


A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM

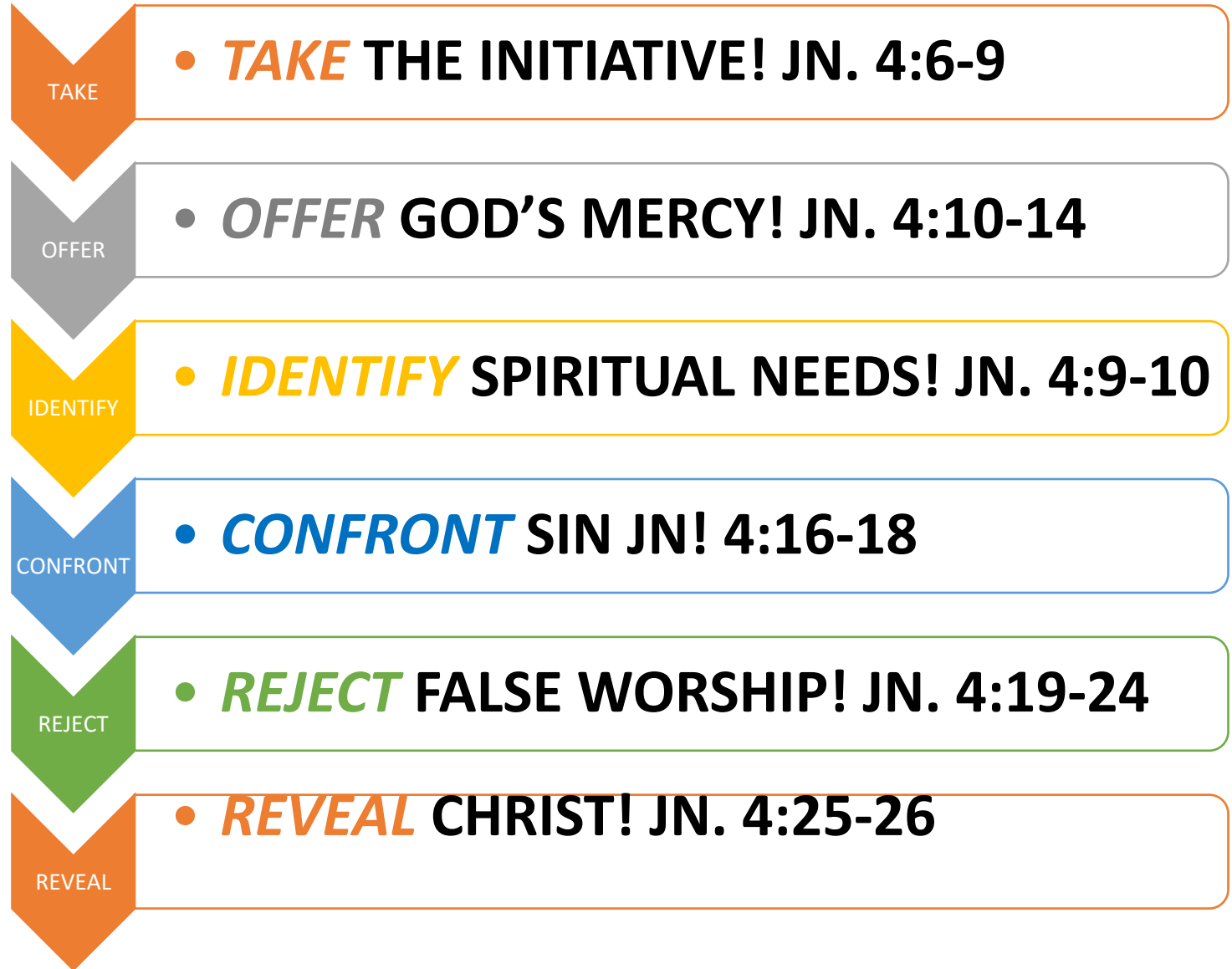


A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's trunk is massive and textured, with roots spreading out across the ground and over the stone structures. The background shows more stone ruins and lush green foliage. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

THE FRUIT OF
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A
TREE OF LIFE,
AND HE WHO IS WISE
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB

**PRINCIPLES
FOR
BIBLICAL
EVANGELISM
FOUND IN
JOHN 4, “THE
WOMAN AT
THE WELL.”**



OUR INHERITANCE

PRIVILEGES OF BEING
HEIRS OF GOD

- **TRASH OR TREASURE?**
- A RICH *LEGACY* TO ENJOY
- WE INHERIT **GOD**
- WE INHERIT **CHRIST**
- WE INHERIT **THE HOLY SPIRIT**
- WE INHERIT **SALVATION**
- WE INHERIT **THE KINGDOM**
- HOW TO WAIT FOR **HEAVEN**
- #1 REMEMBER YOUR *CALLING*
- #2 REMEMBER TO *PRAISE GOD*
- #3 REMEMBER YOUR *INHERITANCE*

HOW TO *RECEIVE TRUE RICHES*

- **YOU DON'T *BUY OR EARN* YOUR WAY INTO AN *INHERITANCE*.** The Greek word translated "*INHERITANCE*" (*KLĒRONOMIA*), (1 PET. 1:4) speaks of POSSESSIONS passed down from generation to generation. **YOU RECEIVE THEM SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU'RE A FAMILY MEMBER.**
- The apostle *PETER* describes the means by which believers gain membership in the family of God: "*[HE] CAUSED US TO BE BORN AGAIN TO A LIVING HOPE THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD*" (1 PET. 1:3).

**WE RECEIVE OUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE BY MEANS OF *SPIRITUAL REBIRTH*—
THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR *SINFUL* CONDITION AND *ALIENATION* FROM
GOD.**

- **JESUS** made that very clear when He said to the Jewish leader **NICODEMUS**, ***“UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD”*** (**JN. 3:3**). **JN. 1:12–13**) underscores the same truth: ***“AS MANY AS RECEIVED [CHRIST], TO THEM HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, EVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME, WHO WERE BORN, NOT OF BLOOD NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD.”***
- We were first born as sinful creatures, dead in trespasses and sins and indulging the desires of our flesh and mind. We were by nature children of wrath, separate from Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world (**EPH. 2:1–3, 12**). We were no more able to change our condition than we could alter the color of our skin, or than a leopard could change its spots (**JER. 13:23**).

- A person in that condition ***MUST BE TRANSFORMED*** by the power of ***THE HOLY SPIRIT***. Through the new birth, the Spirit makes a new creation in Christ (**2 COR. 5:17**), taking up residence in the believer and ***TRANSFORMING*** that person's ***THINKING*** and ***BEHAVIOR—PERSPECTIVES*** and ***VALUES*** change, and the ***FOCUS*** shifts from ***SELF*** to ***CHRIST***.

- ***GOD'S WORD IS ESSENTIAL TO THE NEW BIRTH. PETER*** said, ***“YOU HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN NOT OF SEED WHICH IS PERISHABLE BUT IMPERISHABLE, THAT IS, THROUGH THE LIVING AND ENDURING WORD OF GOD. . . . THIS IS THE WORD WHICH WAS PREACHED TO YOU”*** (1 PET. 1:23, 25).

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD TO ACTIVATE FAITH, WHICH RESULTS IN THE NEW BIRTH (ROM. 10:17).

- ***FAITH MEANS TRUSTING IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ALONE FOR SALVATION***.
- Many people want to add other requirements to the gospel, such as ***religious ceremony, some code of conduct, church membership***, or whatever. All of those things are ***HUMAN WORKS***. Salvation cannot be earned by works but is a gift of God's grace (**ROM. 3:21–26**). That is, God ***does not*** ask us to ***reform*** as a prerequisite to being saved;

HE JUSTIFIES US FREELY, THEN WORKS HIS TRANSFORMING POWER TO CHANGE US INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST (2 COR. 3:18).

- Before ***NICODEMUS*** came to Jesus by night (**JN. 3:2**), he was undoubtedly like the other Jewish religious leaders of his day—***LIVING BY AN EXTERNAL CODE OF RELIGIOUS CONDUCT APART FROM TRUE LOVE FOR GOD (JN. 8:42)***.

- They thought they could be saved by their own good works. But **JESUS** shattered that illusion when He told Nicodemus, in effect, that he would have to assume the role of a spiritual infant by setting aside all his religious error and approaching salvation all over again on God’s terms—he needed to be **“BORN AGAIN”** (JN. 3:3).
- **JESUS** illustrated His point by referring to a familiar event in Israel’s history. At one point during Israel’s wilderness wanderings, God had sent **FIERY SERPENTS** among the people because they had spoken against God and Moses. Many had been bitten and were dying. When **MOSES** interceded for the people, God instructed him to place a bronze serpent on a pole. Those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed of their snakebites (**NUM. 21:5–9**).

THAT WAS THE IMAGE JESUS CALLED UP IN NICODEMUS’S MIND:

“AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, EVEN SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP; SO THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES WILL IN HIM HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.” (JN. 3:14–16)

THAT BRONZE SERPENT WAS SYMBOLIC OF THE SPIRITUAL HEALING THAT COMES **TO ALL WHO TURN FROM SIN AND LOOK TO JESUS, WHO WAS LIFTED UP ON A CROSS.**

- **NICODEMUS** had been bitten by the serpent of **self-righteous religious legalism**. He needed to **ACKNOWLEDGE HIS HELPLESSNESS** and **LOOK TO CHRIST ALONE FOR SALVATION**.

- The **NEW BIRTH** gives **“A LIVING HOPE”** (1 PET. 1:3). It is perpetually alive because it is grounded in the living God, who will fulfill all of His promises (TITUS 1:2), and because it transcends this temporal life. Also, our hope is living because it’s based on the **RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST** from the dead (1 PET. 1:3). **JESUS** said, **“BECAUSE I LIVE, YOU WILL LIVE ALSO”** (JN. 14:19) and **“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME WILL LIVE EVEN IF HE DIES”** (JN. 11:25). Then He raised Lazarus from the dead to prove His claim (JN. 11:43–44).
- **PAUL** said, **“FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN”** (PHIL. 1:21). Physical death is never the end for the believer—it simply ushers us into Christ’s presence, where our hope is eternally realized.

WE NEVER NEED TO FEAR THE GRAVE BECAUSE CHRIST HAS CONQUERED DEATH AND HAS GIVEN A LIVING HOPE TO ALL WHO LOVE HIM.

IMPERISHABLE, UNDEFILED, AND UNFADING

- What would it be like to have endless riches stored up for you—a future reward that could never be taken away, but that could be enjoyed forever? ***IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN, THAT IS AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE INHERITANCE GOD HAS STORED UP FOR YOU.***
- The apostle **PETER** used **3** negative terms to describe the positive perfection of our eternal inheritance: ***“IMPERISHABLE,” “UNDEFILED,”*** and ***“UNFADING”*** (**1 PET. 1:4,**). The Greek word translated **“IMPERISHABLE”** (**APHTHARTOS**) speaks of something that is not corruptible, but **PERMANENT**. The word evokes the image of a land ravaged by a conquering army; so, **PETER** was saying:

OUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE CANNOT BE PLUNDERED OR SPOILED BY OUR SPIRITUAL FOES.

- “**UNDEFINED**” (*AMIANOTOS*) means unpolluted or unstained by **SIN**, **EVIL**, or **DECAY**. Unlike this world, in which nothing escapes the stain of sin (**ROM. 8:20–23**), our inheritance can never be **CONTAMINATED**, **DEFILED**, or in any way **CORRUPTED**. It is **UNBLEMISHED** and **UNSTAINED** by the presence or effects of sin (**REV 21:27**).
- “**UNFADING**,” comes from a Greek term used of flowers. In the context of **1 PET**, it suggests a supernatural beauty that time cannot diminish. **PETER** used the same word with reference to the unfading crown of glory that faithful elders will receive when the Chief Shepherd appears (**1 PET. 5:4**).
- Those **3** terms—**IMPERISHABLE**, **UNDEFINED**, AND **UNFADING**— picture a heavenly inheritance that is **IMPERVIOUS TO DEATH, SIN, AND THE EFFECTS OF TIME**. Considering the corrupting, damning influence of sin on the world, **IT IS WONDERFUL TO KNOW OUR INHERITANCE IN CHRIST IS TIMELESS AND WILL NEVER DIMINISH**.


- The **BELIEVER'S INHERITANCE** is ***"RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU, WHO ARE PROTECTED BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH FOR A SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME"*** (1 PET. 1:4–5). We need never fear the loss of our inheritance, since ***IT IS UNDER GOD'S OWN WATCHFUL CARE.***
- Not only is God watching over our inheritance, but He also is doing so in the safest of all places: **HEAVEN**. That's where ***"NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DESTROYS, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK IN OR STEAL"*** (MATT. 6:20), and where ***"NOTHING UNCLEAN, AND NO ONE WHO PRACTICES ABOMINATION AND LYING, SHALL EVER [ENTER], BUT ONLY THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE"*** (REV. 21:27). ***"OUTSIDE ARE THE DOGS AND THE SORCERERS AND THE IMMORAL PERSONS AND THE MURDERERS AND THE IDOLATERS, AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES AND PRACTICES LYING"*** (REV. 22:15). **NO ONE WILL EVER INVADE OR PLUNDER HEAVEN. THEREFORE, OUR INHERITANCE IS ETERNALLY SECURE.**

- **MANY CHRISTIANS ARE CONFIDENT THAT GOD IS ABLE TO GUARD THEIR INHERITANCE BUT DOUBT THAT HE CAN GUARD THEM.** They fear they will somehow lose their salvation and forfeit God's promises. That's a popular view, but it overlooks the fact that God does pledge to protect us as well!
- **PETER** said, **"YOU . . . ARE PROTECTED BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH FOR A SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME"** (1 PET. 1:4–5). The word translated "PROTECTED" (*PHROUROUMENOUS*) is a military term that speaks of a guard. **PETER** used the present tense to indicate that we are continually under guard. Implied is the idea that **WE NEED ONGOING PROTECTION BECAUSE WE'RE IN A CONSTANT BATTLE WITH SATAN AND HIS FORCES.**

- **IT IS GOD'S OMNIPOTENT, SOVEREIGN POWER THAT GUARDS US AND GUARANTEES OUR FINAL VICTORY.** God, the ultimate Judge, has justified us in Christ, made us heirs with Him, and has given us His Spirit to ensure that the good work He started in us will be perfected (**PHIL. 1:6**). He is able to keep us from stumbling, and to make us **“STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY BLAMELESS WITH GREAT JOY”** (**JUDE 24**). Not even Satan himself can condemn us (**ROM. 8:33**),

SO RATHER THAN FEARING THE LOSS OF OUR INHERITANCE WE SHOULD CONTINUALLY REJOICE IN GOD'S GREAT GRACE AND MERCY.

- **ANOTHER GUARANTEE** of our **INHERITANCE** is our **PERSEVERING FAITH**. **PETER** said we are protected by God's power **THROUGH FAITH** (**1 PET. 1:5**). **FAITH IS GOD'S GIFT TO US; WE DON'T GENERATE IT ON OUR OWN** (**Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 1:29**).

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- ***FAITH IS AROUSED BY GRACE, UPHELD BY GRACE, AND ENERGIZED BY GRACE.*** Grace reaches into the soul of the believer, generating and maintaining faith. ***BY GOD'S GRACE ALONE WE TRUST CHRIST, AND BY GRACE WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE.***
 - ***OUR INHERITANCE*** is a glorious thing. No earthly thing compares to it. But we can ***LOSE SIGHT*** of it through ***WORLDLY PURSUITS*** and the quest for ***INSTANT GRATIFICATION.***



DEAR FRIENDS, DON'T COLLECT THIS WORLD'S TRASH AND NEGLECT THE TREASURE OF OUR UNSPEAKABLE RICHES IN CHRIST.

- No matter what your circumstances might be, **CONSIDER YOUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE.**
- **MEDITATE ON IT.** Let it fill your heart with praise to the One who has extended such grace to you.
- **LET IT MOTIVATE YOU** to live to His glory. Don't pursue the quick fix—some worldly solution to the passing problems of life. This world's trials aren't even worthy to be compared with our eternal glory.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOU HAVE CHRIST, WHO IS ALL-SUFFICIENT IN EVERYTHING NOW AND FOREVER.