satan had on man. Therefore Christ, the seed of Adam, crushed the head of Satan when He was brought back to life, resurrected, thereby becoming victorious over death. “And I will put enmity [hostility] between you and the woman, and between your offspring [seed] and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15 NIV).

Does Christ’s atoning sacrifice provide forgiveness to everyone or only to those who choose to accept Him and His free gift of salvation?

God promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their descendants would be given a land flowing with milk and honey, an earthly Promised Land. This promise was fulfilled following their leaving Egyptian slavery behind and accepting God’s covenant through Moses with the sacrifices of the blood of sheep and “bulls and goats.” However, only those who put their trust in God through obedience and remained faithful were allowed to enter into their Promised Land.

For hundreds of years they reached great heights while faithful to God by keeping His commandments and sank to great depths when they rebelled against God by following the ways of the world around them.

However God was always faithful to accept them back when they acknowledged their sins, repented of their wickedness and asked for God's mercy and forgiveness.

God's promise to Abraham that his "seed" would bless all nations arrived with the birth of Jesus by the Holy Spirit through Mary. The fulfillment of all prophecies, His life, miracles and eye witness testimony, and some secular, non-Christian or Roman, witnesses leaves no doubt about His claim to be the "Son of God and the Son of Man."

"For since the law [Old Covenant (rd)] 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. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

"Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.' Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'

"When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'Behold, I have come to do your will. He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

"And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds' " (Hebrews 10:1-16 ESV).

"Then he adds, 'I will no longer hold their sins and their disobedience against them.' When sins are forgiven, there is no longer any need to sacrifice for sins. Brothers and sisters, because of the blood of Jesus we can now confidently go into the holy place" (Hebrews 10:17-19 GWT). The New Covenant came with the blood sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth, a man without the spots or blemishes of sin, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Christians remember Christ's atoning sacrifice by partaking of what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Supper.

8. The Free Gift of Salvation

As shown in the creation of Adam and Eve, man was given the ability to choose and make decisions. This is also borne out by the Children of Israel, those God chose to bring Christ into the world, were constantly choosing to please self thus rebelling against God then suffering the consequences. Paul tell us "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23 KJV). Adam and Eve learned this lesson the hard way.

Those who choose to become part of Jesus' New Covenant, those in Christ, receive salvation, forgiveness of sins by the cleansing blood of Christ and eternal life in the spiritual Promised Land.

"No one else can save us. Indeed, we can be saved only by the power of the one named Jesus and not by any other person" (Acts 4:12 GWT).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel [Christ (rd)]: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed” (Romans 1:16-17 RSV).

So, all of us have sinned. Christ is our sin-offering. The Gospel, THE RESURRECTED CHRIST, is the power of salvation, forgiveness of sin.

A. Then who is this Christ, Jesus of Nazareth?

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1 NKJV).
- “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him” (John 1:10 NKJV).
- “The Word became human and lived among us. We saw his glory. It was the glory that the Father shares with his only Son, a glory full of kindness and truth” (John 1:14 GWT).
- “Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8-GWT).
- “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! **The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** This is He of whom I said, “After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me’ ” (John 1:29-30 NKJV).
- “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him” (Matthew 3:16 NKJV).
- “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They answered, ‘Some say you are John the Baptizer, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He asked them, ‘But who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!’ Jesus replied, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, you are blessed! No human revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven revealed it to you’ ” (Matthew 16:13-18 GWT).
- “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NKJV).
- For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9 NKJV).

B. Why does man need a mediator?

- “Your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2 NKJV).
- “I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness ... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:19...23 NIV).
- “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:23-25 NIV).
- “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites [sexual perverts (RSV)], nor thieves, nor covetous [greedy (NIV)], nor drunkards, nor revilers [slanderers (NIV)], nor extortioners [swindlers (NIV)] will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV).

- “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 2:1-2 NIV).
- “The gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16 NKJV).
- “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6 ESV).

C. What is the Gospel of Christ?

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1-2NKJV).
- “Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘*stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.*’ **Nor is there salvation in any other [that is Christ (rd)],** for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:10-12 NKJV).
- “**In Him** we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7-8 NKJV).
- “[All] are **justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.** God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:24-25 NIV).
- “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures**” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NKJV).
- “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was **reconciling the world to himself in Christ**, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

D. How is one reconciled back to a relationship with God?

- “Peter said to Jesus ... While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. **Listen to him** [hear him (KJV)]’ ” (Matthew 17:4-5 NIV)!
- “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard” (Romans 10:14 NKJV)?
- “So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you **understand** what you are reading?’ And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him” (Acts 8:30-31 NKJV).
- “Without **faith [belief in action]** *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV).
- “You will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24 NKJV).
- “But if you don't turn to God and change the way you think and act [repent (NKJV)], then you, too, will all die. What about those 18 people who died when the tower at Siloam fell on them? Do you think that they were more sinful than other people living in Jerusalem? No! I can guarantee that they weren't. But if you don't **turn to God and change [repent]** (NKJV) the way you think and act, then you, too, will all die” (Luke 13:3-5 GWT).

- “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you **confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, [when he puts his trust in God through obedience] and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:8-10 NKJV).
- “Even when we were **dead** in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Ephesians 2:5 KJV).
- “Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? When we **were baptized into his death**, we were **placed into the tomb** with him [**we died to sin and were buried, immersed (rd)**]” (Romans 6:3-4 GWT).
- “As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father, so we, too, should **live a new kind of life**. If we've become united with him in a death like his, certainly we will also be united with him when we come back to life as he did. We know that the person we used to be was crucified with him to put an end to sin in our bodies. Because of this we are no longer slaves to sin. The person who has died has been freed from sin” (Romans 6:4-7 GWT).

E. Living the New Kind of Life In Christ

The following teachings of Christ as recorded in Matthew chapters 5-7 reveal much about living in Christ (no attempt has been made to list everything recorded).

Contrast between Traditions and the New Covenant – 6:1-18

1. Display your righteousness vs– Worship God in your Heart before man
2. Call attention to giving vs– Give in secret, honoring God
3. Pray to impress others vs– Prayer is to be to God
4. Call attention to your righteousness vs– God is Holy- not man

Contrasts between Old and New Covenants – Matthew 6:21-48

1. Do not murder vs– Do not nurse anger, abuse, sneer at or hate
2. Give vs– Reconcile differences with brethren before giving
3. Do not commit adultery vs– Do not look upon someone with desire for sexual pleasure
4. Get even with offender vs– Allow God to avenge
5. Hate your enemy vs– Do good to all even your enemies

The New Covenant Spiritual life – 6:19-7:27

1. Know you need God
2. Maintain a gentle spirit
3. Strive to see justice maintained
4. Show mercy
5. Keep thoughts pure
6. Promote peace
7. Accept persecution for doing right
8. Allow your relationship with God to be obvious
9. Teach others to observe all God's teachings
10. Be careful to refrain from teaching tradition as God's word
11. Rely upon God not on accumulated wealth which perishes
12. Be careful what you take into your mind through your eyes
13. It is impossible to rely on God and one's wealth.
14. Life is more than things

15. Put righteousness and justice first - God takes care of the rest
16. Do not be critical of others - you too are stained with sin
17. Those diligently seeking righteousness will find it
18. God gives to those who ask
19. Know God and you will recognize the hypocrite and his works
20. God recognizes those who do his will – not those who say they do

F. Summary Of How To Get into Christ

Hear

- Study diligently and read what Christ and apostles preached for they are the Words of life.

Understand

- All men are sinful, having disobeyed God's righteous commands.
- I have sinned and am not living according to God's commands.
- My sins will result in my eternal death.
- I must be forgiven to have eternal life with God.
- Christ, the sin offering that atones, is the only way for me to be forgiven of all my sins.

Believe that Christ is God who wants to forgive

- Jesus was and is God who came to earth in flesh as Jesus of Nazareth and lived among men.
- Jesus willingly gave His physical life being crucified - the perfect sacrifice to forgive man of his sins.
- He was buried, rose from the grave on the third day and appeared to hundreds of his disciples.
- He ascended back to heaven with the Father.

Repent

- Change my life from sin and disobedience to trust and obedience.

Confess

- Acknowledge before others that Jesus is the Son of God.

Die

- Put to death my old, sinful, worldly life.

Be Buried

- Since your worldly life has died bury it into Christ's in the grave of baptism by immersion in water.

Receive

- Following your death to sin and burial into Christ death, God resurrects you into a new spiritual being, gives you the Holy Spirit and puts you into Christ Body, the church.

Live

- Continue to live steadfast and obedient to Christ, the blood sacrifice that forgives sin and will continue to cleanse all who live in obedience through faith and trust from a contrite heart. You are IN Christ a servant to do God's will.

G. Are you absolutely sure that you would spend eternity with Jesus Christ in Heaven if you were to die today/tonight?

- "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13 NIV).

- “For this reason I [Jesus] told you that you'll die because of your sins. If you don't believe that I am the one, you'll die because of your sins” (John 8:24 GWT).

**The Decision is Yours!
Will you choose Eternal Life or Eternal Death?**

Life

“Those who listen to what I say and believe in the one who sent me will have eternal life. They won't be judged because they have already passed from death to life. "I can guarantee this truth: A time is coming (and is now here) when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who respond to it will live' ” (John 5:24-25 GWT).

or

Death

“He will do this when the Lord Jesus is revealed, *coming* from heaven with his mighty angels in a blazing fire. He will take revenge on those who refuse to acknowledge God and on those who refuse to respond [obey (NIV)] to the Good News [Gospel (NKJV)] about our Lord Jesus. They will pay the penalty by being destroyed forever, by being separated from the Lord's presence and from his glorious power” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 GWT).

Today is the day of decision!

Questions

1. The universe, complex beyond imagination
 - a. Spontaneously and by chance came into existence
 - b. planned and intricately designed
2. Man was created in God's likeness therefore man
 - a. has the ability to choose and decide
 - b. can only do as he was programed to do
3. What instructions did God give Adam to do while in Eden?
 - a. Take care of, tend, the Garden of Eden
 - b. Not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
 - c. Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it
 - d. All the above
4. Adam and Eve listened to Satan and yielded to their desires
T F
5. All scripture, the Bible, is from God and written for man to read and understand God's will for man to live pleasing to God.
T. F.
6. Sin occurs when one:
 - a. Tempted, lured and enticed by desires
 - b. Yields to temptations of his desires
7. Adam and Eve did not suffer any consequences from their sins?

- T. ____ F. ____
8. In Noah's time due to man's wickedness God completely destroyed all mankind except for:
- ____ Adam and Eve
 - ____ Noah and his family
 - ____ Abraham and his family
9. God promised Abraham that
- ____ Children of Israel were chosen to have eternal life
 - ____ Gentiles were condemned to eternal death
 - ____ People of all nations regardless of race would be blessed
10. God entered into a covenant relationship with Moses and the Children of Israel?
T. ____ F. ____
11. Moses could not enter into the land promised to Abraham because he took honor upon himself rather than giving honor to God.
T. ____ F. ____
12. Animal sacrifices of bulls and goats offered to God by the Children of Israel were to forgive them of their sins?
T. ____ F. ____
13. Christ offered His physical body to God as the sin offering for the forgiveness on man's sins.
T ____ F ____
14. Christ entered into a new covenant with all who accept Him as Lord by putting their trust in Him by obedience?
T. ____ F. ____
15. All men have failed to live pleasing to God and are in need of forgiveness in order to be redeemed.
T. ____ F. ____
16. Christ's sin-offering, atoning sacrifice, provides forgiveness to:
- ____ Everyone
 - ____ Those who believe
 - ____ Those who put their trust and obedience in Christ and live His teachings
17. Forgiveness of sins, salvation, is found in
- ____ Their belief as to what is right and godly
 - ____ Their good works and the life they live
 - ____ In Christ
18. Who are those who will not enter into Heaven?
- ____ Fornicators
 - ____ Idolaters
 - ____ Adulterers
 - ____ Homosexuals
 - ____ Sodomites [sexual perverts]
 - ____ Thieves
 - ____ Coveters [greedy]
 - ____ Drunkards

- i. Revilers [slanders]
 - j. Extortioners [swindlers]
 - k. All the above
19. How does one get into Christ where salvation and benefits of forgiveness exists?
- a. Hear God's death burial and resurrection message, the Gospel – Christ the Son of God
 - b. Understand without Christ sin-offering there can be no forgiveness
 - c. Believe without doubt the Christ is and was God
 - d. Repent by changing lifestyle from worldliness to godliness
 - e. Confess your belief the Christ is Son of God
 - f. Die to old life of sin
 - g. Bury that old worldly life into death of Christ by immersion in water often called baptism.
 - h. Receive from God a resurrected spiritual body, the gift of the Holy Spirit and membership into Christ Body, His Church.
 - i. Live faithfully to Christ teachings allowing the Blood of Christ to continue to cleanse you of all unrighteousness
 - j. All the above
20. What is your situation with your God and creator?
- a. You know of Jesus
 - b. Christ knows you

