

SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Steps to Spiritual Freedom | Part 7



STEPS TO SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

Less than half the countries on planet earth experience true freedom (Freedom House and worldaudit.org). Countries such as Angola, Albania, Brunei, Syria and Vietnam still lack human rights, freedom of speech, justice for all and electoral democracy.

One country blacklisted for many years is Iraq. War, dictatorships, kidnapping and torture have been part of life for centuries. During the ill-fated United States war in Iraq, Douglas Wood, an Australian engineer and businessman, was kidnapped at gunpoint and taken hostage in Baghdad. Throughout the next 47 days Wood was beaten, blindfolded and forced to endure the raw emotion of his torture and likely execution.

Douglas Wood got through each day by thinking about his favourite football team and the love he had for his grandchildren. He wasn't sure if he would be rescued, but he never lost hope.



In the most amazing circumstances, Douglas Wood was rescued by Iraqi and US forces while on a routine sweep through one of Baghdad's most dangerous suburbs. Wood heard a shoot-out between the Iraqi army and the insurgents on the roof, and then the army forced their way inside. Wood heard further gunfire, but he knew he was on the road to freedom. When he returned to his homeland, Douglas Wood held a number of speeches telling his story and thanking his rescuers; at the completion of one speech he sang to his audience a moving song entitled "I want to be free".

Do you want to be free? The Bible says the inhabitants of planet earth have also been taken hostage – not by insurgents, but by the devil himself. Do you feel sometimes as if you are captive to guilt, discouragement, deep-seated addictions, abuse, self-centredness or low self-esteem? The good news is that a loving God has developed a rescue plan for you.

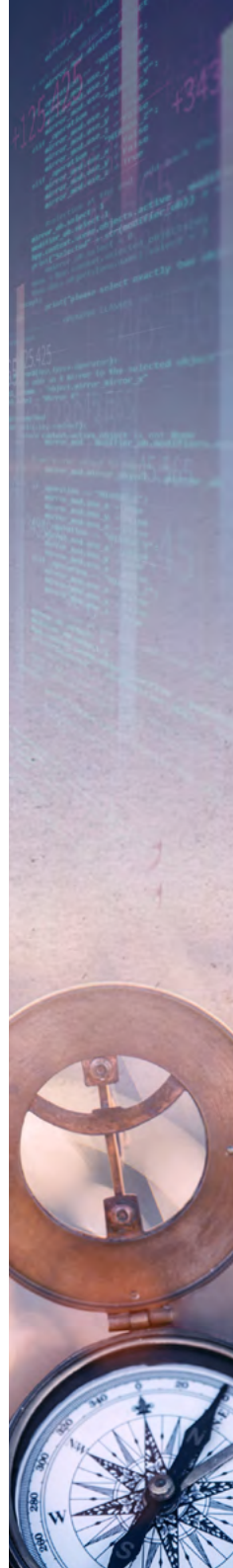
Q1.

WHO IS THE SOURCE OF TRUE SPIRITUAL FREEDOM?

John 8:36 - *Therefore if the _____ makes you free, you shall be free indeed*

.....

The Bible is a love story that highlights the greatest rescue of all times. We will start this story at the creation of the world. As this story unfolds, you will discover why you are so precious to God and why Jesus is so important to you.



Q2.

WHO CREATED THE UNIVERSE?

Genesis 1:1 - *In the beginning _____ created the heavens and the earth*

.....

Planet earth did not evolve. It was designed and created by God. The word “God” in this text is the Hebrew word “Elohim”, which is plural, referring to the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How God could be one God and yet three separate beings is a mystery in itself.

A simple illustration of this concept can be seen in the humble apple. An apple has three parts: the peel, the flesh and the core. They are all separate parts of the apple. Yet they are all one apple. They are not an orange, a lemon or a watermelon. They have different purposes, but they are just one apple. Similarly, the Godhead has three persons. They all have different roles, but they are just one God.

Creation is important because it demonstrates the power of God and tells us why human beings are so precious. God designed and made Adam and Eve with His own hands, to be His personal friends and companions. We are special to God – we are even made in His image (Genesis 1:26).



**THE
GODHEAD**

Q3.

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN ADAM AND EVE SINNED?

Genesis 2:17 - ... *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely _____*

Romans 6:23 - *For the wages of sin is _____*

.....

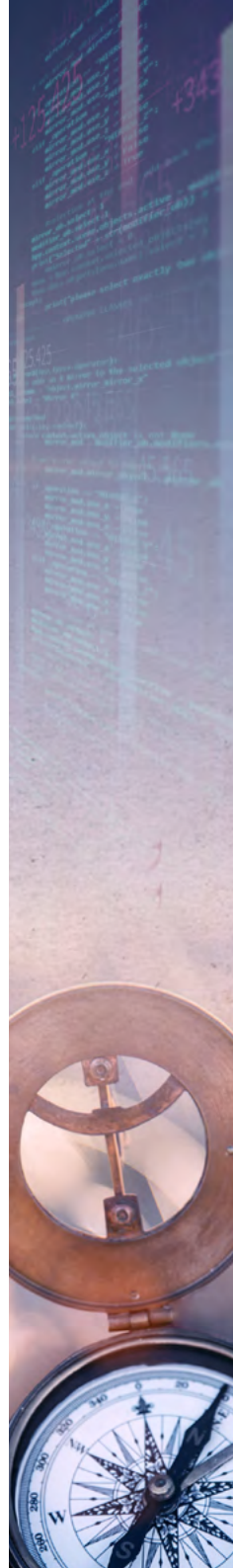
When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, a natural separation took place. The purity of God formed an instant barrier against the sin within humanity. The nature of Adam and Eve changed and everything on planet earth suffered as a result of that first sin. The natural and inevitable result of sin is death. So if God had not responded, Adam and Eve would have died there and then, and that would have been the end of life on this planet.

Q4.

WHAT IS THE FIRST MAJOR PROPHECY OF THE SCRIPTURES?

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your _____, And you shall bruise His _____*

.....



Here we have the gospel (meaning “good news”) mentioned for the first time in the Bible. God is speaking to the serpent (the devil) outlining the great conflict that will occur on planet earth between the seed of the woman (Jesus) and the devil with his followers. The climax of this story is the death of Jesus on Calvary. It was on the cross that Jesus suffered (symbolised by bruising His heel), but Satan was defeated (symbolised through a bruised or crushed head).

Q5.

WHAT SYMBOL IS USED TO REPRESENT JESUS AS OUR SACRIFICE?

John 1:29 - *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The _____ of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*

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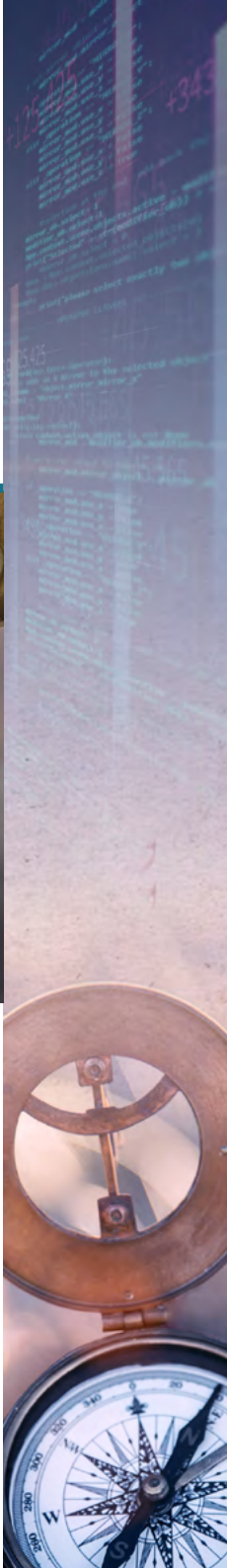
Jesus is the Lamb of God “slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). He was pure and gentle. He did not resist being killed. The book of Isaiah says, “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).



Jesus experienced intense physical and emotional abuse and was nearly beaten to death at his trial. He was paraded totally naked before an angry mob - made completely vulnerable. He was brutally nailed to the cross. He was also abused spiritually - not only was the cross seen by some as a pagan sacrifice, but to be hung on a cross was a symbol of being cursed by God (Galatians 3:13). Jesus suffered the highest level of humiliation and abuse for us.



Read about the death of Jesus in Mark 15 (complete chapter). Ask God to show you the depth of His love for you, and to help you realise how much you mean to Him.



Q6.

DOES JESUS REALLY CARE ABOUT ME PERSONALLY?

1 Peter 1:18,19 - ... *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold ... but with the precious _____ of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*

.....

There is a growing sector within our community who feel a low sense of personal value. This feeling of worthlessness can result in personal discouragement or depression. God wants you to know that in His eyes you are of infinite value. If God invested all the gold and silver of heaven to save us, then that would be an amazing sacrifice. But we are so valuable to God that He invested the most important thing He could, the “precious blood of Jesus”. Not only did God design and personally create us, He also gave the blood of His Son for us.

The old 1975 Ford Escort that once belonged to Pope Benedict sold at an auction for nearly \$900,000, while the golf clubs that belonged to J.F. Kennedy sold for over \$1 million. Why? Those items were not valuable in and of themselves. Their value lay in the fact that they belonged to someone important. You also belong to someone important – the King of the Universe. Jesus loves you and cares about you personally. He wants you to be His personal friend and live with Him forever.

Q7.

HOW DOES THE BLOOD OF JESUS CANCEL OUR SIN?

Hebrews 2:9 - *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste _____ for everyone*

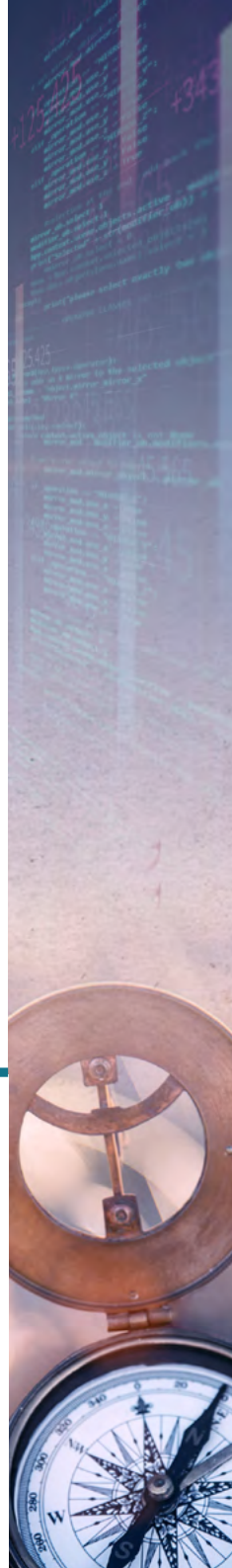
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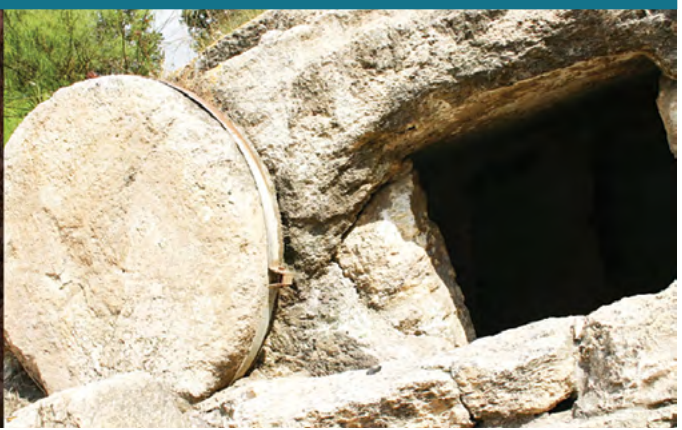
Jesus “tasted death” for everyone. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death, not just physical death, but also what the Bible calls the “Second Death” (Revelation 20:14,15). This is the death that only Jesus has experienced; it is the final death that results from our sins (this will be discussed further in the study guide “Where On Earth is Hell?”).

The reason why the blood of Jesus makes it possible to forgive us is explained in the act of substitution. If you truly forgive someone, then you are willing to suffer the consequences of the evil they have done to you, without retaliation. To illustrate; if someone punched you in the eye, forgiving that person means that you experience the pain from their wrongdoing, without returning the punch.

We have sinned against God and His law. Justice requires the penalty of death, and mercy can only be provided by the God whose law we have broken. Jesus chose to suffer the full penalty of our sin in order to provide a way of escape for us.

FORGIVEN





Q8.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT JESUS WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

1 Corinthians 15:17 - *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is _____; you are still in your sins!*

.....

The apostle Paul said, if Jesus remained dead, we would have no hope of salvation. Although the death of Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, a dead Christ could not forgive our sins today. Only a living Saviour can give us freedom and hope. That is why there is “no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Q9.

WHAT CAN I DO TO BENEFIT FROM THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JESUS?

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

.....

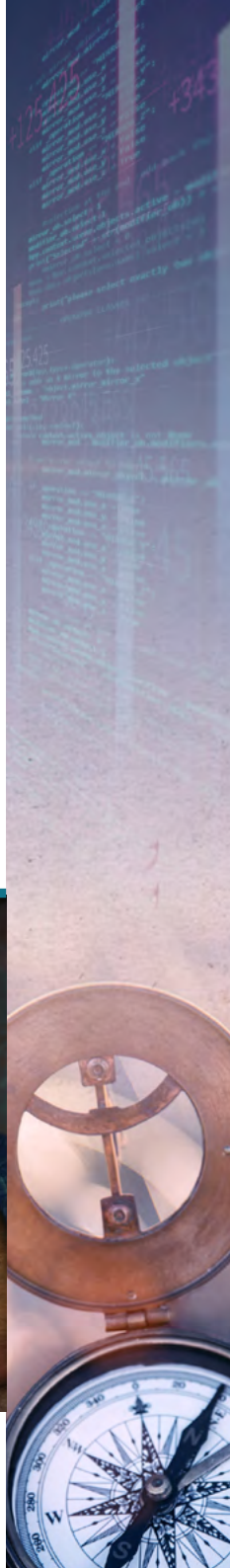
This famous text says it all! God gave because He loves. We cannot earn salvation. We will never deserve it. We will never be “good enough”. We can only accept it through believing in Him. Everlasting life is a free gift that God offers to you today.

Q10.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO RECEIVING SPIRITUAL FREEDOM?

.....

You receive spiritual freedom through accepting the gift of salvation. You accept salvation by accepting Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord of your life. To help you understand how to accept Jesus, here are seven practical steps:



a. Admit you are a sinner

Romans 3:23 - *for _____ have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

The first thing to be realised is your need for Christ. Many people are “good moral citizens” who wouldn’t dream of stealing or killing anyone, but every one of us has experienced sin. We have broken God’s law either by thought or action, which automatically qualifies us as sinners. The Bible says the “wages” (what we have earned) for our sins is eternal death. Only Jesus Christ can solve the sin problem.

b. Come to Christ

Matthew 11:28 - _____ *to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*

What a beautiful promise! No matter how sinful you may feel at times, just remember that Jesus is a far greater Saviour than you are a sinner. Do not wait until you are “good”, or haven’t sinned for a while. Jesus is calling you to Him just as you are.

When you “come to Jesus” you simply say to Him that you recognise you are a sinner, you need help in your life and you acknowledge that only He can give you that help.

c. Believe

Acts 16:31 - *So they said, “_____ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household”*

Believing in Christ is to trust Him. It is more than just an intellectual belief because the “devils believe” (James 2:19). Belief is to have such a trust in Jesus that you are willing to do what He says. To illustrate – a doctor prescribes medicine. If you believe in that doctor you will take the medicine. Jesus has a cure for sin and if we believe in Jesus we will gladly accept His cure.

d. Submit to Christ

James 4:7 - Therefore _____ to God

***I STAND AT
THE DOOR
AND KNOCK***



This is where you ask Jesus to be your personal Saviour. There are many people who go to church each week, and yet they have never asked Jesus to be their Saviour from sin.

Jesus says that He stands at the door of your heart and knocks. He wants to enter your life and have a daily relationship with you (Revelation 3:20). If the richest man in the world knocked on your front door and offered you a million dollars if you let him in, how long would it take to invite him into your home? You know the answer! Well Jesus offers you something much greater than a million dollars. He is offering you an eternity of peace and happiness.



e. Repent and confess your sins

1 John 1:9 - *If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*



Jesus wants us to be sorry, and say sorry for our sins. Confession can be made directly to God, and He promises that He will forgive you. He has purchased your sins with His own blood. You can be guaranteed that if you deliver His purchase to Him, He will accept the delivery.

Confession needs to be specific. If you have hurt another human being, you need to apologise to that person also. True confession comes from a heart that is sorry for the sin and determined to do whatever it takes to move away from a life of sin.

f. Experience the New Birth

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new _____; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*

One aspect of the Mystery of God is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). The Christian life is not just a modification or reformation of the old life – it is a transformation. You become a new creation. The old life is gone and you live a new life, with Jesus living in you.

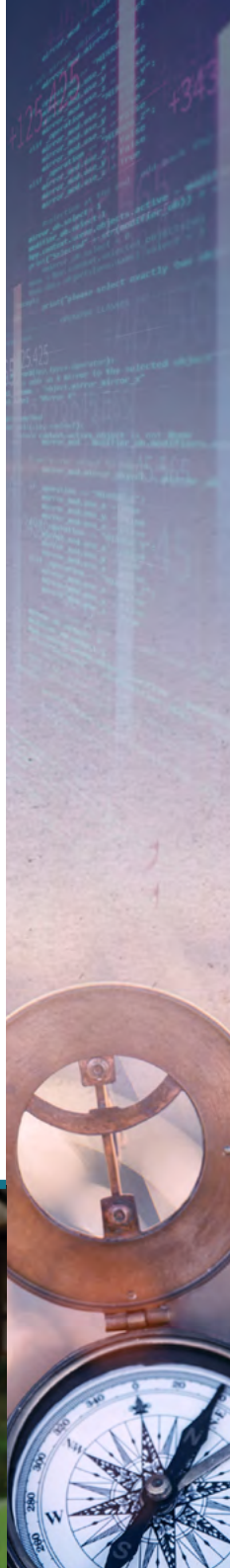
The Bible symbol for this change of life is baptism. To be baptised fully in water represents a death and burial of the old life and a resurrection of your new life in partnership with Jesus (Romans 6:3-6).

This change of life and the ongoing growth in spirituality, can only be accomplished through the work and power of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23).

g. Accept Jesus as Lord of your life

Colossians 2:6 - *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the _____, so _____ in Him*

Many today are happy to have Jesus as their Saviour as an escape plan from hell. But Jesus also wants to be Lord of your life. Jesus said, “if you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). We need to accept Jesus as Lord and then “walk in Him”. In other words, be obedient and walk in His steps towards a happy and victorious Christian life. This is not legalism; it is simply a love response to Jesus.



Q11.

IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BORING AND RESTRICTIVE?

John 10:10 - *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more _____*

.....

The devil tries to rob you of life. He makes out that a Christian life is just for boring people who have nothing better to do. He emphasises what you will “miss out on” or “can’t do anymore”. Jesus says that a life with Him is full of adventure and discovery. It is an abundant life where people of all ages and cultures can discover true happiness and fulfilment in life.

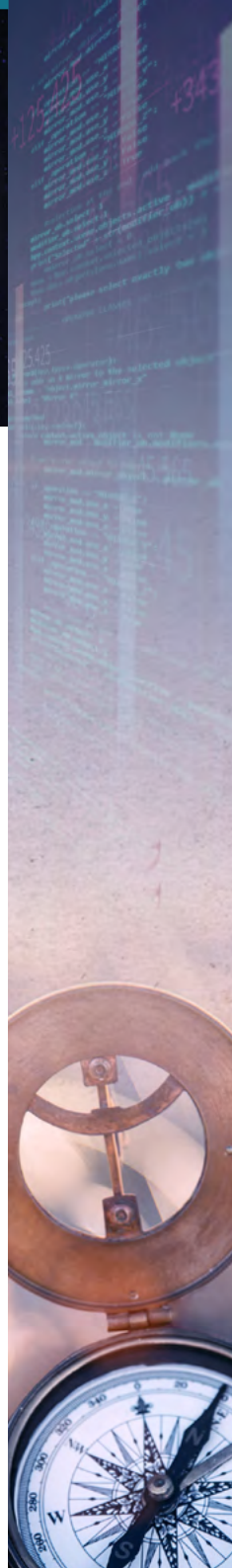
Q12.

WHAT ASSURANCE IS THERE FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS?

1 John 5:13 - *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may _____ that you have eternal life*

.....

Eternal life is not just something you can “hope” for. A true belief in Jesus includes having the confidence that you have eternal life today. The reason why you can have such confidence is because the gospel is based on the power and promises of the Creator God.



Q13.

WHAT DOES GOD PROMISE TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Philippians 4:13 - *I can do ____ things through Christ who strengthens me*

Ephesians 3:20 - *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the _____ that works in us*

.....

There is no limit to the power of God. No matter where you come from, no matter how bad you have been, no matter what sins you are struggling with – God has the love and power to do _____ exceedingly... abundantly... above... all... that we ask... or think... according to the power that works in us.



YES I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE

JEREMIAH 31:3

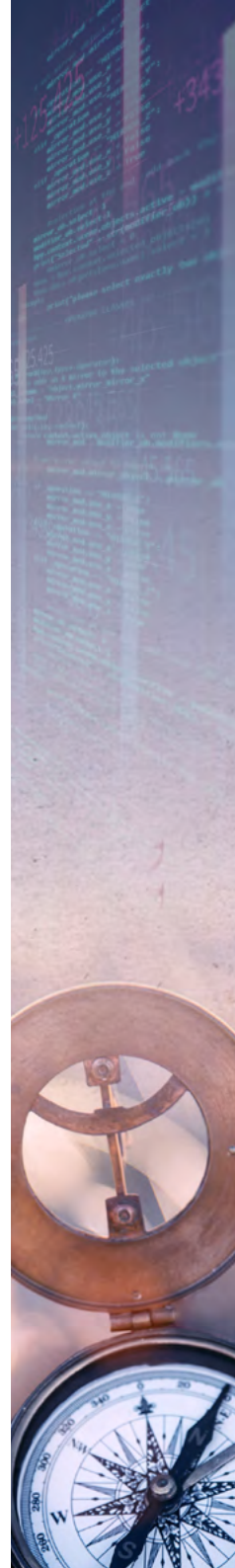
Three points to remember:

- All human beings are sinners and without Jesus we are eternally lost
- You can be certain that you have eternal life if you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour
- God wants to empower you today to live a victorious Christian life

The story:

A railway switchman had the job of operating the controls that locked a bridge in place over a large river. One day as the sun was beginning to set he could see and hear the train coming towards him. Unfortunately the controls did not work on this occasion so he hurried down to the tracks to push the lever manually.

As the man leant with all his might on the lever he heard a faint cry. To his horror he saw his four-year-old boy running across the bridge crying "Daddy, where are you?" His first impulse was to yell out to his son, "Run, Run" but he realised it was too late. His son would never make it to the other side of the bridge before the train came. The man had the worst choice in the world to make. In a split second he had to choose between the train or his son. If he left the lever to save his son the train would crash into the river killing hundreds of people on board. If he saved the train his son would almost certainly be killed on the bridge.



As the heart-torn father leant hard on the lever, he watched the train crush the innocent little body of his young boy. With tear filled eyes he peered into the windows of the train and saw the activities of the passengers. They had no idea of the decision the father had just made. They were either playing cards, laughing, sleeping or eating. As the train sped by, the sobbing figure of a broken father was still clinging to the control lever.

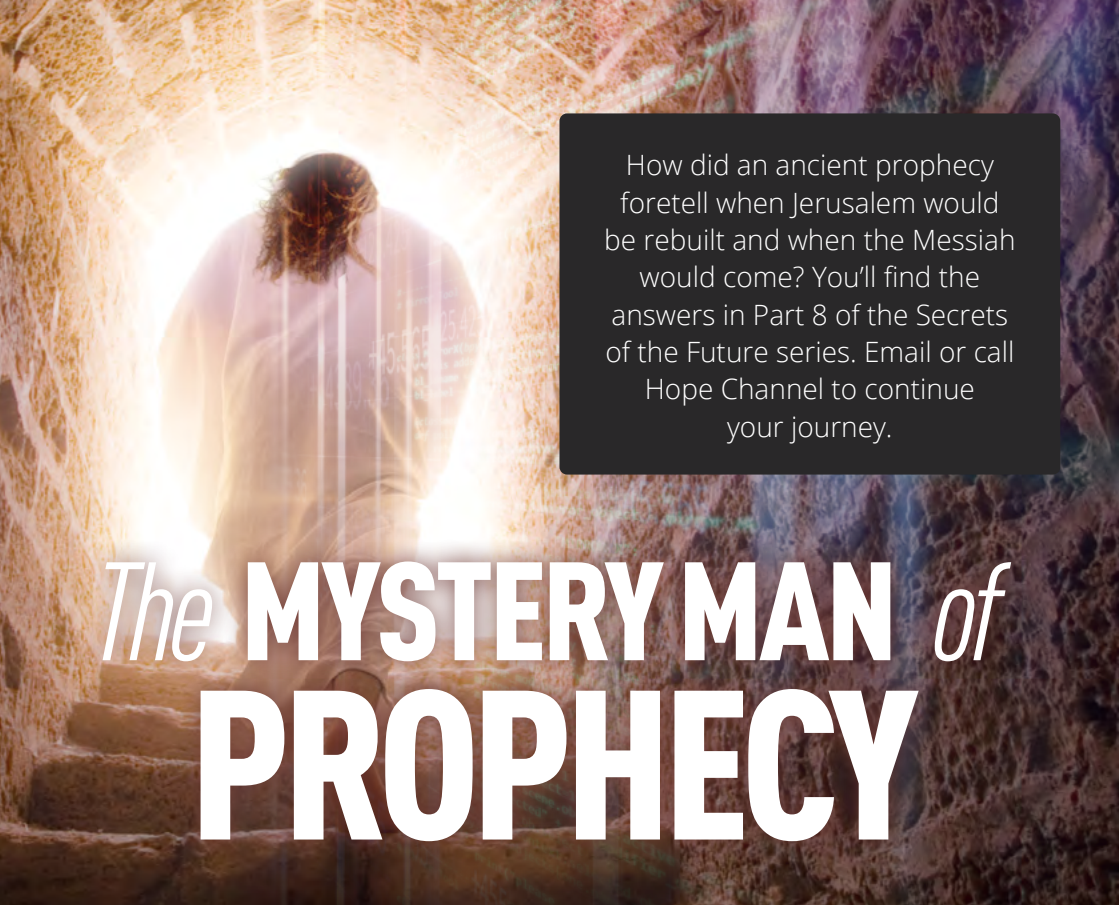
God had a similar choice to make. What does this story illustrate about God's love for you?

Relational questions:

1. What should you do if or when you feel you are not "good enough" to get to heaven?
2. What does the death of Jesus on the cross tell you about God? How can you make the cross even more meaningful to you?
3. Do you think the Christian life is hard? Why/Why not? Why don't you think more people accept God's free gift?
4. What would you say is the secret to living the Christian life? What can you do to increase your love for Jesus on a daily basis?

Your response:

Jesus is offering you the free gift of salvation. Would you like to invite Jesus into your life today, or renew that decision, and experience an empowered Christian life?



How did an ancient prophecy foretell when Jerusalem would be rebuilt and when the Messiah would come? You'll find the answers in Part 8 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

The MYSTERY MAN *of* PROPHECY



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Design: Storysmiths

Images: Phil McKay, iStock

Print: Signs Publishing Company

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