

Heavenly Father's Purpose:

Why God created people

Our Father in Heaven has great plans for us. He said in Jeremiah 29:11:

"I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

God made us for 3 reasons:

To Know Him. God wants a relationship with each one of us. He asks that we call Him "Father," not "Life Force" or "Higher Power." Jesus said:

"I have come to make you, Father, known to them so that the love you have for me might be in them and that I myself might be in them." (John 17:26)

To Have A Satisfying Life. Without God, life is shallow, disjointed and purposeless. But God has planned for us to experience the joy, love, adventure and fruitfulness that He Himself has. Jesus assured us:

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!" (John 10:10)

To Praise Him. God, being good, loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere present and perfect deserves our respect and worship. The apostle Peter wrote:

"You are a chosen people ... a people belonging to God so that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

God has plans for you!

Our Problem:

Why man is cut off from God

God is perfect, holy, faultless. Scripture tells us God's "eyes are too pure to look on evil" (Habakkuk 1:13) and that He lives in "unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16), and "in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Light and darkness, good and evil, like oil and water, cannot mix. That is where our trouble begins.

Every person who ever lived has rebelled against God. They wanted to make their own decisions, live life their own way. That is what sin is: mutiny against God's plan for our lives. It's thinking we know better than God. And even

when we have tried to do things God's way, we can't measure up. The Apostle Paul wrote:

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Sin means being cut off from God. A branch severed from the tree slowly withers. Being cut off from God by sin, we gradually deteriorate. Age, illness, broken relationships, hollow hearts are all symptoms of the root cause of separation from God.

Personal Punishment is eternal. Romans 6:23 states: "The wages of sin is death."

Jesus warned us that most people are going to suffer this death. He said "Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to *destruction* and many go through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it." Here, Jesus gives *Destruction* as the alternative to *eternal life*. And this *destruction* is the same as *perdition* or *outer darkness*, a place of punishment from which no one can return—all eternity in hell.

IMPORTANT WORD STUDY

The Greek dictionary in Strong's Concordance shows that the words *destruction*, *damnation*, and *perdition* in the New Testament all come from the same Greek word (Strong's #684) in the ancient manuscripts. Thayer's Greek/English Lexicon of the New Testament defines this word (#684) as "the destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life, eternal misery, *perdition*, the lot of those excluded from the kingdom of God."

The word *outer* from *outer darkness* in Mat 25:30 is related. Thayer defines the Greek word which is translated *outer* as "the darkness outside the limits of the lighted palace (to which the Messiah's kingdom is here likened)."

So, man's greatest question is: How can we be reconciled with God? How can we cross the chasm and regain our relationship with God?

Every religion except Christianity maintains (and even many Christians wrongly think) that we must straighten ourselves out. We must stop cussing and drinking or lusting. We must pray more, attend church and give money. We must climb the good works ladder to Heavenly Father, make ourselves good enough.

But there is one big problem with that plan. It simply doesn't work. The better you become, the more you realize how far you have to go. The closer you

get to Heavenly Father's light, the darker your own shadow. That's because being good is more than just not being bad. Being good means fulfilling the two great commandments:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27)

No one has ever done that for one day, let alone for their entire lives. Self improvement is a dead end street. When we look at God's standards we recognize that we are between a rock and a hard place:

God is merciful, of course. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read that "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

But, At the same time God is just. "...he does not leave the guilty unpunished." (Exodus 34:7b) And He doesn't grade on a curve. A passing grade has to be flawless:

"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." (James 2:10)

So, how can we ever be saved?

Heavenly Father's Remedy

How He paid our debt for us

God continues to love us. Like a loving Father with a disobedient child, He longs for reconciliation. And He makes the first move.

Jesus came to earth to put things right:

".the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body..." (1 Timothy 3:16)

He loved us so much that he went all out to prove it. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

He suffered our punishment. Because Jesus was human, He could relate to our sinful nature, though He was sinless Himself. Because He was God, He was "big" enough to pay the price of our sin. Paul soberly stated:

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinning Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us so that through Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Heavenly Father placed His stamp of approval on Jesus by resurrecting Him from the dead. Jesus is now in heaven with the Father. His work is done. He has bridged the gap between God and man by suffering in our place and clearing us of all charges. Our debts are canceled; our conviction is overturned. The Judge, after passing the verdict that we are guilty, comes down from His chair and serves our sentence as well!

Our Response:

What we must do

Heavenly Father's forgiveness is not automatic or mechanical. We must personally take steps to accept it. A gift is not yours until you open the package. To receive Jesus' death as our own, we must do the following:

Accept Jesus and His forgiveness as a free gift. You don't pay half, with God paying the other half. There is no matching funds program with God. We don't have to become "pretty good" before we can be saved. Isaiah sets this straight. "All our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (64:6). It's all Jesus, from "A to Z", beginning to end.

"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Most religions spell the path to God with two letters: "D-O". Christianity spells it with four letters, the first two letters the same: "D-O-N-E."

Repent. The Apostle Peter explained to the Jews that they had killed their Messiah but that God had used their ignorance to fulfill what God had promised through the prophets—that his Christ would suffer. Then, he said, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19)

Repent, literally, means to change our minds—about who we are going to trust to show us how to live this life "to the full"—about who we are going to trust to get us into heaven. We were trusting our way of doing life and gaining God's favor. We recognized that we were not such good lords, or rulers, over our own affairs. It's a decision

to do life God's way. Since He is our creator, he is the only one who can show us how to have that full and satisfying life he came to give us.

Confess. We must admit openly our past sin and our only hope in Jesus. Romans 10:9 says:

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

When we say, "Jesus is Lord", we mean he is our master, or ruler. He has our allegiance. We put Him in charge of our lives, obey His commands. If we really believe God raised Him from the dead, that makes Him more important than anyone else on Earth—His words carry more weight than our selfish desires.

The Final Results:

God's Purpose For Us Restored.

If we have sincerely followed the above steps, we can be sure we will begin to enjoy the following results:

Assurance of forgiveness. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

We may suffer the consequences of previous sins at some time during the rest of our earthly life, but God no longer holds our sins against us. He has prepared a place for us in heaven. We can be confident that we will live with Him for eternity.

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

Because of this certainty, we can praise God as He designed us to do. (1 Peter 2:9)

God changes us. His Spirit, His invisible power and influence, now lives in us. Though God is in heaven, He now resides in our hearts as well. We don't have to go through someone else to talk with Him. He is always with us. We can know God personally. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

In baptism we are buried to our old way of selfish living and raised up to a new life with God. It symbolizes our having been cleansed from sin

and the pledge of a good conscience toward God. (We believe baptism should take place when a person has fulfilled all the above steps, and so must be of an accountable age. We also hold that baptism should be by immersion. The Greek word literally means "to dip under water." While baptism doesn't save us — salvation is "by grace through faith ...not by works", after all — we can no more neglect Jesus' command to be baptized than we can His command to remember His sacrifice by partaking of the bread and juice at communion.)

We should expect to be different from now on. The Apostle Paul said:

"...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17)

We are now seen by Heavenly Father as perfect. We are approved for His kingdom even though He is still molding us into the person He wants us to be:

"because by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy." (Hebrews 10:14)

That's worth repeating. The Lord actually considers us already perfected even though the sanctification process is not finished!

We live a new life of good works. Some people think, "Now that I am a Christian, I have just got to be good!" But just as we could not please Heavenly Father by our own efforts before we became a believer, we cannot do so now. Our work, now, is to trust Christ to work in and through us:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galations 2:20)

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

The only way in which works can be said to be necessary is that they are part of the evidence that we have been born again of the Spirit of God. Paul said, "I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds". (Acts 26:20)

And James argued, "...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:17)

God gives us the strength to do what we could

never do on our own. He makes us more loving, generous, joyful and faithful. He gives us a new heart that wants to follow Christ.

In this way we have a truly fulfilling, peaceful, satisfying life—not only for this life but throughout eternity. God will begin to do amazing things in and through you. The adventure is just beginning!

Three Questions for you:

How far have you progressed in Heavenly Father's plan for you? If you are not already seeing the Final Results of His plan in your life, review the "Our Response" section of this brochure.

Do you still have questions? Feel free to call CRC, 800-Need-Him, or the contact person inserted below for answers/discussion.

If you have not taken these steps, as outlined from the Bible, to receive Heavenly Father's gift, is there any reason why you would not want to do so today?

Don't delay. You have no idea how many precious minutes you have left on this earth. And Heavenly Father's promise is waiting for your decision:

"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." (Heb 9:27)

You can speak directly to God about this—you need no other mediator but Jesus Christ. But if you would like additional guidance, or just want to talk with someone about your decision, feel free to make a confidential call to CRC (Ask us to call you back if you'd like to save the long distance charges). Or you can call 800-NEED-HIM, or the contact person filled in below.

Scripture references are from the New International Version of the Bible. Compare to the King James Version and the Joseph Smith Translation.



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Heavenly Father's Plan for You

...according to the Bible