

# “The Word of Life”

## (1 John 1:1-4)

### Introduction

➤ True conversion is a radical, life-altering, transformation. It necessitates a complete and fundamental change in one's priorities, affections, pleasures, goals, perspectives, allegiances, and worship. Jesus cannot simply be added to an otherwise moral, ethical, or religious life. He will not be added to a pantheon of false gods (idols). A person simply cannot be saved, in part or in whole, by their religious/righteous works or moral/ethical goodness. True conversion to Christ does not merely affect the external actions of a person, but radically and fundamentally changes him/her from the inside-out.

When a person truly becomes a Christian, Jesus Christ is their one and only Savior and they seek to serve, love and worship Him alone as God. To receive Jesus involves much more than merely believing in His existence, or affirming Him as a good moral/religious teacher, or seeking Him when it seems beneficial or convenient, or trying to use Him as some “get-out-of-hell-free-card.” Today, all too many people think they are saved simply because they recited a sinner's prayer, responded to an invitation, or checked a box saying that they “accepted Jesus” into their life.

✓ Illust: “But accepting Christ has become the panacea [i.e. cure-all] all over the evangelical world and it has become fatal to millions! A whole attitude of accepting; the passive acceptance of Christ. This easy acceptance! A man will preach a tremendous sermon and then say ‘Now, what should you do? Accept Christ. Have you accepted Christ?’ Or we go to the bedside of a dying man: ‘Have you accepted Christ?’ And if he says he has, why, we pat his head and the next day or two we preach that he's in heaven twanging a harp. Well, now I'm awfully afraid that there are millions of people who are perishing because they are being told to accept Christ and they don't know what's meant by it.

You see, to tell a man to 'accept Christ', while it is relatively right, it yet, if not carefully explained, makes Christ to stand hat in hand waiting on my pleasure; neatly awaiting my verdict on Him. It makes Him apply to me, instead of my applying to Him. It permits me to accept Christ by an impulse of my mind or my emotions and accept Him painlessly and at no cost and no inconvenience. ...

Now what is to accept Christ? Well, let me define it for you a little more closely. Acceptance of Christ is to form an attachment to the person of Christ; to the person of Jesus Christ. It's not to fall in love with a tender-faced Jesus. It is to realize that this tender-faced Jesus is also Lord and God! That God has made Him Lord over all things and Head of the Church and that He has the keys of death and hell and that He will sit upon the throne judging all mankind and that God has given all power into His hand – this mighty Lord Jesus! It's to form an attachment to Him that is revolutionary, reversing and transforming the life. If your Christian conversion did not reverse the direction of your life; if it did not transform it then you're not converted at all, you are simply a victim of the 'accept Jesus' heresy!” (A.W. Tozer, sermon *What Does it Mean to Accept Jesus?*)

➤ In the opening few verses of the book of “1 John”, we come face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ! The apostle John wastes no time in getting right to the heart of the matter – that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God.

**1 John 1:1-4** ~ “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – <sup>2</sup>the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – <sup>3</sup>that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”

➤ From these few verses we glean three all-important truths concerning the one and only Son of God.

## 1. The Eternality of the Son of God (vs.1)

➤ The apostle John began this book with a profound statement: “*That which was from the beginning*” (vs.1). As we see in this verse, John is referring to “*the word of life*” (vs.1), which he further clarifies is the Son of God, “*Jesus Christ*” (vs.3). Here, it seems to me that the word “*beginning*” (*archē*) does not refer to the beginning of Jesus’ life/ministry, or the beginning of the creation of the world, or even the beginning of time. Rather, this seems to be a reference to “eternity past”, the time before the creation of the world – the time before time began (see 2:13, 14).

➤ This is very similar language to what we see (from Moses) in the book of Genesis, and from the apostle John in the Gospel of John:

*1 John 1:1, 5 ~ “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life ... 5This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”*

### Genesis 1:1-4

*“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. 4And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.”*

### John 1:1-5

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

➤ This speaks to what is called the pre-existence of Christ. That Christ existed in eternity past, before His incarnation, with God as God’s Son. From eternity past, the Son of God was – existing in divine fellowship and relationship – with God. God never had a beginning, He has always been God. Thus, as God, the Word (Son) of God had always existed with God – eternally before the beginning of all creation.

➤ As John made clear, and will continue to make clear, the eternal God he was referring to is God’s Son who was born, in the flesh, as Jesus the Christ: “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life*” (vs.1). Notice all the tactile language John used: “*heard*” (*akouō*; also vs.3, 5), “*seen*” (*horaō*; also vs.2, 3), “*looked upon*” (*theaomai*), and “*touched*” (*psēlaphaō*).

➤ There are seemingly countless accounts in which John witnessed firsthand the divine majesty of Jesus Christ. Perhaps, most notably, were the times in which God spoke audibly from heaven affirming Jesus as His “*beloved Son*”:

**Matt 3:13-17** ~ “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup>John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ <sup>15</sup>But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented. <sup>16</sup>And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”

**Matt 17:1-8** ~ “And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup>And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup>And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup>And Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ <sup>5</sup>He was still speaking when,

behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’ <sup>6</sup>When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. <sup>7</sup>But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear.’ <sup>8</sup>And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”

**2 Peter 1:16-18** ~ “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup>For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,’ <sup>18</sup>we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.”

➤The apostles were also privileged to be eyewitnesses of Jesus’ resurrection (see Acts 1:3; 1Cor.15:5-7).

**Luke 24:36-43** ~ “As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you!’ <sup>37</sup>But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup>And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate before them.”

**John 20:19-20** ~ “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ <sup>20</sup>When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”

**John 20:24-28** ~ “Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.’ <sup>26</sup>Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’ <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!!!’”

➤In addition, John reference to Son of God being “*the word of life*” (vs.1), “*the life*” (vs.2), and even “*the eternal life*” (vs.2) all point to Him being God – specifically our Creator and Savior. As the self-existing Creator, the Son acts as the agent of all God’s creation. When God spoke creation into existence, He did so by His divine power in and through His Son. Throughout each of the six days of creation, God sovereignly created everything according to His own sovereign purpose and pleasure, and He did this through His one and only Son. The Son of God is the divine expression of God’s nature and power. When God spoke creation into existence, He did it through His Son – the “Word” of God.

**John 1:3-4** ~ “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

**Col 1:15-18** ~ “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

**Heb 1:1-4** ~ “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup>He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his

nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,<sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”

➤As the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God was in intimate fellowship with God the Father throughout all eternity. The Triune God has always existed as God, before all creation. In fact, the Son of God is the divine agent of all creation and the divine agent of all God’s redemptive work. Throughout all eternity past God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit enjoyed the unity and purity of divine fellowship – something that Jesus longed for during His incarnation.

## 2. The Humanity of the Son of God (vs.1-2)

➤In profoundly describing the eternality (deity) of the Son of God, John described the humanity of the Son of God as Jesus the Christ. As we have seen already, with the Son of God in human form, John was among those who witnessed firsthand the (incarnate) humanity of the Son of God: “*... we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life*” (vs.1).

John went on to describe this further by writing “*the life was made manifest ... the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us*” (vs.2). The Greek word translated “*manifest*” (*phaneroō*; vs.2<sup>2x</sup>) describes that which is revealed or brought to light. It can be used in a literal sense, or more figuratively used to describe that which is disclosed or made known. Here John is describing the appearing of the Son of God in human form (see “appears” and “appeared” in 1Jn.3:2, 5, 8).

**John 1:1-3, 14** ~ “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ... <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

**Gal 4:4** ~ “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law”

**Phil 2:5-8** ~ “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

**Col 1:19** ~ “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell”

**Col 2:9** ~ “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily”

➤Through the miracle of the Virgin Birth (the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ) the Son of God took on flesh (see Matt.1:18, 20-21; Lk.1:31, 35; Rom.1:3; 1Jn.5:18). Not only is Jesus (the incarnate Son of God) human; He is completely human. He took not merely the physical nature of a human being, but the full psychological makeup of humanity as well. He felt the full gamut of normal human emotions. Thus, He was able to redeem all of human nature, for He assumed all of what it means to be truly human.

**Heb 2:14-18** ~ “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup>and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. <sup>16</sup>For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. <sup>17</sup>Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” [vs.17 – “propitiation” (*hilaskomai*); to atone (to make atonement), to have mercy; vb. of *hilasmus*, 1Jn.2:2; 4:10]

**Heb 4:14-16** ~ “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

➤Jesus had to be human, in order to die for our sins and to experience the temptations that we encounter as humans. In that sense, Jesus left His heavenly throne in order to identify with our struggles, our difficulties and our weaknesses – though Christ never sinned in any way. Now, to be clear, as God the Son of God knows us perfectly and intimately. He did not become a man as some investigative experiment in order to gain more knowledge about us as humans.

As God, He already knows everything about us. But the Son of God became a man in order personally experience temptation and trials in the flesh – having absolute victory over all temptation, sin and death – and to reveal to us that He is God, the Lord and Savior. Consequently, Christ’s crucifixion (and subsequent resurrection from the dead) was a substitutionary death in that His death on the cross was in our place and for our sins (see Is.53:4-6; 2Cor.5:21; 1Pet.3:18; 1Jn.2:1-2).

### 3. The Testimony of the Son of God (vs.2-4)

➤Again, it is important and helpful to notice the repeated words in this passage of Scripture. Notice that the apostle John that they “*testify*” (vs.2; *martyreō*, bear witness to) and “*proclaim*” (vs.2, 3; *apangellō*, declare or announce) the fact that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God. They are witnesses of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8), and are declaring the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt.28:18-20). These verses reveal a two-fold purpose in John (and the apostles’) testimony.

#### A. The subject

➤To be sure, the subject of John’s testimony – the supreme and central message of the Gospel – is Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God and one and only Savior from God. In verse two, again, we see that Jesus is referred to as “*the life*” (from “*the word of life*”; vs.1), as well as “*the eternal life*”, indicating both His divine work as Creator and His divine nature as eternal God. In the next verse, He is clearly identified as the incarnate “*Son*” of God, “*Jesus Christ*” (vs.3).

➤Some may argue that this point is too obvious to mention. That is, they assume that the subject of John’s (the apostles’) testimony is Jesus Christ. But, for us, the subject of Jesus Christ must be no mere presumption! Today, in America, countless of “Christian” church services and sermons have little (if anything) to do with the subject of Jesus Christ. Rather, they proclaim political correctness, secular psychology, and worldly philosophies – or are simply emotional, entertaining concerts. The subject of many “Christian” sermons range from self-help to spiritual empowerment to self-esteem – but rarely, if ever, mention Jesus or rightly proclaim the Word of God. Likewise, many “Christian” worship songs do not even mention Jesus or even a vague reference to God (some of these songs can be sung to a boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, without changing one word).

We must be resolute in our testimony of Jesus Christ, and not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (see Rom.1:16; 1Cor.1:23; Gal.6:14)!

#### B. The object

➤The object of John’s testimony, as stated in these verses, is also twofold: “*so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete*” (vs.3-4). These are the glorious consequences of truly receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

### 1) Fellowship (vs.3)

➤ The “*fellowship*” (vs.3<sup>2x</sup>; *koinōnia*) to which John is referring is a personal relationship or partnership. This fellowship is distinctly Christian – uniquely given to Christians and uniquely shared by Christians. John highlighted two aspects of true Christian fellowship: “*so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*” (vs.3).

#### a) ... with other Christians

First, we see that John identified that this fellowship is shared among Christians: “*so that you too may have fellowship with us*” (vs.3). By “*us*” it seems that John is referring to he and the other apostles, but by extension this applies to all Christians.

Christian fellowship is not merely a religious or organizational relationship. What binds and unites Christians together is much more than just doctrinal statements and religious affiliations. Christians are in fellowship with one another because they share the supreme and sacred bond of Christ. This fellowship transcends all other relationships, as it is based on a spiritual and an eternal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

**Acts 2:42** ~ “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

True Christian fellowship is much more than meeting together around punch or coffee and cookies. True Christian fellowship is more than people knowing your name and asking how you are doing; it is more than simply meeting together; it is selflessly and sacrificially sharing together. True Christian fellowship is a work of God’s Holy Spirit as Christians are united together in Christ, and mutually serving one another in and for Christ.

#### b) ... with God/Christ

Christians not only have this fellowship with one another, but also – first and foremost – with God: “*... and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*” (vs.3). This fellowship is “*with the [God the] Father*” is made possible because of the redemptive and intercessory work of “*His Son Jesus Christ*” (vs.3; see 1Jn.2:1-2; Rom.8:34-39). There is no fellowship with God apart from receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (see Rom.1:30; 8:7; Jms.4:4; Tit.3:3).

**John 17:20-23** ~ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,<sup>21</sup>that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup>The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” (see 1Cor.1:9; 2Cor.13:14)

This is truly an amazing, ultimately incomprehensible, statement! But we must be careful not to exaggerate its meaning. Jesus was not suggesting that we can become God-like, or that we (as humans) could possibly share the same degree of intimacy/unity that the Son has with the Father. The phrase is one of comparison. Jesus was referring to the same kind/type of unity, not the same degree. In other words, Jesus prayed that His disciples would reflect the unmitigated and unbroken purity and loyalty found within the Triune God. This is a spiritual union we are to share as brothers and sisters in Christ.

➤ Christians share a sacred and spiritual fellowship with one another because they share a sacred and spiritual fellowship with the Triune God – Christ in us, we in Christ, Christ in the Father, the Father in Christ, the Father in us!

## 2) Joy (vs.4)

➤ The second object of John's writing is that Christians would have and experience the true joy that comes from knowing Christ: "*And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete*" (vs.4) [it seems clear that the word "*our*" (*hēmeis*) is intended to include all Christians, not just the apostles (some manuscripts actually read "your" (*hymeis*))]. This joy is also, like fellowship, uniquely and distinctly Christian. The biblical sense of this word "*joy*" (*chara*) is often misunderstood and therefore needs to be defined. This is not some happiness that is derived from external circumstances or fleeting emotions.

✓ Illust: "Joy is something very deep and profound, something that affects the whole and entire personality. In other words it comes to this; there is only one thing that can give true joy and that is contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He satisfies my mind; He satisfies my emotions; He satisfies my every desire. He and His great salvation include the whole personality and nothing less, and in Him I am complete. Joy, in other words, is the response and the reaction of the soul to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Life in Christ*, 30).

➤ This "*joy*" is the same word used to describe Christian's response to Jesus Christ ...

**John 3:29-30** ~ [John the Baptist]: "The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly [*chairō chara*; idiom, lit. 'rejoices with joy'] at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy [*chara*] of mine is now complete [*plēroō*]. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, but I must decrease."

... and the same word used to describe the angels' response when a sinner is converted to Christ:

**Luke 15:10** ~ "Just so, I tell you, there is joy [*chara*] before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (also vs.7)

➤ Since it is not based on fleeting emotions or external circumstances, the Christian's joy is impervious to life's trials and sufferings. It is based solely on indwelling presence of Christ in the believer's life (see Jn.15:4-5; Gal.2:20). This divine joy is grounded in the objective reality of being right with God (i.e. reconciled to God, and secure in God). The joy that Jesus was referring to is not a worldly or circumstantial, but the joy of God that comes only from God in and through Jesus Christ.

**John 15:11** ~ "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy [*chara*] may be in you, and that your joy [*chara*] may be full [*plēroō*]."

**John 16:22** ~ "So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice [*chairō*], and no one will take your joy [*chara*] from you."

**John 16:24** ~ "Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy [*chara*] may be full [*plēroō*]."

➤ It is important to note that the English translation "*may be*" (vs.4) is essentially the same Greek word (subjunctive form of *eimi*) translated "*was*" in verses one and two. As we have already seen, the word can mean "to be" or "to exist." In light of this, verse four could read: "may be made" (NASB) or even "may exist." In other words, as Christ exists in you so also His joy exists in you.

John is here declaring that he is writing this book in hopes that the "*joy*" that comes from knowing Christ (and abiding in Christ), will be "*complete*" (vs.4; *plēroō*; full or perfect). John's prayer was for the Christian to experience the fullness of the joy of Christ. This was the same prayer that Jesus had for all His disciples:

**John 17:13** ~ "But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy [*emos chara*] fulfilled [*plēroō*; full or complete] in themselves."

## Conclusion

➤ To truly receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, one must understand that He is the one and only Son of God and the one and only Savior from God. This – no matter how religious, moral or spiritual a person may be apart from Christ – is a radical transformation. For those who (either actively or passively) reject Jesus as Lord and Savior, have no saving relationship – no fellowship – with the Son of God nor with God Himself. They are living without true hope, and without true joy.

However, those who have truly received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have a sacred – intimate, spiritual, abiding, eternal – relationship with God as their Father and Redeemer. Consequently, they experience the joy of being God's child, of possessing God's Holy Spirit, and of knowing that they are safe and secure in Christ forever.

**Matt 28:8** ~ “So they [i.e. the women] departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.”

**Luke 24:52-53** ~ “And they [i.e. the apostles after Christ's ascension] worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,<sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple blessing God.”

➤ Seeing the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, had changed everything. This exhilarating and all-consuming joy is to be a reality for every Christian. For, as Christians, we know that the (our) Savior lives! We have the assurance that Jesus victoriously died on the cross for our sins, and rose from the dead conquering both sin and death forevermore!

**1 Peter 1:3-9** ~ “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,<sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.<sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,<sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

**Phil 4:4** ~ “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.”