

BRIDGE ANALOGY

ARE YOU AT A PLACE IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU KNOW FOR SURE YOU WILL BE GOING TO HEAVEN?

(Yes, no, maybe, not sure, hope so)

If you were to die and are standing before God, and He asked you, “Why should I let you into Heaven?”
What would you say?

IN ORDER FOR THAT RELATIONSHIP TO BE REAL AND MEANINGFUL HE GAVE US FREE WILL.

God could have created us like robots so that we had to obey Him, but the longing in His heart was for people who would respond to His love from their own free will of choice... Do you want to be loved for who you are? Or for what you buy or do for people? Most of us, even God, wants to be loved for who we are.

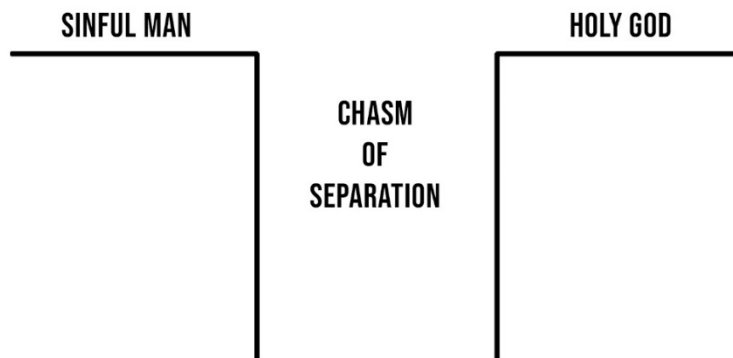
God is complete in Himself, (Colossians 2:9-10) but for whatever reason, God wanted to have a family to share His love and reveal His glory, too. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

SIN ENTERS, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

When sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, it became part of our human nature – so we all sin. *“There is no one righteous, not even one.”* (Romans 3:10)

Sin separates us from God. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23), *“Our sins have separated us from God.”* (Isaiah 59:1)

Sin also brought physical and spiritual death. *“The wages of sin is death.”* (Romans 6:23) Physical death, of course, is when our bodies die. Spiritual death refers to our eternal separation from God.



“WHEN WE DIE, WE FACE JUDGEMENT.” (HEBREWS 9:27)

Now, this judgement may seem unfair since we were born into sin through the actions of Adam and Eve, but the very things we love about God’s character (His holiness, righteousness, justice and perfection) are no longer *our* character/nature because of the fall of man into sin.

BRIDGING THE GAP

The one thing I feel many religions have in common is that they all feel we have been separated from God, and they are the ones with the way back. But the Bible is clear, repentance of our sins and Jesus is the only way back to the Father/God. So people try to bridge the gap. (John 10:9, John 14:6)

Because God placed a longing in our souls to know Him, we are motivated by this to do so. Even though we know there is something fundamentally wrong with us, there is also something inside that desires connection with God.

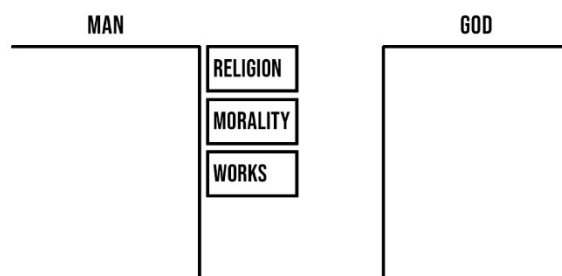
ALL MAN-MADE ATTEMPTS TO BRIDGE THE GAP FAIL BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS.

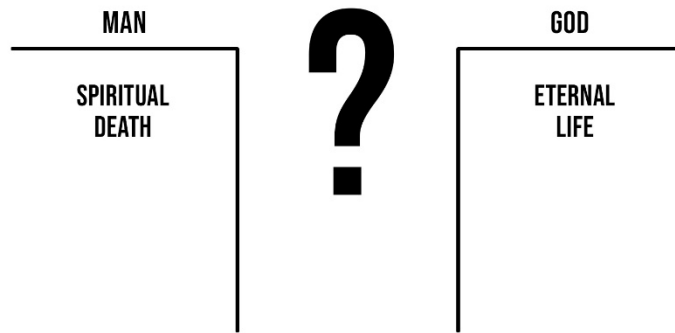
However hard we try to bridge the gap between us and God, those attempts are never enough because God is Holy. “...*even our righteous deeds are as filthy rags before Him.*” (Isaiah 64:6) “...*even if we obey the whole law, but stumble in one point, is as if we have broken them all.*” (James 2:10)

That means God is perfect in every way. Whether you are Mother Teresa or Adolf Hitler, we are all sinners and still fall short of the glory of God.

So man longs for God but cannot get back to Him, God’s righteousness and holiness prevent Him from ignoring or dismissing sin. There are many ways that we try to get right with God – but they all boil down to 3 ways:

- *Religion* – is man-made rituals, practices and rules that are designed to please God and win His favor.
- *Morality* – is an attempt to be righteous by trying to be a good person. We often judge our morality by comparing ourselves with other people. We can always find people who, by comparison, make us look pretty good.
- *Good Works* – is trying to earn righteousness by doing good things. Examples would be, going to church, giving to charity, helping people or treating them well, etc.

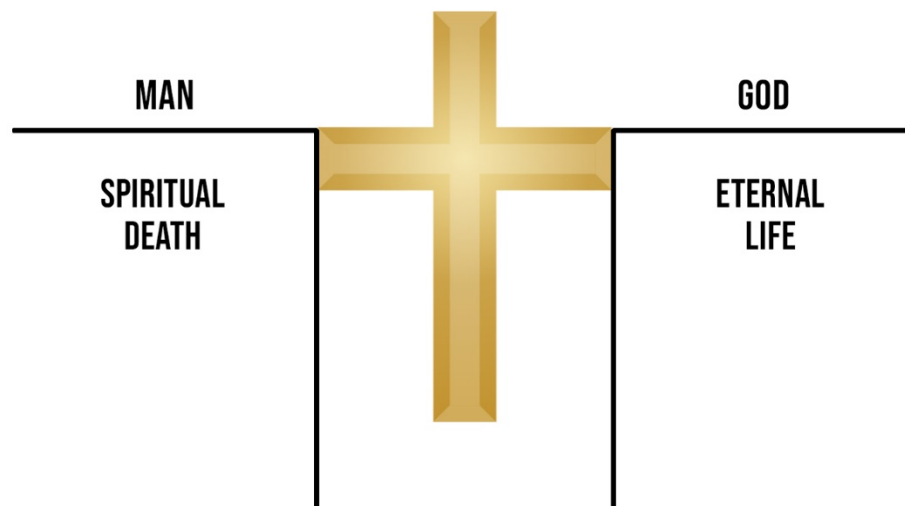




God's answer to the problem is the cross. The cross bridges the gap.
Only God in His great wisdom could come up with a solution to this age-old problem.

- *"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way and the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all."* (Isaiah 53:6)
- *"Christ died for sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."* (1 Peter 3:18) Our sins were placed on Jesus, and He took the punishment for our sins, by the shedding of His blood.
- Not only did He take our sin upon Himself, but He gave us His righteousness. *"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)

Now the sins of a believer no longer separates them from God. When He looks at them, He doesn't see their sins, but He sees the righteousness of His son, Jesus, our Savior. Because they are covered by His blood. That is the gospel, which means Good News.



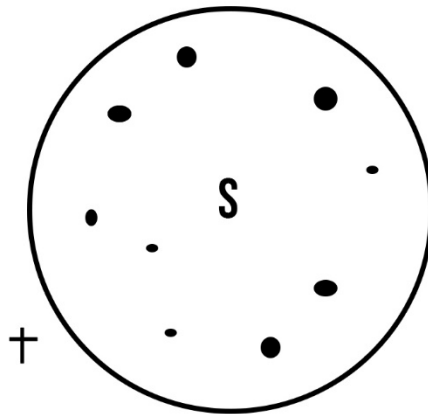
HIS SACRIFICE FOR US REQUIRES A RESPONSE FROM US.

It's more than just mentally agreeing with the truth. The Bible says even the demons believe these things are true, but they don't have belief that saves. (James 2:29) Belief that saves involves two things:

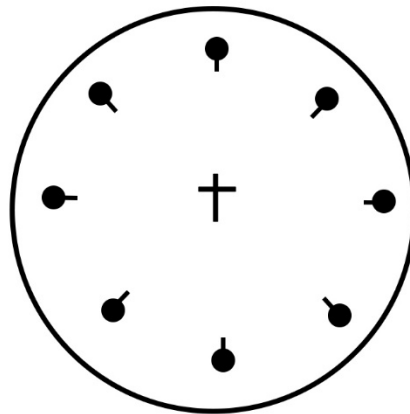
- 1) Opening the door of your heart and inviting Jesus in. In Revelations 3:20, Jesus says, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."* Opening the door of your heart and inviting Jesus in brings you into relationship with Him. *"Yet all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God."* (1 John 1:12) We aren't automatically children of God because of our birth. We are children of God by receiving Him into our lives as Savior.

These two circles represent two kinds of lives:

Drunk on self



Sober Living



- 2) Confessing Jesus as Lord. Romans 10:9 says, *"If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* Confessing Jesus as Lord means that you are ready for Jesus to be Lord of your life and you are ready to let Him lead the way your life should go. (In the center of sIn is "I") Surrender to His Lordship.

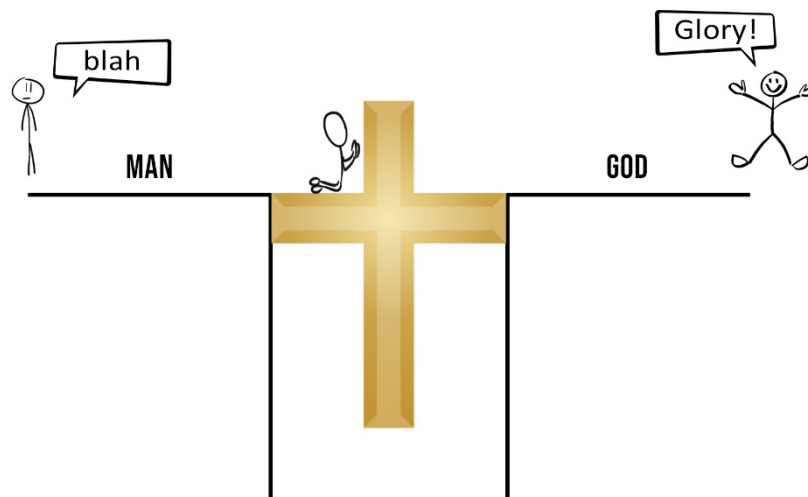
WHAT IS BELIEF THAT SAVES?

In John 5:24, Jesus himself says, *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgement, but has passed out of death into life."* The believer has crossed over (the Bridge) from death to life.

ACCEPTING THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE:

Coming into relationship with God is not a process of getting better as a person. We've already discovered that it is impossible to be "better" because we are sinful and God is Holy. Coming into relationship with God is simply a decision to accept what He is offering. What He is offering us is the gift of eternal life. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23)

"For it is by grace (undeserved favor) that we have been saved through faith – and this is not from yourselves (you didn't earn it), it is the gift of God – not by works (by your own efforts), so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)



HOW DO I KNOW FOR SURE THAT I HAVE RECEIVED THIS GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE?

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO KNOW:

- 1) One is the witness of the Holy Spirit. *"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear (fear of judgement and separation from God), but you received the Spirit of sonship (because you are now a true son or daughter). And by Him we cry, 'Abba (Daddy), Father. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (and will therefore spend eternity with Him)."* (Romans 8:15) John 3:3-8 refers to this as the new birth, also known as being born again.
- 2) A second way of knowing is to simply believe God's word. 1 John 5:11-13 says, *"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."* It says, if you have the Son, you have life. Did you invite the Son in? If you did, then you have eternal life.