

REPENT! "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3) Repentance is humbling yourself and admitting your guilt and spiritually lost condition before God. It is recognizing that you have sinned against him alone, that your sin has separated you from him, and that his eternal wrath upon you is justified. Be sorry for your sin and rebellion against God, confess it, and hate it. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation." (2 Corinthians 7:10) Surrender, and turn from going your own way in life to going God's way by submitting to Jesus as your Lord. Repentance also means to recognize that you have no merit, good works, or attributes that play a role in your salvation. Until you realize you are lost and utterly helpless to contribute anything to your salvation, you will not receive grace and forgiveness. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) You must recognize that your only hope of redemption is to trust solely in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ as a payment for your sins.

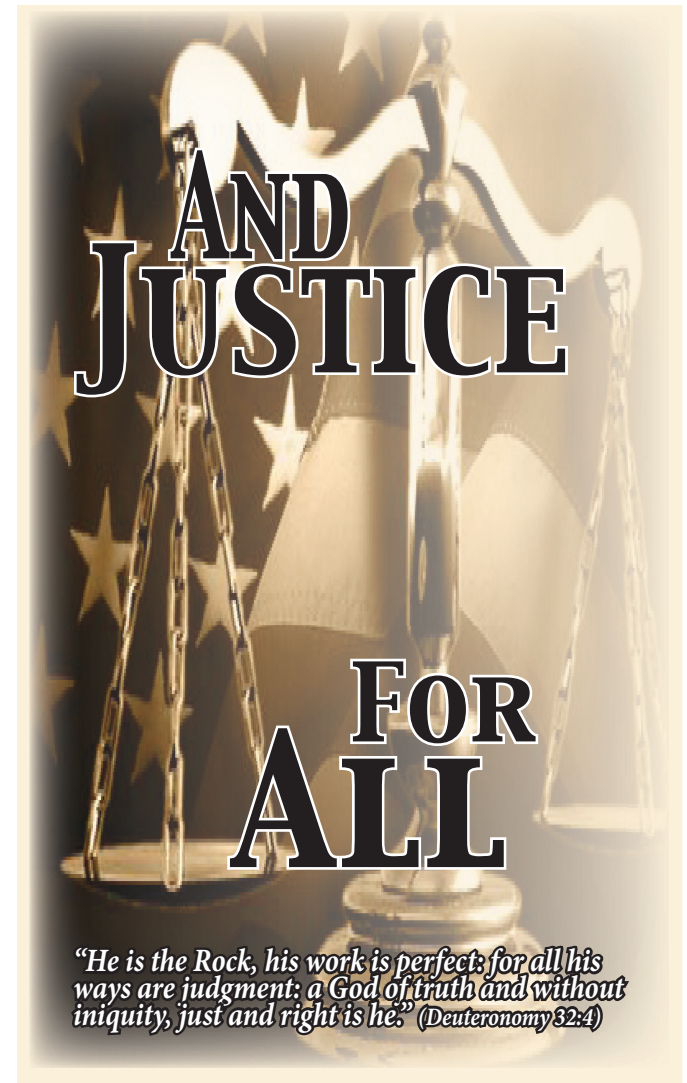
BELIEVE THE GOSPEL: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31) Believing is more than just acknowledging that Jesus Christ exists; it's even more than acknowledging that he died and rose again. "...the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19). True belief is placing your complete confidence and trust in Him alone and His ability to save you by his death and resurrection. You must believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on the cross to save you. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Romans 10:9-10) If the Lord is gracious enough to bring you to a place of repentance and desperation, recognizing that you are in need of salvation, you must cry out and call upon the Lord Jesus and ask him to forgive you for your sins and save

you. "...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:10,13)

If it's genuine, the very moment that you repent and believe the gospel, you will be "born again." (John 3:3) Being "born again" means to have a conversion experience in which God supernaturally changes your heart and transforms you from a child of disobedience into a child of God. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17) You will have a new nature, new desires to love Jesus Christ, to obey his word, to be with other Christians and to live for him every day. Loving God will manifest as a willful obedience to his word in your life. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3) You will never be without sin, but you will no longer love your sin, live for your sin, or be in bondage to your sin; no matter how much power it has over you now, you will have victory over it. "For sin shall not have dominion over you." (Romans 6:14) If these realities are absent in your life, it is likely you have never truly been forgiven of your sins. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." (Hebrews 2:3) Today may be your day of salvation, friend. You are not promised tomorrow! The author begs you on Christ's behalf to have your sins washed white as snow by repenting and trusting Christ as your Lord and savior before it's eternally too late! "Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able." (Luke 13:24)

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The American system of government is founded upon many noble principles. One of the chief principles is justice, as echoed at the end of the Pledge of Allegiance: **"...with liberty and justice for all!"** Without justice, a society would crumble. Nearly everyone loves to see justice served. We all rejoice when terrorists, murderers, thieves, rapists, and other criminals are brought to justice and get what they deserve. However, often times we overlook the justice of God, our Creator, from whom man's desire for justice comes, as we are created in His image. **"He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."** (Deuteronomy 32:4) While man's justice is far from perfect, God always executes perfect justice and judgment. What does God's perfect justice look like?

Just as when people break the law in this country and are punished, God, too, must punish those who break His law. **"And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity [sin]."** (Isaiah 13:11) Every time we break one of God's laws or commandments, we commit sin, **"...for sin is the transgression of the law."** (1 John 3:4) God is holy and hates sin with a perfect hatred. **"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity [sin]."** (Hebrews 1:9) **"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity [sin]."** (Habakkuk 1:13) Sin is so awful in His sight that the only fitting punishment for the offender is an eternity in the lake of fire. **"For the wages of sin is death."** (Roman 6:23) **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."** (Psalm 9:17) God would be compromising His holiness and justice if the punishment were anything less than an eternity in hell. Even more sobering is the fact that only one transgression of the law has the same consequences as breaking all of them a million times over. **"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."** (James 2:10)

What are some of the sins or actions that break God's law? The Bible says **"Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."** (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) **"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."** (Revelation 21:8) God's law goes beyond committing a physical act, but condemns those who also commit sin in their heart, as Jesus taught: **"Ye have heard that it was said...Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."** (Matthew 5:27-28) It matters not how many times you have sinned. If you have sinned but only one time in your heart, you are guilty of all. If you're honest with yourself, you have not just broken one commandment, but probably have lived a lifestyle that is full of sin and in complete rebellion to the God of heaven. On judgment day you would be found guilty and hear the Lord say unto you, **"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."** (Matthew 25:41)

You cannot pay for or cover your sins by any efforts of your own. **"Neither shall they cover themselves with their works."** (Isaiah 59:6) Any attempt to do so is nothing but filthy rags in God's sight. **"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."** (Isaiah 64:6) Your good works can never outweigh your bad works. A lifetime of self-sacrifice and good works can never pay for even one sin, much less a lifetime of sins. If someone were to commit a horrendous crime, like murder, in this nation, a good judge would not take into account the criminal's good deeds and let him off the hook or reduce his sentence. God is the same way; however, because He is perfectly holy, even the

smallest of sins is infinitely worse in His sight than murder is in our sight. Therefore, He must punish the sinner with eternal hell, or else He would be a corrupt judge, and would no longer be perfectly just and holy. Whether it's charity, church attendance, keeping the commandments, baptism, confirmation, believing in God (James 2:19), prayer, religious rituals such as the mass or confession, or just trying to be a good person, they are filthy rags before God and are not accepted as payments for sin. **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."** (Proverbs 14:12) **"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."** (Romans 3:20) Even if you were to live a perfect life from this point on, your past sins demand an account to God.

While you are not be able to do anything to save yourself, God, in his love and mercy has provided for us a way to be forgiven by sending his Son, Jesus, to die a bloody death on the cross as our substitute. **"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** (Romans 5:8) During his life on earth, Jesus perfectly kept all of God's commandments and then was punished on the cross to satisfy the demands of God's justice for your sin. Even in your rebellion, Jesus took the punishment you deserve so you could be forgiven. **"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities... and with his stripes we are healed."** (Isaiah 53:5) He was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day, conquering death and proving his death was acceptable to God as a payment for sin. **"...he [God] hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him [Jesus] from the dead."** (Acts 17:31) This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In order for the blood of Christ be effectual in saving your soul, it is required that you obey the first words of Jesus' earthly ministry: **"Repent ye, and believe the gospel."** (Mark 1:15)