

Extended Version

The Good News of Jesus

In the beginning of the universe, the only eternal God created everything perfect (Gen 1:1)—without fault or deficiency of any kind (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 24, 31). God’s crowning jewel of creation was humanity because they were created in His image (Gen 1:26, 31). The first humans, Adam and Eve, were placed in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8) with the command to take care of all of creation (Gen 1:28), which willingly would provide for them (Gen 1:29–30) and to spread God’s work throughout all the earth (Gen 1:28); God told them they could eat of every tree with the lone exception of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil because eating would mean death (Gen 2:16–17). After some time, Satan came in the form of a serpent to tempt Eve and she was deceived by the serpent and ate of the tree (Gen 3:6, 1 Tim 2:14); she then gave the fruit to Adam and he knowingly disobeyed and ate of the fruit (Gen 3:6). As a result of their disobedience against the command of a holy (Lev 11:44) and perfect (Matt 5:48) God (Ps 19:1), they were separated from fellowship with God due to the spiritual death they experienced (Gen 3:7, 10). The things that were originally intended to be a blessing were turned into a curse (Gen 3:14–19). Additionally, this death became something that was passed on to all subsequent generations (Rom 5:12).

But God, in the midst of the punishment, had mercy and grace on humanity in that he promised the seed of the woman would crush the serpent (Gen 3:15) and removing them from a state of everlasting existence (Gen 3:22–24). Eve thought this meant her first born son, Cain, (Gen 4:1) but time would show he was not (Gen 4:8). Since that time, many came that appeared to be this promised one—Noah (Gen 6:9; 9:1), Abraham (Gen 12:2–3), Moses (Exod 3:10), Joshua (Josh 1:6–9), Saul (1 Sam 9:17), David (1 Sam 16:13), Solomon (1 Kngs 3:10–14), etc.—but each time, the true character of each showed why they could not be the Savior (Gen 9:20–21; 12:11–20; 16:3–4; 20:1–18; Num 20:8, 11–12; Josh 9:15; 1 Sam 15:9; 2 Sam 11; 1 Kngs 10–11).

Then, over 2000 years ago, after many years of waiting and disappointment for God’s people, a virgin, whose name was Mary, conceived a child through the work of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:34–38; Isa 7:14). This child’s name was Jesus (Matt 1:21).

While Jesus was tempted in every way that we are in His lifetime (Heb 4:15), He lived a perfect life without sin (2 Cor 5:21); after all, He was fully God (John 1:1; Col 1:15–18) and man (John 1:14; 1 Tim 2:5). When He was around 30 years old, He began His ministry. During this time, He substantiated the claim that He was God and the Christ (Luke 8:22–25; Mark 8:29). There were many of the religious leaders of the day that did not like Jesus’ claims because He overlooked the outward actions and addressed the concerns of the heart (Matt 5–7; 23).

One day, after many attempts, these religious leaders plotted to do away with Jesus (Matt 26:4). They convinced one of His closest friends, Judas to betray Him (Matt 26:47–50). The night of the betrayal, Jesus was captured like a hardened criminal and brought before a kangaroo court (Matt 26:51–67). After being condemned by the religious leaders, He was then brought before the Roman leaders who decided that He should be put to death on a

cross, but only after being beat with an instrument of torture that ripped the skin and flesh off of Jesus' back (Matt 27:11–44). Jesus was then hung on a cross and died (Matt 27:45–50). His body was taken down off the cross and laid in a borrowed tomb (John 19:38–42). Many thought this was the end of Jesus but after three days, God raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 4:10), demonstrating once again that He had power over sin, death, and the grave (Rev 1:18). While some have said Jesus' resurrection is a hoax, the historical evidence shows that He appeared to over 500 people; many who had previously been cowards were so impacted that they ultimately died martyrs' deaths, refusing to recant their belief in Jesus as their Savior (1 Cor 15:5–8).

Jesus' death on the cross was unique in that He paid the penalty for our sins (1 Pet 2:24). The Bible is clear in that if a person will recognize his guilt before God for being disobedient to His commands, ask God to forgive him on the basis of Jesus' work, and believe in his heart that God will save him through Jesus, God will be faithful to save him (Rom 10:9).

After that confession, the Holy Spirit, who is an advocate for the believer (Rom 8:23) and teaches us how to live (John 14:26), will dwell in a believer's life. He will teach the follower of Christ how to live more like Jesus (John 16:13) and will show the follower of Christ areas that are not honoring to God (2 Tim 1:14). A true follower will submit to these convictions and strive to become more like Jesus (1 Pet 2:21); this does not mean that he will be perfect (1 John 1:10) but that he can live in a way that is like Jesus.

One day, Jesus will return to bring all of His followers (1 Thes 4:13–18) to come live with Him in heaven (John 14:3), where He currently resides at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33).

You can solidify your commitment to Christ by voicing that desire in a prayer similar to the one below.

Lord, I believe that you are the one, true, and holy God. I believe that you created me for your glory and your purposes, but I have lived so much of my life living for myself and for sin. Father, I thank you for your Son, Jesus, and I believe that he is Lord and that he is the only way that I can be forgiven and made right with you. Forgive me God of my sin. I place my trust In Jesus. Change my heart and give me grace and strength to turn from my life of disobedience and to follow you the rest of my life.