

In
My Father's
House

The Good News of
Jesus Christ

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Introduction

In this small book, we are going to ask some big questions. We will begin with questions about God.

- Who is God?
- Is God good? Does God care about us?
- How can we learn about God? Who can show us the way to God?

We will also ask some big questions about ourselves.

- Why were we born?
- Does God have a plan for our lives?
- How should we live our lives?
- Can we look to the future in hope?

In this small book, we will learn about God. We will learn why God made us, and we will learn God's plan for our lives.

God is Love

Long ago, a man named John wrote about God. We find John's words in the Holy Bible. John says:

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.—1 John 4:8

God is love, says John. When we understand this wonderful truth about God, we will understand the meaning and purpose of our lives!

Before we go on, however, we need to learn how John knows this wonderful truth about God. How does John know that God is love? John tells us. He writes:

We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own

eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.—1 John 1:1-4

Whom is John writing about? Whom has John **heard**? Whom has John **seen**? Whom has John **touched** with his hands? John gives us the answer:

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all.—
1 John 1:5

John is telling us the **message he heard from Jesus!** John learned about God by hearing the words of Jesus. John learned about God by seeing the wonderful things Jesus did. John knows that God is love because John knows Jesus!

In the Holy Bible, we learn that **Jesus Christ** is the **Son of God**. The Holy Bible says:

For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.—John 3:16, 17

These words teach us two important truths about God:

- God loves the world.
- God sent his Son to save the world.

Jesus Reveals the Father's Love

Jesus Christ is “**The Word**” of God. Jesus is the one who “**speaks**” the word of God. The Holy Bible says:

In the beginning, the Word [Jesus Christ] already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God.—John 1:1, 2

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.—John 1:14

Jesus Christ is the Father's one and only Son. He was with God “in the beginning,” even before God made the world! Jesus Christ came down from heaven to become a human being, so that he could speak “the word of God” in common human language. The **words of Jesus** are the **words of God**. The Holy Bible says:

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honour at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.—Hebrews 1:1-3

In the past, God spoke through the prophets and holy men of ancient Israel. Now **God speaks through his Son, Jesus Christ**. In Jesus, we see exactly what God is like, for the **glory of God** shines from **Jesus** as light shines from the sun.

Only Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can speak with authority and truth about God. Jesus is the only person in human history who truly **knows** God. Jesus said:

My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.—Matthew 11:27

Only the Son of God knows the Father. Jesus is the eternal Son who was with God “in the beginning.” No other prophet or teacher knows the Father. Only Jesus can show us the way to the Father! Jesus said:

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.—John 14:6

Jesus is “**the way**” to God. We come to the Father only through the Son. There is no other way to God except through Jesus. Jesus said:

I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.—John 6:38

Jesus was sent by God. Only Jesus can show us the way to God because **Jesus comes from God.** Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came down from heaven to do his Father’s work. Jesus said:

I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing.—John 5:19, 20

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does his Father’s work. Jesus does only his Father’s will. Therefore, **Jesus shows us that God is love!**

Many stories in the Holy Bible show God’s love at work in the life of Jesus:

- Jesus’ healing hand upon the blind, deaf and lame shows God’s love for the afflicted.—Luke 18:35-43; Mark 7:31-37; Mark 2:1-12
- Jesus’ love and compassion for a poor widow whose son is dead shows God’s love for the sad and needy.—Luke 7:11-17

- Jesus' gentle hand upon the face of a leper shows God's love for the outcast.—Mark 1:40-45
- Jesus' miracle of fish and loaves, when he fed the large crowd in the wilderness, shows God's love for the hungry.—Mark 6:30-44
- Jesus' forgiving the sins of an “immoral” woman shows God's love for sinners.—Luke 7:36-50

The many loving things that Jesus did show us the Father's will at work. The loving heart of Jesus reveals the loving heart of God. **Jesus shows us that God is our loving Father.**

Jesus Our Saviour

We have learned that Jesus came to show us the Father's love. Jesus also came to **save the world** from sin. The Holy Bible says:

This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.—
1 Timothy 1:15

Jesus came to **save** sinners. We are **all** sinners. The Holy Bible says:

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.—Romans 3:23

We are all sinners because we fall short of God's “glorious standard.” But what is God's “glorious standard?” Jesus said:

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbour as yourself. The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.—
Matthew 22:37-40

God's glorious standard is “**love**.” Everyone falls short of God's standard of love. We do not love God with all our heart, soul and

mind. We do not love our neighbours as ourselves. Therefore, we are all sinners. The Holy Bible describes the harmful results of **sin**:

The wrong things the sinful self does are clear: committing sexual sin, being morally bad, doing all kinds of shameful things, worshiping false gods, taking part in witchcraft, hating people, causing trouble, being jealous, angry or selfish, causing people to argue and divide into separate groups, being filled with envy, getting drunk, having wild parties, and doing other things like this. I warn you now as I warned you before: The people who do these things will not have a part in God's kingdom.—Galatians 5:19-21

Sin brings pain, sorrow and suffering. Sin causes jealousy, anger, resentment and division. Sin divides families, communities and tribes.

Even worse, **sin separates us from God**. God is holy. God is pure. God is goodness and light. However, when we live in the darkness of sin, we build a wall that shuts out the light of God's love.

The Holy Bible tells many stories about people whose sins separate them from God. Long ago, God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell his people:

Indeed, the LORD's hand is not too short to save, and His ear is not too deaf to hear. But your evil deeds have built walls between you and your God, and your sins have made Him hide His face from you so that He does not listen.
—Isaiah 59:1, 2

Sins are like bricks in a wall. When we live our lives in sin, we build up a wall that separates us from God. Brick by brick, our sins shut out the light of God's love.

But there is good news! God sent his Son **Jesus Christ** into the world **to save us from our sins**. The Holy Bible says:

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he

will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.—Romans 5:8-11.

Although we are sinners, **God loves us!** God sent his Son to die for us and to wash away our sins with his blood. Jesus **makes us right** with God. In Jesus, we have a wonderful **new relationship** with God. In Jesus, we have **friendship** with God. The Holy Bible says:

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead: Come back to God! For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.—2 Corinthians 5:17-21

God was in Jesus Christ **reconciling** the world to himself. In other words, God sent his Son Jesus to **restore the relationship** between God and humanity that was broken by sin. Sin can no longer separate us from God, because Jesus has broken down the wall of sin and **brought us back** to the Father. Jesus is the "offering" for our sins. He shed his blood on the cross to wash away our sins and make us clean. Therefore, God no longer counts our sins against us! In Jesus, we are **new** persons. Jesus **makes us right** with God.

In My Father's House

Three days after Jesus died on the cross to wash away our sins with his blood and make us right with God, **he rose from the dead.** Soon,

Jesus returned to his Father in heaven. Before he went back to heaven, however, Jesus gave us a wonderful message of hope. Jesus said:

There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you.—John 14:2

Our Saviour Jesus Christ has returned to **his Father's house** in heaven. Jesus is **preparing a place** for us, so that we may live forever with him in the Father's house.

The Father's house is a place of love, joy, beauty, goodness and peace. Jesus often called the Father's house the "Kingdom of heaven." Jesus told many stories to help us see the beauty and joy of the "Kingdom of heaven." Jesus said:

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.—Matthew 13:44

Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it! —Matthew 13:45

The Kingdom of heaven is like a "**treasure!**" The Kingdom of heaven is like a "**pearl of great value!**" Jesus tells these stories to teach us that our Father's house—the Kingdom of heaven—is the greatest treasure we can ever find.

Jesus tells other stories about our Father's house. Jesus said the Kingdom of heaven is like a great "**wedding feast**" (Matthew 22:2; 25:1). In the days of Jesus, a "wedding feast" was a time of great joy, happiness and plenty. A wedding feast was a time when family, neighbours and community came together in peace and fellowship. Everyone put on their best clothes and celebrated the new marriage by feasting on fine food and making merry. Jesus uses this happy, joyous

celebration to help us understand the love, joy, beauty, peace and plenty that wait for us in our Father's house!

On the night before he died on the cross, Jesus prayed a special prayer to his Father in heaven. In his prayer, he prayed for those who believe in him. Jesus said:

Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!—
John 17:24

Jesus wants us with him in his Father's house. Jesus wants to share with us the love and glory that he enjoyed with the Father before the world began. Jesus came down from heaven to bring us home to the Father. **Jesus is the way to the Father's house!**

What Must We Do?

How do we **respond** to the great love God shows us in his Son? How do we show our **gratitude** for the riches God gives us in Jesus? The Holy Bible says:

Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News. The time promised by God has come at last! he said. The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!—Mark 1:14, 15

Jesus tells us to “**repent and believe the good news**” about God's love for all! This is how we respond to the great gift God gives us in his Son Jesus.

“**Repent**” means “**to change our minds.**” “Repent” means to stop believing in false gods and idols. “Repent” means to stop believing in false prophets. We must believe in the true God and his Son Jesus Christ. When Jesus was praying to his Father in heaven, he said:

This is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.—
John 17:3

The way to eternal life is to “know” God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ. We learn to “know” our Father in heaven by learning to “know” his Son Jesus. We learn to “know” Jesus in the pages of the Holy Bible. We learn to “know” Jesus in places where his people gather together in his Name.

“**Repent**” means “**to change our lives.**” We must not live in the darkness of sin. We must live in the light of God’s love and forgiveness. The Holy Bible says:

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.—1 John 4:9-11

“**Repent**” means to **follow Jesus’ way of love.** This is the way of **giving** to others. This is the way of **servicing** others. Our Father in heaven gave us his greatest gift. He gave us his precious Son to take away our sins, so that we may have eternal life and live in our Father’s house forever. We respond to our Father’s love by serving and helping others **in his Name.**

The Holy Spirit

But how are these things possible? How can we change our minds? How can we learn to know the true God and his Son Jesus? How can we change our lives? How can we learn to follow Jesus’ way of love? We can do these things because God will send us a “**Helper!**”

Before he returned to his Father’s house in heaven, Jesus promised that his Father would send a “**Helper,**” who would comfort us and help us to learn the many wonderful things Jesus said and did. The

“Helper” is the **Holy Spirit**, the Spirit of God, who comes to live in our hearts. Jesus said:

All who love me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. My Father and I will come to them and live with them. But anyone who does not love me does not obey my teaching. This teaching that you hear is not really mine. It is from my Father who sent me. I have told you all these things while I am with you. But the Helper will teach you everything and cause you to remember all that I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name.—John 14:23-26

The Father sends the **Holy Spirit** to help us. The Holy Spirit teaches us and helps us to remember all the wonderful things Jesus tells us. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit comes **to live in our hearts**, so that we may **believe** in Jesus and **follow** his way of love. The Holy Bible says:

For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.—Romans 5:5

The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with godly **love**. The Holy Spirit gives us **power** to live new lives. The Holy Bible says:

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.—Galatians 5:22-26

The Holy Spirit produces many good things in our lives. The Holy Spirit brings together a fellowship of believers who follow Jesus’ way of love. The Holy Spirit creates joy and peace among those who

believe in Jesus. The Holy Spirit sends us into the world to tell others the good news about Jesus.

The Secret of Our Lives

God is **love**. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is **Three Persons**, who eternally exist as **One God** in a fellowship of love.

- The **Father** loves the Son.
- The **Son** loves the Father.
- The **Holy Spirit** unites the Father and Son in eternal love.

God shares his love with us. The **Father** sends his Son to show us his love. The **Son** saves us from sin and prepares a place for us in our Father's house. The Father and Son send the **Holy Spirit** to live in our hearts, so that we may follow Jesus' way of love. The Holy Spirit lifts up our hearts, so that we may share in the love of the Father and Son.

Our Father in heaven loves us. He made us to enjoy his love forever. The Holy Bible says:

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world do not recognise that we are God's children because they do not know him.—1 John 3:1

Here is the “secret” of our lives. Here is the reason we were born! Here is the “mystery” that the people who belong to this world do not know. **We are God's children!** Our Father in heaven loves us. He created us to share his love with us. God created us to enjoy **fellowship** with him now and forever!

No matter how difficult life is today, our hearts may be joyful, as we look to the future in **hope**. Jesus has returned to his Father in heaven. He is preparing a place for us. In our Father's house, we will live forever in the love, joy, beauty, peace and harmony that is the fellowship of the **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**.

Conclusion

Long ago, a great Christian teacher named Paul spoke to a group of men who worshipped false gods and idols. We find Paul's words in the Holy Bible. Paul said:

God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands. Nor does he need anything that we can supply by working for him, since it is he himself who gives life and breath and everything else to everyone. From one human being he created all races of people and made them live throughout the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places where they would live. He did this so that they would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt around for him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us; as someone has said,

In him we live and move and exist. As some of your poets have said, we too are his children.

Since we are God's children, we should not suppose that his nature is anything like an image of gold or silver or stone, shaped by human art and skill. God has overlooked the times when people did not know him, but now he commands all of them everywhere to turn away from their evil ways. For he has fixed a day in which he will judge the whole world with justice by means of a man he has chosen. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising that man from death!—
Acts 17:24-31

God commands people everywhere to repent and believe the good news about Jesus!

Blessing

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.—
2 Corinthians 13:14

Prayer

To begin following the way of Jesus, please pray the following prayer:

Thank you heavenly **Father** for loving me. Thank you for making me your child.

Thank you Father for sending your **Son** Jesus to be my Saviour and to take away all my sins. Thank you for the love and forgiveness you have shown me in Jesus.

Thank you dear God for sending the **Holy Spirit** to live in my heart. Come Holy Spirit. Guide me into all Truth. Teach me to love God and my neighbours, and strengthen me to follow the way of Jesus. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

Everyone who wants to follow the way of Jesus should be baptised. The Holy Bible says:

Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.—Acts 2:38

Baptism is the outward sign of your personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. For baptism, and to learn more about the gift of the Holy Spirit, please contact:

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