

The Gospel: God’s Plan of Redemption

Why Jesus Christ Is the Only Way Back to God

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." — John 3:16

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1. God’s Original Design

Genesis 1:27, 31

When God created man, he was made perfect, without sin, and in right standing before God — in full, unbroken fellowship with his Maker. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). And when God surveyed all that he had made, including man, "it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

That was God’s original intention for humankind: not distance, not shame, not fear, but close, walking fellowship with him — the kind pictured in Genesis 3:8, where God walked in the garden "in the cool of the day." There was no sin, no death, and no separation. Man was right with God simply because man had done nothing wrong.

2. Why Did God Allow the Fall?

Romans 8:18–21; Revelation 21:3–4

If that was God’s design, why did he allow the serpent to tempt Adam and Eve at all? Scripture does not give us a single verse that answers this directly, but it does show us the pattern: contrast reveals value. Just as a person cannot fully appreciate light without having known darkness, humanity could not fully treasure and marvel at fellowship with God without first knowing what it costs to lose it.

God permitted the temptation, and man chose to disobey, and so sin entered the world (Genesis 3:6). That single choice ushered in separation and enmity between God and mankind — a real and painful loss. But Scripture teaches that this present age of sin and struggle is not the end of the story. Paul writes that "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18), and that creation itself waits to be delivered from its bondage to corruption (Romans 8:21). Revelation promises a day when God himself "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

In other words: the elect — those who are redeemed through Christ — will one day inhabit a new heaven and a new earth where sin and separation are gone forever. And because they will have known this present, fallen, sin-scarred world, they will treasure that eternal fellowship with a depth of gratitude and wonder that could not exist without first knowing what was lost. The fall is not the end of God’s story — it is the dark backdrop against which the glory of redemption will shine forever.

3. All Humanity Is Born in Sin

Romans 5:12; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23

When Adam sinned, he did not sin merely for himself — he sinned as the representative head of the entire human race. "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). Every human being who has ever been conceived has inherited that same sinful nature and that same guilt. David confessed, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5) — not describing one

unusually sinful birth, but the universal condition of every person born of Adam’s line.

This is why "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Nobody is born a Christian. Nobody is born neutral, waiting to decide later whether to be good or bad. Every person enters the world already alienated from God, already under sin’s dominion, already in need of rescue. This is precisely why Jesus told Nicodemus, a religious leader who was already devout and law-observant, "You must be born again" (John 3:7) — because physical birth into Adam’s line only ever produces a sinner. A second, spiritual birth is the only way into God’s family.

4. Death, Then Judgment

Hebrews 9:27; Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:10

"And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Death is the direct consequence of Adam’s sin: "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). But death is not the final word — it is followed by an appointment none of us can avoid: judgment before God. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

This judgment is not arbitrary or uncertain. It has a fixed standard, and everyone will be measured by the same standard, without exception.

5. The Law: God’s Standard of Judgment

Romans 2:12, 15; James 2:10; Galatians 2:16

What will God use to judge us — to determine who is guilty and who is innocent, so that the guilty are sent away and the innocent enter heaven? The answer is the law. "For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law" (Romans 2:12).

When God gave the law to Moses, it was written on tablets of stone. But Paul explains that even those who never received the written law still show "that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness" (Romans 2:15). This means every human being, in every nation and every generation, already carries an inner witness of God’s moral law — which is why, on the day of judgment, "every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God" (Romans 3:19). No one will be able to say, "I never knew."

And the law’s standard is not partial obedience — it is perfection. "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it" (James 2:10). One sin is enough to make a person guilty of breaking the entire law, because the law reflects the perfect, undivided holiness of God himself. This is why Paul concludes so bluntly: "by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight" (Galatians 2:16, echoing Romans 3:20). No one — not the most disciplined, most religious, most sincere person who has ever lived — can be made right with God by keeping the law, because everyone has already broken it, and breaking it even once is enough to condemn.

6. A Perfect God Cannot Allow Sin Into Heaven

Habakkuk 1:13; Revelation 21:27

God is holy, and his holiness is not a minor detail — it is central to who he is. "You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong" (Habakkuk 1:13). Heaven, described as the very presence of God, cannot admit anything sinful or unclean: "nothing unclean will ever enter it" (Revelation 21:27). So the problem is not only that we have broken the law — it is that our sin itself makes it impossible for us, in ourselves, to stand in God's presence at all.

If the law can only condemn, and God cannot allow sin into his presence, what hope is there for anyone? The only remaining answer is forgiveness — God himself choosing to remove our guilt so completely that we can stand before him as if we had never sinned.

7. Forgiveness Requires a Perfect Sacrifice

Hebrews 9:22; Leviticus 17:11; Deuteronomy 15:21

God is willing to forgive, but Scripture is unmistakably clear about the terms: "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). God hates sin, and to forgive it he requires that a life be given in the sinner's place — "for the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life" (Leviticus 17:11).

But not just any sacrifice will do. Under the law God gave through Moses, the animal offered had to be without blemish or defect — nothing lame, blind, diseased, or imperfect was acceptable (Deuteronomy 15:21; Deuteronomy 17:1; Leviticus 22:19–21). Every one of those Old Testament sacrifices was itself a picture, an illustration pointing forward to something — or someone — far greater, because the blood of bulls and goats could never actually take away sin (Hebrews 10:4). They could only cover sin temporarily, pointing ahead to the one sacrifice that could take it away permanently.

8. Jesus Christ: The Only Qualified Substitute

Acts 13:38–39; Hebrews 10:5–10

This is where the person of Jesus Christ becomes essential, because he alone meets the requirement of a perfect, unblemished sacrifice — for two specific reasons.

First, he was never born in Adam. Every other human being descends from Adam through natural conception and inherits Adam's sin nature at the moment of conception (Psalm 51:5). Jesus did not. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God" (Luke 1:35; see also Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18–23). Because he entered the world outside the normal line of Adam's fallen descent, he escaped the inherited guilt and corruption that every other person is born with. Paul calls him the "last Adam" — a new representative head of a new humanity, entirely unlike the first (1 Corinthians 15:45–47).

Second, he never sinned — not once, in thought, word, or deed, throughout his entire life. "For our sake

he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). "In him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5). He was "holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26), and he could look his accusers in the eye and ask, "Which one of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46) — and none could answer.

Because he was born without Adam's inherited guilt, and because he lived a life of perfect obedience, Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice in all of human history who was truly "without blemish" — the only one who qualifies as the substitute God's justice requires. "Let it be known to you, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38–39).

This was not a last-minute solution. It was God's plan from the beginning, and every sacrifice, every priest, every altar in the Old Testament was pointing toward it. "Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me... Then I said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God"'... And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:5–10). He is not merely a good sacrifice — he is the sacrifice God himself desired, designed, and provided. He is the promised Messiah, the fulfillment of every Old Testament shadow and prophecy: the seed who would crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15), the suffering servant who would be "pierced for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5), the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

9. Our Sin, Laid on Him

Isaiah 53:4–6; Romans 3:24–26; 1 Peter 2:24

On the cross, Jesus did not die for his own sin — he had none. He died bearing ours. "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned — every one — to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:4–6).

That is the exchange at the center of the gospel: our sin was charged to him, and his righteousness is credited to us. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). We are "justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Romans 3:24–25). "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8) — not after we cleaned ourselves up, not because we earned it, but while we were still enemies of God.

10. Forgiven, Justified, and Born Again

John 3:3–7; Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 10:9–10

If I say, "I am a sinner," then I need Jesus Christ for my sins to be forgiven. Once I am forgiven through faith in him, I am counted innocent before God — not because my record has been erased and left blank, but because Christ's own righteousness has been credited to my account. That is what it means to be

"justified": declared righteous, right with God, on the basis of what Christ has done, not what I have done.

This forgiveness is received the moment a person is born again — not by human effort or good works, but by God's grace through faith. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8–9). Jesus said plainly, "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5). This new birth is a spiritual re-creation — "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is received simply by faith: "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

11. The Assurance of Heaven

1 John 5:11–13; John 5:24; Romans 8:1

This is the faith a Christian should have: not a hope based on how good a person I am, or how many good deeds I have done, but a settled confidence that when I die, I will go to heaven — because all of my sins have already been forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ, given in my place.

"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:11–13, emphasis on know — not hope, not guess, but know). Jesus himself said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). And for everyone who is in Christ: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

A Christian, then, is simply this: someone whose sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ, and who is therefore sure of heaven — not because of personal merit, but because of the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice of the sinless Son of God, given in the sinner's place.

12. What Must I Do?

Romans 10:9–10; Acts 16:31; John 1:12

If you have never trusted Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, Scripture makes the way plain and simple. It is not a matter of trying harder to be good, or hoping your good deeds outweigh your bad. It is a matter of turning from trusting in yourself and placing your trust entirely in Jesus Christ and what he has already done on your behalf.

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved" (Romans 10:9–10). When a jailer in Philippi asked Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was immediate and simple: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

If you believe you are a sinner, that you cannot save yourself by your own efforts, and that Jesus Christ died in your place and rose again — you can turn to him right now in prayer, confess your sin, and place your trust in him alone for your salvation. He is faithful to receive you: "whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37).

If, as you have read or listened to this, God has stirred your heart to trust in Jesus Christ for the first time, or to return to him, we would love to hear from you and walk with you. Please reach out to us through our Contact page — we would count it a joy to pray with you and welcome you into the family of God.