

Gospel

Message and Response

The Bible is full of life and death statements. God's Word will say "do this or you will die" or His word will say "do this and you will live." These statements are important since they point out things that God requires for you and I to have eternal life. Some people say that the Bible is all a matter of interpretation. Most of these "life and death" statements *do not need interpretation*. It is as if someone were yelling in your bedroom window at night, "GET OUT OF THE HOUSE, THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!" This statement is clear and requires no interpretation. What *is* required is action. In the case of a house fire, we must leave the house or we will die! If God says it, we must believe it and do what he says or we will die (miss eternal life). What follows are some of God's life and death statements directly from the Bible. These verses are indicated by the "(L & D)".

The Identity of Jesus

(Look the verses up in your Bible)

In John 8:24 (L & D) Jesus says that if you and I do not believe *he is the one he claims to be* we will die in our sins. Most people do not want to die in their sins? How can we avoid this? Look at the verse. To live we must believe he is who he claims to be. Who did he claim to be? In Matthew 16:13-16 Jesus talks about his identity with his disciples. Peter says that he is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Is that all we must believe about Jesus' identity to be saved? In John 1:1 the Bible says that the word was there in the beginning and that it (the Word) was with God and the Word was God. Verse 14 of John chapter 1 says that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus as the Word was God! I must believe that he is Jehovah God or I will die in my sins. Look again at John 8:24. The phrase "the one I claim to be" (NIV) or "*He*" (KJV) is in brackets or italicized. This indicates that the phrase was added by the translators. The original text says that unless you believe that "I am" you will die in your sins. God used this same name in Exodus 3:14 when he spoke to Moses from the burning bush. Jesus is claiming to be God. The Jews he was talking to realized what he was saying. After such a declaration in John 8:58 they were ready to stone him for blasphemy. Col. 2:9 says that Jesus was fully God in bodily form as a man. His mother Mary was human and his Father God is divine. He is therefore both God and man. He is not only God and not only man, but both God and man.

Sin Problem

Why did God have to come to the Earth in the form of a man? Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Sin makes us dead to God Eph. 2:1. Sin makes us God's enemy - Romans 5:9. We sin all the time. We sin by the things we say, do, and think. We even sin by failing to do the things we know we should do. We needed a mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). We need a "go between" to fix our relationship with God who is the source of all life. We need Jesus because the wages of sin (just one sin) is death - L&D Rom. 6:23. Jesus is the perfect mediator because he is both God and Man. He understands both sides. He knows God's side and man's side because he is both God and man. He was tempted in every way just as we are (man's side) and yet was without sin (God's side) (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus is the one who is able to bring both sides into agreement again. God is so pure, holy and righteous that he cannot tolerate sin in His holy presence. We are like contamination to him. God wants us to be with Him. If He can get rid of our sin contamination we can be together in a right relationship. Jesus makes it possible for us to be brought back together with God. How did he do it? How did God take care of our sin problem and make it possible for us to be with him? A right relationship with the creator is made possible through something called the "gospel."

The Message

(Look the verses up in your Bible)

In Romans 1:16 (L&D), the apostle Paul writes that the gospel is God's power to save us if we believe it. This is like one of those life and death statements - "Believe the gospel and you'll be saved!" I want to be saved! So what is the gospel that I must believe? What is God's power to save me? I want to believe it so I can be saved! **The word gospel means "good news"**. Some people say the gospel is the whole Bible. Others say it is the first four books of the New Testament. I have heard what people say, but I want to know what God means when he uses a word like "gospel." The Bible interprets itself! 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 says that the gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is what is of first importance. It is this gospel that saves us (1 Corinthians 15:2). Galatians 1:6-9 (L & D) says that if we fail to teach the true gospel we are accursed or eternally condemned. If the gospel (the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus/1 Corinthians 15:1-4) is so important, let's break it down into its component parts. Let's find out about this "good news"!

THE DEATH

Romans 5:9-10 says that we are justified by his blood and reconciled to God through the death of his son. His death? Hey! That verse is talking about His death. That's the first part of the gospel! God makes friends with us through the death of Jesus. How's that? Well, it is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from sin, *right?* Where was the blood shed? In his death: on the cross. If the blood takes our sins away then we get in on **spiritual life**. We are no longer dead to God! (Ephesians 2:1). We are made spiritually alive through the death of Christ. The last part of Romans 5:10 states that we shall be saved by his life. How's that? His life is his resurrection from the grave (physical death). How is his life (his resurrection) going to save us? What does it save us from?

THE RESURRECTION

Jesus was raised so that we could conquer physical death. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 says that Christ is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (died). We die in Adam (the Earthly man); in Christ we will all be made alive! We will be made alive if we belong to him when he returns. 1 Corinthians 15:42-58 talks about some things that will happen at the resurrection. It says our buried (planted) physical bodies will be raised as spiritual bodies. It says that these new "spiritual" bodies will give us **immortality!** This is **GOOD NEWS!**

Gospel Conclusion

2 Tim. 1:10 says that life and immortality were brought to light through the **gospel** (death and resurrection). **Life (spiritual life)** comes through the death of Christ and **immortality (physical immortality)** comes through the resurrection of Christ. This is **GOOD NEWS!** This is the **GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!**

Believe Jesus is God and that he died for your sins and was raised from the dead

Repent of Sin – change your heart and life

Confess Him – before men declare Jesus as Lord

Be Baptized – in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins

Be Faithful – as in marriage, we must be faithful to the Lord until death

- Meet with the rest of the saints (Go to the church assemblies and Bible classes)
- Read & study the Bible (apply it to yourself)
- Pray for and serve others

The Response

(Look the verses up in your Bible)

How do we get in on this good news? Do you want to go to heaven? I want to go to heaven! I want to be forgiven of my sins and be raised to live forever. Let's look at another life and death statement.

2 Thess. 1:7-9 (L&D) says that when the Lord returns he will take vengeance on those that do not know God and those that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It says they will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord. Who are these people that will be *punished* with everlasting destruction? It will be those people who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel. We can get to "know God" from his word. We can talk to God through prayer. But how do we "obey the gospel" (gospel being the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus) and avoid everlasting destruction? Whatever it means to "obey the gospel" we MUST DO IT. If we fail to obey the gospel it will mean everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord! To find out how we obey the gospel (the death, burial and resurrection) why don't we LET THE BIBLE INTERPRET ITSELF! Read Rom. 6:3-4 and to find out how we obey or reenact the gospel. *All of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death; we were therefore buried with him that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we too should walk in newness of life.* Why would God want us to get "into" the death of Christ this way (Rom. 6:3)? The reason is that the forgiveness of sins is in the blood of Jesus. That blood was shed IN HIS DEATH.

Question

Can we be justified (saved) outside the blood of Christ?
Where was the blood shed?
How do we get "into his death" according to Rom. 6:3.

Bible Answer

Bible Answer: No! (Rom. 5:9)
Bible Answer: In his death. (Jn. 19:34)
We get into the death of Christ when we are baptized into his death. (Rom. 6:3)

Popular Traditions:

Can a person get into his death by praying on a front pew? Bible Answer: No
Can a person get into his death by asking Jesus into his heart? Bible Answer: No
Can a person get into his death by being good and going to church? Bible Answer: No

How does a person get into the death of Jesus Christ where the blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins?

Bible Answer: Rom. 6:3

Rom. 6:5 is a great life promise. *If we are united with him in the likeness of his death we will certainly be with him in his resurrection.* Baptism is where we get the forgiveness of sins - Acts 2:38. It's where we get "into" Christ and "put on" Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). It's not a work of man. It's a work of God. Man responds in faith (Col. 2:12).

Confess and Repent

Another L & D from the Bible is Luke 13:3, 5 (L&D). We must change our heart and life or we will perish. We must also confess or declare the true identity of Jesus according Matt. 10:32-33 (724) and Rom. 10:9-10 (L&D). Repent or perish! Confess and be saved!

One Body - the Church

Once we have done the things listed above, God adds us to his one and only church. You can't "join" God's church. Acts 2:42, 47 (The Lord adds you as a member); Matt. 16:18 (Jesus' church); Eph. 1:22-23 (body = church); Eph. 4:4 (one body or church), 1 Cor. 12:12-13, Acts 20:28 (church purchased with His blood).

How are you doing in your relationship to the Lord? Do you know for sure without a doubt that you would go to be with him if the Lord returned today? Are you in Him? Have you "obeyed the gospel"? If not, read Acts 22:16 like God was asking you this question and then give God your answer. Why not "call on His name" just as Paul did nearly 2000 years ago.