
What is the Plan of Salvation?

Are you hungry? Not physically hungry, but do you have a hunger for something more in life? Is there something deep inside of you that never seems to be satisfied? If so, Jesus is the way! Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

Are you confused? Can you never seem to find a path or purpose in life? Does it seem like someone has turned out the lights and you cannot find the switch? If so, Jesus is the way of salvation! Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Do you ever feel like you are locked out of life? Have you tried so many doors, only to find that what is behind them is empty and meaningless? Are you looking for an entrance into a fulfilling life? If so, Jesus is the way of salvation! Jesus declared, "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture" (John 10:9).

Do other people always let you down? Have your relationships been shallow and empty? Does it seem like everyone is trying to take advantage of you? If so, Jesus is the way! Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (John 10:11, 14).

Do you wonder what happens after this life? Are you tired of living your life for things that only rot or rust? Do you sometimes doubt whether life has any meaning? Do you want to live after you die? If so, Jesus is the way of salvation! Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26).

What is the way? What is the truth? What is the life? Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

The hunger that you feel is a spiritual hunger, and can only be filled by Jesus. Jesus is the only one who can lift the darkness. Jesus is the door to a satisfying life. Jesus is the friend and shepherd that you have been looking for. Jesus is the life—in this world and the next. Jesus is the way of salvation!

The reason you feel hungry, the reason you seem to be lost in darkness, the reason you cannot find meaning in life, is that you are separated from God. The Bible tells us that we have all sinned, and are therefore separated from God (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23). The void you feel in your heart is God missing from your life. We were created to have a relationship with God. Because of our sin, we are separated from that relationship. Even worse, our sin will cause us to be separated from God for all of eternity, in this life and the next (Romans 6:23; John 3:36).

How can this problem be solved? Jesus is the way of salvation! Jesus took our sin upon Himself (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus died in our place (Romans 5:8), taking the punishment that we deserve. Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead, proving His victory over sin and death (Romans 6:4-5). Why did He do it? Jesus answered that question Himself: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Jesus died so that we could live. If we place our faith in Jesus, trusting His death as the payment for our sins, all of our sins are forgiven and washed away. We will then have our spiritual hunger satisfied. The lights will be turned on. We will have access to a fulfilling life. We will know our true best friend and good shepherd. We will know that we will have life after we die—a resurrected life in heaven for eternity with Jesus!

“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” (John 3:16).

"How can I be saved?"

This simple, yet profound, question is the most important question that can be asked. *"How can I be saved?"* deals with where we will spend eternity after our lives in this world are over. There is no more important issue than our eternal destiny. Thankfully, the Bible is abundantly clear on how a person can be saved. The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). Paul and Silas responded, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Why do I need to be saved?

We are all infected with sin (Romans 3:23). We are born with sin (Psalms 51:5), and we all personally choose to sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8). Sin is what makes us unsaved. Sin is what separates us from God. Sin is what has us on the path to eternal destruction.

Saved from what?

Because of our sin, we all deserve death (Romans 6:23). While the physical consequence of sin is physical death, that is not the only kind of death that results from sin. All sin is ultimately committed against an eternal and infinite God (Psalms 51:4). Because of that, the just penalty for our sin is also eternal and infinite. What we need to be saved from is eternal destruction (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15).

How did God provide salvation?

Because the just penalty for sin is infinite and eternal, only God could pay the penalty, because only He is infinite and eternal. But God, in His divine nature, could not die. So God became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ. God took on human flesh, lived among us, and taught us. When the people rejected Him and His message, and sought to kill Him, He willingly sacrificed Himself for us, allowing Himself to be crucified (John 10:15). Because Jesus Christ was human, He could die; and because Jesus Christ was God, His death had an eternal and infinite value. Jesus’ death on the cross was the perfect and complete payment for our sin (1 John 2:2). He took the consequences we deserved. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead demonstrated that His death was indeed the perfectly sufficient sacrifice for sin.

What do I need to do?

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). God has already done all of the work. All you must do is receive, in faith, the salvation God offers (Ephesians 2:8-9). Fully trust in Jesus alone as the payment for your sins. Believe in Him, and you will not perish (John 3:16). God is offering you salvation as a gift. All you have to do is accept it. Jesus is the way of salvation (John 14:6).

Is Jesus the only way to Heaven?

Yes, Jesus is the only way to heaven. Such an exclusive statement may grate on the postmodern ear, but it is true nonetheless. The Bible teaches that there is no other way to salvation than through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself says in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” He is not a way, as in one of many; He is the way, as in the one and only. No one, regardless of reputation, achievement, special knowledge, or personal holiness, can come to God the Father except through Jesus.

Jesus is the only way to heaven for several reasons. Jesus was “chosen by God” to be the Savior (1 Peter 2:4). Jesus is the only One to have come down from heaven and returned there (John 3:13). He is the only person to have lived a perfect human life (Hebrews 4:15). He is the only sacrifice for sin (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 10:26). He alone fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17). He is the only man to have conquered death forever (Hebrews 2:14–15).

What is the plan of salvation?

He is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the only man whom God has “exalted . . . to the highest place” (Philippians 2:9).

Jesus spoke of Himself as the only way to heaven in several places besides John 14:6. He presented Himself as the object of faith in Matthew 7:21–27. He said His words are life (John 6:63). He promised that those who believe in Him will have eternal life (John 3:14–15). He is the gate of the sheep (John 10:7); the bread of life (John 6:35); and the resurrection (John 11:25). No one else can rightly claim those titles.

The apostles’ preaching focused on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Peter, speaking to the Sanhedrin, clearly proclaimed Jesus as the only way to heaven: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Paul, speaking to the synagogue in Antioch, singled out Jesus as the Savior: “I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin” (Acts 13:38–39). John, writing to the church at large, specifies the name of Christ as the basis of our forgiveness: “I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name” (1 John 2:12). No one but Jesus can forgive sin.

Eternal life in heaven is made possible only through Christ. Jesus prayed, “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3). To receive God’s free gift of salvation, we must look to Jesus and Jesus alone. We must trust in Jesus’ death on the cross as our payment for sin and in His resurrection. “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Romans 3:22).

At one point in Jesus’ ministry, many of the crowd were turning their backs on Him and leaving in hopes of finding another savior. Jesus asked the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” (John 6:67, ESV). Peter’s reply is exactly right: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68–69, ESV). May we all share Peter’s faith that eternal life resides only in Jesus Christ.