

The God of the Bible and You

A MAN was in the sea clinging to a raft for days, exhausted and close to death. He saw a ship in the distance, which spotted him and drew alongside. A voice shouted down to him, “You’re all right now. We’ve come to save you!” Weakly, he cried, “No thanks, I’m alright as I am.”

God wants to save people from sin and death. But first we have to realise that our position as members of the human race is desperate and that we need His help. Without that, none of us will have a truly fulfilled life or exist after our death.

The soul who sins shall die... But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live... Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord God, “and not that he should turn from his ways and live? (Ezekiel 18:20–23).

God is utterly opposed to sin, but He will respond to anyone who recognises their plight and asks for help. First, we have to find out how to get that help and what God’s conditions are.

What does God Want from Us?

1. Read What He Says

God wants us to take time to read His Word – the Bible – and to get to know Him



and His Son, the Lord Jesus. That’s the only way to discover God’s promises and how He wants us to live.

2. Be Baptised

Jesus himself said that his followers should be baptised, when they are old enough to understand the Gospel and what discipleship means.

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).

The method he taught and practised was immersion in water, not a mere sprinkling on the head. True baptism is the way God has appointed for us to declare publicly our belief of the Gospel and to show that we are ‘putting to death’ our old way of life, dominated by sin. We rise from that watery

‘grave’ to a new life that is directed by our wish to follow Christ. In being reborn we follow the pattern of Jesus who died and rose to a new life.

Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3–4).

3. Join in the Fellowship of Believers

Baptised believers are instructed to meet together to worship God, by praising and thanking Him for all that He is and does. They meet specially to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus by eating bread and drinking wine in his memory. They help each other to live according to God’s commandments and to prepare themselves for when Jesus returns to the earth. Together they try to tell others the good news about “the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12).

4. Live Like New People

In the near future God is going to fill the world with His glory, in His Kingdom. Those who are baptised into Jesus will want to give God glory now, by telling others about their belief in the God of the Bible and by behaving like disciples of Jesus. They aim to lead God-centred lives, trusting in Him and the Lord Jesus.

Having our sins forgiven does not mean that we can behave as we like, in the hope

that God will overlook even our worst excesses. It must lead to a determination to resist sin in all its forms.

On the other hand, unlike Jesus, it is not possible for us to be sinless. Because Jesus actually did conquer sin, God shows mercy to the rest of us by forgiving our sins. In other words, as far as God is concerned, ‘it’s the thought that counts’. We should therefore continually pray to Him for forgiveness.

Reconciled to God

Those who turn to God have a joy and an inner peace that results from being reconciled to the God of the whole earth. For the breach that exists between God and us is healed, when He forgives our sins.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered... I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin (Psalm 32:1, 5).

Joy also comes from becoming part of God’s family – a new relationship with Him, His Son and those who also believe the teachings of Jesus and his apostles.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:1–2).



Life Now and in the Future

Suddenly, life will have a new purpose and meaning. Our goal in life will no longer be merely to 'get on'. There is a better, a higher aim in life that is altogether more satisfying. Possessions and careers will not seem so important. Losing them will no longer seem so threatening. Jesus put this life into the right perspective, when he said:

Seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you (Luke 12:31).

Baptism gives a real hope for the future. God offers us something we don't deserve and can't achieve for ourselves – immortality in a perfect world on this earth when Jesus returns.

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

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22).

In an Old Testament passage that describes what the Kingdom of God will be like, the prophet refers not only to the King but also to his helpers:

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice (Isaiah 32:1).

Jesus himself promised his faithful followers both immortality and power in the Kingdom which is to come:

He who overcomes, and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations — 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' — as I also have received from my Father (Revelation 2:26–27).

What Are You Waiting For?

Most people make some provision for the future. They plan their education and careers in the hope of a good life. They may buy a lottery ticket, even though the odds against winning are very high. They take out insurance policies, in case the worst happens. They plan for retirement, to enjoy later life.

The return of Jesus Christ is certainly going to happen. How are you preparing?

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