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***And we have seen and testify that the
Father has sent His Son to be
the Saviour of the world
1 John 4 v 14***

Life

What's it all about?

QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE

We are all travellers on our own individual journey through life. There are times when we have choices and decisions to make and we plan ahead the best way we can. From time to time there are issues such as education, health care, employment, marriage, housing, investment, retirement planning and so on which all need our careful consideration. Our journey may be uneventful for a time, then, something unexpected can happen to change our course.

In life there are many questions and uncertainties – some minor, some important, others critical. Even now you may be facing one – about health, finance, business, family or the future.

At different times in our lives we may find ourselves asking questions about life itself such as – what is life really all about? Is there life after death? Is God really there?

Finding answer to these questions is very important for us all. Good health, financial stability, a happy family and a hopeful future benefit all of us. However, these

are only temporal, whereas issues about life itself and God are eternal.

WHO IS GOD AND WHAT IS HE LIKE?

To believe that God exists is one thing, and we can all know something about Him through the world around us and the universe beyond. The Bible says of Him ... ***The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Psalm 19 verse 1.***

However, it is possible for every one of us to know Him more than this. God is actually a person and not just a power or an influence. He thinks, feels and acts in ways that show us He is a real, personal, living being. ***But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. Psalm 86 verse 15.***

God's main means of speaking to us is through His written Word, the Bible, which was written by the hands of men who were directed by God Himself as they wrote. The Bible is God's account, past, present and future of:

- His creation of the world, the universe, mankind and all living creatures and plant life in perfect harmony with Himself.
- Man's rebellion against God which introduced sin into the world and broke down the perfect relationship that God had with him.

- His plan to restore man's relationship with Himself by rescuing him from the consequences of sin if he will accept and follow God's way.
- His plan for the end of the world as we know it and for eternity.

WHERE DO I FIT IN?

The pressures and problems of modern day living can often cause us to ask, "Does my life have any real meaning or purpose"?

The first thing to understand is that our lives, each one of us, are all part of God's greater plan and purpose for the earth and mankind as a whole. Man is not a highly developed animal as some have suggested, but was specially created by God and given a unique place in His order of things. ***So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female, He created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground'. Genesis 1 verse 31.***

At that time in history they were perfect people living in a perfect world, in perfect relationship with each other and with God.

As you know this is far from the world we see around us today. So what went wrong?

WHAT WENT WRONG?

God made Adam and Eve with attitudes, emotions and a free will of their own, just like you and me. They had complete freedom and the only limitation God placed on them was that they should not eat the fruit of one particular tree in the garden. ***And the Lord commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'*** ***Genesis 2 verses 16, 17.***

However, Satan tempted them and they both ate the fruit. This simple act of disobedience, which God calls sin, broke down their perfect relationship with Him. ***When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Genesis 3 verse 6.***

Because they chose to disobey God their previously perfect nature had now become sinful. From that time onwards every person who has ever been born has inherited that same sinful nature and resulting broken relationship with God.

This has caused us all to make our own way in life, entirely independent from God. This combination of sinful nature and independence from God is the cause of all the problems we see around us in the world today. ***For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3 verse 23.***

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

As we have seen, sin separates us all from God, and this has serious consequences. Every person whose sin still separates them from God when they die, will, when this world as we know it comes to an end, be called to stand before God.

This is known as God's 'Great White Throne Judgement', and it will be a time when each person will have to give an account of his or her whole life to God. *... For we will all stand before God's judgement seat. It is written, 'As surely as I live' says the Lord, 'Every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will confess to God'. So then each one of us will give an account of Himself to God. Romans 14 verses 10-12.*

Because their sin continued to separate them from God right up till the end of their lives they will be sent by God to eternal torment. *He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power. 2 Thessalonians 1 verses 8, 9.*

As we have all been born sinful and separated from God, then it must mean that we will all end up in eternal torment, unless of course God has provided a way for us to escape from these dreadful consequences. Thankfully He has.

THE GOOD NEWS

Because God is neither unjust nor unloving, He has provided one way for us to escape the consequences of our sin. If we follow His plan we will have our sins forgiven and instead of spending eternity in torment, we will be able to spend it with God Himself in eternal happiness.

So what is this way that God has provided? Let me explain. God Himself has determined that the consequences of sin can only be cancelled out by means of a sacrifice that involves the shedding of blood. ... ***without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9 verse 22.***

Originally animals (usually lambs) were sacrificed and each one had to be perfect. Because the people were constantly sinning then this sacrifice had to be repeated year after year. However, the people's attitude and behaviour remained unchanged as it was not in their power to overcome it.

Because God is loving and merciful He wanted to change the people's hearts in regard to sin. So, two thousand years ago, He sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, into our world for the purpose of dealing with sin and its consequences by becoming a final, once-and-for-all-time sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. ... ***but now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Hebrews 9 verse 26.***

You probably already know something about this, but in any event, I will set out the details briefly. Jesus was arrested by the Roman soldiers, taken through a mock trial, condemned and crucified. He died upon the cross, and in doing so He took upon Himself all the consequences of the sins of the whole world. His body was buried in a tomb but miraculously, three days later, God raised Him back to life again.

Because Jesus never sinned in any way at all, He was perfect, just like the lambs that were sacrificed before Him, and the Bible calls Him ... *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John 1 verse 29.*

This was God's plan for dealing with the consequences of all the sin of mankind and for restoring man's broken relationship with Himself.

WE MUST RESPOND

However, not one of us can just take for granted that Jesus' sacrifice has dealt with the consequences of our own sins. There is a personal response that God asks each one of us to make and it is only by making this response that our sins are forgiven and our relationship with God restored.

Only the sincere heartfelt response that God asks for will release us from being condemned to eternal torment and separation from God at His judgement. This response assures us of what the Bible calls our 'free

gift of salvation'. It is free because there is nothing at all we can do on our own to earn it. *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no-one can boast. Ephesians 2 verses 8, 9.*

It is only by putting an end to living our own way independently from God, putting our lives into His hands and believing by faith what Jesus has done for us, that our sins are forgiven. This is the way God has provided for mankind to receive His free gift of salvation and live with Him for eternity.

Our response to God must be made in this life. God does not hold us responsible for being born with a sinful nature, but if we ignore or reject what He has done to deliver us from that sinful nature and its consequences, we will remain in danger of eternal torment until we come to Him in repentance and faith. *Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. John 3 verse 18.*

THE RESPONSE GOD ASKS FOR

- I must acknowledge that I am a sinner and have lived my life entirely my own way without God. *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 2 verse 23.*
- I must turn away from all known sin in my life and

from living my own way independently from God.
Repent then and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out. Acts 3 verse 19.

- I must believe that Jesus is the Son of God and trust by faith what the Bible says He did on my behalf. ... *that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15 verses 3, 4.*
- I must receive Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. In doing this I will become a child of God. *Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. John 1 verse 12.*
- I must tell others what I believe and have done. *If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10 verses 9, 10.*
- I must be baptised. *Repent and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit* Acts 2 verse 38.*

*This is God's Holy Spirit who He promises to everyone who repents of his sins, to enable him to live his life God's way.

This is the response God asks us to make – now. Every one of us who responds to God in this way will receive His free gift of salvation.

If you wish to make your own personal response to God you will find a model prayer which you can follow later in this booklet on page 14.

A NEW LIFE

When we make this response God asks for, in faith and sincerity, we have the assurance that all our sins have been forgiven. We will begin to enjoy a new life here and now with God at the centre of everything. This will be for the rest of our lives on this earth and then for eternity. We will receive this new life from God now and also strength from His Holy Spirit to help us to live as He wants us to. ***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ He is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come.***
2 Corinthians 5 verse 17.

We will go on to find that we enjoy meeting with other Christians to worship God and get to know Him. We will begin to find out about praying (talking to God), reading the Bible and living our lives by what it says. As our life changes, we will begin to find we no longer want to do some of the things we used to do. We will discover our tastes, lifestyle and outlook all begin to change too as we find and follow God's plan and purpose for our life.

Responding to God is the turning point in our life –

turning from being our own master in all things, from trusting in our own abilities and ingenuity, and from relying on fragile and uncertain worldly resources. We will begin to trust God and allow Him to lead and guide us more and more. His plan for our lives will begin to unfold. *Trust in the Lord will all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3 verses 5, 6.*

GOD'S LOVE

We will begin to understand and experience the love of God and to find real peace which comes from the assurance that our life and future are now safe in His hands. Jesus says ... *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11 verses 28, 29.*

TAKE CARE

You may already attend a church and have experienced child baptism and/or confirmation. You may already pray and read your Bible. You may do good deeds and lead an honest life. If so, that is really good. However, the Bible clearly shows us that this is not the way God has provided for us to have our sins forgiven, to receive His free gift of salvation, to have our relationship with Him restored and to spend eternity with Him.

Once we have obeyed God by responding to Him as He wants us to, then some of these activities will become a natural part of our everyday life. However, on their own they have no part in securing our salvation, which is entirely a free gift from God. ***For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and it is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2 verses 8, 9.***

You may believe you are not good enough or worthy to receive God's free gift of salvation. You may feel you need to try to better yourself in some way before being able to receive His free gift. Please understand that Jesus came to save you from the consequences of your sins no matter what kind of life you have led or what condition you believe yourself to be in. Don't wait till you feel good enough to come to Jesus – come as you are. He came to seek sinners, not those who already believe they are good enough. Jesus says ... ***For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Matthew 9 verse 13.***

TIME IS SHORT

The Bible tells us what the world will be like as it draws to a close. ***But mark this. There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure***

rather than lovers of God. 2 Timothy 3 verses 1-4.

As we look at the world around us it is not difficult to see this Biblical prophecy coming true. God has revealed it to us for a purpose so we cannot afford to ignore the facts. Time is passing quickly, so please consider your own situation and future whilst there is still time. Please do not ignore or reject God's free gift of salvation. *I tell you now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6 verse 2.*

AT THE END

When the end of the world as we know it comes, every person, both past and present, who has accepted God's free gift of salvation and whose relationship with Him has been restored, will enter into eternity to live with God Himself forever. *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling place of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. Revelation 21 verses 3, 4.*

Everyone who has ignored or rejected God's free gift of salvation will have to appear before Him at His 'Great White Throne Judgement'. God has a book called 'The Book of Life' and in it are all the names of those who accepted His free gift of salvation and have had their relationship with Him restored. At that judgement He

will condemn every person whose name is not in the book to everlasting torment. *If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20 verse 15, and He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and the majesty of His power. 2 Thessalonians 1 verses 8, 9.*

IN CONCLUSION

By now you will appreciate that what you have just read is of great importance to you. Who knows when his life will end, leaving no further opportunity to respond to God and receive His free gift of salvation. Please don't delay, your eternal future depends on it.

Here is a short personal prayer you can follow as you make your own personal response to God. This prayer, said in faith from a sincere heart, will be heard and accepted by God.

MY PERSONAL PRAYER

Dear God, I believe in my heart that you are calling me to become Your child.

I know I am a sinner and have lived my life independently of you and gone my own way.

I now turn away from all the sin in my life and from living independently of you, and ask you to forgive me.

I believe that Jesus is Your Son and that He sacrificed His life on the cross for my sins, that He was buried and that He rose from the dead after 3 days.

I now commit my life unreservedly into Your hands and make Jesus Lord of my life.

Amen

If you prayed this prayer to God in sincerity, from your heart, you can be certain that you are now a child of God, part of His family and part of His church. You may not feel any different right now, but, emotions aside, you can trust God's Word which says ... ***For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3 verse 16., and I tell you the truth, whoever hears my Word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. John 5 verse 24.***

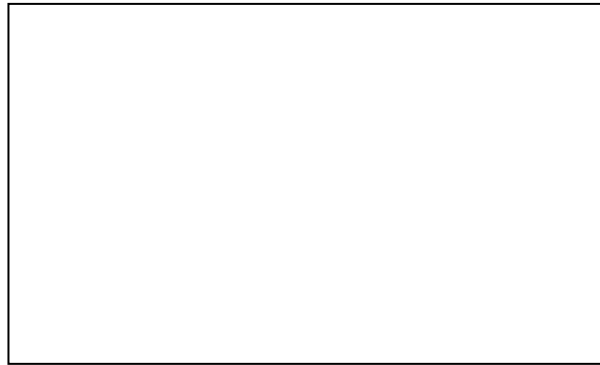
NOW WHAT?

A warm welcome awaits you in your new family now that you have become a Christian, a child of God. It will be really good for you to tell your friends and family. As soon as possible you should become part of a church where you can worship God, get to know Him and enjoy good fellowship with other Christians. You will also need to be baptised so take this further step and begin to experience life as God intended.

PLEASE NOW SEE OVER THE PAGE.

The person who gave you this booklet will be able to help you find a church where you feel at home and they will also be able to answer any questions you might have.

For further help please contact



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