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- (1) John 4:4-42
- (2) John 10:10
- (3) Genesis 2:8-9, 2:16-18, Genesis 3
- (4) Revelation 21:6-8
- (5) Psalm 19:1
- (6) *It Couldn't Just Happen* by Lawrence O. Richards ©1989
- (7) Romans 1:20
- (8) Romans 3:23
- (9) II Peter 3:9
- (10) I Peter 1:18-21
- (11) Genesis 12:1-3
- (12) Leviticus 6:24-25
- (13) Hebrews 10:4-7
- (14) Luke 1:30-33
- (15) John 10:14-18
- (16) John 3:16
- (17) Acts 2:38
- (18) Romans 5:9-11
- (19) John 17:3
- (20) Revelation 21:1-4
- (21) I Thessalonians 4:16-17
- (22) Ephesians 2:8&9
- (23) Luke 2:1-7; Micah 5:2
- (24) Mark 15:16-39; John 19:16-37
- (25) www.desiringgod.org/articles/historical-evidence-for-the-resurrection
- (26) Luke 16:19-31
- (27) John 7:37-39

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I have decided to accept God's gift of eternal life.

Signature

Date

THE STORY OF GOD'S LOVE
AND
THE GIFT HE WANTS TO GIVE TO EVERYONE

In the best-selling book of all time, the Bible, we find a story of a woman's encounter with a man named Jesus.(1) John 1:14 tells us that this Jesus was God in human flesh and that He was “full of grace and truth.” One day Jesus passed through an area called Samaria. Being weary from His journey, He stopped at a well to get a drink. He asked a woman there to draw some water for Him. Without her revealing what her life had been like, Jesus told her she had been married five times and was living with a man who wasn't her husband. Out of love and compassion, He offered her “living water”—not literal water, but a quenching of spiritual thirst that can only come from knowing God personally.(2)

You might be thinking, “Well, that's a nice story. But if God is so loving and compassionate, why does He allow pain and suffering and death?” The Bible gives us the answer. Those things are the result of man's decision, just a short time after creation, to rebel against God's perfect plan for a beautiful life. There were many trees in the Garden of Eden, but Adam and Eve chose to eat of the one tree God warned them not to eat of. They allowed Satan, clothed as a serpent, to cast doubt on what God had said. Their desire for the forbidden fruit overcame their faith in God's wisdom. Man's disobedience, or “sin,” separated us from friendship with God and a life free of problems and resulted in spiritual and physical death.(3) The ultimate punishment, sometimes called the “second death,” would come after death.(4)

Of course there are many who refuse to believe that there really is a God who created us. The Bible reminds us that the skies make a loud and clear statement about God's creative work.(5) Looking at the earth from space, it is strikingly different from the other planets orbiting our sun. Earth is the only planet where water exists on the surface as liquid. If the earth were too small, its gravity would not hold our air and water. If it were too large, the increase in gravity would crush most living things. If it were too far from the sun, it would not receive enough heat. Without a large moon, the sea would have no tides. All the necessary factors are finely tuned for life on this planet. The anatomy of the human eyes with which we view the skies is one of a multitude of proofs that a designer was required for creation and that happening by chance is not a reasonable possibility.(6) The Bible plainly states that man has no legitimate defense for denying God's existence.(7)

We have to admit that we have all done wrong and fallen short of God's perfect plan, as Adam and Eve did.(8) But God wanted every person on Earth to have an opportunity to be reconciled to Him and be saved from the ultimate punishment that results from sin.(9) He designed a plan even before creation to save us from the fate of being punished forever.(10)

God's plan included centuries of preparation. He chose a man of faith named Abram (later called Abraham) to father a people through whom His plan would come to pass.(11) Genesis 15:6 says, "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." God required His chosen people, Abraham's descendents, to make sacrifices of perfect animals to foreshadow the culmination of His plan.(12) In due time, the One who would be the Perfect Sacrifice for all time was sent to the earth.(13) It was Jesus, the second person of what is referred to as the "Trinity"--one God in three persons. Jesus, the Son of God, was born on the earth(14) and lived among men for 33 years. Then He willingly laid down His life and suffered the cruelty of dying on a cross for our sake.(15) God the Father, because of His great love for us, allowed His Son to be crucified so that we could be released from our ultimate punishment.(16) After Jesus rose from the dead and returned to Heaven, His disciples preached that everyone should repent and be baptized in water in Jesus' name so they could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.(17) To "repent" is to regret the way you have been living and turn to God. Romans 10:9 says, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Once a person takes the step of repenting and believing Jesus died to pay for his sins, the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, will dwell within him. He is no longer separated from God.(18) This is what the Bible calls "eternal life"—being spiritually alive forever because we have come to know God personally.(19)

This life is so short compared to eternity. If we accept God's gift of salvation by faith, our physical death will be a doorway to a great life in Heaven with God forever and ever, where there will be no more suffering or death or sorrow.(20) Believers who are still alive when Jesus returns to the earth will gain entrance to Heaven without having to go through the doorway of physical death.(21)

Many people are convinced that they will go to Heaven if they do more good than bad. But that isn't God's standard. We can only enter Heaven on the merits of Jesus, who took our punishment in our place.(22) Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Can we trust those words of Jesus, or could He have been some kind of hoax? Jesus' life fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies, such as His birth taking place in Bethlehem.(23) Psalm 22 is full of word pictures, written hundreds of years before, that describe the circumstances of Jesus' crucifixion. (24) The words Jesus spoke while on the earth were powerful. Mark 1:22 says, "The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law." Jesus did many miracles. John wrote, "Jesus performed many other signs, which are not recorded in the book. But these are written that you may believe that

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:30-31) Another confirmation of Jesus' authenticity is His resurrection. There are many considerations to help support the reality of the resurrection. One of the strongest is the fact that it isn't likely that ten of Jesus' disciples would have given their lives as martyrs for someone they knew to be a fraud.(25) After Jesus told His doubting disciple, Thomas, to feel the wounds in His hands and side, "Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'" Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' " (John 20:28-29) Will you be counted among those who haven't seen Jesus and His wounds with your own eyes, but yet have chosen to believe?

Jesus told a story about a rich man who lived in luxury every day but had no time for God. He ignored the needs of a poor beggar named Lazarus. When both men died, the rich man found himself in a "place of torment", while Lazarus was in a place of comfort, with those who believed. The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers to turn to God. But Abraham said that if they hadn't believed the prophets, they would choose not to believe even if someone came back from the dead.(26)

Did you ever get a gift from someone, but just laid it aside and left it unopened? A gift is useless, unless it is opened. Like the woman at the well in Samaria, you must choose whether you will believe in Jesus and receive the "living water" He offers to all.(27) In the very last chapter of the Bible, we find these words: "Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life." (Revelation 22:17)

All you need to do is tell God:

- (A) You are sorry you have been living your own way.
- (B) You believe Jesus died to pay for your sins and rose from the dead.
- (C) You want to accept His gift of eternal life and begin to live in a way that pleases Him, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

If you have decided to accept God's gift of eternal life, then the words of Romans 15:13 apply to you, as a believer: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

