

Via



See:
**Chilean
Miner's
Capsule**
– page 15

Via Magazine is published annually by a group of Christians who desire to share with you the good news of God's salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Contents

Asleep in the Boat.....	4
Evidence of Love.....	5
The Grandest Ship Afloat.....	6
World Peace	8
Apple's Founder Saved by a Death.....	9
Horace the Cow? – Children's Feature	10
Dear Teenager – Teen Talk.....	11
Road Signs from the Word of God	12
Have You Found the Ancient Door?	14
From Darkness to Light	15
Buried Alive.....	16
Grand Canyon – Long Jumpers Would Perish!	17
Looking Forward to My Heavenly Home	18
Sure Entry.....	19
You Are Not Alone	20
God is not a Vending Machine.....	21
Free Material.....	22

EDITORIAL

Via Magazine would like to present you with the answer to your personal and spiritual needs – Jesus Christ.

With Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour:

- We become children of God.
- We are moored to the Rock that will hold us safely in any storm or strong current of life.
- We are given a peace that passes our understanding.
- We discover God's goodness greatly exceeds our expectations.
- We know our sins are forgiven.

We cannot steer our own way to Heaven. Our sins separate us from God forever unless we choose to accept the payment that the Lord Jesus Christ made for us on the cross, when He paid for our sins Himself. He is the door to Heaven and to a complete and fulfilled life on earth.

It is important to read the Bible for yourself. All of the Bible quotations used in *Via* are from the New King James version. Find out God's message to you and treasure it in your heart. **Look for the hidden 'heart' in the magazine.** If you have any unanswered questions, please write to us. We always enjoy hearing from our readers.

Years ago a young guide at Niagara Falls had nothing to do, so he moored his boat well above the cataract, lay down in it and fell asleep. He thought he had tied the boat securely, but with its constant swaying the knot came undone. With the sleeping occupant, the boat began to drift with the current. Spectators on the shore, seeing his danger, yelled at him trying to awaken him, so that he could save himself while the current was not too rapid. He did not hear their cries.

At one point in the boat's progress it was grounded on a rock in midstream. Seeing the boat pause, the by-standers increased their efforts to awaken the sleeping man. They yelled, "Get on the rock! Get on the rock!" But he slumbered on, still oblivious to his peril.

With the movement of the waters, the boat was soon cleared from the rock, and headed for the falls. The poor man awoke when he heard the thundering roar of the waterfall but he was too late to reach safety.

How appalling! Asleep in the boat! Calmly and unconsciously drifting into the jaws of death!

This illustrates the indifference of people today! Many, unconcerned

about their eternal destiny, are fast asleep in their sin, perhaps lulled by earthly pleasures, or soothed into false confidence by their dependence on a blameless life or religious profession. **ALL ASLEEP IN THE BOAT!**


"...The god of this age (Satan) has blinded, (those) who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Are you safely moored to the Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ, or are you drifting into danger? Have you trusted Him as your Saviour, or are you carried along with the broad, rapid current of a world that is fast approaching destruction? If you are still not saved, will you wake up to your danger of going on without Christ? If you keep putting off the salvation of your soul for a future day, you may suddenly wake up too late. You may find yourself taking that last fatal plunge over the brink into the dark waters of death and the fearful woes of a lost eternity.

"Awake, you who sleep" (Ephesians 5:14).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Bible Truth Publishers



Asleep in the Boat

Evidence of Love

When Prince William wanted to demonstrate just how deep his love for Kate Middleton was, he gave her the most meaningful and precious gift he could ever give.

Burned in the memories of some who lived in the 80's and 90's are the heartbroken and sad faces of two young princes, William and Harry, whose mother had tragically died in a car accident. Royalty followers never once questioned Princess Diana's love for her two boys, nor their love for their mother. The boys were left with beautiful memories of a mother who loved them.

Pictures, mementos, heirlooms and keepsakes are treasured reminders of the one Prince William loved. One very special treasure was Princess Diana's sapphire and diamond engagement ring. The unique ring would not be given away lightly or carelessly, nor would it be worn on the finger of someone not loved or valued deeply by William. It would be reserved for the love of his life. It would be gladly given to the one to whom he wanted to express his deepest love.

As heart-warming as the royal love story is, there is an even greater love story to be told. As meaningful as Prince William's engagement gift was, there is a love gift that outstrips all other statements of love and affection.

The Gift was wrapped in swaddling clothes and snuggled in a manger in Bethlehem. The Gift dressed in street clothes of commoners and walked the dusty roads of earth in pursuit of those to whom He could bring blessings and



happiness. The Gift rested His weary head in a boat sailing to other shores to seek and to save the perishing. The Gift sat at a well and blessed a thirsty destitute woman with living water.

The Gift was stripped of His clothes and beaten and bruised. Eventually the Gift hung wounded and bleeding upon a cross - rejected and despised by the very ones He loved and came to bless.

The full appreciation of the Gift can only be understood by considering His painful and shameful death on the Cross. When God wanted to express the depth of His love to sinners like you and me, He gave His one and only Son to bear the penalty and to pay for our sins. That death was God's ultimate statement of love to our prodigal world.

Kate Middleton accepted, as a statement of love, that which was most precious to Prince William - his mother's beautiful ring. Have you ever accepted the Gift that is most precious to God - His Son Jesus Christ?

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The Grandest Ship Afloat

The beginning of the 20th century saw many new British passenger liners entering service. Each one seemed to be larger, faster and more luxurious than the one that had gone before, until there was the biggest and grandest of all the ships, the *Titanic*! Weighing 48,000 tons and with a length of 882 feet, this new ship was the pride of the seas. With its twelve watertight compartments, they claimed it to be “practically unsinkable”.

The rich and famous soon booked their places in the lavish and expensive cabins. Thousands of people came to Southampton on Wednesday April 10, 1912 to see *Titanic* embark on its maiden voyage to New York. Little did those people know that this was to be its first and last voyage.

Within five days the majority of people on board that ship were in eternity!

For Those in Peril on the Sea

On Sunday night April 12, 1912 a hymn singing evening was arranged. About a hundred passengers gathered in the second class dining saloon for the occasion. One of the many hymns sung that night was William Whiting’s famous seafaring hymn “Eternal Father, Strong to Save”, containing the words, “Oh hear us when we cry to Thee, for those in peril on the sea.” Those enjoying this evening of singing did not know

that within two hours they would all be enduring an unprecedented great peril in the freezing waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

As you sail across life’s ocean, have you prepared for the one certainty in life - death? Have you ever stopped to think of the awful danger your soul is in if you are not right with God? The Lord Jesus Christ said, “*what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*” (Mark 8:36).

Iceberg Dead Ahead!

Most people on board the great liner were retiring for bed at 11:40 p.m. when Fredrick Fleet, a sailor in the crow’s nest of the forward mast, sighted a dark mass in the water ahead of the ship. Picking up the telephone connecting him to the bridge he called out, “Iceberg dead ahead”. First Officer, William Murdock, immediately ordered the helmsmen to steer, “Hard a starboard”. Travelling at 23 knots (26.5 mph) the ship seemed reluctant to respond but finally her bows started to slowly move to the left. It seemed that she would miss the iceberg. However, as *Titanic* tried to skirt around the ice a light vibration shuddered through the ship, alerting those on the bridge that their efforts had tragically been unsuccessful.



Are you trying to steer your own way to Heaven using your good works and efforts? The Bible says, “*by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*” (Ephesians 2:8).

To the Rescue!

At 12:15 a.m. Harold Cottam, the wireless operator of the steamship *Carpathia*, picked up *Titanic*'s distress call. He immediately woke his captain, Arthur Rostron. Rostron made every effort to cover the 58 perilous miles to the floundering ship as quickly as possible. *Carpathia* was pushed to the limit as Rostron wove a treacherous course through hazardous pack ice and icebergs! During the nearly four hours it took to reach *Titanic*'s position, Captain Rostron ordered his crew to prepare for the reception of survivors. The next morning when all the survivors of the disaster had been safely rescued, Rostron looked around the

barren expanse of sea. As he gazed at the dangerous pack ice he exclaimed, “Someone’s hand other than my own was on the helm of my ship last night!”

The Bible states, “*the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world*” (1 John 4:14). The Lord Jesus did not come out of a request for help from a ruined sinking world. He came in great love, “*to save sinners*” (1 Timothy 1:15). By dying on the cross at Calvary the Lord Jesus paid in full the price that a righteous God demanded for our sins. Just as Captain Rostron issued orders to get his crew ready to receive survivors, we need to obey God’s command to be ready for Heaven. The Bible says God, “*commands all men everywhere to repent*” (Acts 17:30). Have you repented (turned away) from your sin and trusted Christ as your Saviour? As you remember the tragic loss of *Titanic* may your soul be averted from eternal disaster. “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved*” (Acts 16:31).



World Peace

Pursuing an impossible dream?

Iraqi war protesters, hippies, and peace movements represent only a handful of the billions of people who yearn for a world where peace reigns. In spite of their desires, in the past century tens of millions of people have died in wars and hundreds of thousands have been victims of violent crimes, ethnic cleansing, genocide, crime sprees, cybercrime, gang wars and malicious behaviour; all fuelled by human greed, jealousy and vindictiveness. This commentary underlines the prophet Isaiah's words, *"There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked"* (Isaiah 57:21). Try as we may, lasting peace is impossible at the world level and even the individual level.

However, peace is not an impossible dream. God desires that every person would have peace in their own hearts, peace with their fellow man and especially peace with God. However, this peace does not come from human efforts - it is a gift from God that must be received by faith.

To find this peace we must first acknowledge our restless sinful natures. We can never be satisfied, because our spiritually empty hearts are always seeking something more attractive, or living in fear, or envying others.

God has provided a basis for removing the greatest cause of our unrest; the guilt and the penalty that our sins deserve. God provided the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Saviour and the source of peace with God. Centuries before Christ's coming, Isaiah spoke of Him as the *"Prince of Peace"* (Isaiah 9:6). After His death and resurrection, Peter preached *"peace through Jesus Christ"* (Acts 10:36) and Paul referred to Him as the one who *"made peace through the blood of His cross"* (Colossians 1:20).

While He was on earth the Lord Jesus brought peace and health to people who were suffering. During His sufferings at Calvary, He endured God's judgment for sin and made a basis of peace that will be imparted to everyone who trusts in Him. You may have many disturbances in your life - unemployment, marriage problems, sickness, finances, legal issues, to name a few. However, if by faith you accept the salvation and pardon that the Lord Jesus Christ offers, your heart will be filled with *"...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding..."* (Philippians 4:7) even in the midst of these circumstances. Why not stop striving to manufacture peace? Rest on the reconciliation and peace provided by the Lord Jesus Christ today.



Apple's Founder Saved by a Death

qualifies. That time, it was Steve Jobs who received the life giving transplant.

Have you ever thought about the generosity of the One who chose to give up His life by dying on a cross in order to save you? Your spiritual disease of sin is far worse than any form of cancer. Without the generous intervention of Another, you are facing certain eternal death.

Sin is such a deadly spiritual disease. It leaves us completely without strength to save ourselves. Left to our own efforts, we would face eternal death and separation from God. But consider this amazing piece of news: *"When we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"* (Romans 5:6).

Why would He lay down His life to save us? The only explanation is because of the generous and loving heart of God. *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). *"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us"* (1 John 3:16).

The gift of an organ to save the life of another is outstanding generosity. With the urgency of Steve Jobs' physical health needs, what would you think if he had refused the gift?

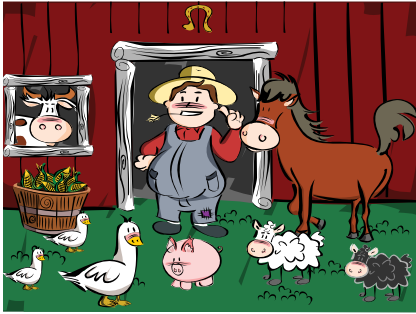
God generously gave His Son to die for your sin sickness. Have you ever accepted His gift? *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). If you refuse this gift you will face eternal damnation.

The beaming face of Steve Jobs was the focal point on the stage in San Francisco. The founder and former CEO of Apple Inc. was greeted by a standing ovation as he appeared at his company's annual media event. It was more than obvious that he was glad to be there but he just about wasn't.

Billionaire Jobs had faced the possibility of death five years earlier. He was diagnosed with cancer. At first he was told he had an incurable form of pancreatic cancer and should get his affairs in order. It was later discovered that he had a rare form of the cancer, curable by surgery.

The computer guru had his share of health problems. He also suffered from end-stage liver disease. He was the sickest patient on the list waiting for a liver transplant.

A car crash claimed the life of a young person. When organ donor cards are signed, potential donors do not specify the recipients. Whoever is most in need



HORACE THE COW?

Horses and cows wandered around the pasture, grazing on the plentiful grass. One particular horse, Horace, took time each day to watch what was going on around him. He noticed that when the farmer banged his grain bucket, all the cows lined up in a very orderly fashion. They quietly, without pushing, walked towards the barn. Each cow entered the barn in single file. The barn was a sturdy building with four beautiful, red walls. Horace also noticed that when the horses decided to go to the horse barn, they kicked and nipped their way across the pasture. The scattered group would enter their barn. It had only three walls painted a boring brown.

One day Horace became fed up with being a horse. He decided he was going to be a cow. So, when the farmer banged the grain bucket, Horace lined up with the cows. He walked slowly and carefully in between two cows in the line heading for the barn. He swished his tail at the same time as the cow in front of him. He picked his feet up, just like the cow behind. He was quite pleased that he could do such a good job of being a cow. He was looking forward to seeing the

inside of the barn. He loved the vivid, red walls on the outside.

When Horace arrived at the barn the farmer would not let him in. The farmer said, "Horace, you are not a cow. Go back to the other barn. You don't belong with the cows because you are a horse. You have to be born a cow to come in this barn." Horace was sad because he thought if he just acted like a cow he could be a cow.

Sometimes kids behave like Horace. They think that if they just act like a Christian they will be a Christian. The Bible says that we "*must be born again*" (John 3:7). Perhaps you already know that, "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). Our sins must be forgiven in order for us to be ready to enter Heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again. His blood was shed to pay for our sin. When you, "*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, ... you will be saved*" (Acts 16:31). When you trust that the Lord Jesus Christ died for you, then your sins are forgiven. You become a child of God with a home in Heaven forever. Have you asked the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Saviour? He's waiting to hear from you!

Hidden Heart

The Bible says, "*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You*" (Psalm 119:11). To help you remember that it is important to read the Bible and treasure it in your heart, we have hidden a heart somewhere in this magazine. See if you can find it! Send us your name and address to Via Magazine Box 551, Portage la Prairie, MB, R1N 3B9 Canada. Tell us where you found the heart and we will send you a small prize.

• TEEN TALK •

Dear Teenager:

I would like to express my sympathy and concern for so many of you who are encountering difficulty in the pursuit of your chosen field of education and employment. It seems, what with tuition increases, funding cuts, technological advances, and unemployment, that there aren't the wide choices available to you that were taken for granted by your parents' generation. It is not surprising that so many are fearful of the future and frustrated with present conditions.

So many teens are choosing suicide as a way out. It is a worry. I am not going to simply pass on clichés like "Don't worry - be happy", or "Everything will be all right - hang in there", but I can tell you with certainty that **GOD CARES ABOUT YOU!** He cared so much that He allowed His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to take the punishment for the sin of the whole world. To all who accept Him as their Saviour, He has promised an eternal home in Heaven.

Since He did that for you, won't you trust Him, as you allow Him to be Lord in your life? If you do, the Lord Jesus says to you, as He said to His followers before He went back to Heaven, "...Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

If you will take the advice in Proverbs 3:6, "In all your ways acknowledge Him," you may confidently rely on the promise in the second part of the same verse: "and He shall direct your paths". His 'direction' may not lead in paths you had thought of travelling, but they will be those of greatest blessing to you.

The most important key to your whole future is how you respond to the Lord Jesus. First of all, you must accept Him as Saviour. To reject Him is to reject the forgiveness of your sins and eternal life in Heaven. The only alternative is Hell, which was "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

If you are saved, don't be afraid to let Christ be Lord of your life. The prophet Jeremiah says in 29:11, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." The Lord Jesus Christ wants you to fully trust Him.

May each one of you experience peace **WITH** God in salvation, and the peace **OF** God that will keep your hearts and minds in these uncertain times.

Your friend

Road Signs from the Word of God



...that every mouth may be stopped,
and all the world may become guilty
before God.

Romans 3:19



In all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:6



Jesus answered ... Most assuredly, I say
to you, unless one is born again, he
cannot see the Kingdom of God.

John 3:3



Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:12



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



GOD'S WAY

Jesus said...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6

MAN'S WAY

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.

Proverbs 21:2



There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Proverbs 14:12

Have You Found the Ancient Door?

We normally take doors for granted but recently construction workers uncovered a remarkable door in Zurich, Switzerland. No one was looking for it, but it was found. Archaeologists believe the door is one of the oldest ever to be discovered in Europe. The ancient door is about 1.5 metres high and made of poplar wood held together by a 'remarkable system'.

There is no question about it - when you find a 5000 year old incredibly preserved door, it is something to be excited about.

I'm not an archaeologist but I too found a remarkable, well preserved Door of historical significance. In my case, I was desperately looking for it. I am so glad the Door was wide open when I got to it. I was outside in dense darkness and I was deeply bothered. I had heard about a Door that people could enter for safety and blessing but I knew I was still on the outside.

The greatest moment in my life was when I discovered the Door. As soon as I found it I entered. That open Door made all the difference in my life. I discovered the one and only Door to God and eternal life in Heaven. One beautiful Bible verse explains what I am talking about: Jesus said "*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved*" (John 10:9).

Our sins are a huge barrier between us and God. On one side of the barrier is darkness, sadness, emptiness, disappointment, bondage and many other sad things. On the other side is light, happiness, acceptance, forgiveness and eternal life. The awesome message of the Bible is that the Lord Jesus Christ came down to earth to break through the barrier of our sin and to open up the way for sinners to be brought to God.

The greatest Door of all is not one that has been buried for thousands of years. It is the ONE who was buried but was raised from the dead after three days. He wants to welcome you. He reassures all who come to Him, "*...the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out*" (John 6:37).

Have you found the Door? Have you entered? What a tragedy if you find yourself on the outside of a closed Door in the future. Opportunities do come to an end. Consider the open Door and enter today!

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/switzerland/8075952/5000-year-old-door-found-in-Europe.html

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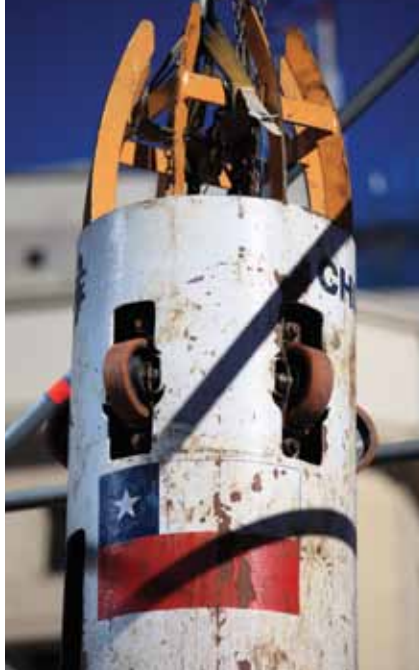
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

The story of the Chilean miners trapped underground for more than two months captivated the world. People checked the news daily to discover the latest developments. I was glad to hear that the 33 men were given Bibles to read.

It must have been a very challenging, fearful time. The miners were in the dark, 622 meters below the surface of the earth, separated from family, and with limited supplies. The rescue effort was brilliant. A capsule was sent down through a narrow tunnel to save each man one by one. What a plan! That capsule was a lifesaver.

Each man had to put his faith in the capsule and actually step through the door if he was going to be brought up safely. If the men had merely chosen to admire the capsule or put a picture of it on the mine wall, they would have been left in darkness rather than living in the light of the sun again.

This is how many people treat the Lord Jesus Christ today. They say He was a good man, some people even hang a cross around their neck or have His picture on the wall. However, they have never believed in His sacrifice to save them from the power of sin in their lives and from the judgment God says sin deserves. Could this be you?



The Lord Jesus Christ left a wonderful place of light called Heaven to come down to this dark sinful world to pay for our sins on the cross. God requires judgment for every sin, no matter how small in our eyes. Just as the capsule did all the work for each miner so that they could be saved, Christ paid for our sins on the cross. We need to personally put our faith in Him for salvation. He is the one who can bring us to God and into the marvelous light of knowing our sins forgiven.

The Lord Jesus Christ wants to give you eternal life. He wants to lift you out of the darkness of your sins and the eternal condemnation they deserve. He will bring you into His light, His joy, and His forgiveness. He is the door to Heaven and to a fulfilled life here on earth (John 10:9,10). The Lord Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (John 8:12). What a Saviour! Will you trust Him?

buried alive

Iraq-based American truck driver Paul Conroy is attacked, and then finds himself buried alive in a coffin, six feet underground. Using his mobile phone, he begins to call his list of contacts to tell them he is alive and to beg them to locate him. Time is as limited as his available oxygen. Those above ground try to find him, but to no avail. Paul Conroy dies in a coffin. Is it true? Or is it someone's worst nightmare?

Actually, it is the plot of a thriller movie starring Canadian actor Ryan Reynolds as Paul Conroy. In an interview Reynolds was asked, "Do you think about your own mortality in ways that you hadn't before?" Reynolds replied, "Yeah, it really started the ball rolling on that little doozie. In fact, I wish it hadn't. I think about it all the time still." He knew when he accepted the role that he would have to face death as Paul Conroy, but what he didn't count on was having to confront his own mortality.

Death is not a probability but a certainty. One hundred percent of people die. The Bible teaches us that it is wise to consider how short life is and the end of it. "*Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end*" (Deuteronomy 32:29)! Also, "*Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am*" (Psalm 39:4). Why

is it wise to think about our mortality? So that we can act now! Death is not the end but a means to our eternal destinies. Though our bodies decay, our souls live on. Where we will be after we die depends on our choice in this life. Our sins will separate us from God

**Death is not the end
but a means to our
eternal destinies.
Though our bodies
decay, our souls
live on.**

forever unless we have chosen to accept the payment that the Lord Jesus Christ made for us on the cross, when He took our sins on Himself.

Death is an appointment that cannot be postponed or cancelled. Hebrews 9:27 says, "*... it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*" You have a choice: "*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*" (John 3:36). It is good that Ryan Reynolds is still plagued by these thoughts; he still has time to prepare. "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (Hebrews 10:31). Have you prepared for your final appointment?

Grand Canyon

Long Jumpers Would Perish!

Imagine a long jump competition held at the world famous Grand Canyon. Two star athletes agree to participate. Together they stand at the breathtaking precipice. Their stomachs churn as they peer down one mile into the Canyon. Quite a drop! They look across - 18 miles is a large gap. But they are the very best long jumpers in the world. **If anyone can do it, they can!**

The first competitor prepares for the jump, runs, and with incredible power pushes his legs off the side of the Canyon, catapulting through the air - 28 feet, 5.75 inches! **That was his best!**

The next athlete with intensity and focus takes his turn. Like a bullet, he goes into the air. The distance? 29 feet, 4.5 inches. **His very best!** Yes, he made it farther than the first athlete - but they both fell short of the distance of 18 miles.

If this was a true story both participants would have died even if they were the very best performers in the long jump event. One made it a little farther than the other, but neither of them had what it took to span the distance.

There is a wider and deeper canyon between sinners and God. *“Your iniquities (sins) have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). This canyon was formed in the Garden of Eden when Adam rebelled against God.

Even the best person is not able to make it across the chasm. The distance is too great. Sin has caused a divide that none of us can bridge. No matter how many good things we do, or how sincere we are, or how religious our life may be - the Bible says even the best fall short. None of us have what it takes to get across the divide. We will perish if we try to get across by ourselves.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

The Lord Jesus Christ dealt with the divide caused by our sin. He died in our place and is our bridge across the chasm. He is the only way to Heaven. We can trust Him. *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”* (1 Peter 3:18).

heaven4sure.com

Looking Forward to My Heavenly Home

I was born and raised in a home where I was blessed with God-fearing parents, two brothers and a good church community. We lived in the countryside, so I had plenty of space to roam and explore. I had a wonderful childhood.

I was baptized as an infant. I went to church twice every Sunday. I attended a Christian school. The subjects studied included Bible Study and Church History. I read my Bible and my parents also read it every night after supper.

If I ever thought about death at all, I took it for granted that I was going to Heaven. After all, I was in the right church - automatically making me one of God's elect. I thought at the time that I had nothing to worry about.

When I grew a little older, I started having questions. Why was I one of the elect, and other people I knew were not? They lived better lives than I did. Why was I chosen and they were not? I knew from the Bible that God is a God of love. I knew He wouldn't be unfair, arbitrarily saving some and not others.

As I became a young adult, I sometimes struggled with these questions. I realized that I was no longer sure I was going to Heaven. Belonging to a certain church didn't seem to be the solution any more.

Thankfully one night the Lord saved me. All my questions were answered. That evening as always, my father was reading the Bible to us. As sometimes happened, my mind wandered, but this time my eyes went to a wooden plaque on the kitchen wall that contained a Bible verse. I really focused on its words. *"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).

The words *"whoever believes"* jumped out at me. I could know I was going to Heaven, not because of the church I belonged to nor through any merit of my own. All I had to do was believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for me.

Immediately, a huge load was taken off my mind. I knew the Lord Jesus died for me and I was going to Heaven. I didn't say I was saved at the time, as I was not familiar with the term. Years later when I attended a gospel meeting and heard about salvation, I knew I had this salvation and I knew when I received it.

I thank the Lord for my salvation every day, and I look forward to my Heavenly home.

Alvin Vandermeulen

Sure Entry

In February 2010, ten American volunteers went to Haiti to offer their assistance. Jim Allen was a last minute addition to the group. He was invited by his cousin and his cousin's son to go along to help the earthquake ravaged people. Although he did not know the other members of the group of men and women, Jim felt his construction experience could be put to good use with the team.

Instead, shortly after arrival in Haiti, he and the nine other volunteers were arrested as they tried to transport 33 Haitian children to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic. The group believed the children between the ages of two months and 12 years old were orphans, but in fact many of them had at least one living parent. The children were brought to the bus by adults. The Americans erroneously assumed the adults were aunts, uncles or grandparents and not parents. The team of volunteers thought they had all the necessary valid documents to take the children to the Dominican Republic, but Haitian officials say the group did not have permission to take the children out of the country.

The Americans were charged with child kidnapping and criminal association. After a complex, international legal battle, Jim Allen and seven other volunteers were released. They had been in a Haitian jail for three weeks. Another volunteer was released after a month in jail. The last member of the group was released after spending 3 months and 8 days behind bars.



It must have been an ordeal for all concerned, but those who stand before God without a valid entry into His house will suffer far worse. They will be rejected forever from entering Heaven. Some may believe that the record of their religious efforts such as baptism or church attendance will gain them entry into God's presence. Others may feel that good deeds, charitable donations, and good references from others will suffice. However, the Bible tells us there is only one way into Heaven. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6).

The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for our sin. Only He can give us a sure entry into Heaven. Have you trusted Him? Be sure you have a valid entry to God's Heaven for eternity.

*One way God said
To get to Heaven.
Jesus is the only way.*

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Sometimes we get the feeling that we are alone with our troubles in the world. We worry about what is going to happen next. These are not new feelings. In 1 Kings the prophet Elijah acted in a strong and brave manner for God one day, but felt alone and feared for his life the next.

Elijah asked King Ahab to gather the people of Israel and the false prophets together. Elijah asked the people to make a decision. If the Lord is God then follow Him: but if Baal is God then follow Baal.

Elijah was the only prophet of the Lord left but there were 450 prophets of Baal which Jezebel, Ahab's wife, supported. Elijah suggested that each group of prophets choose a bull to be sacrificed on an altar. However, the prophets would not light the sacrifice on fire. They would call upon their gods to provide the fire. Elijah said that the god who answers with fire is God.

The people thought this was a great idea. Elijah let the prophets of Baal go first. They called to Baal from morning to noon. But no one answered. Elijah mockingly told them to call louder because perhaps their god was on a journey or asleep. Baal's prophets did cry loudly. They even cut themselves as their traditions dictated in an effort to make Baal hear. Still, no one answered.

Elijah, when it was his turn, built a trench around the altar. He had the people pour water on the sacrifice

and the wood. Everything was soaked and the trench was full of water. He prayed that God would let it be known that He is God. Fire fell from Heaven and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, the dust and even the water in the trench. Then the people knew that the Lord is God.

Because they misled the people of Israel, Elijah had all Baal's prophets killed.

Jezebel retaliated by sending a message to Elijah that she was going to kill him.

Elijah was afraid. He ran away, alone in the wilderness. He reminded God that he was the only one of His prophets left and Jezebel wanted to kill him too!

God encouraged Elijah and told him that there were 7000 people in Israel who hadn't bowed to Baal. Elijah was not alone. He could carry on with God's strength.

Sometimes things happen to make us feel despair: acts of terrorism, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, sickness or the death of a loved one. We are not alone, God is listening. He sent the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son to take our place and make us right with God. *"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved"* (Acts 15:11). Don't allow despair, defeat, denial or doubt to ruin your life. Turn your eyes to the Lord Jesus and serve Him. He is worthy! When we trust Him, we have His promise, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).



God is not a Vending Machine

Vending machines are simple - drop in a few coins, get your drink or treat, turn your back and walk away. You do your part, they do their part and everybody is happy - except when they don't do their part. If the vending machine "eats" your coin, you find yourself tapping, pounding, kicking or otherwise inducing it to respond in the way you expected. Sometimes it coughs up the product and sometimes you walk away without coins or treats but brimming with frustration.

It is strange how many people approach God on their own terms as though they want to cut a deal with an Almighty God in exchange for a little pleasure. As long as we feel spiritual, live by our own sense of right and wrong, do some good works and confess when we've messed up, we think we can expect a decent return on our 'investment'.

God is not an impersonal vending machine. He is the Almighty and eternal Creator God who wants a relationship with us according to His own perfect view of it. We are spiritually bankrupt - without anything of value to bring to Him. *"All our righteousnesses are like filthy*

rags" (Isaiah 64:6). We have offended Him with our sin. *"Your iniquities have separated you from your God"* (Isaiah 59:2). God wants us to come to Him, not with good works and great words but with humility and repentance - recognizing

When we come to God in repentance, we discover that His goodness greatly exceeds our expectations.

that we deserve not treats but judgment. *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23).

When we come to God in repentance, we discover that His goodness greatly exceeds our expectations. *"You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness"* (Nehemiah 9:17). We find a God of love and goodness. Acknowledge your sin and reach out by faith to receive His undeserved and unearned love and goodness.

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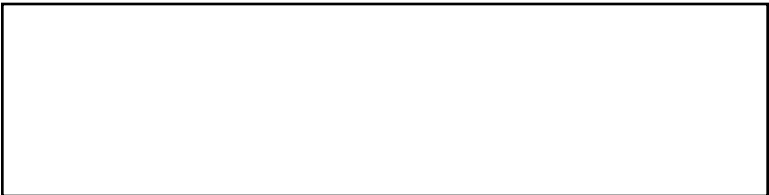
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