

Why Should I Become a Christian?

Why Should I
Become a Christian?
Being “Born Again”
Explained

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INTRODUCTION

Why should you become a Christian? It's a valid question. After all, you are a good person. You have a good heart. Like everyone, you were created in the image of God. That gives you the desire and ability to love, be kind, and be good to others. We see the image of God in varying degrees in different people. For the most part you try to be merciful and gracious; just like God is. Sometimes people make it hard. It's challenging, but you do your best to be a good person and always do the right thing. Those close to you know that, and God knows that.

The problem is, that is not enough to get you to heaven. Heaven requires more goodness than we can give. Before you get all upset, there is an easy solution. Well, it's easy for us; but it was NOT so easy for God. We'll get to that in a few minutes, but it's important that you understand what the problem is. Then you will see that it is a problem you can't fix on your own. I really hope you will read far enough to fully understand the solution. Then, you will know why you should become a Christian.

Please understand that this little book is motivated by pure love. If I had a cure for cancer but

didn't tell anyone; if I just kept it for myself in case I ever got cancer, you would think that I was an awful person. You would be right.

I believe with all my heart that I understand the cure for sin and eternal separation from God, an eternal plight far worse than cancer (*see my book called: "Hell: Is it real? Is it Eternal?"*). To not share the solution would be the most unloving, uncaring, selfish, and downright wrong thing that I could ever do. So, please keep reading, understanding that I am not pushing a religion or trying to guilt you into anything.

THE PROBLEM IS: YOU'RE REALLY, REALLY GOOD; JUST NOT PERFECT

Have you ever told a lie? I know the answer is 'Yes', or ...well, you just proved my point. It was probably just a little white one, but it was a lie nonetheless. Relative to perfection, most of us have, in fact, done far worse or far more than telling one little white lie. The problem with that is that, even one little lie or anything that violates our conscience, or God's Word makes us impure. To illustrate this, take a glass full of water and add one drop of food colouring. Now, try to get that food colouring out. You can't do it. That drop has permanently changed the colour of the water. It is the same with sin. Once we have committed one we have become a sinner. That can't be changed by ourself. Trust me, we are all in the same boat. No one is perfect.

In contrast, God is. He is perfect. In addition to that, He doesn't allow anything that isn't perfect into heaven, where He lives. That means that you, I, and the rest of us have a problem because the alternative is nasty. Let me re-state that. Everyone who isn't a Christian has a problem.

In answering the question, "*Why should I be a Christian?*" you have to ask yourself whether you would like to get what you deserve or would you like something far better.

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The end result of sin is all the same. It doesn't matter what you've done, whether it is what we think of as a 'big' sin or a 'little' sin. It doesn't matter if you have sinned a lot or a little. It's not that God is unfair, it's just that there is only one end result to sin. Any amount of sin makes us imperfect, just like that drop of food colouring. Imperfection separates us from God. No sin is allowed into heaven.

Separation from God is the real meaning of death. We tend to think of death being that moment when the heart stops beating and the lungs stop breathing. That's true in a physical sense. When you are cut off from the source of life - blood and oxygen - you have death.

When we consider the eternal part of us (I'll explain what I mean later) it is similar, but with much more significant results. God is the source of life. If we are cut off from Him, which is what sin does, then we no longer have life. Any amount of sin causes us to be imperfect, and imperfection separates us from God, in which case we are spiritually dead. You will see in the Scriptures below that the Apostle Paul says: "*The wages of sin is death*". That's what he is talking about. It is interesting that he uses the word "wages", because a wage is something that we earn. It is something that we deserve. The sins that we have committed have earned us the right to be separated from God, to be spiritually

dead, and not be able to spend eternity in heaven.

The good news is in the latter half of that verse: “...*the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” God doesn’t want to give us what we deserve. He wants to give us eternal life.

Scripture

Romans 3:23 *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*

Matthew 5:48 *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Revelation 21:25-27 *“On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*

Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

JESUS SAID: “YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN”

What, on earth, does that mean: “*You must be born again*”? The first person who heard those words wondered the same thing.

It was a guy by the name of Nicodemus. He was an impressive man. He was an elite leader among the Jews, both a teacher of religion and a member of the Jewish ruling council. Since the others in his position commonly rejected the idea that Jesus was the promised Messiah, it was a bit risky for him to talk to Jesus. So, he came to Jesus after dark.

What was really significant is that this ‘teacher’ called Jesus ‘teacher’, or “rabbi”. He recognized that Jesus spoke with a deeper knowledge and understanding of Scripture than what he had. He also acknowledged the many miracles that Jesus had done, which he viewed as a clear indication that Jesus had come from God.

Jesus responded to this by saying, well the only way anyone else gets to see the Kingdom of God is to be ‘*born again*’. I don’t think those two words had ever been put together in one sentence before.

Nicodemus' response was a sincere one. It wasn't sarcasm. Jesus had said something totally foreign to the human ear. Nicodemus said: 'Well, people can't very well climb back into their mother's womb and be born again.' Jesus responded: "...no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

This is a great revelation. In our mother's womb we were protected by amniotic fluid, or water. When we were ready to be born, the water would break, and our mom gave birth. That is flesh giving birth to flesh. It is being born of water.

Every person born has 3 parts. We are physical beings. That part of us is born to die. We will all experience this death. We also have a soul. That is essentially our personality. It is the part of us that was created in God's image, made up of emotion, will, volition (the ability to exercise our will or to make decisions). That part of us was created to be immortal. It will live on when the body dies.

Closely connected to the soul is the spirit. Some believe the soul and spirit are one entity. It doesn't much matter what your view on that is because the spirit is also created to live on with the soul after the body dies.

The problem is that we are still-born spiritually. Our spirits are not alive because, as said earlier, spiritual life requires perfection. That means that either we must find a way to bring our spirit to life, or we are destined to live out our eternity separated from God.

A question that comes to mind is “Why was the spirit born dead; or separated from God?” That’s a bit of a complicated issue, but I will try to answer it in a few words.

When Adam and Eve were created, their body, soul and spirit were created alive. They were perfect. God wanted their relationship to be one of choice though. He wanted the crowning glory of all His creation to have free-will, so He asked them to **not** do one thing. For free-will to truly work, each choice had to have consequences. The consequence of obedience was for everything to remain perfect. The consequence of disobedience was death. You know the story. It involved a tree in the middle of the garden and some fruit. They didn’t die physically, but they were removed from the garden where they fellowshiped with God. They were separated from Him. They experienced spiritual death immediately. Physical death was certain though. It would follow.

Well, that was Adam and Eve. We are not them, so what does it have to do with us? The problem is that as the first human beings they represented all of their

descendants. As a result of their ‘death’ or separation from God, we were all born that way. (That’s in 1 Corinthians 15:45-50, but it’s tricky). King David understood this. He said of himself: *“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”* (**Psalm 51:5**).

So our problem is twofold. First, we are born separated from God. Secondly, we have all sinned. Our human nature has a bent toward selfish behavior that leads to sin because of that separation from God. So, from a very young age we live accordingly. No matter how you look at it, every human being is separated from God and has a decision to make.

The term ‘born again’ has all kinds of different meanings today. To some, the person who defines themselves as a ‘born again Christian’ is some kind of religious nut.

To Jesus, the one who coined the phrase, it meant one thing. You were born spiritually separated from God or spiritually dead. That’s a big problem but the solution is simple. You simply must choose to come alive. You must choose to be ‘born again’.

That is the free gift that the Apostle Paul wrote about. Rather than getting what we deserve, which is spiritual and eternal separation from God; we can accept God’s gift of life. It is offered to us freely.

Before I explain what we have to do to accept it, let me tell you what God had to do to make it available to us.

Scripture

John 3:1-7; 16-17 *“Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”*

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” 4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

5 Jesus answered, “no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’

16 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. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

Genesis 2:16-17 *“And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;17 but you must*

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not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

THE COST OF THE FREE GIFT

God created mankind to be in relationship with Him. The separation between Him and us broke His heart. He immediately put a plan in place. I could use all kinds of fancy religious words right now; but how about I don't? Here is how it works in point form.

- God requires perfection for us to be in relationship with Him
- That's impossible because we are born imperfect, and we have all behaved imperfectly
- God set the price of our second birth as the sacrifice of a perfect person. Since one person brought sin to all mankind, it made sense that the life of one perfect person could make life possible to all mankind.
- The problem was that, since all people are born in sin, there was no such thing as a perfect person.
- I don't want to get sidetracked by trying to understand the Trinity, but the Bible is clear that God is made up of three parts, like an egg is a yoke, white, and shell. It is one egg but it has three parts. God presents Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son of God was chosen to be that sacrifice. He was perfect. The problem was that He wasn't a man.

- The Son of God came as a man to earth. His earthly mother, Mary was conceived of the Holy Spirit. This Immaculate Conception meant that Jesus skipped the sin gene. He was born alive. He was born perfect. Jesus was the Son of God, and the Son of a human mother. He was 100% God, and He was 100% man. He left all of His divine attributes in heaven while on earth in order to live life as a human being; and would do so without sinning. That wasn't easy, but necessary to fulfill His purpose.
- After 33 years of life on planet earth, Jesus hung on a cross until death. He hadn't done anything wrong. He was a perfect human being who died as if He was a criminal. Not only that, He bore the weight of the sin of all humanity from the beginning to the end of time. Before His arrest, He literally sweat drops of blood just thinking about it.

So, the cost of the free gift of spiritual life that God offers us was the painful, gruesome, awful and undeserved death of His Son. God set the price. God paid the price.

What we must remember, though, is that because Jesus was born perfect and lived a perfect life, death could not hold Him. Death was caused by sin, and Jesus was sinless. So, three days after His crucifixion He came

back to life and subsequently went to His rightful place in heaven.

Scripture

Hebrews 4:15 *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”*

Romans 6:10 *“The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”*

Hebrews 9:26-28 *“Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many.”*

Acts 2:24 *“But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.”*

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SO, WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

I see three things in the Scripture that a person must do to become a Christian. They are so intertwined that they are really three acts that become one.

I'd like you to notice that becoming a Christian is called 'being saved' or 'salvation' by some. That speaks to the severity of the moment. Those who used that terminology acknowledged that their destiny was one of separation from God and eternal suffering. Becoming a Christian literally would save them from that. It's true for all of us.

These are the three steps laid out in the Scripture.

First, you must believe. That isn't just an intellectual assent to the truth that Jesus came and died. You must believe it in your heart. In other words, there needs to be an element of faith that rises up within you that tells you that you have a serious spiritual need and that Jesus is the solution. This faith acknowledges the severity of the problem you didn't realize you had, and that Jesus is the antidote to that huge problem.

Second, you must **repent**. To many that's a scary religious word, and it implies that they are a terrible person. Some think that they must pay for that sin in

some way. No, it has already been paid for. The Son of God died. Remember? The only cost to us is our faith. The word repent is really a non-threatening word that simply means to turn around. It implies that you were travelling down the road of life the wrong way. Any way that doesn't include a faith relationship with God is the wrong way. It doesn't matter if you have committed big sins or little sins. It doesn't matter if you have committed a lot of sins or a few. What you need to do once you have faith that Jesus is the solution to your problem, is stop in your tracks, and turn around. Start walking toward God, not away from Him.

The third thing that I see is that we should tell someone. It could be a pastor, a Christian friend, a spouse, even a non-Christian friend. Many people wonder why that is important. I view it as being like adding cement to the water and sand. Telling someone that we have become a Christian solidifies that decision. Something significant happens when we hear our self say it to someone else. In addition to that, there is a level of accountability that comes with telling another person. We then know that someone is watching to see if there is evidence of this decision in our life. A third reason is that it excites and builds faith in the person we tell.

So you become a Christian when there is real, heartfelt faith in what Jesus did for you. That faith is real enough to cause you to turn around and walk toward a

deeper relationship with God, while speaking of this new revelation of what God has done for you.

Scripture

Acts 16:30-31 *“He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” 31 They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...”*

Acts 2:38 *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 10:9-10 *“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”*

OKAY, I DID IT. WHAT NOW?

Should I be emotional? Should I feel something? What should I expect when I actually say “Yes, I want to be a Christian?”

Some people do get very emotional. Others, not at all. Some say they can literally feel the weight of their sin being lifted off of them. Others have no such sensation. There are a lot of circumstances in life where people respond differently. That often has to do with personality. Some are very expressive and others more reserved. The fact is, those things aren't what is important.

It is important that you understand that two amazing things happen spiritually when you become a Christian. You may or may not respond to it emotionally in the moment, but either way you should see the impact of these things over time.

The first is that the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, literally gives life to your spirit and remains within you. It is His presence in you that assures your entrance into heaven when it is your time.

In the meantime he is with you to help you travel the road of life the opposite way to what you are accustomed to.

The second thing that happens is that God sees you differently. We are not perfect and we won't be, the Holy Spirit in us will help create the desire and provide the strength to work toward that end, but admittedly perfection will allude us until we get to heaven. So, we are not perfect.

So, how can we enter heaven if nothing imperfect is allowed there? This is the free gift we spoke of. When God looks at us He sees the perfection of His Son, without seeing our imperfections. That is because of our faith in what Jesus did for us at Calvary. I'll say it again, God does not even see our sin because they are blocked by the perfection of His Son in whom we have put our faith. That means that we are perfect in standing before God because of our faith in Jesus. He doesn't see our sin. As a result, we are citizens of heaven.

Scripture

Ephesians 1:13-14 *“When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”*

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Ephesians 2:5 *“made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”*

Philippians 3:12 *“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”*

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE RULES?

It's true that the Bible sets a high standard for people living in a world that is so saturated with sinful behaviour. As a result, many people view Christianity as not much more than a list of rules. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, there is a strong message to be holy as God is holy. That seems like an impossible challenge. It is, but it is a goal He sets before us to keep us motivated toward holiness. Even though we will grow in our attempt at representing God's character well, perfection will allude us until we reach our final destination.

Why is this so important then? There are two reasons.

First, the dividing line between holiness and sin is like a fence between the safe zone and the danger zone. God is active within the safe zone. If we choose to go outside that area, where sin exists, then we are very vulnerable to Satan's attacks who wants nothing more than to keep us from continuing in our relationship with God.

Second, God views our desire and honest attempt to be like Him as an expression of appreciation for what

He has done for us. It is an act of love given back to Him. To be His ambassador, to represent His character on earth, is part of our purpose as a Christian.

It is helpful for us to redefine holiness in our mind. Holiness is not a list of rules. Holiness is loving God so much that we don't want to do anything to hurt Him. If you are in a relationship or married, you know that certain behaviour would be hurtful to your partner or spouse, so you don't do it. You don't want to do anything that would hurt someone you love so much or do harm to that relationship. If you transfer that way of thinking into your relationship with God; you will be long to be holy.

Scripture

1 Peter 1:16 *“for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”*

1 John 5:3 *“In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome”*

2 Corinthians 5:20 *“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”*

DO I HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH?

There is nothing in the Bible that says that you have to go to church when you become a Christian, but we are given lots of reasons why it makes sense.

Let me say first, that I know that the church is an imperfect place, run by imperfect people. There isn't a perfect church anywhere because there are no perfect pastors, leaders, or church members. Still, I highly recommend that you try to find one that teaches all of the Bible without adding or taking away, that worships God with sincerity, and that prioritizes being Christ's ambassadors.

In point form, these are the reasons why church is important. Please read the Scriptural support for these views.

- It is His church, not man's. Why would God start something that He doesn't want us to be part of?
- We are referred to as His body. When we go to work, if we leave an arm and a leg at home we are much less effective. If you aren't involved in church you are that arm or leg.

- It's a place to use our gifts. The Holy Spirit takes the strengths of our personality and super-sizes them to be used for God's purposes.
- It's a place of fellowship. There is so much strength and enjoyment to be found in hanging out with people of like mind. When you make friends at church you will meet people who will support you, pray for you, answer questions, and help you grow in your relationship with God.
- It's a place of learning, where we are taught how to understand God's Word and purpose for our life.
- It's a place of worship. Those in relationship with God understand the value of what He has done for us. We are born again because of Him. We are saved from eternal destruction. Of course we want to express our thankfulness and acknowledge His character.

Christ's Church: **Matthew 16:18** *And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

His Body, a place to use His gifts: **Romans 12:4-8** *For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;⁸*

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if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Fellowship: Acts 2:42 *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”*

Learning: 1 Peter 2:1-3 *“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”*

Learning and Worship: Colossians 3:16 *Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*

MAY I HELP?

These are not magic words, but if you would like to become a Christian and don't know where to start, let me help you. It isn't the words that make you a Christian, it is the sincerity of your heart and your faith in God's offer of salvation.

“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner and that without you there is nothing I can do to help myself. I confess my complete inability to deal with the dilemma my sin has caused me. I know that without your sacrifice there is no way for me to know you, or be in your presence. I confess my faith in Christ as the One who took my sin upon Himself when He died on the cross. I believe that He did all that will ever be necessary for me to stand in your holy presence. Thank you for accepting me, despite my sins and failures. I stand before you with a repentant heart, asking you to come into my life and to make me into the person you want me to be. I pray this in the Name of My Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.”