



Read this for **one minute!**
I am sure you will keep reading! Accept this challenge!

Many people know that the middle cross held Jesus who died as a sacrifice so that we could go to heaven. If you don't know this, then you do now! But the other two crosses are barely thought about. **Listen to this!**

On the other two crosses were two actual criminals that were crucified next to Jesus, and they were going to die just like Jesus.

One of the criminals mocked Jesus, saying *“Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!”* Jesus said nothing to this man.

The other criminal simply said, *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

... and WHAT did Jesus say?!... He said to the second criminal, *“Today you will be with me in heaven.”*

This second criminal did two things: He **BELIEVED** that Jesus was Lord and **ASKED** Jesus to allow him into heaven. Even as you are reading this, that criminal is in heaven right now with Jesus Christ!

But wait! Here is what is important! ... **I want you to know what that criminal who asked Jesus to remember him DID NOT do....**

He didn't go to church. He was never baptized. He didn't read a bible. He didn't do a bunch of good things in life. In that moment, he simply **BELIEVED** that Jesus was Lord and **ASKED** to be in heaven when he dies.

In other words, it wasn't this person's "godly life" full of "good deeds" and being a "good person" that got him into heaven. **He believed. He asked. THAT'S IT!**

KEEP READING!

CAN THE BIBLE BE PROVEN?

People will say... “the bible was just written by people”, “it is fairy tale”, “it can’t be proven”, etc. etc.

The bible is comprised of 66 books written by 40 different authors written over thousands of years. Some person didn’t sit down and decided to write a novel one day. The words of the bible are inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. Guess what?! In all of those 66 books written over thousands of years by 40 different authors, there is **not a SINGLE** contradiction in the bible. How is THAT possible?! You may hear people try to give you examples otherwise, but if you do your research, you will find no contradictions. Google can be your friend. Look things up. If you think there is a contradiction, then Google it and see what theologians who study the bible have to say. You might be surprised at what you learn!

The bible is also a historical book, and many of the places mentioned throughout the bible you can go to **today**. You can go to the place where Jesus fed 5000, had his last supper, where he was crucified, etc. etc. Also, there are a multitude of artifacts, manuscripts, and historical events that back up the writings of the bible.

In an attempt to disprove the bible, people will bombard you with evolution theories, dinosaur theories, etc. etc. But, with all of our technological advances, we have found much more proof of a sudden creation of life than a theory that life evolved from nothing millions or billions of years ago. Newsflash – the greatest scientists in the world are STILL unable to create life from non-life – and they never will! Only God can do that! As for carbon dating showing that dinosaurs have been here for “millions” of years... that science is proven flawed science. Why don’t dinosaurs exist today? They do! The elephant exists, the alligator exists, etc. etc. They just haven’t gone extinct yet like the other ones. Creatures become extinct all the time – nothing new! As for humans evolving from apes? I challenge you to find a SINGLE skeleton which shows the progression of ape to human. You won’t be able to! The one “skeleton” we have was crafted from a single set of fragments of a skull and hips. It was crafted by an artist. But wait... shouldn’t we have lots of FULL skeletons showing progression of apes to humans? **We have NONE!** It is a THEORY. Also, If you don’t believe that Noah’s Ark and the flood happened, you would be amazed at the sheer amount of evidence there is for that event! **The bible cannot be disproven.** The bible is true.

Let’s talk about “proof” of the events of the bible and the existence and deity of Jesus Christ. If I asked you to prove to me that George Washington was real and that he was the first president of the United States, **how would you go about doing that?** The answer is simple... you would get artifacts and literatures from the past backing your claim and offer even more literature backing that literature up. **You would call that PROOF, and most people wouldn’t question your claim** that Washington existed and that he was the first president. Well, the same holds true for the bible and Jesus Christ – historians and theologians would provide the same types of evidence. Lots of evidence! – **and why wouldn’t we call that proof?**

Some of the most prominent Christian writers (Lee Strobel, CS Lewis) actually first set out on a path in **an attempt to DISPROVE the bible**, and after looking at all of the facts, they realized the bible was true and gave their lives to God!

People will say they believe in ghosts, demons, angels, aliens, tarot cards, astrology, palm reading, some form of afterlife, etc., but for them to consider that the God of the bible, Jesus and the angels might be true is nonsense to them. < **Explain that!**

Remember this always: The words written in the bible are inspired by the Holy Spirit of God Himself, and they are a love letter to you. God shows us the fall of man and how we turned our back from his plan for our lives. And he shows us, over and over again, how he has made ways for us to be right with Him so that, when we die,, we will be with Him in heaven forever.

NOTE ABOUT DIFFERENT BIBLE “VERSIONS”

If there are different versions, then **which ones are true? They all are!** Let me explain what a different bible “version” means:

In year 1600’s, there was the “King James Version” of the bible. Many people still use it today. Here is an example of a bible verse from it:

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

No one talks like that today! They did in the 1600’s, but not today. So here is the same verse written in the “New Living Translation” from 1996:

“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.”

It’s the same bible verse with the same meaning but written in a manner in which we communicate today.

HOW ARE WE SEPARATED FROM GOD?

There can be NO sin in heaven. ZERO! What is sin? Sin is anything that we do that is against the heart and will of God. It doesn’t have to be something serious like murder. It could simply be pride, a lie, a small theft, sex outside of marriage, unforgiveness of others, or using God’s name in vain (“God dang it!”). We ALL have at least some sin in our past and current life. Read the following scripture:

The bible states this very clearly:

“ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”.

As you can see, there are people who do many good things or are generally “good people”, but they STILL can’t get into heaven because they have sin! That’s terrible, right?!

Quick sidenote! ... Don’t think about heaven much? Newsflash! That stats just came in! – Evidence suggests that there is a 100% chance that you will die! Where will you go?

KEEP READING!

GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD!

SO, HERE'S THE QUESTION ... If there can be no sin in heaven, then how are we as sinful people able to ever be in heaven?

There has always been a "blood sacrifice" for the atonement and forgiveness of sins. In the "Old Testament" of the bible (the time before Jesus came), God required certain things to be done such as following over 613 laws and the sacrifice of a pure lamb at the temple. **However, when Jesus came and died on the cross, He was the FINAL and lasting sacrifice.** No more sacrifices. No more temples! No more rituals. No more priests! None of that! We have DIRECT access to God once we accept Jesus as our Lord!

So what must you do in order to be blameless before God?

Believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. Believe that He came to this earth to be crucified on the cross for every sin that you have ever committed and EVER WILL commit. Acknowledge that only HE can forgive you for everything you have ever done against God and simply ask Him, **"Jesus, I believe you are Lord, and I believe you died for my sins. I want to be in heaven when I die. Please forgive me for my sins."**

This free gift of forgiveness is for EVERYONE. Even murderers! God makes this very clear in His word that ALL who come to Him will be forgiven. Do NOT think that you are too far from God's love to be forgiven. Once again – this is a free gift. You CANNOT earn it!

Jesus calls this being "born again". Many mock this terminology, but these are the actual words that God Himself used. Remember this... to be "born again", forgiven of your sins and to have a relationship with God, **no church is needed to do this!** No fancy event! No "special prayers"! No baptism in water! None of that is needed to be forgiven and start your relationship with God. Just simply talk to Him. That's it! The bible backs this up over and over and over. **"Religion" is for "religious" people. God hates "religion"** because "religious people" actually believe that they are "right with God" because of how "religious" they are. That means that these "religious" people feel that they are "worthy" to get into heaven based on their lifestyle or good works. God is VERY clear on this.... The **ONLY** way you get into heaven is by acknowledging Jesus Christ as your Lord and humbly living your life for Him. **God doesn't want "religion" – He wants a RELATIONSHIP**, and that takes place when you are talking to Him, listening to Him and choosing to live your life in a manner pleasing to Him.

Sidenote about talking to God....

Did you know? ... talking to God doesn't have to be verbally with your mouth? You can simply speak to Him with your heart and not make any noises. He hears you. He knows you are talking to Him. As a matter of fact, I would venture to say that most, if not all Christians, talk to God more with their heart than out loud with their mouth. It is intimate, and it is honest. And God LOVES honest!

KEEP READING!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REPENT (TURN FROM SIN) ?

It means to do your best every day to make God the priority of your life. You will want to do what is pleasing to God because He died for your sins because He loves you! It means to stop having sex with your girlfriend or boyfriend. It means to not lie or steal. It means to become a hard worker at work if you know you are being lazy. It means to forgive others. It means to be kind and giving instead of selfish and taking. It means to put God's will ahead of your will. It means to have **no** other gods or idols. What is another god or idol? Anyone or anything that you value more than God. It could be money, a person, your choice of entertainment, etc.

Easy, right? ----- > NOT!

As a matter of fact, after you become a Christian by asking Jesus to forgive you, you **WILL still** sin. Probably less and less over time as you grow closer and closer to Him. But you will never be able to completely stop sinning. Even on your BEST day being "good" and "holy", you will still fall short of His glory. So now what? Great news....

Jesus' death on the cross covers ALL of our sins – both now and in the future. That is great news, right?!!!! YES! It is! **BUT! (very important) ... This is not a license to sin.** God knows you and your heart better than even you do, and he KNOWS if you truly are trying not to sin in general. So, daily, you make a decision to keep doing your best to LOVE GOD for what he has done for you and therefore do your best to follow God's commandments. **If you do sin, NEVER EVER EVER THINK FOR A MOMENT that you have blown it with God!** ALWAYS return to Him, and always talk to Him. Simply ask for forgiveness and start following Him again if you have fallen away. THAT is the way it is done!

PEACE

During our whole lives we strive for happiness, and we think we know what will make us happy. Money, a respectable career, excelling in a sport, becoming married and having kids, a new house, new things, a large group of friends, being esteemed by those around us, etc. etc. All of those things can bring temporary happiness, but it is always temporary. Don't believe me? Buy a new house that you are in love with and see if you even notice it a year later. The zeal wears off, as with everything in life. Got a new car? You won't even notice it in a month. Finally married to your dream come true? Boom – real life problems hit and you realize that marriage is actually a lot of work.

The happiness that God offers is in the form of PEACE. Even in our worst times, God provides peace which no one can understand.

God gives peace in two areas: our life, and our death.

The peace regarding death is easy to understand. We know that when we die we will IMMEDIATELY be in heaven with God – a place with no more tears or pain. If no one has told you what heaven will be like, then you are in for a surprise! It is going to be awesome! The picture of little pudgy cherubim playing harps in the clouds for eternity... that's definitely NOT heaven!

But what about peace in our life? God is a VERY personal God who **absolutely LOVES you** – even as you are reading this now. When you ask Jesus to forgive you for your sins and to come into your life, GOD takes over in the following manner – and this is directly from the bible:

“ALL things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

If you have accepted Jesus as Lord and rely on his forgiveness for your sins, then you ARE most definitely “called according to His purpose”. And what does that verse say? ... “ALL things work together for good..” That means that, as you follow God, He will make sure that everything that happens is good for you. You can have peace and breathe easy because the God who created the universe cares about you!

This does NOT mean that you will never become ill. It does NOT mean that you will become wealthy. It does not mean that your husband or wife won’t cheat on you. This does NOT mean that bad things will not happen in your life. What it does mean is that, even in those bad moments, GOD is in control – even up to the point of your death! (because -- newsflash! -- Christians still die too.)

There is MUCH to write about pain, suffering, unfairness and hardship, but you should know that God allows pain and suffering for many reasons. We may not immediately know what those reasons are, but the bible is clear on this: One of the reasons God allows hardships in a Christians life is to help perfect their faith in Him by making them RELY on Him more and more. As you gain more and more faith, God will use you more and more to do other things such as tell this gospel to other people or maybe even turn from a sin that you haven’t been able to kick. He may even bless you with more than you had before (read the book of Job!)

It is true – God does work in mysterious ways at times, but if you are a Christian, just rest knowing that He LOVES YOU and He is IN CONTROL!

The first thing anyone EVER told me about God was a one line statement: “Chris, People will let you down, but God never will.” So true.

PRAY? HOW?

Simple. Talk to him. End of story.

Things to pray about: Confess the things you have done wrong and pray for forgiveness. Thank Him for what he did on the cross. Praise Him for being a loving God. Thank Him for making Himself REAL to you! Thank Him for your health, your food, your possessions, your family and anything else you have. Ask him for wisdom to understand things and make the right decisions. Ask Him to help you understand things in the bible better. Ask him for help with your health, finances, family problems, work problems. Ask Him to help you with a particular sin or to help you forgive someone. These are examples, but you will have many more reasons to pray.

Just talk to Him.

Also, you talking (praying) to God doesn’t have to be this big event! Sure, sometimes you may want to go to your room and get on your knees and pray at length. But most other times you can pray from your heart (without your voice) at any moment even if it is as simple as “God please help me through this day!” or “God, I love you. Thank you!”

WHAT DO I DO IF I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

BELIEVE - Number one is this: Don't ever be fooled into thinking that you are not a Christian or that your experience was nothing. God heard you, and God is with you. He will never leave you or forsake you. You may have doubts at times, but stand on God's word!

CHURCH - Find a church. Be around other believers. If you're not sure if it is a good church, go and look at the people and see how they treat each other with love and openness. That is a great clue you have found a decent church. What each church professes to believe is called "doctrine". Some churches doctrine does not match up with scripture in the bible. Listen for inconsistencies and ask questions. Be prepared to do research and leave that church if their doctrine does not match what is in the bible. Here is a link to an online church at "**Harvest.org**" (or you can download the "**Harvest+**" app for your phone. Their doctrine is sound. Start there and learn!

READ - Read your bible every day if possible. Start reading at the book of John! Then read the next two books in the bible... "Acts" and "Romans" You do NOT have to understand everything that you read! Just read, and things you don't understand now will become understandable later. Don't worry if you get sleepy while you read. It doesn't mean that you're not a Christian! Just read! If you get sleepy, then close your bible and read again at another time!

PRAY – Pray all the time for the littlest things – even if it is just to share a thought with God! Talk to Him regularly – it's easy!

As you do all of these things, you will grow closer and closer to God, gain more peace and you will live your life more and more for Him and with less sin.

Listen for God's voice to speak to your heart! It is the Holy Spirit of God that speaks to you.

OTHER RELIGIONS

Every single other religion – EVERY SINGLE ONE! – is based on "works". They base your acceptance and rewards from a god or gods with your good and bad deeds. Christianity is the ONLY "religion" that is not based on how "good" you are. When Jesus Christ died on the cross for you, He finalized your salvation into heaven based on one thing only: Believe in Him and follow Him. The reason you become "good" and "better" as a person in Christianity is because you become more and more in love with Jesus Christ as you continue to be awed by what He did for you, and then you want to do good to PLEASE HIM out of love, and NOT to "save yourself". See the difference? NEVER forget... you will NEVER be good enough to be right with God. That is why Jesus came and died for you.

Also, many of these religions have pre-defined prayers and rituals. That is "religion". Remember – God wants a relationship with you, and cannot have a relationship with someone who is just being "religious".

KEEP READING!

CHRISTIANITY IS A CRUTCH?

You have probably heard this said before. It is a phrase meant to insinuate that only weak or weak minded people become Christians.

I have a different view on this: Christianity is the most persecuted religion on this earth. It takes a considerable amount of fortitude to be a Christian in a world where you are mocked or ridiculed. Do you know that Jesus's name is mocked regularly everywhere on earth? It is so routine to mock the name of Jesus that it is regularly done on your television screens. Do you hear any other names being mocked? Buddha, Krishna, Allah, Brahma? NO! In this world, the only God that it is acceptable to mock is Jesus Christ. Thousands of Christians die every year because they will not turn their back on their faith in Jesus and are killed because of it. Because the world hates the God of the bible, the media will not cover the horrific things that happens to Christians. Jesus said that the world will hate you because you are with Him. It takes more courage and perseverance to be a Christian than a non-believer. As such, being a Christian is not for the weak!

Getting back to the word "crutch"... well, that IS part of it!... Jesus is MUCH MORE than a crutch though. He is the 911 call! The ambulance that races to you! He is the emergency room that stabilizes you and the surgeons who fix you! He is the ICU where He can keep a close eye on you and he is the rehabilitation center where you get back on your feet! Jesus is ALL of this!

He came to heal the broken hearts! He came to be with the lonely! He came to provide peace in an unstable and unpredictable world where people and material things let us down way too often! He came to give us a way into heaven! THAT is MY crutch!

Here is what God says about those who mock you because of your faith...

"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way."

WHO IS FOOLISH AND WEAK? WHAT GOD SAYS

"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong..."

We esteem ourselves for things such as our strength and our minds. We become proud of how smart we are and how great and self sufficient we are. In all of this, MOST people have decided that they do not need God. They don't need God because they have life figured out! They are PROUD of themselves and their accomplishments. God called these people fools because they refuse to acknowledge their need for Him. Yet the world calls Christians fools, not knowing that in the end that it will be us who spend eternity in heaven with God.

NEWSFLASH! A homeless person that just asked Jesus to be their Lord and forgive them of their sins is EXPONENTIALLY richer than the smartest, richest non-Christian on earth! Imagine that.

God values humble people who put Him first, and in doing so become servants to other people around them. Christians understand the gift of God. They understand that this time on earth is so very short and that eternity is forever! Christians are smart because they know to put their faith in God, and those who reject God – even with all of their fame, wealth, possessions, pride and earthly happiness – will not enter into heaven. For eternity.

So when you are mocked and ridiculed because you are a Christian, be glad because YOU, in your childlike faith, are the smart one!

NEWSFLASH! You will struggle your whole life trying to find happiness in things, money, relationships, accomplishments and the acceptance of others, but you will ALWAYS be empty without Him. You will fully understand this even more once you choose to follow Him.

WHAT ABOUT THE HYPOCRITES?

Everyone who hates God loves to point out the hypocrites in an attempt to discredit God. For sure, they are everywhere. They are on television asking for money and in return they say “God will make you rich because you gave!” Some of them are on TV jerking their body in weird ways. And, some of them are in the church, sitting right next to you. You might even think that the person sitting next to you is in love with Jesus and you will never know that they don’t have a true relationship with Him.

Hypocrites are everywhere. All of us can be hypocrites at times. When it comes to religion, do NOT hold God accountable for someone else’s hypocrisy. God never endorsed hypocrisy, so why would we associate Him with it? It is the condition of a person’s heart that can make them a hypocrite, not the God who created them. Don’t be so quick to judge a hypocrite either. God may not like their sin, but He loves them you as much as He loves you!

Here is the MOST important thing you need to know about hypocrites and false Christians: **NEVER hold God accountable for that.** These are simply sinful humans (like we all are in our own ways) we are not to judge God based on these people actions or lifestyle! God is the judge, and he will deal with each person in His own way. **Never forget – even these people God loves! Never forget, you too can fall into sin even as a Christian.**

I WANT TO LEAVE YOU WITH THIS:

When Jesus left heaven and came to earth to die for our sins, He chose 12 men to follow Him as disciples and to witness His miracles and help Him spread the good news of salvation to the world. They were with Jesus for three years before Jesus was crucified, and they loved Him!

But these disciples were still humans, as you and I are. When the Roman soldiers and Chief Priests came in the night and took Jesus into custody before His crucifixion, the disciples became scared and they scattered! At one point, one of Jesus’ closest disciples, Peter, denied even knowing Jesus when he was asked.

And the next day, Jesus was brutally tortured and then crucified on the cross.

KEEP READING!

What did the disciples do? They ran. Crucifixion was one of the worst ways someone could be put to death, and if you ever learn about what happened to Jesus, you will understand. When they were done flogging Him, His flesh lay open on His back and His front side was so beaten that you could not recognize His genitals on the front. And after that, they had Him drag a massive wood cross to where He would die. They nailed Him to that cross and lifted it up where He hung for six hours, struggling for every breath. The words I have written don't even touch the horror of what Jesus suffered. He willfully came and endured this because He loves YOU!

Now you might understand why the disciples ran!

Three days after Jesus was crucified, just like it was prophesied thousands of years before, Jesus rose from the dead. He conquered sin and death! When He rose from the dead, He revealed Himself to the disciples and over 500 other people! He then spent forty days with His disciples after that, and then he left the disciples and ascended into heaven. NOW HERE IS WHAT I WANT YOU TO KNOW!

After that, the disciples did not run any more! They preached the good news of salvation throughout the lands, and **guess what happened to most of them?** They were killed for preaching about Jesus! Peter, the one who denied knowing Jesus three times was crucified upside down because He felt unworthy to be crucified in the same way Jesus was. Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross. James was beheaded by sword. Nathaniel was flayed alive and then beheaded. Matthew and Thomas were both speared to death. The other James was thrown from the temple and clubbed to death. Simon was cut in half. John was exiled to the island of Patmos after he was boiled in oil and survived. These accounts are based on historical accounts that are separate from the bible text... yet more proof of Jesus.

HERE IS MY QUESTION!!! If everything the apostles saw and wrote about while they were with Jesus was a lie and Jesus was not really God, wouldn't they all have saved themselves and admitted that Jesus wasn't God?

>>>> No one would go through that torture and death for a made up story! <<<<

Jesus is real. God is real. Heaven is real. God's love for you is real and you accepting Jesus Christ as Lord is paramount to how you will spend eternity after you die.

HELL

I can't end this without talking about the "H" word. Hell. Most don't know this, but Jesus Himself (and the bible in general) mentions "hell" many more times than it does "heaven". Why? Simple... Jesus came and died so that, whoever believes and follows Him, will never have to go there. Jesus KNOWS what is waiting for you if you go to hell, and that is why He who is God came to this earth to be sacrificed for your sins – so that you don't have to go there!

Many people joke about hell saying that they will be with their friends there... as if it is going to be fun. God is very clear on this... Hell is a place of eternal separation from God where there is pain, thirst and gnashing of the teeth (anger) among other things. It is for eternity.

KEEP READING!

Some argue that a “God of love” would NEVER send someone to hell. But there are two parts to this correction: 1) You have a CHOICE to accept Jesus as Lord. God will not force you to do anything because if He did, then your decision to follow Him would not be out of faith and love, but coercion. God wants a relationship with you, not a robot. 2) If God the Father did not love you, He would not have sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to be tortured and killed and the hands of the very people He loves so that YOU could go to heaven.

When compared to the light and love of God that the Christian will be in for eternity, doesn't it make sense to consider at least talking to God or looking further into this message?

LAST THING:

If you are unsure of Jesus, simply pray to God,

“God, if you are real, please reveal yourself to me.”

Wait! Hours, days, months... He will!

Visit our website to ask a question or ask for additional resources – we will be happy to help!

ALSO! Links to the **bible online** and video **sermons from Harvest.org** are on the website!

the2crosses.com