

# About God

## 2. God's Character

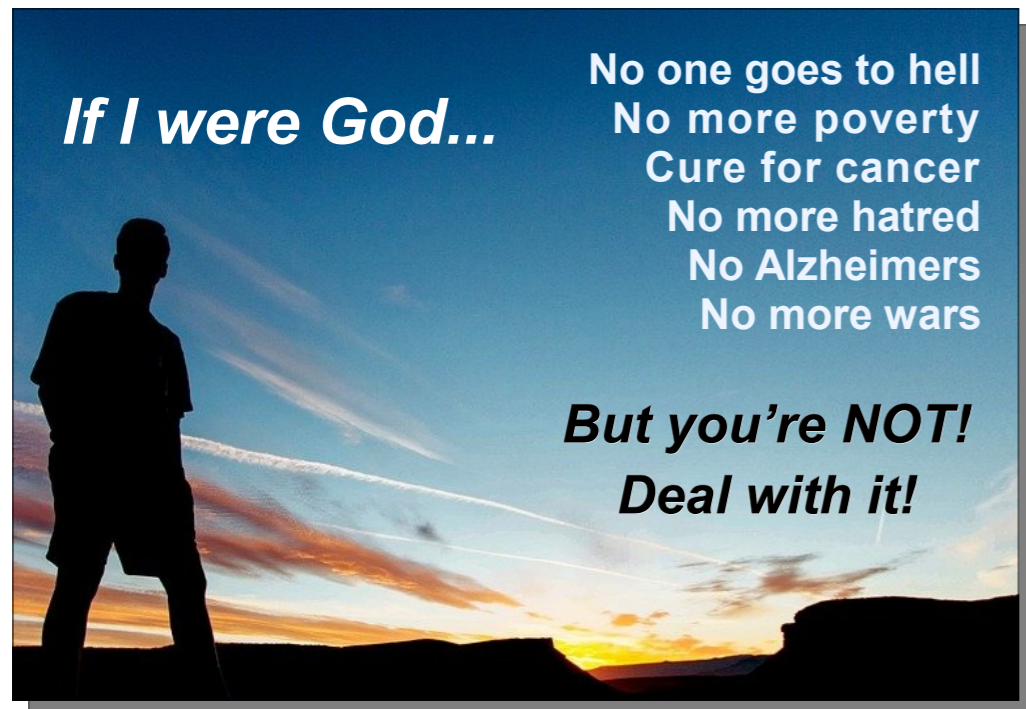
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### God is mighty and powerful - best to be on His good side as He cares for His people

All of what we call 'emotions' or 'character traits' are displayed in God in the ultimate form - perfection. Whether it be kindness, anger, love, hate, truth, justice. We always hear about God's love and mercy, but not so much about His anger and what He hates. Yet all these things are important solid truths about a creator God who we can trust and who does not change, and will care for all who come to Him.

"All we need is love" is a fanciful notion that has no place in a world full of sinful hearts, full of hate, violence and greed, and where Satan rules. So as we look at the expression of God's character here, we see all these various aspects play their role in God's dealing with mankind, and with us as individuals. We do suffer because of other peoples sin and this does affect our situation, freedom and lifestyle.

Yet in all God's 'government' of the world, He speaks to us as individuals showing us how to survive, endure, and even conquer in our life. He is our example, leader, protector, saviour. The one to be feared, yet is our loving heavenly father. Jesus is the judge, yet He is our brother. Our life in this world is a spiritual preparation for the next. It is how we live our life here that is important, not the worldly stuff.



**If I were God...**

No more poverty  
Cure for cancer  
No more hatred  
No Alzheimers  
No more wars

**But you're NOT!  
Deal with it!**

**God shows us Love**  
Even in a complicated world, we see God's perfect love reaching into the hearts of those that trust Him, giving them strength for the day & hope for the future. Jesus suffered for our sin on the cross so that we could have His righteousness to enter heaven, & He gave the Holy Spirit as a 'seal'.

**God shows us Truth**  
There is only one truth in any situation or incident. Anything else is false or a lie. God will only reveal to us truth, which He does in the Bible, & will not accept from us anything else. We must be like Him in our dealings with our neighbours.

**God shows us Holiness**  
Only God is holy & separated from all sin. His character is one of flawless moral perfection. He always does what is right & honest. He is therefore bound by His holiness & can not allow sinners into His heaven. As followers of Christ, we are commanded to be holy also.

**God shows us Wisdom**  
Wisdom is the appropriate application of knowledge. The Bible urges us often to seek wisdom above all things. Godly wisdom is different from worldly wisdom & is only found in the right application of God's instructions in the Bible. We are told to ask God for the gift of wisdom.

**I DO  
what  
I DO**

**God shows us Justice**  
Without justice there is no love. All evil & sin must be punished by a holy God, & each person must suffer the consequences for their own actions. It is a loving God that upholds the oppressed, innocent & exploited against the greedy, wicked & ruthless, to bring them to judgement.

**God shows us Kindness**  
Kindness is a part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. When we exhibit the kindness of God, we are tender, benevolent, and useful to others. We are showing Jesus to people in being kind & sometimes it needs God's power to be kind in some of life's situations.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."  
Proverbs 9:10

**God shows us Mercy**  
It is essential to understand that, before God, humans have no rights, claim or privileges to God's mercy. Mercy is given solely by the giver & is a one-off act. God's mercy was shown by sending His Son to die on the cross and pay the debt we owe because of our sin. We must show mercy to others also.

**God shows us Patience**  
God is patient with sinners, giving them time, encouragement & warning that will lead them to repentance. Patience is a part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We are to be patient and not to complain as we wait for Jesus to return, & we also need to show patience to others as God has with us.

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" 1 John 3:1  
  
Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.  
Ephesians 5:1-2

**God shows us Grace**  
Grace is the ongoing act of God who is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don't deserve it. Grace is a gift & is actively and continually working in the lives of God's people to bring them to maturity in Christ, and empower them to share the gospel.

**God shows us Anger**  
When you read the Old Testament you find that God does get angry, but He is slow to anger & gives people many warnings to change their evil ways. His is a controlled, calculated anger against persistent wickedness. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a righteous God.

**God shows us Hate**  
The LORD hates... a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren. Prov.6:6-19



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## For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:17

“Therefore by **the deeds of the law** no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed... through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith ...that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ...Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:20-28

When the Bible speaks of “**the law**,” it refers to the detailed standard God gave to Moses, beginning in Genesis with the Ten Commandments. God’s Law explained His requirements for a holy people & included three categories: Civil, Ceremonial, and Moral laws. The Law was given to separate God’s people, Israel, from the evil nations around them and to define sin.

The Law clearly demonstrated that no human being could purify himself enough to please God—i.e., the Law revealed our need for a Saviour. The sacrifice for the sin of the people had to be done every year. While the Law itself was good, it was weak in that it lacked the power to change a sinful heart.

Getting right with God has always been a heart issue. Doing ceremonial sacrifices with a rebellious heart did not impress God one bit. Much of the ceremonial law pointed to the coming of the Messiah who would be the pure lamb sacrificed to fulfil the law and redeem those enslaved under the law.

**Grace** is the ongoing act of God who is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don’t deserve it. Grace is a gift & is actively and continually working in the lives of God’s people to bring them to maturity in Christ, and empower them to share the gospel.

There is no conflict between grace and the Law, properly understood. Christ fulfilled the Law on our behalf. Once we are saved, God desires to glorify Himself through our good works. Therefore, good works *follow* salvation; they do not precede it. Grace is an essential part of God’s character. Grace is closely related to God’s benevolence, love, and mercy.

Grace can be defined as “God’s favour toward the unworthy”. In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don’t deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously. Grace does not stop once we are saved; God is gracious to us for the rest of our lives, working within and upon us. The Bible encourages us with many additional benefits that grace secures for every believer.



## Old Testament - Old Covenant - The Law

**Moral Law** – this is law which reflects God’s character and His design of this world. Examples of this law would include but are not limited to commands regarding murder, children honouring and obeying their parents, adultery, covetousness and theft.

**Ceremonial Law** – this was a brand new set of laws that God gave to Moses that were specifically for the nation of Israel as a theocracy. These laws dealt with the qualifications for priests, requirements for how and when to perform sacrifices, cleanliness laws, dietary laws, festival laws and tithing laws.

**Civil (Judicial) Law** – All nations must have civil laws to help deal with disputes between their citizens as well as to enforce the morals of the people. A great deal of the civil laws for Israel did in fact deal with how to punish or make restitution for violation of God’s moral laws. So, when we examine the Old Testament to search for the moral law of God, we must look for moral laws that stand alone as well as civil laws which prescribe punishment and restitution for breaking God’s moral laws.

## New Testament - New Covenant - Grace

Grace is a gift  
 Grace is what saves us  
 Grace is the essence of the gospel  
 Grace gives us victory over sin  
 Grace gives us freedom

Grace is God extending His favour to us  
 Grace justifies us before a holy God  
 Grace grants us immeasurable spiritual riches  
 Grace helps us in our every need  
 Grace gives us encouragement & hope

Grace provides us access to God to communicate and fellowship  
 Grace wins for us a new relationship of intimacy with God  
 Grace disciplines and trains us to live in a way that honours God  
 Grace is the reason behind our every deliverance  
 Grace preserves us, comforts, encourages, and strengthens us

# Prophecy

## 2. Great Tribulation

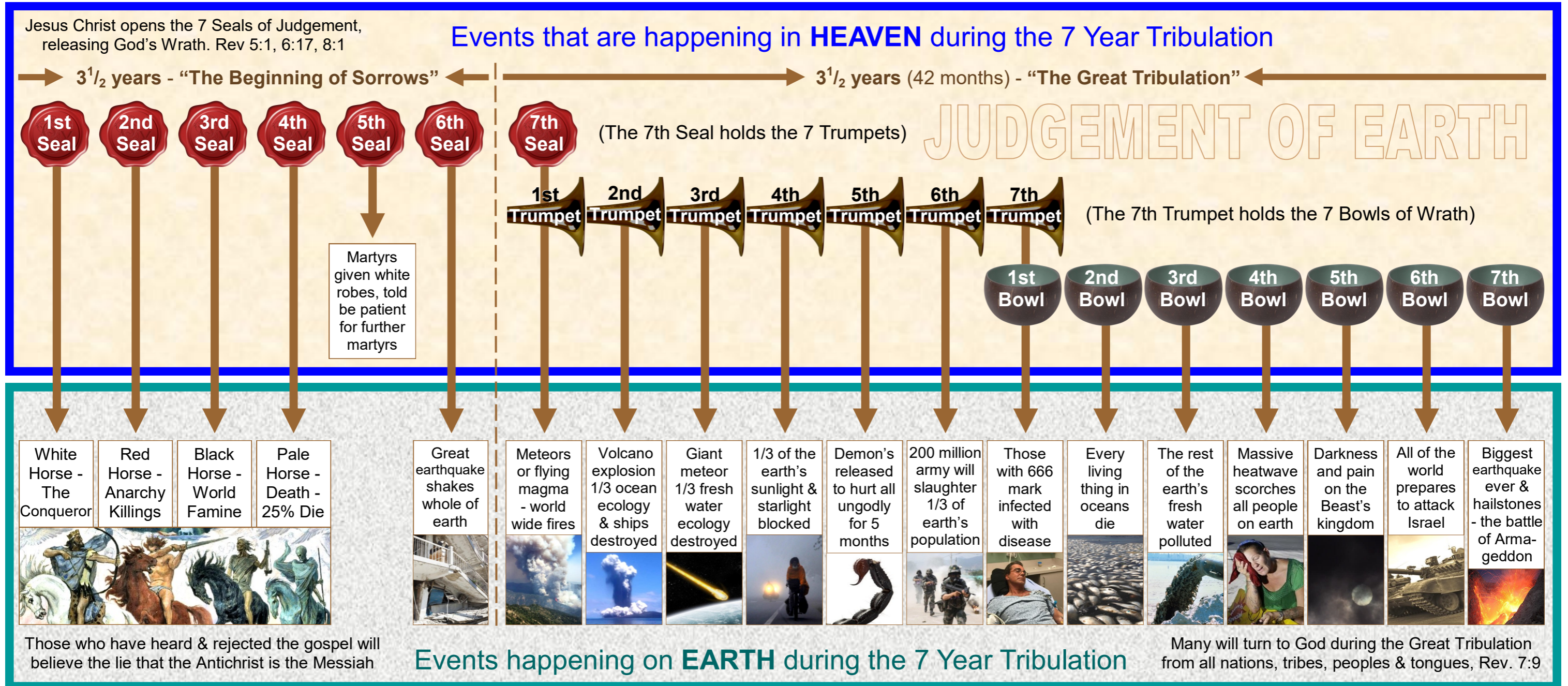
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### Seven year transition from the Church Age to the Kingdom Age

As we look at the 7 year Tribulation we need to understand:

- God is not going to 'ZAP' to make these things happen. Most of the events are the result of human's pollution or treatment of the earth's eco system, and their corrupt treatment of each other in greed, exploitation and wars.
- As the events unfold, you can see the environment getting worse and causing the next calamity to happen (i.e. volcanos & fire - sky goes dark - famine).
- We can also see that God has been "holding back" events like earthquakes, volcanos, tsunamis, meteor strikes, so that more people may come to Jesus to be saved before tribulation starts, from this overdue judgement of earth .

**Before** the Tribulation, Jesus comes in the air & calls up the Holy Spirit & His Bride, the Church, off the earth to heaven (the Rapture of the Living Saints & resurrection of the Dead in Christ). **After** the Tribulation, Jesus returns to earth (2nd coming) to reign in peace for 1,000 years (the Millennium).



It is estimated that at the beginning of the Tribulation the world population in year 2026 will be **8.25 Billion**<sup>^</sup>

<sup>^</sup> Sourced from PopulationPyramid.net

Guestimate of people left after Great Tribulation:

Start of Tribulation -	8,259,276,651 alive
People Raptured -	10% - 825,927,665 - 7,433,348,986 alive
4th Seal -	25% die - 1,858,337,246 die - 5,575,011,740 alive
Trumpet Judgements -	33% die - 1,839,753,874 die - 3,735,257,866 alive
Die in anarchy, etc. -	10% die - 373,525,786 die - 3,361,732,080 alive

**Over 4-5? BILLION\* people will die in 7 years**

Please see chart #006 Dispensations 1 for reason selecting these dates for the Tribulation.

It is estimated that at the end of the Great Tribulation the world population in year 2033 will be **3.4 Billion?**<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Conservative number.

# Topical Issues

## 1. Santa the Imposter

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### Parents/adults - how long before you stop lying to children about the mythical Santa Claus?

“...whoever causes one of these little ones (children) who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matt.18:6

As Christians (and we're especially talking to Christian parents), how might having your child or children believe in Santa Claus and his flying reindeer **damage their future view of God?** Have you thought about how teaching your children to believe in a seemingly all-knowing, very powerful, loving, giving, but soon-to-be-discovered **imaginary person** is going to shape their view of God? There may be unintended consequences that can arise from teaching children to believe in an imaginary man who wears a fluffy red and white bathrobe, has flying reindeer and a sleigh, lives in the North Pole, and delivers billions of presents to children all over the world in one night, as harmless as it may sound.

**People go out of their way to effectively deceive their kids into believing that Santa is real** by secretly wrapping presents, eating loads of cookies and milk, writing fake and elaborately decorated letters for/from Santa. **Truthfully, this may be a hindrance to your child's view of God when they grow up**, and here's why...

Children are told that they cannot see Santa (except at his special mall appearance, of course), so they naturally rely on the testimony of adults for their belief, after all, **they're supposed to trust adults, especially their parents.** For all they know, Santa *is* a real person, they just can't prove it. As if that weren't enough, children are also told that Santa possesses some powerful attributes that they can't see.

For example, he is said to be all-knowing ("he sees you when you're sleeping; he knows when you're awake"); and he has great powers (he can fly with his reindeer, squeeze through chimneys and deliver billions of presents in one night). To kids, this Santa guy sounds pretty spectacular! In fact, he kind of sounds like God in a twisted sort of way. Do you see the problem here?



As children grow up, they eventually realize that Santa Claus is not a real person. They learn that their parents, friends, teachers, and members of society **have fabricated an elaborate scheme to deceive them** about jolly old Saint Nick. Their whole world falls apart. Well, perhaps we're exaggerating, but it *is* a rather sad day for many children when they come to this realization, that **my Christian Parents have been LYING to me all these years.** Some *do* become angry and resentful for a time, depending on their personality, even though they know their parents meant no harm.

**But children may have a hard time believing anything their parents say about anyone or anything in the future...** including the Creator God, the Bible, and Jesus, since they can't see Him either. Don't let Santa entice you into evil this Christmas season. Stand for the truth. Ask Jesus to help you get through this season by focusing your family on Him. (Text based on [www.truthinformed.com/the-christian-and-santa-claus/](http://www.truthinformed.com/the-christian-and-santa-claus/))



# What's the problem?



Believers and churches celebrating the worldly Christmas and Santa, is like Israel saying they are following God, but also celebrating the festivals of false gods and having pagan idols in their home, provoking the Almighty God to anger, as He is a jealous God of His people.





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**DON'T FOOL YOURSELF**  
Real faith is a heart for God

**Eternal salvation is SEALED from day one:**

- 1. Adopted by God** - "...the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Eph.1:3-5
- 2. Guaranteed with the Holy Spirit** - "In Him you also trusted... having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption." Eph.1:13-14
- 3. Born again** - "...since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit... having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever." 1 Peter 1:22-23
- 4. God knows our heart** - "...the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: **'The Lord knows those who are His.'**" 2 Tim. 2:19



You did not earn salvation, it is God's gift to you. God did the work, not you. There were no 'works' you could have done to earn it. Therefore, once you accept that gift through belief, trust & repentance, there is nothing you can do to stop God from completing your salvation in taking you to glory with Him. If you say there are things we might do to cause us to lose our salvation, then you are saying that it is by 'works' that we have it, which goes against the whole New Testament teachings of MERCY & GRACE.

**Once you are born of God and become His child, you can not then become 'un-born' - you are always a part of His family, no matter what!**

But how is it we see people who have been in the church for ages, who have been Bible teachers, preachers, prayed beautiful prayers, leading people to Christ - then reject the whole Christian scene and become atheists or start to follow some worldly religion?

**The issue is not losing your salvation, but NEVER having had it in the first place.**

We are very good at deceiving ourselves, thinking we are doing something for the right reason, but then later discovering it was never really in our heart, just our head, and only emotions driving us. If a person's belief and commitment to Jesus is not from the heart, and does not involve true repentance of their sin, then using all the right words and acting the part of a true believer will not give them eternal salvation at all. We are just fooling ourselves. And, sadly, we do it very well at times. Time to get real!

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* Matt.7:21-23

**When people come to know Christ** as their Saviour, they are brought into a relationship with God that guarantees their eternal security. Jude 24 declares, "To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy." God's power is able to keep the believer from falling. It is up to Him, God, not us, to present us before His glorious presence. Our eternal security is a result of God keeping us, not us maintaining our own salvation.

**The Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed**, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28-29b). Both Jesus and the Father have us firmly grasped in their hand. Who could possibly separate us from the grip of both the Father and the Son?

**Ephesians 4:30 tells us** that believers are "sealed for the day of redemption." If believers did not have eternal security, the sealing could not truly be unto the day of redemption, but only to the day of sinning, apostasy, or disbelief. John 3:15-16 tells us that whoever believes in Jesus Christ will "have eternal life." If a person were to be promised eternal life, but then have it taken away, it was never "eternal" to begin with. If eternal security is not true, the promises of eternal life in the Bible would be in error.

**The most powerful argument** for eternal security is Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation**, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Our eternal security is based on God's love for those whom He has redeemed. Our eternal security is purchased by Christ, promised by the Father, and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

( Text based on [www.gotquestions.org/eternal-security.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/eternal-security.html) )



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**Paul's missionary journeys** helped spread the gospel throughout much of the ancient world. Over the course of his ministry, the Apostle Paul travelled more than 16,000 kilometres (10,000 miles) and established at least 14 churches. The Book of Acts records three separate missionary journeys that took Paul through Greece, Turkey, Syria, and numerous regions you won't find on modern-day maps. Some scholars argue that Paul also took a fourth missionary journey, since parts of the New Testament appear to reference travels that may have taken place after the events in Acts. Paul's travels played a crucial role in the formation and development of the early Christian church.

## You could sum up Paul's life by saying, "He's on a Mission from God!"

Before Jesus spoke to Saul (a name also used for Paul) **he was zealous for God**, actively defending the old testament teachings that he grew up with and studied, and was out there breathing threats and murder against these new Jesus followers, thinking he was doing the right thing.

Then Jesus spoke to him while on the road to Damascus, putting him on the right path. Jesus the Messiah! Whoa! Then he understood what the Prophets & Law were pointing to - Jesus, the Lamb of God given to take away sin of the world. The Messiah has come.

### *It all just fitted into place - Jesus is the Christ!*

**His enthusiasm for God now had a new direction.** After some days with the believers at Damascus, he immediately preached Christ in the synagogues. *"Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ."* Acts 9:22.

The Lord said about Saul (Paul), *"...he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."* Acts 9:15-16.

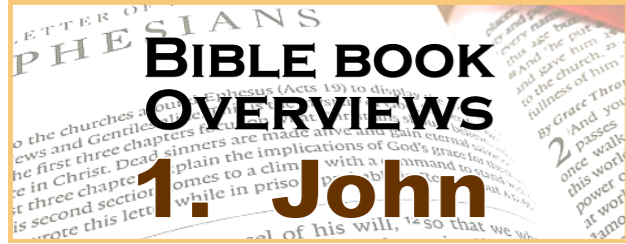
We might think at times that Paul enjoyed travelling the region and writing letters to various churches and friends. But reading through the book of Acts and the letters he wrote, you quickly understand the personal hardship he endured in sharing the good news. God used Paul, along with many others, to spread the gospel message throughout the northern Mediterranean region, from Antioch to Rome, which then spread out into the rest of the world.

Paul was finally executed in Rome for sharing the message of Jesus. Paul wrote, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."* Gal 2:20. He was **one tough missionary for Jesus!** A humble man with his eye on the prize.

"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God ...to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."  
2 Timothy 1: 8, 11-12

**There is no one in the Bible, apart from Christ, who lived a life of boldness & humility, gratitude & thankfulness, love & concern more than Paul the Apostle.** This is more significant considering the terrible trials and sufferings he went through. Here is a list that still falls short of all he suffered. It comes from 2 Corinthians 11:23-33:

- in labours more abundant
- in stripes above measure
- in prisons more frequently
- faced death often
- from the Jews 5 times forty stripes minus 1
- three times beaten with rods
- once stoned
- three times shipwrecked
- a night and a day in the deep sea
- in journeys often
- in perils of waters & the sea
- in perils of robbers
- in perils of his own countrymen & the Gentiles
- in perils in the city & in the wilderness
- in perils among false brethren
- in weariness and toil
- in sleeplessness often
- in hunger and thirst
- in often fasting
- in cold and nakedness
- a daily deep concern for all the churches
- a thorn in the flesh
- abandoned by all his friends while imprisoned
- despaired even of life



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## Reasons to believe in Jesus



# Amazing statements in 'John'

The Gospel according to John is the fourth of the four accounts written by Jesus' closest disciples. It contains a highly schematic account of the ministry of Jesus, with seven "signs" culminating in the raising of Lazarus, and seven "I am" discourses culminating in Thomas' proclamation of the risen Jesus as *"my Lord and my God"*. John's account also contains Jesus' Farewell Discourse, in which he speaks plainly to his apostles before his crucifixion.

The book of John is the story of Jesus: **God who came down to save the world**. This book was written by a disciple whom Jesus loved—the Church traditionally attributes it to John. John is the fourth and last Gospel (an account of Jesus' life and ministry) in the New Testament. John focuses on the deity of Christ more so than the other four: we see Jesus as the Word of God, the Son of God, and God Himself. Jesus is a great miracle worker, an omniscient teacher, a compassionate provider, a faithful friend, and the one who holds the future.

John may be the final Gospel, but this narrative begins far, far earlier than the other three. John opens with the beginning of all creation: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Jesus presents Himself as God incarnate throughout the Gospel of John, often using the phrase "I Am," the memorial name of God revealed in the book of Exodus in the Old Testament.

Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God

**I am the bread of life**

No man ever spoke like this Man

*I am the light of the world*

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live

**Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you**

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me

**It is finished!**

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life

**One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see**

**The truth shall make you free**

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep

**Jesus wept** **I go to prepare a place for you**

**Behold the Man!**

Shall I crucify your King?

**What is truth?**

*What I have written, I have written*

As the Father has sent Me, I also send you

*My kingdom is not of this world*

**My Lord and my God!**

The Gospel of John makes a strong argument for Jesus as the exclusive saviour, the only truth, and the only way to know God (Jn 1:18; 14:6). Jesus is greater than the Jewish heroes Moses and Abraham (Jn 1:17; 8:58); Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, and John challenges us to believe in Him. The gospel's concluding verses set out its purpose: *"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."* (Jn 20:30–31)

In addition to this Gospel, John also wrote three New Testament letters (First, Second, and Third John) and the prophetic book of Revelation. He was a leader in the early church, and he probably wrote his documents after most of the other New Testament books were already written.

The miracles recorded in John's gospel are written that the reader would believe in Jesus and find life in His name (Jn 20:30–31). Therefore, much of John's material directly states who Jesus is, not just what He does or says.

Unlike the Gospel of Luke, John does not aim to chronicle the whole life of Christ—in fact, John doesn't think the world could contain such a document (Jn 21:25). Instead, John presents a few signs and teachings of Jesus that should compel us to believe He is the Christ, Messiah, Saviour and Lord.

Text based on [www.overviewbible.com/john/](http://www.overviewbible.com/john/)



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## If you want to work for God fulltime, get busy in serving others where you are now.

If God is calling you into 'Mission', **you will already be active in serving Him** in your own church in some way. You can not steer a boat sitting in the water and not moving. It must start to move, even in the wrong direction, for it to be turned to where it should be going. In the same way, praying for God's big call in your life while doing nothing in your local area shows that 'serving' is not really in your heart. God uses the faithful servant and guides them while they are moving doing His obvious will. God does not use lazy Christians, only busy ones doing His will.



Most Christians do not get the 'big' call, and that's OK. **We have all been called to serve one another** in the church, and to be a witness in the circles of people we are a part of, i.e. in our family; at school or work; with our friends, etc. You will find **that** call throughout the New Testament. It is about having a heart for the lost and loving your brothers and sisters in Christ, and then doing something about it. Even the little things, a cup of water in Jesus name, counts big with God. **Support Missions if you can't go.**

A Christian missionary is **commissioned by the Lord to make disciples, followers of Christ**. Jesus commands all Christians to share the Gospel, the message of His death and resurrection that conquered the penalty and power of sin. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:19-20). There is great joy and excitement in doing what God has asked you to do, in pleasing Him.

Although missionaries cannot be stereotyped, **they each have a call**. God calls them to set aside personal ambitions in order to be witnesses of the Gospel. Like Isaiah, a missionary gladly responds, *"Here am I. Send me!"*. Often God sends a missionary to a particular people group as Paul was sent to the unreached Gentiles and Peter to the Jews. Although technically a **Christian missionary is one specifically called by God and sent out by the local church**, yet every Christian has a mission to make disciples and be a servant where they are, regardless.

Missionaries do more than evangelism. The commission was to **make disciples**, not immature believers. Thus, a Christian missionary's outreach involves evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. These main goals are accomplished in a variety of ways: street preaching, tract hand-outs, church building, Bible studies, teaching English as a second language, relief projects, children's clubs, literacy teaching, radio broadcasting, etc.

Jesus tells us that missionaries will face opposition and suffering. Missionaries leave friends behind, experience culture shock and rejection. But instead of falling into self-pity or pride, they learn to delight in serving God. Rather than it being a burden, obeying His call brings joy and reward in heaven. Therefore, **a missionary serves not out of duty but love.**

### ***Will you be a Christian missionary?***

A Christian missionary is an ambassador of Christ. Each one must be yielded to the Lord, loving Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. Specifically, a missionary is one whom God sends through the support of the Church to the unreached. All Christians, however, are called to be missionaries of the Gospel. The Lord works through them to rescue the lost and make them disciples. What greater call can one answer, than to be called by Jesus to serve Him?

Text based on [www.gotquestions.org/Christian-missionary.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-missionary.html)

**Who is a Christian missionary?** Many people picture a missionary as perhaps a middle-aged man who leaves his job to evangelize and plant churches in Africa. But that is a simplistic view. Today, African Christians reach out to Muslims in the Middle East. College students spend their summer teaching English in Asia. A family befriends and witnesses to international students. A truck driver responds to an international disaster, meeting both physical and spiritual needs. All these are missionaries. It is their aims that make them missionaries for Jesus.

**What does a Christian missionary do?** The apostle Paul was a tentmaker by trade, and he relied on that trade to support himself on occasions while he travelled doing mission work. All facets of work life are included in the 'missions' job description. Administration, accounting, gardening, mechanic, electrician, etc. are all required for an outreach to run from day to day. Then most also do things like Bible teaching, evangelism, translation of scripture, counselling and so much more to share the gospel in Jesus name to the people they are serving.

**Why does a Christian missionary go?** When a believer realises that the secular goals in their life are perhaps a little meaningless and a bit selfish compared to the spiritual poverty of those who do not know the good news in Christ, then they begin the journey that will lead them to hear a personal call from God, a mission. Seeing that this life on earth is a short time and eternal life awaits, they decide to use their talents and spiritual gifts in serving God fulltime as He guides and leads. God has promised to supply the needs of those He sends.



# Topical Issues

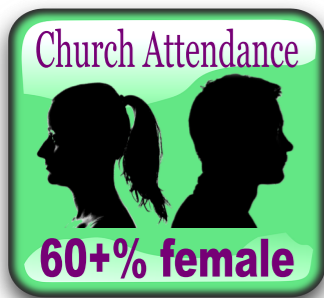
## 2. Men & Church

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**If the typical church service were a TV show, it would be on the Oprah or Hallmark networks, certainly not on the Adventure stations.**

Let's be clear from the start, we are examining

**the tough issue of reaching more men** with the great news of salvation and getting them attending fellowship on a regular basis. And keeping the guys we have already in our church before they leave out the back door. This is NOT just men whinging and whining about women taking over the church. It is calculated that



male church attendance is down to 40% or less, and of those that do attend, some of those attend under sufferance and only in obedience to their God - they would rather not be there. This is not to say that the faith & commitment to God of those men attending or not attending is not strong.

**The 'Church' is great for women - not so much for men.** Most of the ministries in church revolve around traditionally feminine roles in caring, children, ladies' programs and music ministry. It's all about being 'intimate' with God and others, sharing personal stuff, praying in groups, and a lot of talking and singing. It's the perfect institution for women to use their gifts, so **women naturally excel at church, and most men don't.** There are certainly men out there who are verbal, studious, sensitive, and musical, but their numbers tend to be smaller. And, for the most part, those are the guys we tend to find in church, the artistic men and those good with words. But where does that leave the others, the more macho type men?

### Where are the husbands, fathers and young men?

Where are the 'manly men' - construction workers, sports players, truck drivers, business executives? Tough earthy guys, alpha males, risk takers, visionaries? Men who see something wrong and fix it. Men who are willing to fight in the Lord's Army. Men of quick decision and action, not of long words and drawn-out prayers. These men will not sit in church for an hour or more, week after week doing nothing but warming up a pew. **It drives them nuts!** These men want to serve God with a hammer, not an apron.



The manly no-nonsense sort of guy sees the hypocrisy of people being told to be bold in following Jesus, yet seeing that they are unwilling to change the way they do things, or will not trust God for expansion plans even when it is glaringly obvious that it is needed. They see the church employ a teacher to do all the sermons even though there are a number who could also be sharing. These men are active men, if you don't involve them in an active way in your church, they stop coming or won't come. **Men need to work in ministry some way or they stay home.**



The church's teachings, emphasizing humility, holiness, and introspection, are seen by some men as "weak" or somehow less than masculine. Men pray about something, get an answer and stop praying, because there is work to be done. **Men are looking to be actively challenged** with a "bold" message of adventure, danger, and aggressiveness. Finding the right activities to attract men is also a challenge for many churches. Some congregations make an extra effort to provide times of fellowship and bonding for men by adding off-road expeditions, fishing trips, sports, etc., the things that they can bring their friends from work to.

**Following Christ should include adventure, risk, and purpose.** Churches should use their men to preach the Word or serve others in some way, not just sit in a pew each Sunday. They should be actively challenged, nurtured and encouraged. Any church that turns the gospel into a soft, congenial love message and minimizes the cost of discipleship, or imputes weakness in following Christ does its people a disservice. Charles Spurgeon decried such a watered-down message in his day: "There has got abroad a notion, somehow, that if you become a Christian you must sink your manliness and turn milksop."

**For the most part, males who attend church regularly are:**

1. **Older men over 60** - that have been attending since they were younger, and before the modern changes happened to the sermons, worship style and the music. And before women started taking a more predominate roll in the church.
2. **Boys under 14** - mostly because their mothers make them attend. Almost all leave & don't return. The future of the church is leaving out the back door because men are not disciplined to lead.

**What sort of godly man do you see when you read the Bible:**

- Abraham leaving home & taking his family for a place he knew nothing about because God told him.
- Noah who built a huge boat for years & people thought he was insane.
- God's Prophets who faced down stiff opposition from friend and foe.
- Moses leading an ungrateful people out through a desert for 40 years.
- Even David who wrote many of the Psalms was a bold leader of an army.
- Then we see the Apostles proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah & suffering the consequences, sometimes to death.
- They were lions, not lambs - take charge men who risked everything in God's service. Even their life.
- They spoke their minds & stepped on the toes of religious people.
- They were true leaders, tough guys who were respected for their tough stand of their faith in God, for the truth & justice.
- There were no wimps in the men we read about in the Bible. God called them & they obeyed with all their heart.

**If these sort of men were active in you church, would it look the same as it does today?**

# Beliefs/Doctrine

## 2. After You Die

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**A grave mistake to die without Jesus**

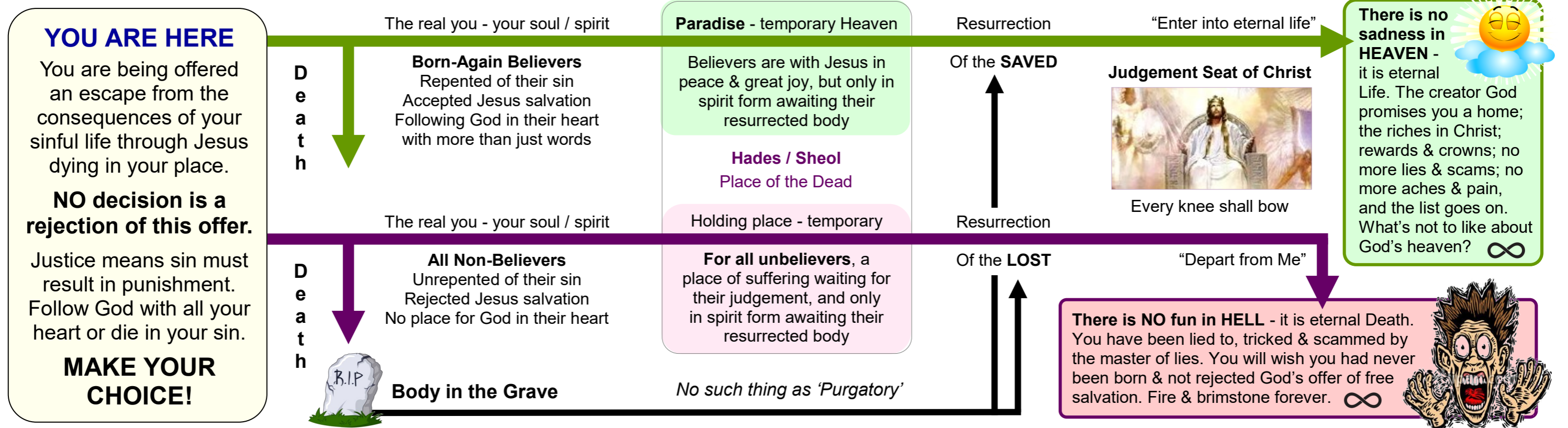


The Bible tells us that, yes, there is life after death. This world is not all there is, and mankind was made for something more. The fact of life after death does not mean everyone will go to heaven, however. People will continue to exist after they die, and there will be a resurrection someday, but God makes a distinction between the resurrection of the just (those who are in Christ) and the unjust (those who die in their sin): “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt”. Paul put it this way: “There will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked”.

Each person must make a choice in this life, a choice that will determine his or her eternal destination. It is appointed for us to die once, and after that will come judgment. Those who have been made righteous by faith in Christ will go into eternal life in heaven, but those who have rejected Christ as Saviour will be sent to eternal punishment in hell. Hell, like heaven, is a literal place. It is a place where the unrighteous will experience the never-ending, eternal wrath of God. Hell is described as a lake of fire where the inhabitants will be tormented day and night forever and ever. In hell, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, indicating intense grief and anger. Follow the Creator to heaven, not the Deceiver to hell.

For **the believer in Jesus Christ**, the Bible tells us that after death believers’ souls/spirits are taken to heaven, because their sins are forgiven by having received Christ as Saviour. For believers, death is to be “away from the body and at home with the Lord”. However, other passages describe believers being resurrected and given glorified bodies. If believers go to be with Christ immediately after death, what is the purpose of this resurrection?

It seems that while the souls/spirits of believers go to be with Christ immediately after death, the physical body remains in the grave “sleeping.” At the resurrection of believers, the physical body is resurrected, glorified, and then reunited with the soul/spirit. This reunited and glorified body-soul-spirit will be the possession of believers for eternity in the new heavens and new earth.



For those who do not receive Jesus Christ as Saviour, death means everlasting punishment. However, similar to the destiny of believers, unbelievers also seem to be sent immediately to a temporary holding place, to await their final resurrection, judgement, and eternal destiny. Luke 16:22-23 describes a rich man being tormented immediately after death.

(Text based on www.gotquestions.org)

Revelation 20:11-15 describes all the unbelieving dead being resurrected, judged at the great white throne, and then being cast into the lake of fire. Unbelievers, then, are not sent to hell (the lake of fire) immediately after death, but rather are in a **temporary realm of judgement and condemnation**. However, even though unbelievers are not instantly sent to the lake of fire, their immediate fate after death is not a pleasant one. The rich man cried out, “I am in agony in this fire”.

Therefore, after death, a person resides in a “temporary” heaven or hell. After this temporary realm, at the final resurrection, a person’s eternal destiny will not change. The precise “location” of that eternal destiny is what changes. Believers will ultimately be granted entrance into the new heavens and new earth. Unbelievers will ultimately be sent to the lake of fire. **These are the final, eternal destinations of all people—based entirely on whether or not they had trusted Jesus Christ alone for salvation.**