

RUE

Are you ready?

For what?

Your last breath; the instant when this life ends. Are you ready for that?

I hope so... I guess so... I don't know... how can anyone know if they're ready for that?

Well, the Bible offers an answer. Are you willing to consider what it says?

Maybe.

Great! The Bible says there IS something after our last breath.

You mean something besides a coffin, a grave, or perhaps some ashes in an urn?

Yes, after our bodies die there is something else we need to be ready for.

And... that would be?

Eternal life!

Okay. I expected that might be where we were headed, but I'll bite. Eternal life "sounds" good.

Maybe... the Bible tells us it can be great... or, it can be awful!

Really? I'm stunned. I'll bet we're talking "heaven or hell" here and you're suggesting we have a choice.

Yes, we do - unending life in Heaven WITH God, OR eternal life WITHOUT Him in a lake of fire.

Well, I'm not sure I buy that. But... let's say I did. Who wouldn't choose Heaven? That's a "no-brainer."

It should be. But, amazingly, lots of people have chosen and will choose to miss Heaven!

Really? Why would someone do that?

Different reasons: they don't know they have a choice; they don't believe what the Bible says; they think, "I'll just trust the Big Guy - He's got my back;" they can't believe a loving God would doom anyone; they put off making a choice; or they just decide to ignore God's offer for eternal life with Him.

So, if I were to decide to accept His offer, and I'm not saying I am; but if I were, how do I do that?

It's not hard - ANYONE can do it: First, accept what the Bible tells us - God is perfect; we aren't.

Because we've done things we shouldn't, and have failed to do things we should do, we are sinners - separated from God.

All right, that's not rocket science. What's so hard about that?

It isn't rocket science. But many people struggle with it.

Really? What's the struggle?

They either think they're NOT BAD ENOUGH to need God's help, OR, they think THEY ARE SO BAD, God won't or can't help them. In reality, God's wants neither of these. Instead, He just wants us to agree with Him that we ARE sinners, and that our sin has earned us death - physical, life's last breath - and spiritual, separation from Him NOW, and FOREVER when we die.

Hmm... I'm still not sure about all that. But, even so, how does the Bible say God can fix that?

It assures us that He already has! He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, here to earth. Jesus did what NO ONE else has ever done. He lived a perfect life. And because He never sinned, He DIDN'T earn what we earned with our sin - Jesus DIDN'T deserve death and separation from God. But, because He loved us so, He chose to die in our place, giving us hope. Being sinless, He did what HE ALONE could do.

Two thousand years ago, He took your place and mine on a Roman cross, dying in our place, and then, ROSE FROM THE DEAD, to buy us back to God. NO ONE ELSE in ALL of history has done that!

Wow! Even if you don't believe that, just considering the idea is overwhelming.

Indeed, it is. Holy God, who created us in the first place, provided His one and only, Holy Son as a perfect sacrifice for us, to end our separation from Him - now and later when we breathe our last and die.

So, if someone does believe that, what's next?

The Bible teaches that we must:

Admit we are sinners,

Believe that Jesus is God's son, that He died and rose from the dead to remove the penalty of our sin, and that He will forgive us as we turn from our sin,

Confess willingly to others that we have trusted Jesus to save us, and that we have given Him absolute control of our lives from this point forward.

That's it? That's all there is to it?

You said it already! It isn't rocket science. The Bible says that we must come as a child. New life in Jesus begins with a simple, sincere prayer - something like this, expressing your own heartfelt commitment:

God, You have shown me that I am a sinner and that my sin has separated me from You. I know You sent Jesus to die in my place and to rise from the dead so that my relationship with you could be restored. Jesus, I'm sorry for my sin, I want to turn from it. I ask for Your forgiveness. I give up trying to run my life. From now on, I want You to take total control. Thank You for saving me so that I can live my life for You alone.

Asking Jesus to save us and take control of our life is a step of faith, made in the heart. The Bible calls the transformation this step brings, "being born again." The evidence that someone has truly been "born again" and is now a true Believer, is revealed in an ongoing, lifelong journey of allowing Jesus to continue that transformation as they study the Bible and willingly obey Jesus' commands:

- 1) telling others what has happened in their life - family, friends, co-workers - those they know who are also believers, and those who aren't as well!*
- 2) committing to grow in their faith, finding a group of fellow believers who can help them study the Bible, apply its teachings to their life, lead/teach them to pray, and help them grow in their faith.*
- 3) committing very soon to take the important next step of obedience - baptism. Baptism is a symbolic act where a new believer is immersed in water as a public testimony and picture of the transformation that has happened in their life.*

If you live in our area, we at First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, would be excited for you to join us!

If you're not near us, let us give you names of churches near you that will help you grow. We'll even pass along your contact information so they can connect with you, if you're willing. But, regardless, please do email or call us, about your decision. We want to share your joy and welcome you to the family of faith!

Email: fbc@fbcfayetteville.org

Phone: 479-442-2387