

WE ALL HAVE A DEATH SENTENCE

but

WE CAN CHOOSE LIFE!

*For **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* (Romans 3:23)

*For the **wages of sin is death**, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:23)

The soul who sins shall die. (Ezekiel 18:20)

Yes, we all have a Death Sentence, as we all fall into the group of those who have sinned. We have all missed the mark of perfection by a giant margin and yet the Bible teaches,

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)

There aren't many who are foolish enough to argue against the fact that they have sinned. Occasionally, I will encounter one who will argue that he no longer sins but the Bible tells us that he is self-deceived.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)

The good news (gospel) is that we can choose "life." Jesus made this possible when He Himself made a satisfactory payment for our sin on the cross.

John 3:16 is often referred to as the most quoted verse in the Bible and yet the least understood. The reason it is called the least

understood is because there are millions who can even quote it but do not really understand its message. Here is that verse:

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16)

Let's examine the verse further by looking at it in its context.

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "**He who believes in Him is not condemned**; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* (John 3:14-18)

Countless people who can even quote verse 16 still do not understand that salvation (the receiving of eternal life) is dependent upon one thing – BELIEF in Jesus Christ! More than 150 other New Testament verses point this out as well, but our churches are filled with folks who think that faith is only ONE of the requirements, that there are numerous other requirements as well, such as water baptism, faithful church attendance, giving, avoiding certain sins, and even keeping the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, or some other list of things.

Notice, as you examine that passage, that it is by belief in Jesus Christ that a person's destination is switched from being *condemned* to being *not condemned*.

I especially love this next verse, found two chapters later in the same book, the Gospel of John.

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and **believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life**, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."* (John 5:24)

Did you see that? The believer "**shall not come into judgment**, but has **passed** from death unto life." This means that eternal life is something that begins the moment one receives Jesus. It truly is a matter of receiving him instead of rejecting Him.

*He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as **received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, **to those who believe in His name**.* (John 1:11-12)

Yes, the person who receives Jesus by believing in Him (that He is indeed the savior), is born into God's family and becomes His child.

This next passage is perhaps my favorite on this topic as it informs us that we can KNOW that we possess eternal life. We don't have to only hope but can know it!

⁹ *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.* ¹⁰ ***He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not***

*believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.¹¹ And this is the testimony: that **God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.¹³ **These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.** (1 John 5:9-13)*

That eternal life (salvation) is indeed a gift and not something to be earned or deserved, we need only consider this passage from the book of Ephesians:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it **is the gift of God**, not of works, lest anyone should boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Another look at the two verses I used to begin this pamphlet will reveal that Romans 6:23 also calls eternal life the *gift of God*.

These next two verses, found in the book of Revelation, portray the freeness of the gift.

*And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life **freely** to him who thirsts.*

(Revelation 21:6)

*And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life **freely**.*

(Revelation 22:17)

In summary, even though we begin this journey called life with a death sentence, we don't have to remain in this state. God has demonstrated His love for us and offers each of us the gift of eternal life. All we have to do and all we can do is BELIEVE Him for it. It really is as simple as that.

The really sad part is this. Man sinned and incurred a death penalty. This wasn't just a physical death but more importantly, a spiritual death. Because of God's great love for us, He paid the penalty Himself and offers eternal life as a gift. Like any gift, there must be a giver and a receiver. Unless we receive it, we don't get it. Since, in this case, the gift is eternal life, if we don't receive it and face physical death without it, we will step into eternity without God's gift of eternal life and therefore be separated from Him for all eternity. How sad is that?

I, therefore, encourage you to believe the message of the gospel, that God has made the payment for our sin, and receive Jesus as your savior if you have not already done so. If you have believed, and already know this, share this information with others. Tomorrow may be too late. We never know when "today" will be our last day. Today, literally is the last day for many. The Bible tells us that "today is the day of salvation."

*(NOTE: All quoted scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers)

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***Who among us would not
want to exchange a death
sentence for eternal life?***