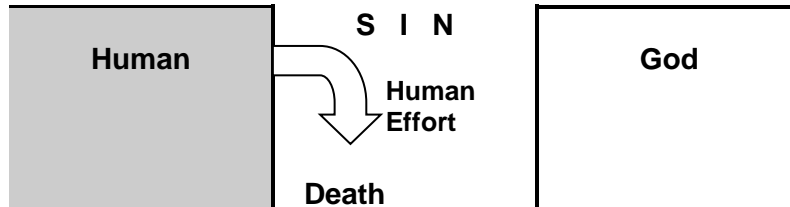




What is the Solution?

The Problem

- The main problem with humanity is a broken relationship with God, caused by our sin.¹ The consequences are spiritual death and God’s judgment.²



Broken relationship; shame, fear, guilt; humans cannot make themselves acceptable to God.³

The Solution

Religion/ Philosophy	The Solution (to “the Problem” as understood by the respective religion/philosophy) ⁴
Naturalism	We must gain increased knowledge through scientific inquiry to more fully realize the potential of humankind. (Since there is no ultimate reality beyond the material universe, the aim of the “solution” is much less idealistic than “religion.”)
Hinduism	In order to attain freedom from the life/death/rebirth cycle and become one with the universal soul (Brahman), we must attain enough good Karma. The three classic ways (paths) include (1) the way of work, (2) the way of devotion (<i>bhakti</i>), and (3) the way of knowledge and meditation.
Buddhism	In order to attain freedom from suffering (<i>dukkha</i>), we must understand the “four noble truths,” which stress the elimination of all desire for the impermanent. Desire can be eliminated by following the 8-fold path: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right awareness, and right meditation.
Islam	In order to obtain God’s (Allah’s) “mercy,” we must repent (turn to belief in Allah and his Prophet) and obey the will (divine guidance) of Allah as revealed in the Qur’an.
Christianity	According to His mercy and grace, God has provided the way of forgiveness of sins, necessary to be reconciled to Him (that is, to be restored to a relationship with God). God’s solution provides freedom from the penalty of sin (God’s judgment) and the controlling power of sin (which enables us to victoriously live the Christian life).

¹ In the Bible, the most common words for ‘sin’ generally convey the idea of missing the mark, or deviating from the goal. Other biblical words are used to specifically denote unfaithfulness, rebellion, error, deliberate wrongdoing, wickedness, violation of God’s law, etc. Thus the biblical concept of sin cannot be limited to the meaning of one of these words I have defined sin as ‘any attitude or action that is opposed to the authority and moral will of God.’ Also, ‘sin is that condition and activity of human beings that is offensive to God, their Creator’ (*The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 946).

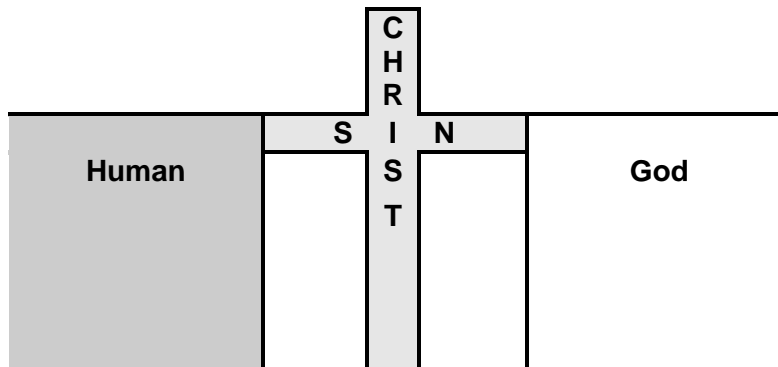
² The focus here concerns the consequences prior to receiving ‘the Solution.’ In a broader sense, ‘the problem’ (sin and its negative effects) has affected all people, including those who have received ‘the Solution.’

³ The Bible presents our situation as hopeless without God. It is like we are in deep dark pit, and it is impossible for us to get out. We cannot save ourselves. Only God is able to rescue us. It is only by God’s grace (*Ephesians 2:8-9*).

⁴ See Lesson 5 for ‘the Problem.’ These descriptions of the solution are based on the orthodox, philosophical representations of the religions, and may not reflect the understandings of many of the religions’ adherents.

The Solution: Jesus - the Lamb of God

- 📖 “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (*John 1:29*)
- 📖 “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this; While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (*Romans 5:8, NIV*)
- 📖 “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice⁵ for our sins.” (*1 John 4:9-10, NIV*)
- 📖 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (*2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV*)

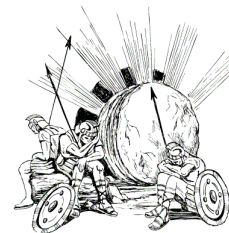


Jesus took our sin, shame and guilt on Himself, and died in our place. By doing this, he provided the way of reconciliation (restored relationship) to God.

The Solution: Jesus - the Resurrection and the Life

- 📖 *Jesus said*, “I am the resurrection and the life...” (*John 11:25*)
1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. What is the essential content of the gospel (good news)? How important is Jesus’ resurrection? Why is it so important?⁶ (see 15:14, 17)

- 📖 “...God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” (*Acts 2:23-24, NIV*)

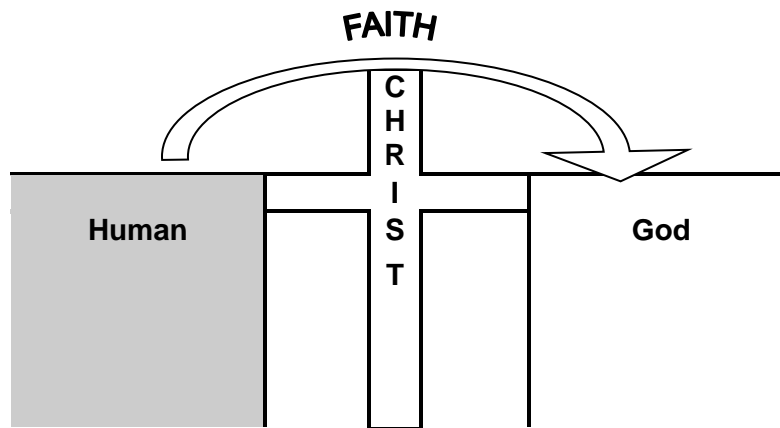


⁵ The meaning of Christ’s death is explained in biblical terms such as ‘atonement’ and ‘reconciliation’ (restoration of relationship); ‘redemption’ and ‘ransom’ (the price paid for release from captivity and/or punishment); and forgiveness of sins. This lesson does not include detailed explanations of these terms. The main point is that Christ’s death was necessary to rescue us from the results of our sin. The necessary result of sin is ‘death’ (separation from God). Jesus died in our place so that our relationship with God could be restored. This provision is a gracious gift from God. ‘For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (*Romans 6:23*). For more information on ‘atonement,’ see ‘What is Atonement?’ on the ICF website.

⁶ The resurrection of Christ is essential to the Christian faith. Paul wrote, “if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile (useless); you are still in your sins” (*1 Corinthians 15:17, NIV*). The historical evidence for the resurrection is very strong. See ‘The Reliability of the New Testament’ and ‘The Resurrection of Christ’ on the ICF website.

How Can We Benefit from the Solution?

- 📖 Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (*John 14:6, NIV*)
 - 📖 “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved ... As Scripture says, ‘Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.’” (*Romans 10:9, 11, NIV*)
 - 📖 “... to all who received [Jesus Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (*John 1:12, NIV*)
2. Considering the above verses, what response is necessary for us to benefit from “the Solution?” Explain.



Jesus Christ is the “bridge” (the Way) back into a relationship with God. Through faith⁷ in Christ, our shame and guilt are removed, and we are adopted into God’s family.

The Solution: Jesus - Our Life

- ❑ The believer in Christ is “made... alive with Christ” (*Ephesians 2:4-5*). Just “as Christ was raised from the dead ... [believers] too may live a new life” (*Romans 6:4*). The believer in Christ is a “new creation” (*2 Corinthians 5:17*).⁸ Read Colossians 3:1-4.⁹
3. What is already true of the believer? Based on these truths, what is the responsibility of the believer? What attitude is needed for the believer to *live* the “new life?”

⁷ The New Testament word for ‘faith’ is πίστις (*pistis*). The word ‘believe’ (πιστεύω, *pisteuō*) comes from *pistis*. Biblical ‘faith’ is confident belief and trust in God. Christian faith is not ‘blind faith.’ It is a faith based on sufficient evidence to be firmly persuaded, even if some of the things believed are future or unseen. Also, this faith is not based on human intellect alone, but is enabled by God’s grace, and is evidenced by human action, including a willingness to turn from our sin (repent) and invite Jesus Christ to take control of our life through the Holy Spirit.

⁸ ‘New creation’ can be understood both individually (the believer’s personal transformation) and cosmically (the believer’s part in the new order eventually consummated in the new heaven and new earth). ‘United to the risen Lord, the believer participates in the new creation in which Christ is the fount and the life’ (G.R. Beasley-Murray, “2 Corinthians” in *The Broadman Bible Commentary* [Nashville: Broadman, 1971], 42)

⁹ ‘the things above’ – the things of God in the new order, characterized by righteousness, eternal life, and harmony with God; ‘earthly things’ – the things of the old order, characterized by sin, death, and self-centeredness. Our thinking and acting should be oriented to heavenly values rather than worldly values.

- ❑ The new life is empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and is characterized by newness in relationships and newness in attitudes and actions.
 - **Relationships.** The “new person” is to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind; and love others as themselves (*Matthew 22:37-39*).
 - **Attitudes & Actions.** Though “new” in Christ, the “new person” is not *completely* new. Renewal is a process. So the new person must “put off the old self” and “put on the new self” in order to become more like Jesus Christ in true righteousness and holiness (*Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-17*).
4. If you are a Christian, in what ways has “the Solution” changed *your* life?

Reflection/Application

For Non-Christians:

- What do you personally believe about “the Problem” with humanity? The Solution presented in the Bible is “good news” only to those who accept the Christian view of the problem.
- What do you personally believe about “the Solution?” How can we be set free from the Problem, and experience true peace, joy, security, and fulfillment? What is the *basis* for your belief? How does your belief compare with the Bible’s explanation? What offers more promise and hope? If you have any questions about the Bible’s explanation, contact Jay.
- Maybe you are ready to respond to the Solution, and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. See “Steps to a New Relationship with God” below.

For Christians:

- The Solution provides freedom from both the penalty of sin and the controlling power of sin. As a Christian, you have already accepted the Solution. Are you living like it? Read Romans 6 and Colossians 3:1-17 and apply these truths to your life.
- Are you prepared to share the Solution (the gospel) with others? Are you doing it?

Steps to a New Relationship with God

- Confess your problem – a broken relationship with God because of your sin.
- Be willing to “repent” – turn from your sin, and turn toward God.
- Believe and trust in God’s solution – Jesus Christ died for your sins, and was raised from the dead, so that you could have a new relationship with God.
- Through prayer, receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – invite Jesus Christ into your life, and give Him control of your life through the Holy Spirit.
- After receiving Christ, be baptized as a public profession of your faith, symbolizing your repentance and new life in Christ. Become actively involved in a Bible believing church.

