

# Now For The Good News

In the previous two studies we have looked at the bad news about human nature and where it gets us and leaves us in our relationship with our Creator God.

**We are separated from God and nothing we can do can ever change that!**

But the Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible, does **not** end with bad news.

In fact, it is really an account of very good news, and brings a message of hope for all humanity.

**There is a way out of the mess we find ourselves in.**

**John 3:16** [NIV] *“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.”*

Because our Creator God loves us so much, He has put in place an amazing rescue plan.

While we could **not** reach Him, God has reached out to us.

**Romans 5:6-11** [NIV] *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, **having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!** Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”*

While we were helpless to save ourselves, God has come to save us from ourselves and our sin-prone nature.

**God's rescue plan is centred on Jesus Christ.**

God's Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible, tells us that Jesus of Nazareth who walked the roads of Palestine 2,000 years ago is our **only** hope of avoiding the wrath of God, that is due because of our rebellious sins.

**Jesus Christ is God's answer to our needs and all the world's problems.**

There is **no** other way out of our problems and **no** way back to God except through Jesus Christ.

## Who was and is Jesus Christ?

The Christian Bible and other historical accounts tell us about the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus travelled around Palestine 2,000 years ago teaching a new way of life, healing the sick, releasing people from the control of evil spirits, and performing amazing miracles.

Jesus' fame spread and thousands flocked to Him wherever He went.

Who was this Jesus and where did He come from?

Was He just a great moral teacher and miracle worker?

Was He just one of many other prophets who spoke new teaching about God?

Was He just a great religious leader of the past that we should respect and admire?

Or was Jesus Christ more than all this?

### **Jesus Christ was unique.**

Jesus was what He claimed to be, “*the Son of God.*”

**Matthew 3:13, 16-17** [NIV] “*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John.*” ... “*As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*”

A voice from heaven confirmed who Jesus was.

**Matthew 17:1, 5** [NIV] “*After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.*” ... “*While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”*”

It is Jesus the Son of God whom we should listen to.

**Matthew 16:13-17** [NIV] “*When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”*”

Revealed as the Son of God by the Holy Spirit to Jesus’ disciple Peter.

**Mark 15:33-34, 37-39** [NIV] “*At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”*, which means, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” ... “*With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”*”

A hard natured, pagan, Roman soldier recognised Jesus as the Son of God.

**Jesus was not only sent by God into the world as a human being, He was God clothed in a human form.**

**John 1:1-3** [NIV] “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*”

Who was this person called the Word?

**John 1:14** [NIV] “*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*”

This person who was the only Son of God became a human being.

**Philippians 2:5-8** [NIV] “*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself*

*nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!"*

Jesus had the very nature of God even though He was in human flesh.

Jesus was and is equal with God.

**Philippians 2:9-11** [NIV] *"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Jesus is not just someone we should respect and admire.

Jesus is the One we should fall down before and worship.

**Jesus as the Son of God is the One being we should listen to and obey above all others.**

To ignore or reject Jesus Christ is the biggest mistake we can ever make in our life.

## **Why did Jesus have to end His short physical life dying on a cross?**

Jesus came into the human world, as a human being who could die by shedding His life-giving blood.

It is only Jesus' shed blood, the giving up of His perfect God-like life, that can deal with the barrier that separates us from God.

Jesus lived a perfect sin-free life, and went about doing good and expressing the love of God for all human beings, whoever they may be.

**Mark 15:9-15** [NIV] *"Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they shouted. "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified."*

Out of envy the religious leaders of Christ's day not only opposed Jesus but in the end caused Him to be crucified on a cross.

**Crucifixion was the Roman penalty for rebellion.**

Only slaves and rebellious non-Roman citizens were put to death by crucifixion.

**Jesus, who was a sinless and totally subject to God the Father died as a rebel with other rebels.**

Why?

The human man Jesus who was also God was the sacrifice for all human beings who will ever exist.

Jesus Christ's sacrifice of His life on the cross is the centre of God's amazing rescue mission to save us from the penalty of our sin.

## Why did Jesus have to shed His life blood on the cross?

**Leviticus 17:11** [NIV] *“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.”*

The life of every living being is in the blood.

When our heart stops pumping the blood around our body we die.

**Hebrews 9:22** [NIV] *“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.

Remember it was Adam and Eve's rebellious sin against God their Creator that cut them off from the source of eternal life, the “tree of life”.

How did God cover the shame of this sin?

**Genesis 3:21** [NIV] *“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”*

An animal had to give up its life and shed its blood for these skins to cover the shame of Adam and Eve's sin.

I believe this animal was a lamb.

Why?

**John 1:29, 36** [NIV] *“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” ... “When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!””*

John the Baptist recognised Jesus the Saviour of all humanity as the “lamb of God”.

Under the Old Covenant that God made with Israel a person who sinned was required to bring a sacrificial offering, a sheep, goat, bull or some other clean animal, to the priest of God to be sacrificed instead of their own life being forfeited.

**Leviticus 14:12-14** [NIV] *“Then the priest is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil; he shall wave them before the LORD as a wave offering. He is to slaughter the lamb in the holy place where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest; it is most holy. **The priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.**”*

A male lamb's blood became a covering sin offering.

It is interesting to note where some of the sacrificial blood was placed.

“Ear” – all we listen to.

“Right hand” – depicting our work.

“Toe” – the path we walk in life.

**Every aspect of our life needs the cleansing power of Christ's sacrificial blood.**

**2 Corinthians 5:21** [NIV] *“God made him [Jesus Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

Jesus Christ, the “*lamb of God*”, became our sin offering.

Jesus Christ shed His blood and died as a substitute for our deserved death because of our rebellious sins.

## **The good news doesn't stop at the death of Jesus Christ**

Jesus was resurrected from the grave by the Holy Spirit and is alive for ever as our High Priest, an eternal being who intercedes on our behalf on the throne of God.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

This is the new and eternal office of Jesus Christ, the human Son of Man, but also the Spirit Son of God.

### **The resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrated His victory over death, Satan and sin.**

There are recorded in the Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible, many witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Matthew Arnold**, an historian, describes the resurrection of Jesus Christ as one of “*the best attested facts in human history.*”

**Sir Edward Clark**, a Supreme Court Judge said “*to me the evidence (for the resurrection of Jesus Christ) is conclusive...*”

**Matthew 28:1-6** [NIV]

**Luke 24:36-43** [NIV]

**John 20:19-29** [NIV]

**John 21:1, 25** [NIV]

**Acts 1:3** [NIV]

**1 Corinthians 9:1** [NIV]

**1 Corinthians 15:5-8** [NIV]

**Matthew 28:16-18** [NIV] *“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. **Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”***

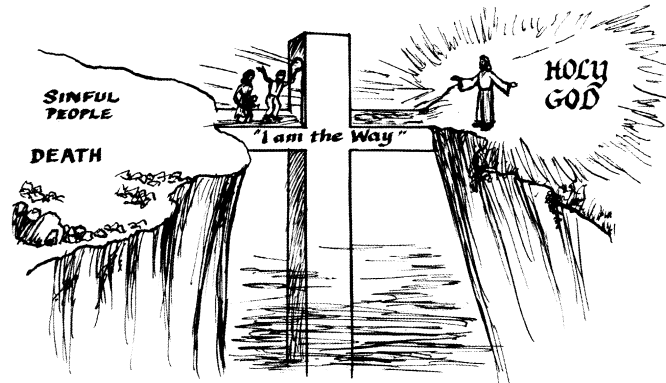
Jesus reigns over the universe as King and Saviour, and is willing to offer the result of His victory over sin, Satan and death to all who will believe in Him and put their lives under His kingly rule.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is, therefore, a wonderful story of good news.

**God has allowed Jesus to die in our place, to take the penalty and punishment for our sins.**

Jesus offers pardon to all who will believe in Him and accept His offer of forgiveness.

**Romans 5:9-11 [NIV]** *“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”*



We do not need to stay a rebel!

We do not need to live a life separated from God and under His judgement.

**John 15:12-17 [NIV]** *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.”*

Jesus has made a way for us to become His friend instead of His enemy.

Do you want to experience this?

**Memory verse:**

**Romans 5:8 [NIV]** *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

In the next article we will study as to what our response should be to this good news.