



# An Outline of the Gospel

## The Existence of God

*"He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him"*  
Hebrews 11v6

The Bible makes no effort to prove the existence of God so neither will we. What the Bible makes clear is that within all of us - whether we like it or not - there is a God-consciousness which will find expression in some way in our life.

The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans shows clearly how the rejection of God has been a progressive and deliberate choice on the part of the human race. It equally demonstrates the ridiculous lengths to which we will go to fill this spiritual void.

*"Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures ... they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, ..." Romans 1vv22-25*

## Why The Bible?

If, as Christians claim, the Bible is God's primary means of communicating with men and women, then we had all better pay close attention to what it teaches. What is it about this book that has convinced so many millions of people both today, and over the last two millennia, that its message is worth believing?

The history behind the Bible is frankly incredible (I use the word literally), and has convinced many of its supernatural origins. Of far more importance, however, is the message which the Bible teaches and the claims which it makes.

We are faced with a choice, either the Bible is the biggest con in human history and deserves to be thrown out in its entirety, or it is the most important document you will ever read in your life. It claims to be the word of God, i.e. the message from God to the human race. Writing to his friend Timothy, the Apostle Paul said *"...from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation ... all Scripture is inspired by God"* (2 Timothy 3vv15-16). It claims to be eternal in duration: The Lord Jesus said *"it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail"* (Luke 16v17). It demands total acceptance without qualification: *"O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken"* (Luke 24v25).



## What Does The Bible Say About Me?

The Bible states clearly that all of us are descended from a common father, Adam, and mother, Eve. The first three chapters of Genesis (the first book in the Bible) record how God created Adam and Eve in His own likeness, how Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and how their disobedience resulted in a disastrous breakdown in the relationship between them and God. The Bible says that this legacy of rebellion and separation from God has passed down the whole human line to you and me today: *"...through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned"*

Many religions have based their own versions of this story on the biblical account. The Bible uniquely demonstrates its divine origin in the solution which it presents to this problem. All humanly-conceived systems of religion suggest that in one way or another we must, through our own efforts, try to make ourselves more acceptable to God. The Bible teaches precisely the opposite. *"Behold, Thou wast angry, for we sinned, we continued in them a long time; And shall we be saved? For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment"* (Isaiah 64vv5-6).

According to the Bible the sinful nature which we have inherited and the sins which we commit every day are absolutely abhorrent to God. So much so that the idea of us making ourselves acceptable to Him is totally out of the question. Further, the Bible states that God's nature is so pure (holy the Bible terms it) that He must punish all sin. When we understand that according to the Lord Jesus even thinking about something wrong is sinful, then any idea that we can make ourselves a little less wretched in God's eyes goes out of the window!

Certainly no human intellect could have conceived such an unflattering and hopeless portrayal of our position before God. Even more certainly not even the most brilliant mind could have suggested a solution to this problem.

Thankfully, God, through the Bible, does just that!



## How Do We Get Out Of This Mess?

God hasn't been caught out by the rebellion of His creation. He created us with a free will precisely because He does not want the worship of pre-programmed automatons. He knew before He created Adam just how Adam and Eve would respond to temptation and He had His divine recovery program already in place.

The whole focus of the biblical writings, both Old Testament and New is that God would send (OT), or has sent (NT) a 'redeemer'. A redeemer in biblical terms is someone willing to pay off the debt of sin which we have accumulated. Something not one of us can do. The price that God's holiness demanded was the death of an absolutely sinless man!

The good-news of the Gospel is that God has sent into the world just such a man, His own Son, Jesus Christ. Equal to God in every respect, the Lord Jesus not only did not sin, but could not have sinned. His mission was to die at Jerusalem and to take upon Himself the punishment required for every sin that ever has been, or ever will be committed. *"[God] made Him who knew no sin [the Lord Jesus] to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* (2 Corinthians 5v21). God has demonstrated His complete satisfaction with the price paid by raising the Lord Jesus to life again the third day after His crucifixion. *"...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins ... but now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep."* (1 Corinthians 15vv17-20)

## Is This A Cop-Out Then?

Does the Bible teach then that I can carry on living in rebellion against God's standards of holiness, but that I will be OK in the end because Christ has died for my sins?

God will have no forced conscripts in His house. You have a free will and you can still exercise it as you please. What the Bible does is to let you know the consequences of your decision.

You can choose to carry on as you are - in rebellion against God. By so doing you are counting yourself out of God's provision for you and choosing to carry the can for your sins for yourself.

Alternatively, you can do what God wants you to do. You can agree with His assessment of your current life and future (eternal) prospects. This is not the easy option. We are all naturally proud, and God's portrayal of us is not flattering. If you do accept that your future is hopeless without God, and accept that Christ's death was required to make you fit for God's presence, then God has made a promise to you:

*"He who believes in the Son has eternal life"* John 3v36