



GOOD NEWS FOR YOU

This is a true story. Some call it the greatest story ever told.

Many thousands of years ago, God created the heavens and the earth. Then He created man and woman. The first man, God called Adam, and Adam named the first woman Eve. God loved Adam and Eve and gave them a beautiful garden in which to live.

“And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ... And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’ ” (Genesis 2:8-17).

God’s enemy is Satan, or the devil. We learn that he was cast down to the earth and is trying to deceive the whole world. “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth ...” (Revelation 12:9). The Bible’s first mention of him is when he tempted Eve. We cannot see him but he is real.

Satan came to Eve and told her that she should eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because it would make her wise like God. Eve saw that the fruit looked good and she thought it would taste good. She also liked to think she could be wise like God, so she let Satan talk her into eating the fruit. Then she gave some to Adam, and he also ate it.

When God saw what they had done, He was very angry and disappointed. Since they had done what God told them not to do, they had to be punished. When someone does what God tells them not to do, that is called sin. Adam and Eve were the first sinners who lived upon the earth. God had said that if they sinned, they would have to die.

To die means to be separated or lose life. If they could have stayed in the garden, they could have eaten of that tree and lived forever. But God told them if they sinned, they would die. God had to put them out of the garden, so they could not eat of the tree of life and keep on living. From that time on, their life span was limited. They lived many years after that, but they finally died. Since to die means to be separated or cut off, Adam and Eve really died on the day they ate the forbidden fruit. This is because they were separated or cut off from God. God no longer walked and talked with them as He had in the garden.

This is the worst thing that can happen. God is where Life comes from. But God cannot let sinners live with Him. The really bad thing is that we have all sinned. We have all done things that God does not want us to do. So, we must all die. What can we do? Is there a way out for us? Must we all be separated from God forever?

What we have told you so far is mostly bad news. The rest of the story is Good News!

Remember, we said God loved man when He made him. He still does. He still loves every person on earth, even though we have all sinned. So God decided to make it possible for us to be punished for our sin and still live with Him forever.

If the punishment is being separated from God, how is it possible for us to be punished and still get to be with God forever? If

it were left up to us, it would not be possible. But with God, all things are possible. By God's great love and power He has found a way for us to live with Him. He calls that salvation, or being saved.

God wants us to be saved, but He also wants us to understand what a great and powerful God He is. He also wants us to know what a loving and merciful God He is. So He spent hundreds and hundreds of years getting man ready for the coming of the One who could save us. He chose a man named Abraham and told him that those who would come from his family would be a great nation. God also told him that there would be one member of his future family who would bring blessings to all the people of the earth.

Abraham's descendants later were called Israelites after a grandson name Israel. They were also called Jews. God chose these people to teach us many things about His goodness and how very bad sin is. He never intended that these would be the only people He loved. He has always loved every person of every nation and color. Then, when the time was just right, He gave all people the way to be saved. The most wonderful thing you will ever know is that God loved the world so much He gave His only Son. God gave His Son so every person who believes in Him would not be lost, but have life forever. What does it mean that "God gave His Son?"

To understand this, there is something you need to know about the one true God: He is God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit. That does not mean that He is three Gods; He is one God. But He chooses to let Himself be known to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—each united but with a separate work to do. This may be hard to understand, but we believe it because God said it is true.

Now God decided because He loved us so much, He would make it possible for us to be with Him forever—even though we are sinners. He decided He would send His Son to the earth and have Him live a perfect life—for us; and that He would be punished for our sins—for us; he would die for us; and he would be raised from the dead—for us. In other words, I cannot live a perfect life so Jesus Christ, God's Son, lived it for

me. I cannot pay a big enough price to make up for my sins, so Jesus paid it for me by being nailed to a cross.

For one awful moment, Jesus was separated from the Father, dying for my sins. And since I do not have the power to raise myself from the dead, God raised Jesus from the dead for me.

And now, praise God, He tells me how I can share in Jesus' life, death and resurrection (being raised from the dead). The Good News is that by believing in Jesus as the Son of God who died for me, I can be in Jesus. By being in Jesus Christ I share in the blessings of what He did for me.

Christ means the anointed or king. I can have forgiveness of my sins. And if my sins are removed, there is no longer any reason why I cannot be with God forever. And though my body dies, if I am in Jesus, I share the power that raised Him from the dead—and someday God will raise me from the dead.

So how do I show God that I really believe in, or trust Jesus as His Son? First, I cannot believe in someone of whom I know nothing. I must hear the good news of His life—how obedient, kind and good He was. I must know of His mighty works—how He healed the sick, helped the helpless, loved both the rich and the poor, and how He raised the dead. I must know of His Godness, the fact that He was actually God in the flesh, that God loved us so much He actually gave Himself for our salvation. I must know of His will, what kind of life He wants me to live and how He wants me to express my trust in Him. When that is known, He wants me to make up my mind to do what He wants me to do and make Him the Lord of my life. That is called repentance.

He wants me to love Him and trust Him so much that I will not be afraid to tell anyone that I am His follower. And He wants me to tell the whole world how much I trust Him by being buried with Him in water. This is called baptism.

The reason for this is it is the way of being buried with Him, dying with Him, and being raised with Him to a new life. We are baptized into Christ. From that time, you belong to Him. You become a part of His people, the church, and you are the brother or sister of every person who has accepted this good news. Because you belong to Him—because He is your Lord—

you will live for Him, praise God through Him, and tell others the Good News that has set you free from sin!

(My dear friend, the above is from the Old Testament and the New Testament. These two Testaments make up a collection of books called the Bible. The Holy Spirit guided many men to write these books for the good of all mankind. Please read the story of God's love for you and follow His Son, Jesus Christ, so you may live forever with Him. We especially call your attention to these books of the Bible and their chapters and verses: Old Testament, the book of Genesis, chapters 1 through 3; chapter 12:1-3; chapter 25:19-28; and chapter 46:5-7; in Exodus, chapters 1 through 3; and chapters 13 through 15.

In the New Testament, read I Corinthians 10:1-13; the entire book of Mark; Acts, chapters 1 and 2; Romans, chapters 1 through 6; Galatians 3:1-29; I Corinthians 15:1-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 1:5-10).

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SIN, GUILT & SALVATION

Directions:

- I. Read the Scripture reference given, considering the context.
- II. Circle the appropriate answer (re-read the reference, if necessary).
 1. Romans 3:9-12, 23 (compare Galatians 3:22)
Y N Is anyone righteous?
Y N Does anyone do good?
Y N Is anyone free from sin?
Y N Are you free from sin?
 2. I John 5:17
According to this passage, sin is:
 - a. Disobeying parents.
 - b. Wrong words or actions.
 - c. All unrighteousness.
 3. James 4:17
Y N When we know what is right and we don't do it, to us that is sin.
 4. I John 3:4
Y N Sin is lawlessness.
 5. I John 1:8-10
If we say we have no sin, whom have we deceived?
 - a. Our Parents.
 - b. God.
 - c. Ourselves.
 6. If we say that we have not sinned, who do we make a liar?
 - a. Satan.
 - b. God.
 - c. Ourselves.
 7. Galatians 5:19-21
Have you ever been guilty of any of the sins listed below?

Mark the ones you have committed.

-] Immorality.
-] Impurity.
-] Idolatry (see Colossians 3:5).
-] Sorcery (includes such things as astrology, witchcraft, fortune telling, seances and other occult practices).
-] Enmities (hostile feelings toward another person).
-] Jealousy.
-] Outbursts of anger.
-] Disputes, dissensions, factions.
-] Envy.
-] Drunkenness (includes influence of illegal drugs).
-] Carousing (drinking or drug-taking parties, orgies, etc.).

8. How many times a day would you normally sin?

- a. 5 times.
- b. 3 times ($3 \times 365 = 1,095 \times 10 = 10,950!$).
- c. Innumerable times.

9. Ezekiel 18:4, 20-21

According to this Old Testament passage, who is responsible for your sins?

- a. Adam.
- b. Yours parents.
- c. Yourself.

10. Romans 2:8-9

Y N Will the person guilty of sin receive God's wrath and indignation and have trouble and distress?

11. James 1:13-15 (see also Romans 6:21-23)

When I "give in" to temptation,

- a. God tempted me.
- b. The Devil made me do it.
- c. I was enticed by my own lusts.

Y N Does lust "give birth" to sin?

Y N When we sin, is death the result?

12. Romans 5:6-8 (see also I Timothy 1:15)
 - Y N Did Jesus die for ungodly sinners who were unable to help themselves?
 - Y N Did Jesus die for our sins so that we would not have to?
 - Y N Is this a demonstration of God's love?
13. Ephesians 2:8-9 (compare Titus 3:5; II Timothy 1:9 and Romans 6:23)
 - Y N Is salvation (forgiveness of sin and restored fellowship with God) something we can do for ourselves?
 - Y N Is salvation by grace through faith the gift of God?
 - Y N Is eternal life something we can purchase?
14. John 3:16-17
 - Y N Does God love the world?
 - Y N Did God, because of this love, send Jesus to judge (condemn) the world?
 - Y N Must we believe in Jesus if we are to avoid perishing.
15. Mark 16:16
 - Y N Does Jesus teach that belief and baptism are necessary in order to be saved?
16. Acts 2:38
 - Y N Did Peter teach that one must repent (a change of mind resulting in a change of our way of life) and be baptized in order to be forgiven of sin?
17. Acts 17:30-31 (compare with Mark 1:15)
 - Y N Is repentance required of all persons?
 - Y N Is one safe if one is ignorant of God's will?
18. Matthew 10:32-33
 - Y N If we confess (that we believe in) Jesus before men, will He confess us (that we are His) before His Father?
19. Romans 10:8-10

Y N Is an oral confession of Jesus as Lord necessary for salvation?

20. I Peter 3:21

Y N Does baptism save us?

Y N Is baptism an appeal to God for a good conscience?

21. Romans 8:1; Ephesians 1:3 (see also I John 3:5)

Y N Can those who are “in Christ Jesus” be condemned?

Y N Are there any spiritual blessings “outside” of Christ?

22. Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27

Y N Is baptism the way to get into Christ where we have all spiritual blessings and freedom from condemnation?

Y N Is baptism the way to clothe ourselves with Christ?

23. John 3:23

Baptism requires:

a. A trip to Aenon near Salim.

b. A little water in a fount.

c. Much water.

24. Romans 6:4-5 (compare Colossians 2:12)

Y N Is baptism a burial and a resurrection?

Y N Does sprinkling or pouring require “much water?”

Y N Would one bury something or someone by sprinkling a little dirt on them?

25. Acts 8:35-39

Y N Was it necessary for Philip to take the Ethiopian “down into the water” in order to baptize him?

Y N Was water sprinkled or poured on the Ethiopian? (How do we know?)

Y N Would it be right to be baptized in the same manner as the Ethiopian?

26. Acts 22:16
Paul was told to be baptized.
- As an “outward sign of an inward grace.”
 - To wash away his sins.
 - As a sign that his sins had already been washed away.
27. Personal Inventory:
- Y N Are you a sinner in need of salvation?
- Y N Do you believe that Jesus has suffered death in payment for your sins?
- Y N Have you repented in regard to your practice of sin?
- Y N Have you confessed faith in Jesus as Lord?
- Y N Have you been baptized (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of your sins?
- Y N Do you want to be forgiven of your sins and be safe from condemnation?
- Y N Do you want to experience all spiritual blessings?
- Y N Are you ready to give Jesus full control of your life?
- Y N Are you ready to “wash away your sins” right now by being immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
28. James 4:14
- Y N Is the matter of your salvation urgent?

If you would like further teaching or help in becoming a Christian (a follower of Jesus Christ) or if you wish to discuss this study-guide, please contact the nearest Church of Christ. God bless you.