

The Nativity Story

In the gospels, the Bible explains how Jesus Christ was born. A Jewish man, named Joseph, planned to wed Mary, also a Jew. When Joseph discovered that Mary was already with child, he thought to cancel his wedding plans. But an angel stopped Joseph from abandoning her and explained that Mary had been chosen to bear the Son of God! The couple married, and Mary remained a virgin throughout her pregnancy.

After arriving in the town of Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary could not find a vacant room. They finally settled in a stable as a last resort. Desperate, they moved into the stable, and soon afterward Mary went into labor. Jesus certainly had a humble beginning!

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The Gift of God

The lowly stable and barn animals surrounding this newborn baby were quite unimpressive. But the amazing thing about the birth of Jesus was that His true father was not Joseph, but our almighty Creator—God the Father! This is why Jesus was capable of such miracles as healing the sick, calming a violent storm with His words, and restoring the dead to life again. He even rose from the dead three days after He was crucified! According to the Bible, Jesus Christ is both fully human and fully God, making Him the perfect gift for the world.

Why did Jesus have to come to earth?
How is He a gift?

Spiritual Help

The Bible teaches that Jesus is God's way of sending spiritual help to humankind. Christians, or followers of Christ, are those who recognize that they are unable to earn a place for themselves in heaven by doing good works. Jesus said, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*" (Luke 5:32). The Bible clearly teaches: "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). Again in Romans the Bible states: "*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one*" (3:10). But the Bible also offers hope to sinners: "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 6:23).

How serious is sin? Why is it such a big deal to God?

God is Holy

God cannot tolerate sin because of His holy character. Our Creator is completely pure, loving, and righteous. Many people think of sin as crime or things done against society. But sin is more—it is living for ourselves without regard to God or His laws. Because of our sin, the Bible says that God hid His *“face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities”* (Isaiah 64:7).

God is eternally loving, yet His holiness and righteousness cannot allow Him to overlook sin. Every tiny trace of it must be judged. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, *“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”*

As our lives continue to fall short of His holy standards, the burden of our sins just grows bigger and bigger. Many people try to erase their past sins by doing good works, but Isaiah 64:6 says, *“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”*

Others think that if they avoid committing really awful sins, their sincere efforts will make a good impression upon God. The Bible’s response is, *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all”* (James 2:10).

According to the Bible, God does not want us to work or strive to earn salvation—He simply wants to give it to us: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Sin's Consequence

Why can't I just enjoy my life now and deal with God about my sins after I die?

The Bible says that "*the wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23a). When we commit an act of sin, no matter how big or small, we receive death in payment for that sin. That is why all human beings die. The Bible explains, "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*" (Romans 5:12). But the phrase "*the wages of sin is death*" carries more meaning than just physical death. The Bible also teaches of spiritual death.



Spiritual Death

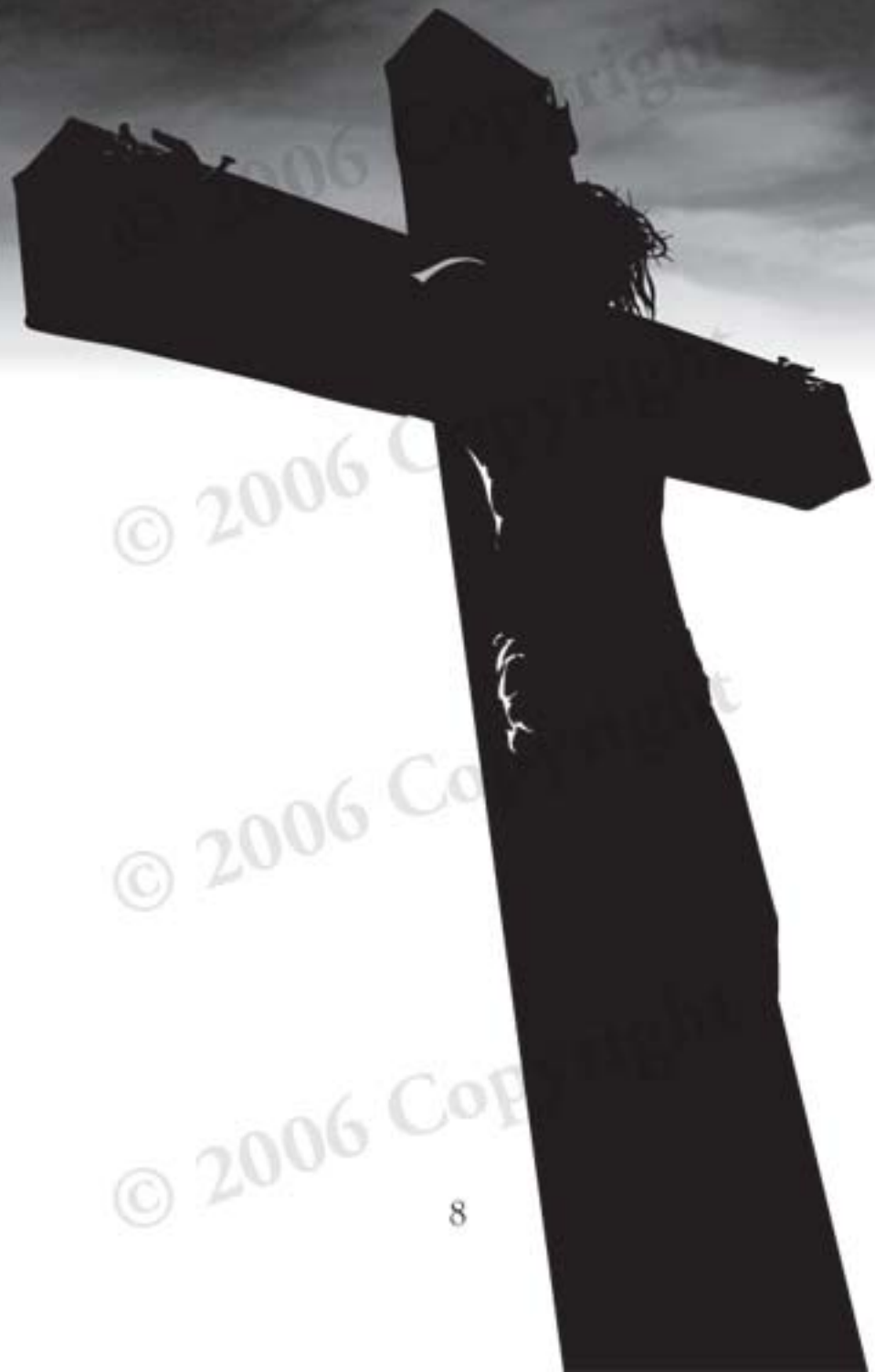
To be spiritually dead means your personal relationship with God is cut off and you cannot communicate with Him or enter into His presence. Those who, because of sin, remain spiritually dead when they come to the point of their physical death, can never enter into God's holy presence: "*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27). Even worse, they must spend eternity paying for their sins in hell. Revelation 20:15 says, "*Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*" This awful and extreme punishment shows us that God is completely holy and that He views the matter of sin very seriously.

God's Plan to Rescue Sinners

Because God's eternal love is so great, He created a plan to rescue us from the grip of sin. He made this plan very simple... *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). If you believe on Jesus Christ, God will freely exchange His righteousness for all your sins. How is that possible?

As Jesus, the Son of God, hung on the cross in agony, He took upon Himself all the sins of mankind. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"* (Galatians 3:13).

In His own words, Jesus tells us why He did this: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13).



God's Gospel

Jesus laid down His precious, divine life so that the spiritually dead could have spiritual life. The ancient Hebrew prophet, Isaiah, testified that Jesus would come for this purpose: *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:4-5).

This free exchange may not seem fair to our human minds, but it pleases our loving Creator. The Bible assures us many times that it was God's plan for His Son to die for mankind: *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Do you believe this good news?

Believe

Believing is more than just acknowledging that Jesus Christ exists. The Bible says *"the devils also believe, and tremble"* (James 2:19).

True belief is placing your complete confidence in Jesus and His ability to save you from your sins. It's placing your faith in this reality—Jesus sacrificed His own life so that I could live. When you are 100% sure of this truth, God the Father forgives you of all sin. He then gives you spiritual life and establishes your relationship with Him. He actually makes you one of His own children: *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* (John 1:12).

Will you repent of your sins?

Repent

The word “repent” means “to be sorry enough to change direction or to go the opposite way.” God wants you to change your desires from pleasing yourself to pleasing Him. You should see your sin as something that grieves God, and let go of it. Like faith, repentance requires 100% devotion to Jesus and 100% rejection of the sin in your life.

Repentance does not mean that you will never commit another sin again. However, it does mean that you will have a new attitude in your heart, one that hates doing wrong. Just as sin grieves God, it should grieve you also. The Bible says that God is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus’ message as He preached to the people of His day was: “*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matthew 4:17).

Act Now

Do you believe that you are a sinner?

Do you believe that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sins when He died on the cross?

Are you willing to repent of your self-serving lifestyle and follow God's will for your life?

If you answered yes to all three of these questions, simply bow your head and pray. The Bible says, "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Tell God in your own words that you are sorry for your sins. Ask Him to forgive you and give you a new relationship with Him. Tell Him that you want His Son Jesus to be the Savior and Lord of your life. Let God know you want to have spiritual life given to you so that you can live with Him in heaven for all eternity after you die. And as you pray, claim this promise, that Jesus Christ will never turn anyone away... "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Romans 10:13).

He changed my life *forever*

Please let us know about your decision. We would like to help you learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

- I am already a Christian, saved by the grace of God!
- I read this booklet and by faith asked Jesus to be my Lord and Savior.
- I have not yet trusted Jesus as Savior but would like to learn more about Him and the gospel message.
- Please send me a free New Testament.
- Please send additional Bible study material.

Comments or special requests:

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____