



The Way to
Heaven

A Priceless Gift

Nancy L Harry

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Introduction

This book is for you if you are curious or would like more understanding about:

- Going to heaven
- Eternal life
- Salvation

Get ready to discover the answers to these questions:

- How do I know if I will go to heaven?
- What does it mean to be saved?
- Was Jesus more than a great man?

Perhaps you question the reason some people point to Jesus to be saved. Maybe you are a Believer but still have questions.

The Bible is God's instruction book to all of us. It is a proven history book. It is also the verified Word of God received through inspired people over millennium.



Chapter 1

What Happened?

So God created mankind in his own image
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.” Genesis
1:27

God blessed this first couple and gave them authority to, “Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground,” Genesis 1:28.

He made a garden in Eden for Adam, the first man, to live in and take care of. God told him he could eat from *any* tree in the garden, except for *one*. He was warned that there would be consequences if he ate from that one particular tree. Adam showed God his loyalty, love, trust and honor for Him, by following God’s instruction.

Sometime later, a lying and deceitful serpent went to Eve in the garden. He put doubt and mistrust in her mind concerning God. In her deception she chose to believe those lies, in-

stead of believing God's truth. The result? She ate the fruit from the forbidden tree.

“She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Genesis 3:6

Adam, who God taught personally, did not stand firm on the direct words from God. He did not intervene for Eve and protect her from this evil one and his lies. Instead, he chose to go along with her, in direct disobedience to God. He chose his desires over God's, opening the door for sin to flood mankind.

Both Adam and Eve came under judgment as a result of this turning from God, who was the very One who created them and loved them. It is now through Adam that we receive a sin nature, a pull towards evil:

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12

Science discovered that DNA contains our genetic code. Half comes from each parent. Biological information and hereditary patterns are carried by our genes from one generation to another. The sin nature is a hereditary pattern passed down through the generations.

This nature can be seen in our children. Leave them to themselves without any guidance and they can find all kinds of trouble to get into. Ideally, the family structure provides a loving foundation for teaching and guiding our children.

I wondered if we are born sinners, since we are born with a sin nature. The answer is no. A sin nature is not the same as being a sinner. The performing of the sin in reality or in our hearts is when sin is brought forth.

A separation between God and mankind rose up through the years, because of evil and immorality. It was not that God stopped caring about people or loving them. Mankind turned their backs on their Creator.

People decided to choose their own ways, that sometimes are not the best ways, rather than the righteous ways of God. Often deceived, they believe lies rather than the truth of God, just as Eve did in the garden.

It is sad to say, but sin has been found in everyone. "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1:8. Even one sin qualifies us to pay the penalty. And what is that penalty? "The wages of sin is death," Romans 6:23. The end result is the same for any sin.

Sin violates God's law of love. It is doing things that hurt us or others, or dishonors the God who made us in His image. It is so offensive to a holy God, so against His nature that it cancels out and overrides all the good we have done or could do.

Why is sin so offensive to Him? Because He loves His creation; He loves us. He knows how damaging, heartbreaking, and detrimental sin is to our lives. Ultimately, it causes us to lose the opportunity for eternal life with Him in heaven.

Yet, there is hope ahead. Because of God's love and His desire to have us live with Him forever, He asks us and wants us to choose life with Him. He has an answer for our dilemma. He has provided a way. A loving God would not leave us without hope.



When there is no way out,
let God in!



Chapter 2

Our True Treasure

A treasure map takes curious people from here to there, picking up clues along the way, until the sought-after treasure is found. Think of the Bible as our treasure map leading the way into the presence of a loving God, with joys for evermore.

The first spot on our map is found in the first verse in the Bible:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1



The word translated ‘God’ is *Elohim* in the original Hebrew, which is a plural noun. Familiar words that we use today that are plural nouns are people, sheep and family. They are singular words, but they mean more than one.

Continue in Genesis to our next spot, “Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,” Genesis 1:26. The use of the

words *us* and *our* used in this verse confirms the name *God* is plural.

On Our Way

Following our map, we move on to the book of John. John tells us that the Word was with God in the beginning and all things were made through Him:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” John 1:1-3

John related how the Word came to live among us: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth,” John 1:14.

Continuing on our way, we discover:

“Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” John 1:17-18

As we follow our treasure map, we discover that Jesus was also truly human. Mary was the

chosen mother of Jesus. She was a virgin and engaged to a man named Joseph. An angel of God went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you," Luke 1:28.

The angel spoke to her about the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Concerning the future of her son, the angel said, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High," Luke 1:32.

Joseph received a visit from an angel of God too, but through a dream: "An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins," Matthew 1:20-21.

When Mary conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit, she passed her humanness on to Him. The other half of His DNA came from God. Even though His origins were divine, He put His position to the side, to become like us.

A Life of Love

"Jesus gave this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do

only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”

John 5:19

“If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. ... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!” John 14:7,9

All that Jesus did, the miracles He performed and the words He spoke, all represented the works of God the Father.

Peter said of Jesus:

“You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea ...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” Acts 10:37-38

Throughout His life, Jesus expressed compassion and love for the people:

- He desired for them to be well in their body, mind and soul.
- He was dedicated to teaching them about God and His ways.
- He demonstrated God’s desire to see them healed, blessed and to know His love.

His Choice

Jesus had the choice whether to choose the way of sin or righteousness, the same as the rest of us. Yet, He lived a sinless, righteous life in every way and qualified to receive eternal life. We find this fact recorded in 1 Peter 2:22, “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” It is also recorded by the writer of Hebrews. Speaking of Jesus: He was “tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin,” Hebrews 4:15.

Since Jesus lived a sinless life as a human man, He had no penalty to pay. If you or I would have lived a sinless life, we would have saved ourselves, but no one else. Yet, the Bible tells us, “But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin,” 1 John 3:5.

How is it, that Jesus can take away our sins and save all of us? This includes everyone down through the generations who would accept Him as their Savior.

The Answer

As the Word and a member of the Godhead, Jesus’ life was worth more than all of mankind’s put together. Since He lived a perfect life without sin as a human man, He could now step in and

take our place. As Jesus died, God imputed all the sins of the world to Him. He was judged for our sins.

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.” 1 Timothy 2:5-6

Accepting Jesus as your Savior, the One who can save you from the penalty of your sins, means you will be forgiven. The sacrifice of His death will be applied to your sins. The prison door will open. You are freed!

“The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body, like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.” Romans 8:3 NLT



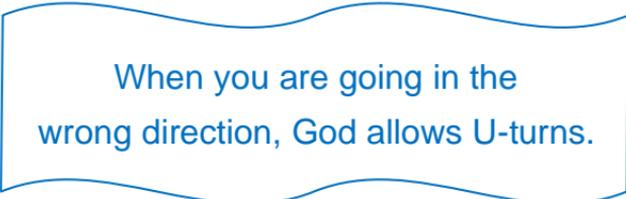
God, who was so full of love, gave His beloved Son to die for us. Jesus bore the pain of thousands of years of sin and shame. As hard as it must have been, He willingly gave His life for us.

He endured a slow death of extreme suffering, as He was nailed to a cross and His life's blood drained from Him. But now He:

- Is our hope
- Is our deliverer from sin
- Is our Savior
- brings us back into right standing with a holy God

“The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

We have found our true treasure!



When you are going in the wrong direction, God allows U-turns.



Chapter 3

The Remedy

We learned that we are separated from God, because of sin. Jesus' sacrifice was the answer to this problem. It is now possible for our relationship with God to be restored. Eternal life in His loving presence is available once again.

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 NLT

God's love was the catalyst that motivated Him to sacrifice His own Son for us. Our sins will be forgiven when we believe what Jesus did for us. We won't perish, but have eternal life with Him.

“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

The world wants to believe there has to be many ways to heaven. The truth is: Jesus is the only way to heaven. Jesus told His disciple,

Thomas, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" John 14:6. Peter spoke about Jesus when he said:

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

To reiterate: Jesus qualified to take the penalty for our sin, in our place, because He was the only one to live a sinless life. And, as a member of the Godhead, His life was worth more than all of us put together.

God is just. The penalty for sin had to be paid. We were not given a free 'get out of jail' card. There was a cost. Every drop of Jesus' own blood paid for it.

Pastor Robert Morris, of Gateway Church in Southlake, TX, said, **"Do not get upset because there is only one way, but get excited because there is a way and it's been revealed."**

Paul wrote:

"There is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ." Romans 5:15 NLT

Paul also stated: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,” Romans 10:13.

Rejection or Acceptance

What happens to those who reject God’s love, those who will not accept the sacrifice Jesus made for them? Scripture answers this question for us: “Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked, for the evildoer has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out,” Proverbs 24:19-20.

John wrote:

“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” John 3:18

I heard about a young man with quite a lot of material wealth and a title beside his name. He said that he didn’t need to be saved. He had everything he wanted and he was happy. Could you also be one who thinks you don’t need a Savior? Do you think that because you have everything you want or because you are happy, you do not need Jesus?

When this young man understood this message of God’s love and His desire for him to be

happy for eternity, not just for this short time on earth, he humbled himself before God. He asked for His forgiveness and accepted Jesus as His Savior.

God wants you to be happy too and have an abundant life. Yet, it is important to remember that God hates sin. He despises it, because He is a loving God. He knows how destructive and hurtful bad behavior can be.

His desire is for everyone to be saved. To those who trust in the salvation of God, David writes:

“He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:10-12

An Awesome Love

Can you begin to understand, even a little bit, how awesome and great God's love is for you? He looked down and saw your sins, all your wrong doing. His heart broke when you went down the wrong path. Despite the things you did, He continued to care about you.

Too many people think God waits to punish them or that He does not care about them. Neither concept is correct. It is time to know Him, to see Him in a different light. He is not unattainable. He does care. Your prayers reach His ears.

What we deserve and what we receive are two very different things, if we believe His Son came to pay the price for our sins. God offers you His mercy, grace and forgiveness. He offers you eternal life with Him. Why? Because He loves you.

We do not have to receive what we deserve. That's how great God's love is! Even when we were busy doing our own thing, whether it pleased God or not, even while we were oblivious to God's love and plan for our lives, His Son took our place in the court room. He stood in for us, as our substitute.

God's love is unfailing. His favor is unmerited. His kindness is exceptional. He made salvation possible. We can be so thankful for His love, mercy and grace!



A Priceless Gift

Are we automatically saved because of the sacrifice of Jesus? Does salvation just fall into

our laps? Salvation is not based on how good we are, because it is impossible to ever be good enough. And doing the right things now will not pay the penalty for sin already committed. We all need someone to save us. We all need a Savior.



Salvation is a gift because we can't earn it. And we do not need to work for it.

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

We can receive this gift through faith in Jesus; believe in Him as your Savior, in what He did for you. Then the sacrifice of the blood He shed for your sins will be applied to you. On top of that, you will be freed from the hold sin had on you.

Let's try to simplify this by picturing a guilty person – any one of us – standing in the court room before the judge. All the testimonies for and against us are in.

The verdict of guilty is to be pronounced. But at the last minute, the judge extends kindness and mercy, and offers us the chance to bring forth one more witness in our defense.

We are excited, full of hope, knowing there is one more person who we can bring in to defend us. We just know this person will be able to save us from the guilty verdict that is about to be pronounced on our life. For us that person is Jesus; He is our defense.

“My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.” 1 John 2:1-2 NLT

The judge pronounces the verdict –

**NOT
GUILTY!**

Jesus said, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand,” John 10:28.

Your Choice

Believing in or having faith in Jesus as your Savior – the one who can save you – is a choice you make. God does not force anyone to do anything. He has given you free will, but He wants you to choose life. Why? Because He wants to enjoy your company forever.

If you do not accept Jesus as your Savior, you will not receive eternal life in heaven, just because He paid the penalty for you. Faith in what he did for you is required to receive this gift of salvation. “We know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law,” Galatians 2:16 NLT.

Here is an analogy to help simplify it:

The postman comes to your door with a package. He brought a gift from a friend. You did not order it or ask for it. You did not work for it, so you did not earn it. It is a gift because it is being given to you. Someone cares a great deal about you. It is out of their love that you are receiving this gift.

But it was sent by certified mail, which means you need to sign for it before you can have it. The postman can't sign your name for you. You need to show your signature in order to receive this gift from the postman. In the same way, your faith – your belief in Jesus – is your signature to receive God's gift of salvation.

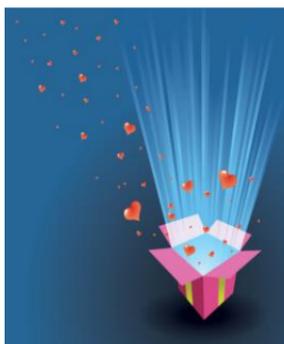
Adoption

Once we accept Jesus, our sins are exchanged for His righteousness. We are no longer sinners in God's eyes. We even receive a new name. Instead of sinner, we are called

‘child of God.’ And now, we can call Him – Father.

“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” John 1:12-13

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” 1 John 3:1





Chapter 4

Worth the Price

Are you His child? Are you in a position to receive His promises and blessings? Do you understand how much He loves you? If you haven't believed in the Lord Jesus for salvation, then now is the time to pray to God and accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior.

“This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46-47

To repent is changing the way you think about your sins, attitudes, or behaviors that do not stand up to God's standard, based on the foundation of His love. Repentance leads to forgiveness of sins. It leads to life.

Now is the time to believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and inherit eternal life with Him.

“Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Holy Spirit

Jesus made sure His followers knew that after His death and resurrection, another gift would come. “I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you,” John 16:7. The original Greek word for advocate also means: encourager, comforter, helper, or counselor.

The Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirit that we now have eternal life:

“When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.” Ephesians 1:13-14

We know we are now God's children by the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children,” Romans 8:16. “And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been

poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us,” Romans 5:5.

The Holy Spirit gives us the desire and the ability to overcome things that many of us would not be able to do on our own. And with His prompting, we find we are applying God’s way of doing things in our everyday lives, without even thinking about it.

This is the result of a life guided by the Holy Spirit and the nature of Jesus:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Righteousness

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, God takes out your sin and covers you with the righteousness of Jesus: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God,” 2 Corinthians 5:21. “This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe,” Romans 3:22.

Some people think being a Christian or a Believer in Jesus, the Christ, means their life will be full of “no’s.” In reality, it is filled with “yes’s.” Yes to forgiveness for your sins; yes to God’s

love and acceptance; yes to His way of living; yes to heaven; yes to the leading of the Holy Spirit; yes to your new name – child of God; yes to kindness; yes to blessings; and yes to all His promises.

Remember, you do not have to work to receive what is waiting to be given to you as a free gift. God loves you and accepts you without reservation. You don't have to clean up your act or even put on a new suit to receive this gift.

“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:7-8

Jesus satisfied God’s wrath against sin through His finished work on the cross, and provided believers with victory over their sin nature:

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.” 1 Peter 2:24

Jesus takes us out of the kingdom of darkness and puts us right into His kingdom, the kingdom of light and life. Our old life of sin is exchanged for a new life of righteousness.

Even though we can't do enough to gain salvation, since it is God's gift to us, He does expect us to do what is right and good to represent His character and love.

**“we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”
Ephesians 2:10 NLT**

The Golden Rule

Many people will recognize this verse as the 'golden rule.' Jesus said, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you,” Matthew 7:12. Paul taught, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law,” Romans 13:8.

Jesus said if we love Him, we will obey what He commands. What did He command? “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you,” John 15:12. To be sure we got it, Jesus repeated it, “This is my command: Love each other,” John 15:17.

Is everyone saved?

Since Jesus died for all sin, some people think that everyone must already be saved. John 3:36 tells us that this is not true. In order

for Jesus' sacrifice to be applied to someone, they must believe in Him.

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.” John 3:36

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” 1 John 5:11-12

To summarize:

Sin or shame is not a stumbling block for God. He created the antidote and gave it to the world. The LORD is here, waiting for you to come to Him. He says, “Come and be surrounded by my love.”

You are worth the price that He paid for you. Even though we may go to Him:

- ✓ with sin in our lives
- ✓ wrong attitudes
- ✓ bad habits
- ✓ with hurts
- ✓ and broken hearts

His compassion and amazing grace triumphs over all!

Pray to God now. Praying is talking to Him; tell Him what is on your heart. God is a safe place. He wants to hear from you.

“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 10:9

Here is a sample prayer to help you, but it's better to use your own words:

Heavenly Father, I am guilty of sinning against you. I ask you to forgive me and apply the blood that Jesus Christ shed for me to my life. I accept Him as my Lord and my Savior. Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to live in me. Thank you for accepting me, for loving me and forgiving me. Amen.

Now I would like to pray for you:

“Father, I know you heard from heaven and will blot out all their sins. Bless them now. Thank you that they are now in your family, because your Son is in their life. Thank you that joy, righteousness and all your promises are coming their way. In Jesus name, amen.”

If you have accepted Jesus, I'd like to welcome you into God's family. If you know someone who has been praying for you, let them know, so they can rejoice with you.

God looks forward to hearing from you, so continue to pray about the big things and the little things. Begin reading the Bible in an easy to read version. The New Testament contains God's heart for you today. The Gospel of John is a good place to start. Attending a Bible-believing church will give you the opportunity to worship the Lord with others.

Enjoy your journey as your relationship with the Lord continues to grow and deepen.





“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God, and the fellowship of the
Holy Spirit be with you all.”

2 Corinthians 13:14



About the Author

Nancy L Harry

Nancy L Harry has a soft spot for the love and Word of God. Her passion comes out in her enjoyment of writing.



She lives under the sunny skies of Florida, with her adoring husband and empty fish bowl. She raised her three children in her home state of Pennsylvania.

She looks forward to the day when everyone will know the unconditional love of God and the impact it has on our daily lives. Her prayer is taken from Ephesians 3:16-19, for everyone to be rooted in love, and have the power to understand and know Christ's deep love.

Her favorite scripture flies out from Isaiah 40:31, "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles."



www.nancyharry.com