

PLAN OF SALVATION

CHRISTIANITY 101

Perhaps the greatest mystery of life is that the Creator of the universe loves you. He spins the galaxies and directs the course of history, yet he also wants to have a personal relationship with you. He wants to be closer to you than your parents, a best friend or even a girlfriend.

FIRST, SOME BAD NEWS.

Not only does God exist, but he's also holy. That means he's perfect. He's never made a mistake or done something he's regretted. He's never been guilty of a crime or broken a law. In short, God is free from any hint of sin. He's so holy and perfect that someone who sins can't even stand in his presence. Even worse news for us is that sin *must* be paid for—and the price is high. God said that the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) and that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22). Sin is serious. The Old Testament describes how the Hebrew people offered sacrifices of lambs and goats to make payment for their sins (see Leviticus 1–7).

SECOND, SOME GOOD NEWS.

After thousands of years of sacrifices, God provided a better way. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, as the perfect Lamb. Jesus was both fully God and fully human. As God, he was perfect in every way. As a man, he knows what it's like to be us. He experienced the same temptations we experience, and he represents us before God at all times. He died on the cross for us (Matthew 27:32–61). Proving he had power over all sin and death, he didn't stay dead. After three days he was raised to life again (Matthew 28). Because he was without fault and sin, he was the perfect sacrifice—a sacrifice so complete that it's powerful enough to forgive all your sins—past, present and future (Hebrews 10:17–18).

Jesus paid the penalty we deserve for our sins. In exchange, he gives us his righteousness. In other words, when God sees us, he doesn't see our sin any more; he sees Jesus' holiness, which has been given to us (2 Corinthians 5:17–21).

SO, WHAT'S CHRISTIANITY?

Simply put, Christianity is aligning yourself with Christ.

- It's admitting that you have sinned and that your sin is really offensive to God (Psalm 53:3).
- It's recognizing that there's nothing you can do to pay for your sins (Romans 3:23).
- It's confessing your sins to God. Even though he already knows them, he wants us to confess them—to come to grips with them (1 John 1:9).
- It's following him—getting to know him, reading his Word and doing your best to follow him daily (Romans 12:1–2).

SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

If you'd like to become a follower of Christ and enjoy friendship with God, here's a great way to get started.

Pray. Here's a prayer that can help you give your life to Jesus:

“God, I believe in you. I know that I am a sinner. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins and make me right with you. Please come into my life. I give it to you. I want to live for you from now on.”

Read. Spend some regular time getting to know God better. Start with the 30 Days for New Christians reading plan on page 1641. Read some of God's Word each day. Spend some time thinking about what you read and talking with God. Tell him about your day, the things you're learning, the things that frustrate you and the things that you're excited about. As a true friend, he cares about you and your life.

Don't Go It Alone. The Christian life isn't meant to be lived alone. Spend time with other Christians. Get involved in a church or youth group that loves God and wants you to know him better.

Remember . . . Above all else, remember that God's friendship with you is permanent. Sure, there will be times when you make mistakes. You'll fail, you'll sin and you'll even feel guilty. There will be times when you disappoint yourself and others. In those moments, though, remember that God is your constant companion. He remains your proud friend, loving Father and faithful Savior. He'll never leave you; he'll never forsake you. He promises you that (Romans 8:28–39).

If you've recently become a Christian, we'd love to hear your story. Log on to www.RevolutionBible.com, click on the “Tell Us Your Story” link and tell us when and how you decided to follow Christ.

READING PLANS

30 DAYS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

Day	Theme	Passage
1	The Fall of Humanity	Genesis 3:1–19
2	A People for God	Genesis 28:10–15; 32:22–28
3	The Ten Commandments	Exodus 20:1–17
4	Sacrifices Required Under Law	Leviticus 5:14–19
5	Punishments for Sin Under Law	Leviticus 20:7–27
6	Obedience From Love	Deuteronomy 11:13–21
7	Cycles of Disobedience	Judges 2:10–19
8	The People Demand a King	1 Samuel 8
9	Saul Fails and Is Rejected	1 Samuel 15:17–23
10	Many Kings Fail	Jeremiah 1–17
11	The Sin of the People	Ezekiel 20:5–26
12	An Eternal King Promised	Jeremiah 23:1–6; Isaiah 9:6–7; Zechariah 9:9–10
13	The Promised King Is Born	Luke 2:1–20
14	The Word Became Flesh	John 1:1–18
15	Signs and Miracles of Authority	Matthew 9:1–8; Luke 13:10–17
16	Jesus Fulfills the Law	Matthew 5:17–20; Romans 8:1–4
17	Jesus Teaches About New Life	John 3
18	Jesus Willingly Taken	John 18:1–11
19	Jesus' Death and Resurrection	Luke 23:44–24:12
20	Christ a Sacrifice for All	Hebrews
21	God's Wrath Explained	Romans 1:18–32
22	God's Judgment Explained	Romans 2:5–11
23	Righteousness by Faith	Romans 3:9–26
24	Life Through Christ	Romans 5:12–21
25	Life by the Spirit	Romans 8:1–17; Galatians 5:16–26
26	Living Sacrifices	Romans 12
27	Walking in the Light	1 John 1–2
28	Living for God	1 Peter 1–11
29	Love for one Another	1 John 3:11–24
30	Promise of Eternity	2 Corinthians 5:1–10; Revelation 21:1–4