

8 – Born to Live Forever



The Secret of Immortality

1



2

The earth shook. The powerful tremors sent shock waves through the entire city. Office buildings collapsed and homes crumbled. Hospitals, schools and churches were destroyed. The earthquake in El Salvador killed nearly 3,000 people instantly. Thousands more were left homeless. Rescuers worked day and night searching for victims. They found only a few left alive. After four days of continuous digging, someone noticed a half-buried arm amidst the rubble. Amazingly, it began to slowly move! Rescue workers dug furiously. It took them nearly four hours to uncover a middle-aged man from underneath the debris. He was alive. He had survived for four days without food or water. Later in the hospital, he was asked how he possibly could have lived under such amazingly difficult conditions. His answer: "I willed to live. I gasped for air. I did not want to die. I believed help was on its way."



3

We were born with this desire to live. As humans we are bonded together by our common desire to live.



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And when a human life is threatened, people go to incredible, heroic lengths to save others. It could be a child trapped in a burning house. Passengers aboard a crippled ship stranded at sea.



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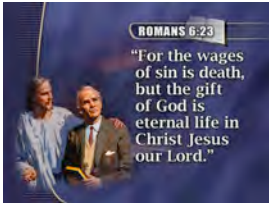
A climber stranded on a dangerous mountainside ledge. Or victims trapped in the rubble of an earthquake. When a life is at risk, people will risk their own lives to save another.

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Yet the truth that none of us likes to think about is that the lives of every last one of us are in danger.
Not just in danger, either.
We're each doomed to die.



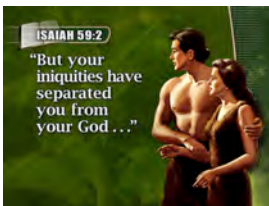
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(Text: Romans 6:23)
“For the wages of sin,” the Bible says, “is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus the Lord.”
Romans 6:23.
Sin is poisonous stuff—it’s deadly.



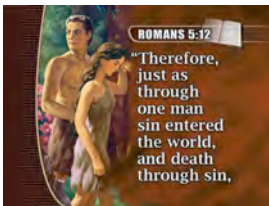
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Why is it lethal? Because it separates us from the Source of all life—God Himself, who created us.



9

(Text: Isaiah 59:2)
“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from God.” Isaiah 59:2.
God is the source of all life, and when Adam and Eve sinned, they began to die. And every one of us has sinned. We all are under the sentence of death.



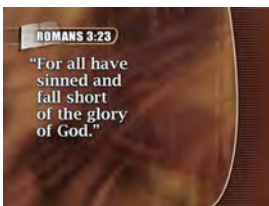
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(Text: Romans 5:12)
“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin,



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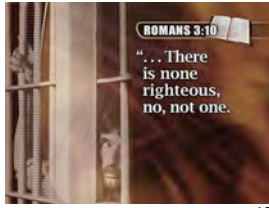
and thus death spread to all men, because all have sinned.”
Romans 5:12



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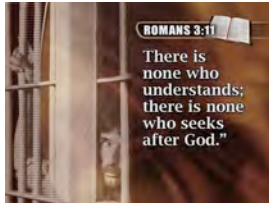
(Text: Romans 3:23)
“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23.

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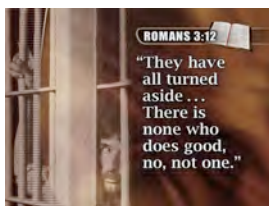
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(Text: Romans 3:10-12)
“...There is none righteous, no, not one.



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There is none who understands; there is none that seeks after God.



15

“They have all turned aside . . . There is none who does good, no not one.”
Romans 3:10-12.



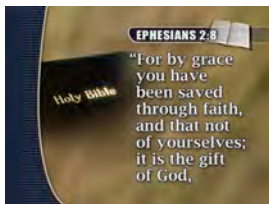
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Our original parents, Adam and Eve, chose to cut themselves off from God by disobeying Him and going their own way.



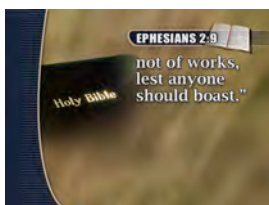
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Adam would die because of his sin.
So too would all who descended from him—including each one of us.
The bad news is that we’re destined for eternal death unless someone saves us. The good news is that Someone has!



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(Text: Ephesians 2:8, 9)
“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God,



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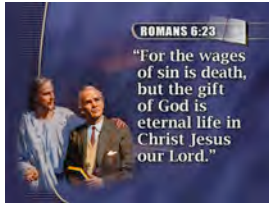
not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
Ephesians 2:8, 9.
Yes, we have all sinned.
We need to recognize that!

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20

A person with a fatal illness who never recognizes his or her problem or seeks medical help will die. Knowing our lost condition is important. But so is knowing that there is a solution!



21

(Text: Romans 6:23)

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6:23.



22

Salvation is a gift.

We don't deserve it.

We can't earn it by our own good works.

We can't buy it at any price.

Yet many people believe that human beings somehow earn or merit forgiveness and eternal life by doing good deeds. They may even seek divine favor by unusual acts of physical abuse.



23

Some people sit on beds of spikes, believing that by torturing their bodies they can earn God's approval.



24

Others beat and bruise their bodies with whips and chains, or pierce themselves with sharp hooks.



25

Some walk barefoot on hot coals in their search for a spiritual experience or self-improvement.

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26

Others believe they gain merit for a future life by building temples or feeding the holy men.



27

And for some, one of the surest ways of earning favor with God is a pilgrimage to Mecca or dying in defense of their faith.

Yes, the religion of many is a religion of works, hoping to do enough good to balance out the bad.



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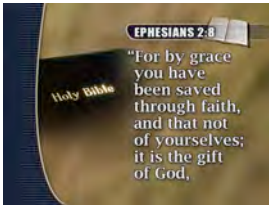
Many Christians unwittingly do the same thing. They attend church, give offerings, and follow the Bible's Golden Rule, thinking they earn favor with God and thus deserve eternal life.

But is that possible?



29

Can man, through some means of physical punishment, mental anguish or deed of kindness, bribe God into granting him forgiveness and eternal life?



30

(Text: Ephesians 2:8, 9)

The Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,



31

not of works, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9.



32

We cannot save ourselves by our own works—we must depend on God's grace and His love and favor, which He freely gives us.

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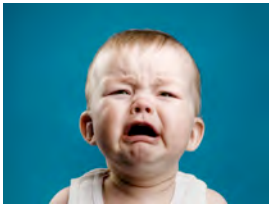
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But why would the mighty God who rules the universe be concerned about people on our little planet? Why didn't He just abandon selfish, rebellious man and leave him to suffer the results of his sin?



34

(Text: 1 John 4:8)
The answer is found in John's first letter:
"God is love."
1 John 4:8.
Some of you are parents.



35

And you know what it's like to have a baby begin to fuss and cry, even in the middle of the night. You try everything to make things better, but nothing seems to help. You walk the floor, sing to the baby, and try the advice of friends and family, but nothing works. Now let me ask you something: No matter how tired you are, no matter how long the baby is sick, do you ever even think of giving the baby away or leaving it to suffer alone?



36

No? Why? Because you love that little helpless baby all the more because of the pain and suffering he or she has to endure. God's children on Planet Earth became sick with the disease of sin, and the pain and suffering they endure because of it only makes God love them even more.



37

That is what God is like!
Never has God considered just walking away from us!



38

Never has He considered leaving us to die and suffer the results of our rebellion.

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39

(Text: 2 Peter 3:9)

The Bible says, “The Lord is . . . longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9.



40

Regardless of how good or bad you may be, God loves you and wants to save you.

He is not willing that you should die.



41

Oh yes, we deserve death. And because He is a just God the demands of a broken law must be met.



42

If even earthly governments cannot tolerate lawlessness and survive for long, how could God allow His law to be broken and no justice be served, no consequences result?



43

Though God is a God of everlasting love, He is also a God of justice.

On Mount Sinai He described Himself:



44

(Text: Exodus 34:6, 7)

“...The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,



45

maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished.”

Exodus 34:6, 7.

A fair and loving God found a way to save us and still be just.

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46

He found a perfect Substitute to die in our place, paying the penalty for our sins so that we could live.

John, the beloved disciple, explains it this way:



47

(Text: John 3:16)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,



48

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16.

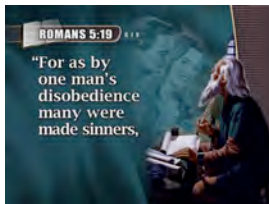


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Jesus came to live on Earth as a man, facing the same problems and temptations that every human has faced.

He lived a life of perfect obedience.

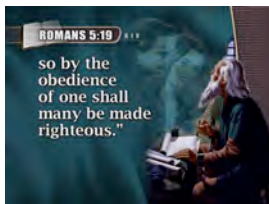
But He was not only our example as a perfect man. He was also the God who created us, whose law had been broken. He took upon Himself the guilt of every person who would ever live, and died in his or her behalf.



50

(Text: Romans 5:19)

Paul wrote, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,



51

so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Romans 5:19.

Thankfully the Scriptures not only reveal that we are sinners, but that there is a wonderful Savior!

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God's chosen people, the Israelites, daily witnessed, in symbols and ceremonies, an illustration of God's plan to redeem fallen man.

The daily sacrifices were intended to remind God's people of a coming Deliverer who would die for their sins and restore them to Himself.



When a person sinned he went to the sanctuary, taking with him a sacrificial animal.

He placed his hand on the head of the animal and confessed his sin.

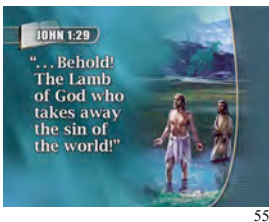
Then he took a knife and killed it, symbolizing that his sins caused the death of the innocent sacrifice.

Unpleasant? Yes.



But Jesus' death on the cross of Calvary, the real price paid for our sins, was far more unpleasant.

The sacrifices made in the sanctuary only pointed forward to the innocent Lamb of God who would die in our place for our sins.



(Text: John 1:29)

Jesus was the true sacrifice. As Jesus came to be baptized, John said, "...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

He was the innocent Lamb! He was the only One, the Bible records,



(Text: 1 Peter 2:22)

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"

1 Peter 2:22.

Though He was innocent, Jesus was beaten, mocked, and sentenced to be crucified – one of the worst forms of execution.



He could have resisted. He could have escaped. But He willingly died for your sins and mine.

And as God placed upon Him the sins of the whole world,

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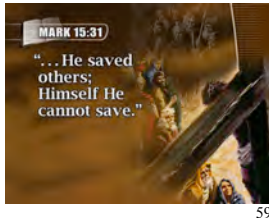


(Text: Matthew 27:46)

He cried out, “...My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
Matthew 27:46.

He felt the terrible separation that sin brings. Jesus could not bear the agony of separation from the Father.

It broke His heart.



(Text: Mark 15:31)

The crowd shouted, “...He saved others; himself he cannot save.”
Mark 15:31.

And that was true!

He could not save Himself and still save others.



He was paying the price for a lost race, a broken law, the wages of sin.

Thus it was that God, with a love that could not be satisfied until man was restored to His family, gave His own son to die in man’s place, as his Substitute.

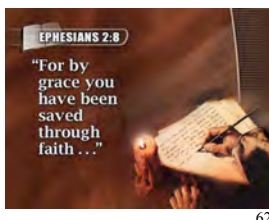


Jesus was treated as we deserve that we might be treated as He deserves.

He was condemned for our sins and suffered our death that we might have His life.

In this way God could give us eternal life and still be just.

Not because of any good thing we have done, but because of what God did in Jesus!

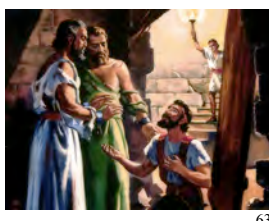


(Text: Ephesians 2:8)

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, said,
“For by grace you have been saved through faith.”

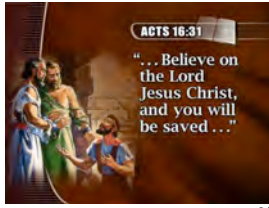
Ephesians 2:8.

This faith is the very heart of salvation.



When the Philippian jailer asked Paul what he must do to be saved, Paul answered,

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64

(Text: Acts 16:31)

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”

Acts 16:31.



65

However, just agreeing in your mind that Christ lived on earth is not enough. That is not saving faith.

There is more to it than that.



66

(Text: James 2:19)

The Bible says that “the devils also believe, and tremble.” James 2:19.



67

To believe in Jesus means more than acknowledging that He died over 1900 years ago.

The Bible says,



68

(Text: Proverbs 3:5, 6)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

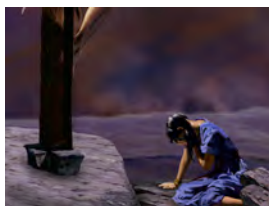


69

in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Trusting Jesus means yielding our hearts, our minds, our ways to Him.



70

It means believing that it is not what we can do that saves us, but what Christ did for us on Calvary.

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71

The glory all belongs to God!

It is grace on God's part and faith on our part: trusting God completely—willingly letting Him control our lives.



72

Receiving salvation is really so simple, yet many make it seem so difficult and complicated.

There's one important question we need to know the answer to. It is the same question that the jailer asked Paul and Silas that dark night in Philippi:

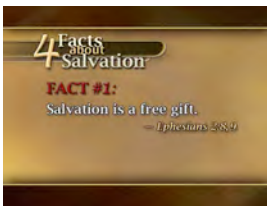


73

(Text: Acts 16:30)

“What must I do to be saved?”

Let's look at four facts from the Bible that answer this question.



74

(Text: Ephesians 2:8, 9)

FACT #1: Salvation is a free gift.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God not of works, less anyone should boast.”

Ephesians 2:8, 9.

Now the question is, “Why is it that salvation must be a free gift?”

The reason why it must be a free gift brings us to point number two.



75

(Text: Romans 3:23)

FACT #2: All of us have sinned.

Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”



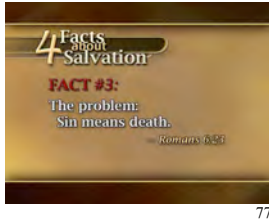
76

That means that I don't deserve the gift. I don't deserve salvation. You see, I have sinned.

If salvation depends on my goodness, then I can never earn it. I have already sinned, already come up short.

That is exactly the reason why salvation must then be a free gift, freely given to me, because I can't earn it and I don't deserve it.

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(Text: Romans 6:23)

FACT #3: The problem: Sin means death.

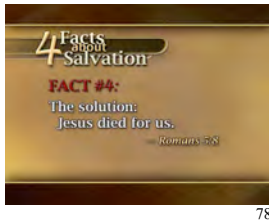
Romans 6:23. “For the wages of sin is death.”

I’m a sinner; therefore I deserve death.

My sin separates me from God, the Source of all life.

If I get what I deserve, it will be eternal death. I will perish.

Thankfully, God does have a solution to the problem!



(Text: Romans 5:8)

FACT #4: The solution: Jesus died for us.

Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Isn’t that beautiful? Jesus died for me, a sinner. And friend, He died for you too!



Four simple facts. Let’s review them:



1. Salvation is a free gift.

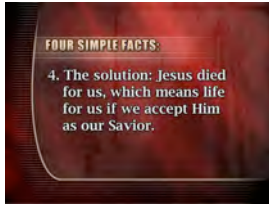


2. All of us have sinned.



3. The problem: Sin means death for us.

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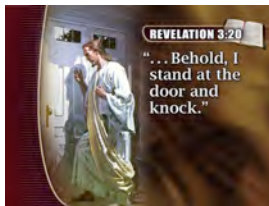
83

4. The solution: Jesus died for us, which means life for us if we accept Him as our Savior.



84

While we were still sinners, Jesus died for us. Don't you love Him, my friends?
Don't you love Him for dying for your sins and my sins?
Don't you love Him for giving us that free gift of salvation?
Now you might ask, "How can I accept that free gift?"



85

(Text: Revelation 3:20)

The Bible gives us the answer to that in Revelation 3:20.

"...Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

If the One with eternal life knocks at the door of your house, do you leave Him outside—or do you invite Him in?



86

Of course, you open the door and invite Him in! You see, by receiving Jesus, we receive the gift of eternal life He brings. It's that simple.

Jesus wants to come into our lives.

We invite Him in when we yield to Him, to His Word, to His will, to His offer.



87

That's how we accept that free gift.

We simply reach out and say "Thank You, Jesus!"

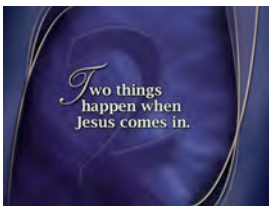
Come into my life.

Come into my heart.

Take control of my life.

Take control of my heart."

And when Jesus comes in, we accept Him as our Friend, as our Savior, and as our Lord and Master.



88

Two important things happen when we ask Jesus into our hearts—when we accept Him into our lives.

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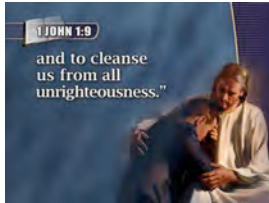


89

(Text: 1 John 1:9)

First, we confess our sins and receive His forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins



90

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

Friends, that is a beautiful promise.



91

No matter what we've done or where we've been, no matter what kind of lives we have lived – even if we have been the most terrible sinner – we can come to Jesus and accept that free gift of salvation.

We can confess our sins and receive complete and total forgiveness.



92

Maybe there's some sin that you have confessed to God, yet you are still condemned and burdened by guilt?

Have you ever felt that your sin is too great for even God to forgive?

What God says He means! We must believe what He says.



93

(Text: 1 John 5:10)

"He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself;



94

he who does not believe God has made Him a liar,

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95

because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.” 1 John 5:10.

When Jesus promises that He will forgive our sins and take away our guilt, He will do exactly what he says He will do.



96

When Jesus forgives, He forgets, and we should forget, too!



97

(Text: Acts 3:19)

In the words of Peter in Acts 3:19:

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...”



98

You see, we come to Jesus, we accept the free gift of salvation, we invite Him into our lives, and the first thing that happens is that He forgives and cleanses us, He washes us, He covers or pays for our sins with His precious blood.

Isn't that beautiful, my friends?

Don't you love our Savior?

But there's something else that happens when we invite Jesus into our hearts.



99

He gives us the power to overcome our sins and become more and more like Him – to walk in His footsteps.

The thief no longer steals.

The liar no longer lies.

The drunkard no longer drinks.

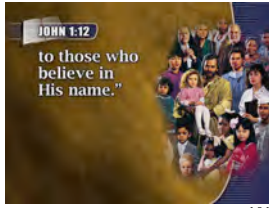


100

(Text: John 1:12)

Notice in John 1:12: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,

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101

to those who believe in His name.”

He’ll give us the power to become His children, His sons, His daughters. No longer are we controlled by Satan.

No longer are we the children of darkness.



102

He’ll give us the power to walk in His footsteps. As we believe in Him, as we accept that gift of salvation, He’ll give us the power to be over-comers.



103

If we stumble and fall after we have received the gift, He’ll forgive us again and again.

Then He’ll give us that power to be overcomers –to grow more and more like Jesus.

It’s a growing process to learn to have faith and confidence and trust in Jesus our Savior. We will not be perfect, but we will be forgiven. Satan is no longer our lord. Jesus is our Lord.



104

When we answer that knock at the door of our hearts and invite Jesus inside, He not only cleans up our sinful hearts and forgives us.

He also gives us power to change and win over sin and become more and more like Him.



105

And when Jesus lives in us, we can know for absolutely certain that we have eternal life.

Did you know that?

We don’t have to worry about whether we’ll be saved and live forever with Jesus.



106

(Text: 1 John 5:12, 13)

“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

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107

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,



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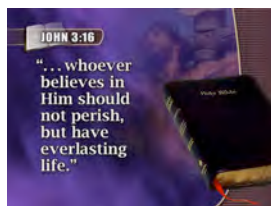
that you may know that you have eternal life.” 1 John 5:12, 13.



109

Jesus wants us to know—here and now—that we have eternal life. We can know here and now that as we invite Jesus into our hearts, we receive the assurance of our salvation.

Jesus gives the invitation to everyone everywhere, so that



110

(Text: John 3:16)

“whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16.

Perhaps you feel you are a hopeless sinner, but that is not true!

God can turn the most impossible situation into victory.

No life is too bad, no sin too great, for Christ to forgive!



111

On December 31, 1995, John Clancy, veteran firefighter in New York City, led his crew into a burning vacant apartment building in a bad neighborhood. As the fire raged out of control, the firefighters were concerned that someone might still be in the building, although it was only used by vagrants, drug addicts, alcoholics, and prostitutes. Nevertheless, Clancy and his colleagues decided to enter the blazing inferno to conduct a search and rescue operation. The building was filled with smoke, making visibility almost zero. The firefighters were risking their lives to find vagrants who might be using the building as a temporary home.

Suddenly the second-floor ceiling collapsed, trapping John Clancy. His colleagues worked feverishly to deliver him from the fiery holocaust, but when they finally pulled him out, it was too late. His body was burned beyond recognition. He left behind a wife

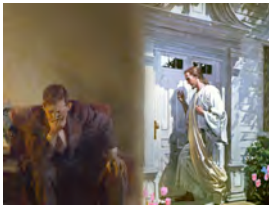
8 – Born to Live Forever

who was six months pregnant and the future they were planning together.

John Clancy believed that all life was valuable; therefore, he was willing to risk his own to save whoever might be in the building. He left the safety of his own home for the danger of a raging fire. He entered the flames to save lives and lost his own. His devotion to duty cost him his life.

As details of this story were uncovered, investigators discovered that the fire had been caused by arson. Edwin Smith, one of the homeless vagrants in the building, set the fire. John Clancy died attempting to save the one who burned the building down. He gave his life for an arsonist.

What an example of Jesus Christ!



112

Jesus left the security of His heavenly home and plunged into the raging inferno of this world's flames.

Our Savior hung on a cross, and the fires of sin totally consumed Him. But it wasn't His sin. It was ours.

By our own deliberate choice we sinned.

We set this world aflame with our angry tempers, our dishonesty, our lust, our greed, our adultery and our lying.

Christ died in our place so that we can live.

He experienced the flame of sin on the cross so we would not have to experience the flames of hell when Jesus comes to burn up sin forever.

Today Jesus longs to give you the assurance that you can live forever.



113

He is listening and waiting.

Why not open your heart's door today and invite Him to come in and be the Savior and Lord of your life?

He is waiting! He's listening!

There is one thing Jesus cannot do, that is to force you to open your heart's door to Him.

He has given us each the power of choice.

We must be the ones who open the door!

He will gladly come in if we open the door!

Friend, would you like to do that right now?

Would you like to invite Jesus into your heart without waiting a moment longer? (Ushers begin passing out cards.)

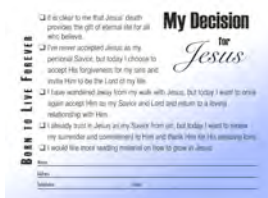
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114

Tonight the most important decision we can make is the decision to accept Jesus into our hearts. While the ushers are passing out the cards, I just want to invite you to consider your decision. Is there anything in your heart that would prevent you from inviting Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of your life? Is it really worth holding on to at the cost of eternal life? Isn't tonight the night to give that to Jesus, to give it all to Jesus, and let Him give you the gift of salvation, freedom, and forgiveness?

I invite you just now to take this little card and as we read together, just prayerfully select the options that best describe what the Holy Spirit has impressed on your mind this evening.



115

Tonight the most important decision we can make is the decision to accept Jesus into our hearts. While the ushers are passing out the cards, I just want to invite you to consider your decision. Is there anything in your heart that would prevent you from inviting Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of your life? Is it really worth holding on to at the cost of eternal life? Isn't tonight the night to give that to Jesus, to give it all to Jesus, and let Him give you the gift of salvation, freedom, and forgiveness?

I invite you just now to take this little card and as we read together, just prayerfully select the options that best describe what the Holy Spirit has impressed on your mind this evening.

The first option you can prayerfully check, if you would like, says: "It is clear to me that Jesus' death provides the gift of eternal life for all who believe." If that has been clear to you as we've studied God's Word tonight, just check this box.

There are many who have never had or taken the opportunity to make a decision for Jesus. And tonight, if that's your experience, the second option is for you! "I've never accepted Jesus as my personal Savior, but today I choose to accept His forgiveness for my sins and invite Him to be the Lord of my life." If that's your heart's desire, just tell Him "Yes Lord!" as you check that box.

The third option applies to many. Perhaps you once knew the Lord but have wandered away. If so, there's no better time than now. This one is for you. "I have wandered away from my walk with Jesus, but today I want to once again accept Him as my Savior and Lord and return to a loving relationship with Him." If this has been your experience, please make this decision by checking the box. Of course, every day is a good day to renew our commitment to

8 – Born to Live Forever

Jesus. Maybe you're already a Christian, rejoicing in His love and forgiveness, and tonight you'd like to just tell Him once again that you're all His. Let's take a look at the last option. "I already trust in Jesus as my Savior from sin, but today I want to renew my surrender and commitment to Him and thank Him for His amazing love." If this is your desire, just check this box.

And finally, we do have additional resources that you may be interested in, and we would be happy to provide these for you free of charge. If you're interested, just check the box that says "I would like more reading material on how to grow in Jesus."

We want to have prayer together, and pray about the decisions we've just made. I'm going to pray especially for those who may be finding this decision a difficult one. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is convicting you, but the devil is tempting you to doubt. As we finalize these cards and make our decisions I just want to pray for each one of us, that God will bless the decisions we are making. Let's bow our heads as we pray.

[Suggested prayer on next slide notes]



116

[Suggested Prayer]

"Father in Heaven, thank you for giving us Jesus. Thank you for being willing to give heaven's greatest gift to a world that was in rebellion and didn't even care. Lord, tonight we've been making some decisions. We've made decisions for you. Tonight I want to thank you for those who have decided to accept you as their personal Savior from sin. Give them peace and joy as they rejoice in your forgiveness. Keep them loving and growing in you as they continue to learn more about your will for their lives. I thank you also for the renewed commitments made here tonight. Thank you for your patience with us and mercy toward us. Please help us to be faithful to you. Give us strength to follow through on the decisions you've led us to make. Change our lives and hearts and make them more like you. Bless each home and family represented here and protect them by your mighty power. We thank you, we love you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen."

Make sure your name is on the card, and leave them with our ushers as you go out the door (your specific instructions may vary). Have a good night.