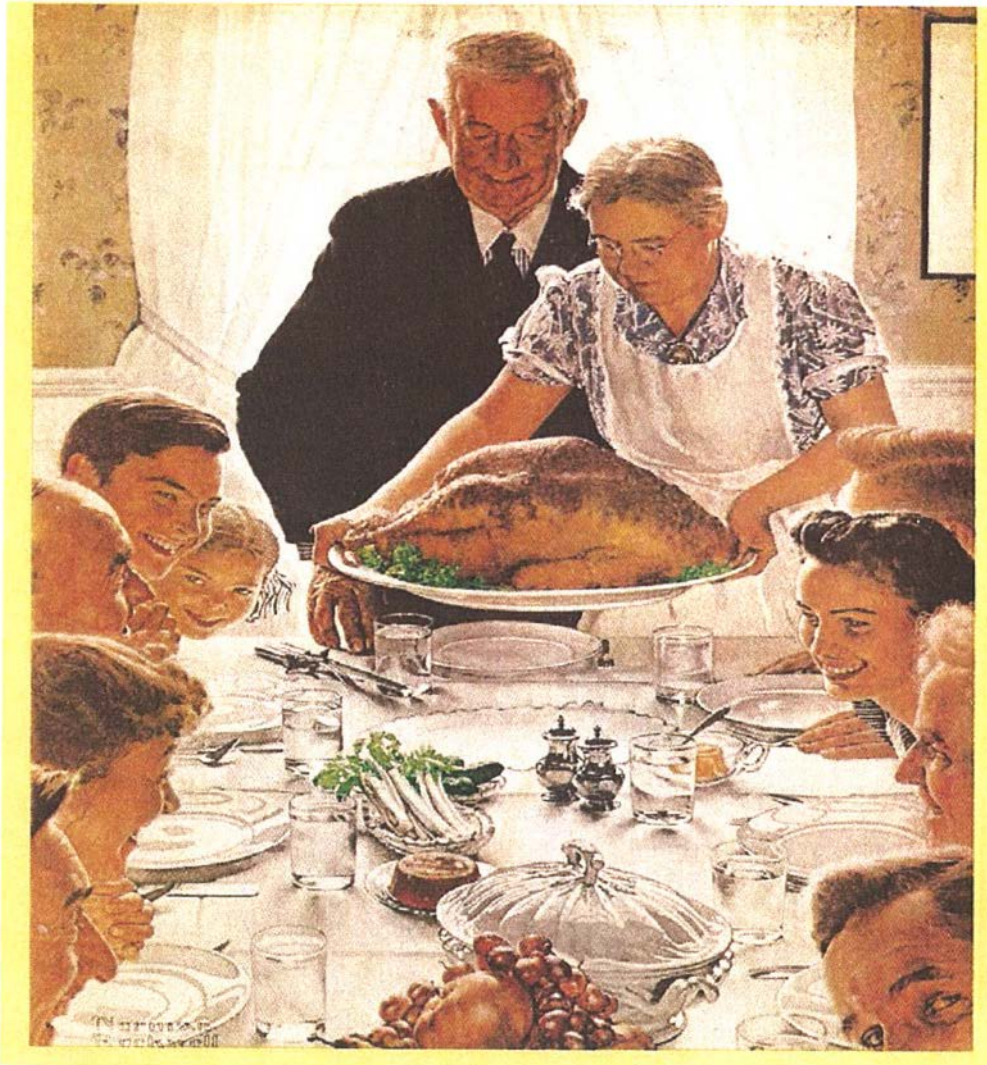


The Origin of Thanksgiving





- Thanksgiving is a holiday to thank God for His blessings and for all that He gives to us in His kindness.
- It's a holiday that traces its origin to the early 17th Century when a small band of “pilgrims” settled in New England.

The Pilgrims were a group of Christian believers who lived in England in the early 1600's. They believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and they followed the teachings of the Bible.



England did not have freedom of religion. In 1534 a law passed requiring everyone to attend the King's church (the Church of England).



The Pilgrims were not happy with the Church of England. They wanted to follow the Bible and not be told by the Church how they should worship God. They believed that the Church of England was polluted and taught things that were wrong.

The Pilgrims separated from the Church of England and worshiped God by meeting in homes.

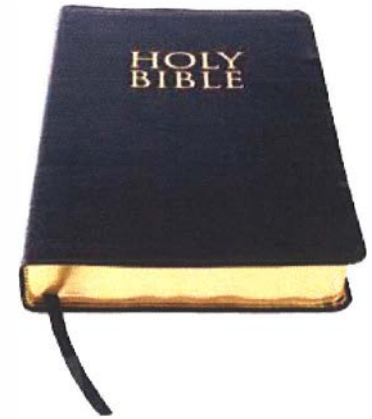


A spring can be very pure at its source but can become very polluted further down. The Pilgrims wanted to drink from the pure stream, not from the polluted stream.



The Pure Stream of truth:

The Bible (God's Word)
and the teachings of
Jesus Christ

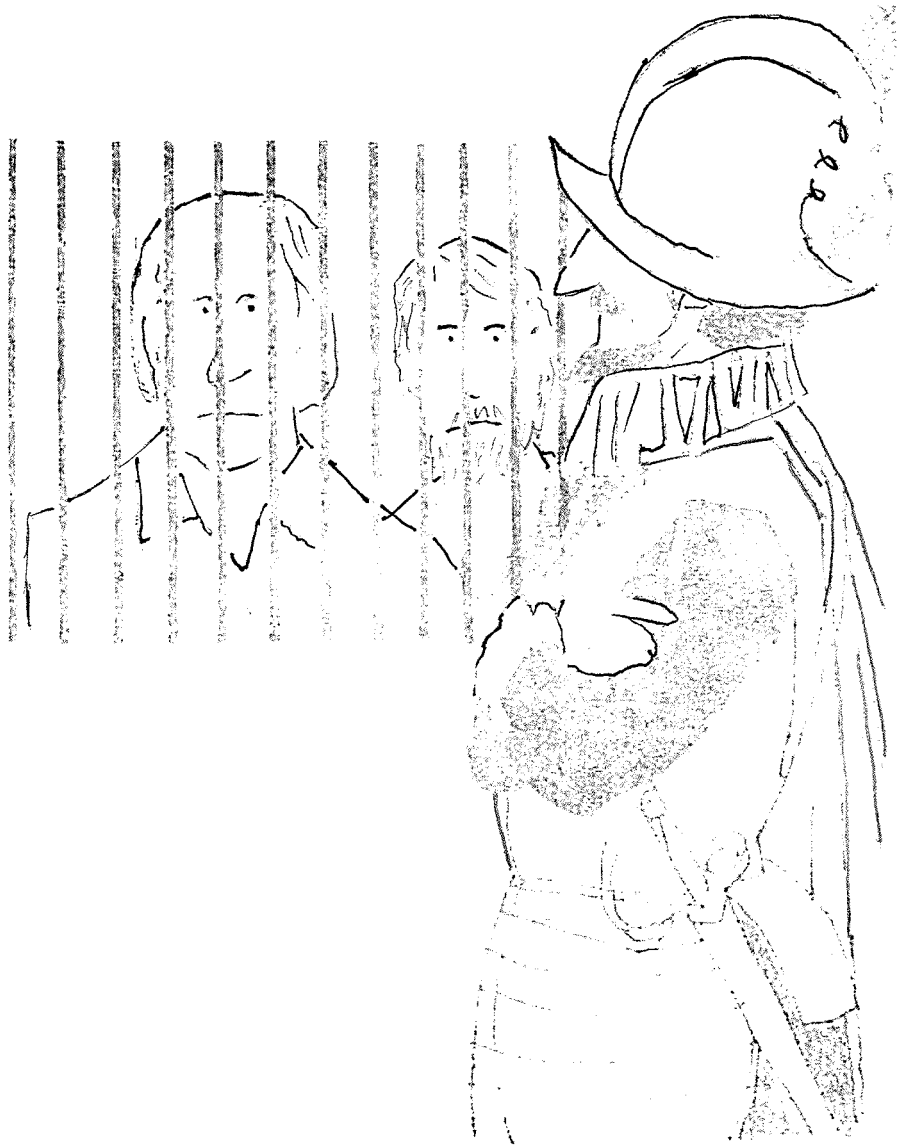


The Polluted

Stream: The Bible and the Teachings of Jesus Christ mixed
together with:

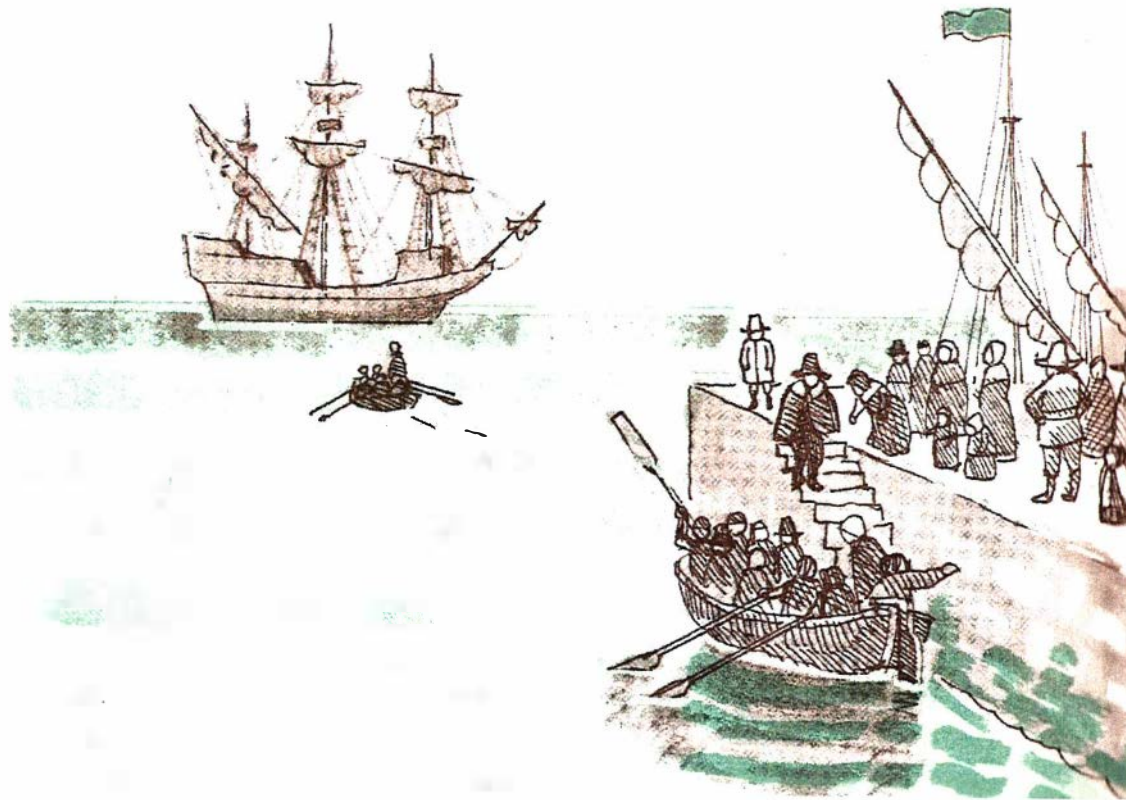


**The Ideas of Men ❀ The Traditions of Men
Wrong Teachings ❀ Wrong Practices
“The Church of England”**



- Many of those who met in homes were imprisoned or persecuted in other ways.
- Although they did not want to leave England which was their homeland, they needed to find another place to live where they would have freedom to worship God without having to worry about being persecuted.

- ✦ Because of religious persecution, the Pilgrims fled from England and lived in Holland for about 12 years.
- ✦ In September of 1620, there were 102 passengers (including about 41 Pilgrims) and about 20-30 crewmen who set sail from Plymouth England for America on a sailing ship called “The Mayflower.” It was a difficult and dangerous journey.



- ✱ The voyage was extremely rough and took over two months (67 days).
- ✱ In this small ship sailing along across the stormy Atlantic the Pilgrims encouraged themselves by singing praises to God (the Psalms).
- ✱ In a violent storm, one of the Pilgrims fell overboard.



The Amazing Rescue of John Howland



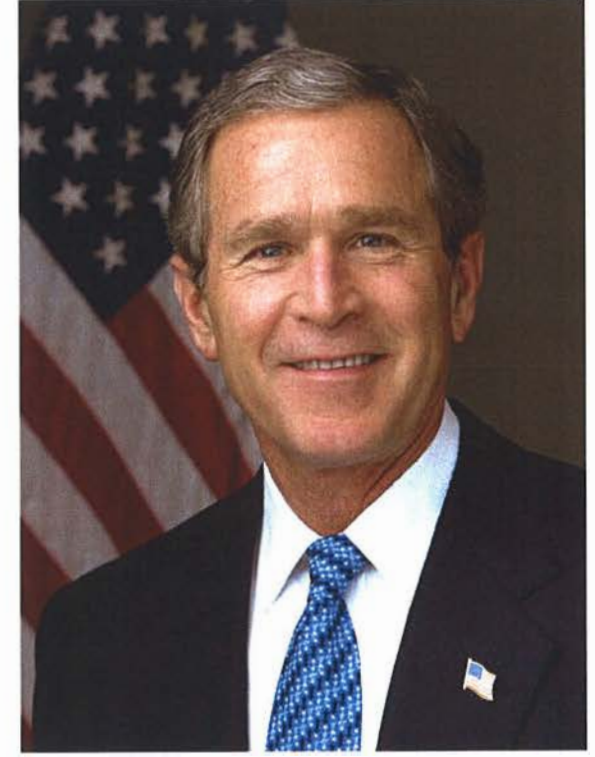
Famous Descendants of John Howland



Franklin D. Roosevelt
32nd President



George H. W. Bush
41st President



George W. Bush
43rd President

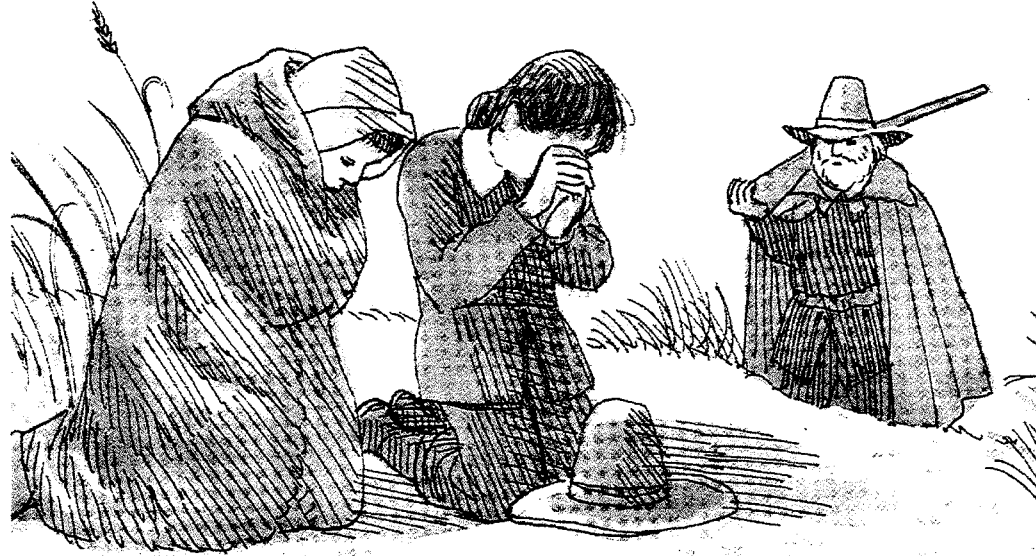


Note: Even though they spotted land on Nov. 19, their main place for lodging had to be the *Mayflower* because the weather was cold and they had no dwelling places on land. The actual landing at Plymouth did not take place until December 21.

- Finally on Nov. 19 someone shouted, “Land ho!”
The Pilgrims sang Psalm 100

Psalm 100 taken from the *Geneva Bible* which was the English Translation that the Pilgrims used.

- 1 Sing ye loud unto the Lord, all the earth.
- 2 Serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyfulness.
- 3 Know ye that even the Lord is God; he hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter into his gates with praise, and into his courts with rejoicing: praise him and bless his Name.
- 5 For the Lord is good: his mercy is everlasting, and his truth is from generation to generation.



- The Pilgrims “fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof . . .”

- The winter was harsh.
- From Dec. 1620 thru March 1621, 47 of the original 102 died of disease, including 13 of the 18 wives.
- Those still living were grateful to be alive.



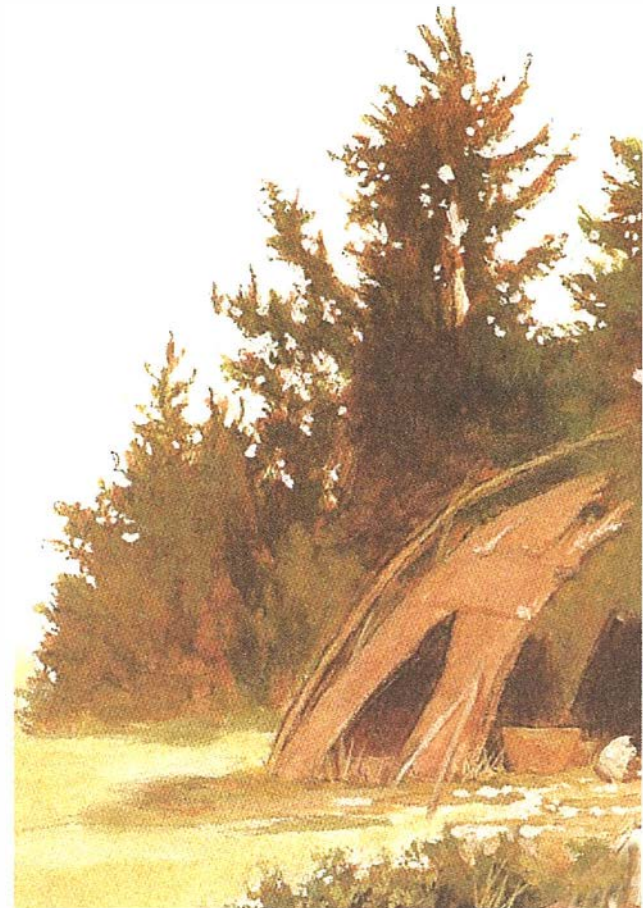
- Through all their afflictions the Pilgrims kept up their faith in God. They prayed, they read the Bible, they listened to God's Word





- Then in March 1621 something unusual happened—a brave, single Indian walked boldly into the men’s meeting—speaking perfect English! He said, “Welcome!” His name was Samoset.

- Samoset explained that the land where the Pilgrims were living once belonged to the Patuxet Indians. A strange illness had killed all the Patuxets four years before the Pilgrims arrived. Other tribes shunned this land. No other tribe claimed to own the land where the Pilgrims were living!



- One week later Samoset returned with another native who also spoke English— Squanto. He was a Patuxet! In 1605 Englishmen had caught him and took him to England. There he learned to speak English. He later learned about the Christian faith. Finally he returned to America six months before the Pilgrims landed, and learned that his whole tribe was dead. He joined himself to another tribe.





- Squanto became a special friend of the Pilgrims. He taught them how to plant corn using fish for fertilizer. He taught them how to catch eels in the streams. He showed them the best places to look for lobsters among the sea rocks.



- With Samoset as an interpreter, the Pilgrims made a peace treaty with Massasoit, one of the most powerful native chiefs in that part of the country.



- A year after they arrived, in the Fall of 1621, there was an abundant harvest. Probably sometime in October of 1621 Governor Bradford declared a three-day thanksgiving harvest celebration. They invited Chief Massasoit who arrived with 90 hungry Indians! How would the Pilgrims feed them all?



But there the hand of God was evident as well, for Massasoit had commanded his braves to hunt for the occasion, and they brought with them 5 deer and turkeys, ready to cook and eat!



- This is where the custom of eating turkey on Thanksgiving Day comes from!



"The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth"
By Jennie A. Brownscombe (1850-1936)
Painted 1914

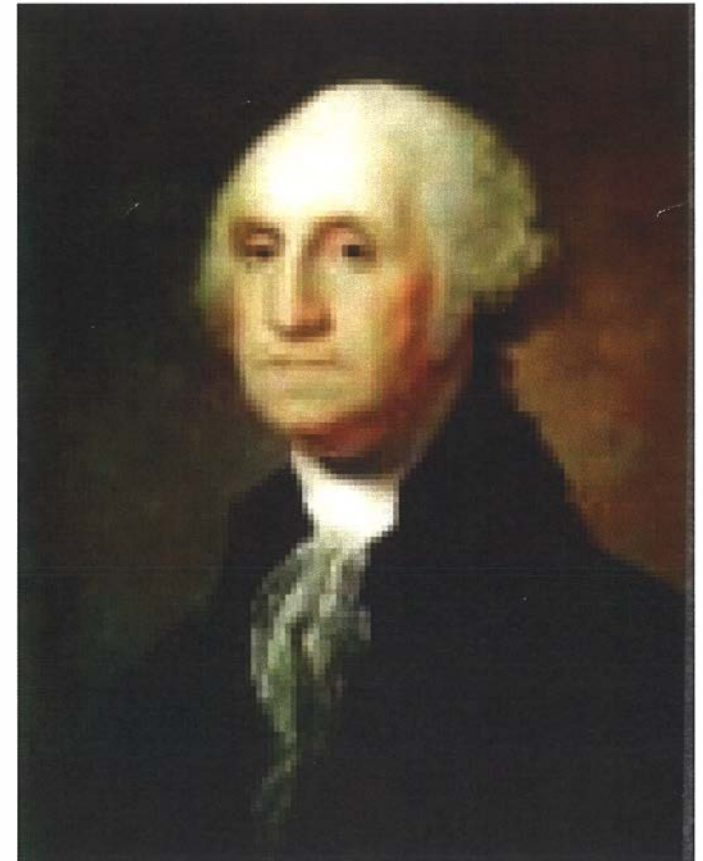
→ Certainly the highlight of the celebration was brother Brewster's prayer of thanksgiving to God for all He had done for them!

In 1623 no rain fell between the third week in May and the middle of July. The fields began to dry and wither, and it seemed that all crops would be lost and famine would be their lot. The Pilgrims called on God, in a special day of humiliation and prayer.



Bradford described this day of prayer: “They set apart a solemn day of humiliation, to seek the Lord by humble and fervent prayer, in this great distress. And He was pleased to give them a gracious and speedy answer... toward evening it began to overcast, and shortly after to rain, with such sweet and gentle showers as gave them cause of rejoicing and blessing God.” After this other rains came and they had a good harvest. Both the Pilgrims and the Indians were amazed at what God had done!

- Over the years various Thanksgiving days were celebrated. Then in 1789 George Washington said, “I make Thursday, the 26th of Nov. next to be devoted by the people of these states to the service of the great and glorious [God] who is the Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be that we may all unite in humble thanks for His kind care and protection”



Many other Presidents gave similar Thanksgiving proclamations.



Giving Thanks Whether Little or Much



Oh Give Thanks Unto the Lord, for He is good.
(Psalm 107:1)

“Giving thanks always
for all things unto God
and the Father in the
name of our Lord Jesus
Christ” (Ephesians 5:20)



FACT NO. 1

Heaven (eternal life) is a free gift — based on God's grace.



“For the wages of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

The message of good news from the Bible

Heaven cannot be earned or deserved.

“For by *grace* are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the *gift* of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Grace—refers to what God wants to give you which you do not deserve.

AMAZING, BUT TRUE — God wants YOU to go to heaven — eternal life is a free GIFT!

The second fact tells why many do not have this gift —

FACT NO. 2

**Man in himself does not
deserve the gift of heaven —**

WHY?

Man is a sinner by nature and by choice.

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



**Man is incapable of doing good according to God's stand-
ards.**



“... there is none that doeth good, no, not
one” (Romans 3:12).

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law,
and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of
all” (James 2:10).

Man cannot save himself

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but
according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5).

**The result of this sin is found in
Fact No. 3**

FACT NO. 3

There is a penalty for sin



God is love – He doesn't want to judge you.

“The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward,
not willing that any should perish, but that
all should come to repentance”

(2 Peter 3:9).

BUT

God is also just – He must judge sin.

“He will by no means clear the guilty” (Exo-
dus 34:7).



“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

i. e., physical death
and also spiritual death (separation from God)

Man's basic needs are:

- forgiveness
- peace with God
- eternal life

He tries religion, good deeds, materialism, acclaim, etc., to satisfy
his needs, **BUT THESE DO NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM
OF SIN.**

God is love. He has the solution!

**Fact No. 4 tells us how God has the only
solution.**

FACT NO. 4

Jesus Christ is your only way to heaven.

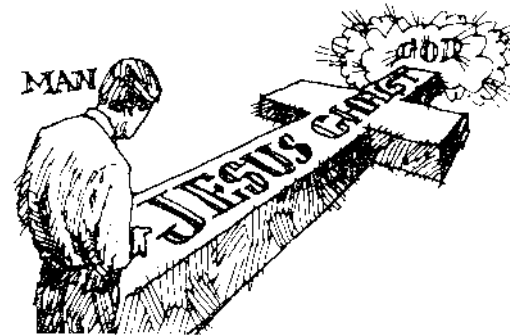
Who He is – the infinite God-man.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14).

What He did – He paid the penalty of our sins, and purchased a place in heaven for us.

“God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us** (Romans 5:8).

“Christ once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (I Peter 3:18).



“Jesus saith unto him, I am **the way**, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by **Me**” (John 14:6).

What must you do?

FACT NO. 5

Personal faith in Christ—is the answer.

Faith is not – merely mentally believing a fact.

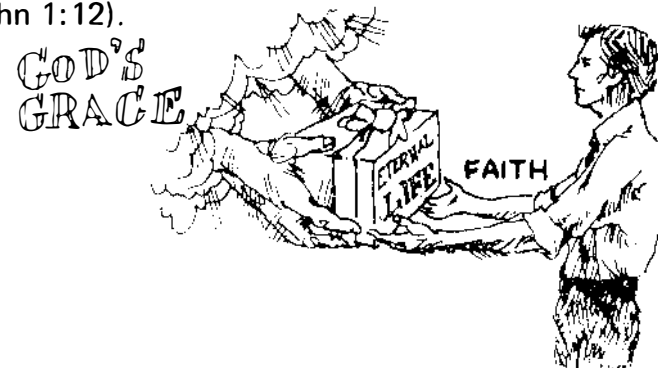
“Thou believeth that there is one God, thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble” (James 2:19).

Many people *agree* that Jesus Christ lived and died, and some even *agree* to the fact of His resurrection! But, they have not turned from sin, and trusted Him.

Faith is – turning from your sins and trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your eternal salvation!

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“But as many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that *believe* on His Name” (John 1:12).



“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

The Bible says: “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).

Now the question is

Can you think of any reason why you wouldn't like to invite Christ into your life right now?

Here is a suggested prayer that may express the desire of your heart:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the gift of eternal life. I know I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I believe Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for my sins and rose again from the dead. I now put my complete trust in you alone for eternal life. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Pray this prayer now.

How do you know that you have eternal life?

Because God says so! Don't trust your feelings.

Believe these facts in God's Word:

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:11-13).

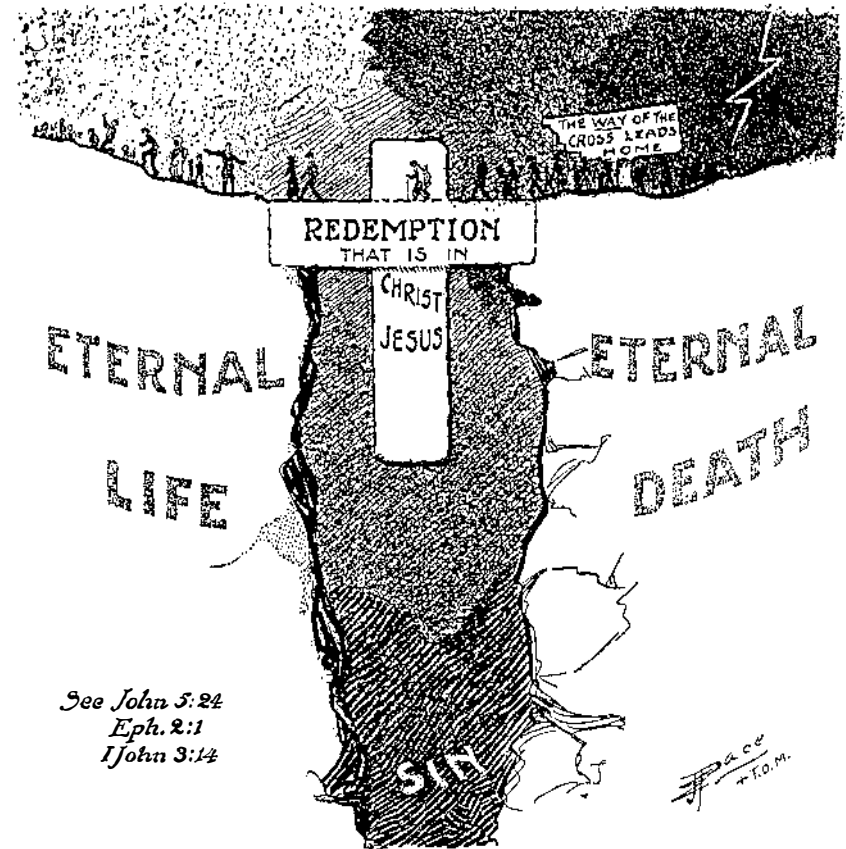
Now remember, God doesn't lie. He said:

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

Now that you are a new Christian,
what should you do?

1. Make a public confession of your faith before others (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10).
2. Be baptized in obedience to Christ and in testimony to your faith (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:35-39; 16:30-34; Romans 6:3-5).
3. Attend a Bible-teaching church where you can fellowship with other Christians and learn the Word of God (Acts 2:41-42; Hebrews 10:24-25).

Go to God in prayer often.
Read God's Word daily.
Obey God's Word.
Witness to others of Christ.



THE ONLY BRIDGE THAT SPANS THIS CHASM