

# THE SALVATION STORY

God is eternal – He has no beginning and no end. He is the One true God, the Almighty and All-Knowing God. He is perfectly loving, compassionate, forgiving, patient and kind. God is merciful; He is also perfectly just. God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – three expressions of the One God.

God created the heavens and the earth. In His image, He created Adam and Eve. He put them in charge of the earth, and gave them a beautiful garden in which to live. God told them to be fruitful in life and multiply. God loved them, and He walked and talked with them.

Satan came to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent, convincing them that there was more to life than God had provided for them. This liar, thief and destroyer challenged God and His Word, just as he formerly did when he led a rebellion in heaven and was cast out with his followers. Satan and his demons still work continually to tempt people away from God.

Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God's protective command to not eat of the one tree whose fruit would make them aware of evil. Their disobedience allowed sin to enter the race of mankind. Sin is the thoughts, words and actions that go against God's laws and loving purposes for mankind. Sin brings destruction and pain to mankind. It separates us from God and His plans for us now and eternally.

God's perfect justice requires a consequence for sin, which is death – both spiritual and physical. But God, in His perfect love, set in motion a plan to save mankind from sin and death, and restore the relationship between God and mankind that sin destroyed.

At the perfect moment in human history, God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to fulfill His plan of salvation for mankind.

Jesus Christ, who was and is God:

- was born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life;
- revealed God and His way of salvation to mankind;

- sacrificed His own innocent life in mankind's place – dying on a cross – to take upon Himself God's judgment for sin;
- destroyed the power of sin;
- rose up from the dead to prove that He is God;
- lives and reigns forever as the King over all kings.

What Christ did was for all mankind. Every person has sinned and needs to be saved from the consequences of sin. This can be done only when a person believes that Jesus Christ came and died for them and rose from the dead. Each must repent from their sins and accept the sacrifice that Jesus made to save them from death. When they do, God forgives their sins and cancels the death penalty against them. They can then have relationship with God, our Father in heaven, now and throughout eternity.

People can never be good enough to work their way back to God or earn His salvation. Even our best efforts are like filthy rags compared to God's perfection. There is no other way to know God but to accept Christ's payment for our debt of sin.

When we believe in Christ as our Savior and Lord, God's Spirit comes into our life. The Holy Spirit helps us to know God and to think, believe and live by God's ways. Since God wants everyone to be saved, the Holy Spirit also wants to give us power so that we can boldly share with others the Good News of Jesus Christ's salvation!

God has revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ. He also reveals Himself, His ways and His plan of salvation to us in the Bible. This powerful book contains God's words revealed to men who wrote them down just like His Spirit instructed them. The Bible teaches us what is true. We can believe it and rely upon its counsel. We must read and study the Bible as often as we can.

Every person will die a physical death. But if we believe in Jesus Christ and His salvation, we will spend our eternal life in heaven with God. Those who reject God's offer of forgiveness will be eternally separated from God in hell.