

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. **Everything was perfect.** (Genesis 1:1)

God created us because He wanted to have a special relationship with us. He also created this beautiful world for us with air to breathe, food to eat, water to drink and many other things we take for granted. Everything was perfect, and God wanted it to stay that way.

2. **So what happened?** (Romans 5:12)

Even though God warned the first man and woman that sin would cause death, they still sinned. Sin not only separated them from God, it passed down to every other human being; and everyone continued to sin. All of the problems we face today—including sickness, poverty, fear, depression, brokenness, pain and death— came as a result of sin.

3. **Why do people keep sinning?** (1 John 5:19)

There is a wicked spirit named Satan, who is also called the devil. Since the first man and woman, he has been deceiving human beings and influencing them to sin. He knows that through sin, he can control them, and cause more and more damage to their lives.

4. **What will God do to Satan for deceiving us?** (Revelation 20:10)

Because God loved us so much, He promised to judge the devil and to cast him into the lake of fire. The lake of fire was created to be a place of punishment and torment forever.

5. **What will happen to the people who are deceived by him?** (Revelation 20:14–15)

The lake of fire—for human beings—is called the second death. After you die physically, you will spend eternity in one of two places: in heaven with God, or in hell, the lake of fire. When sin separated us from God, hell became the destiny of every human being.

6. **What did God do and why?** (John 3:16) Because God loved us so much, and didn't want anyone to go to hell, He sent His only Son, Jesus, to save us. Jesus loved us so much that He willingly came and died to pay for all of our sins—past, present and future. Now, if anyone puts their trust in Jesus and what He has done for them, they no longer have to pay for their sins or be punished.

7. **Salvation is free.** (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Because Jesus died to pay for all of our sins, salvation is completely free. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation or forgiveness from God. In fact, Romans 4:4–5 says that anyone who tries to earn their salvation by being good enough will still owe their debt of sin. So if someone says, "I think I'll go to heaven because I'm a pretty good person," they are trusting in their own works instead of trusting what Jesus did. Salvation is only available by God's grace through our faith—we simply believe and receive.

8. How do we receive salvation? (Romans 10:9)

When we hear the good news about Jesus, it brings faith to our hearts. We begin to believe that God really does love us, and that Jesus came to save us. Then, if we act on our faith by confessing that Jesus is Lord, we are saved. By declaring Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are choosing to turn away from our old life of sin to follow Him. Would you like to pray to make Jesus Christ your Lord right now? If so, you may use the prayer below. There's nothing magical in the words, but if you believe it in your heart, God will hear you and welcome you into His family. If you'd like, you can repeat after me (pause after each comma and period):

"Dear God, I know I have sinned, and that my sin has separated me from You. I am truly sorry. Please forgive me and save me. I believe that Your Son, Jesus, died for my sins, and was raised from the dead, and is alive today. I receive Jesus as my Saviour and Lord. Please fill me with the Holy Spirit, and help me to obey You for the rest of my life. My life belongs to You now. In Jesus' name, Amen."

9. New life in Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Here are some of the changes you can expect to experience in your new life.

- Inner peace
- Awareness of God's love
- Desire to read the Bible
- A feeling that my life is moving in the right direction
- Awareness of sin
- Ability to overcome sin
- Concern for others

10. So what's the first thing Jesus commanded new believers to do? (Mark 16:15–16)

Jesus commanded us to baptize new believers in water. When you come to be baptized, you are publicly declaring that a change has occurred. When we lower you down (immerse you) into the water, you are saying, "My life of sin is dead; bury it!" (the water represents the ground). When we raise you up out of the water, you are saying, "I have a brand new life in Jesus Christ." And when you feel the water washing over you, remember that God wanted you to experience on the outside what happened on the inside —He washed all of your sins away.

11. So what's next? (Matthew 28:19–20)

Jesus also commanded us to disciple every new believer. Discipleship includes teaching, training and encouragement. From the earliest days of the Church, believers have met in both large and small gatherings for discipleship. Though there are many terms, we often refer to these gatherings as "going to church." Being part of a discipleship-oriented congregation is God's will for everyone. This will help you grow spiritually and become the person God created you to be. If you don't have a church home, I would like to invite you to mine.