

Witnessing to the Far Lost
Steve Moore

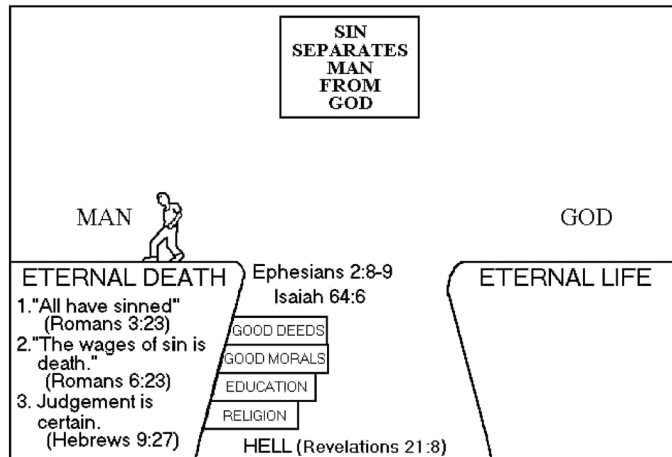
A series of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 equally spaced lines.

The Good News Bridge

Bad News: Man's Problem

In this picture we see man is separated from God. Originally, man and God had fellowship with each other. God and Adam walked together in the Garden of Eden. Then Adam and Eve both sinned and were separated from God's presence.

The Bible teaches in the first three chapters of Romans that all men, whether born in a heathen family or Christian family, have sinned. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).



Man desperately tries to build his own bridges across to heaven. The most common way that man tries to get to heaven is through his own good works. But our good deeds are as filthy rags in the sight of a Holy God (Isaiah 64:6).

Other men try through ethics or good morals to reach God. But generally man does not live up to his own standard of values, much less God's standard of righteousness. Man is not able to keep the "Ten Commandments" which are only the elementary laws of God. The problem lies in man's deceitful heart (Jeremiah 17:9).

Nor is education the answer. Knowledge increases our feelings of guilt. God does not excuse our sin merely because we have been taught the truth. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13).

"But surely religion will save us," some will say. No, not even religion will bring us back into fellowship with the Living God. Religion is good; it offers good advice. Religion tells us what we should do and should not do. But religion whether Buddhism, Daoism, Hindu, Islam, Jewish, Catholic or Protestant cannot forgive our sins and save our souls. Only God can do that. Sinful man does not need more religion. He needs a Savior.

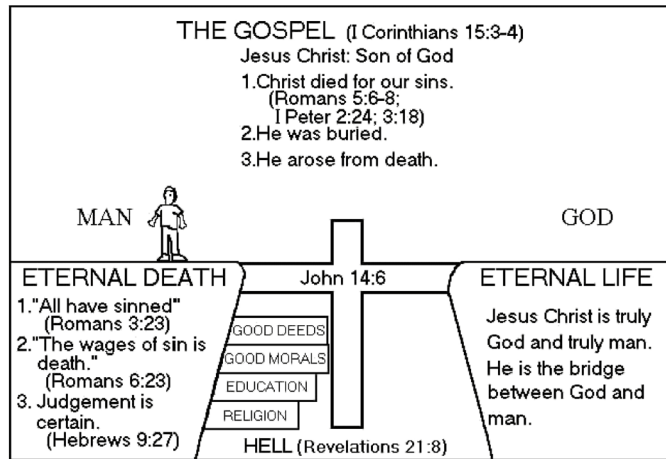
Not only have all men sinned, but the result of sin is death. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Man was not created to die but to live in fellowship with God. Yet because of Adam's sin, man inherits death.

And that is not all. The Bible tells us "...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Judgment is certain...it is inevitable. Every person is judged by the Almighty God, and those whose sins are not forgiven are sent to hell, a place that was originally prepared for Satan and his demons (Matthew 25:41).

It is a terrible picture. Man cannot bridge the gap to heaven. Left to his own devices, man is helpless. Man is cut off from God and condemned by his own sins. Sin... death... judgment... hell. Man's condition is hopeless (Ephesians 2:12).

Good News: God's Solution

In this picture, however, we see that God in His great love provided a way of deliverance. God had a wonderful plan designed before the world began to bring sons and daughters back to live with Him forever. Only one man could bridge the gap that separated man from God. That man must belong both to man and to God. If he is not man he cannot represent us; if he is not God, he cannot save us.



So God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be born as a man. Jesus is the Son of Man born of Mary, and the Son of God conceived through the Holy Spirit. He is not part man and part God, but 100% man and 100% God. In theology He is called "Very God" and "Very Man." There is but one qualified to become our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This man Jesus did many wonderful miracles, but we are not saved by the miracles of Jesus. He taught many beautiful lessons, but we are not saved by following the ethical teachings of Jesus. He healed many people from their sickness, but the healing of the body does not guarantee the healing of the soul. The fact is that we are not saved through all those marvelous things that Jesus did in His life. The life of Jesus demonstrated that He was the Son of God; but more is necessary for my salvation.

Jesus Christ had to die on the cross for my sins. Oh, the wonder of it all! Jesus died for me, and for you. The cross of Christ is the bridge from death to eternal life.

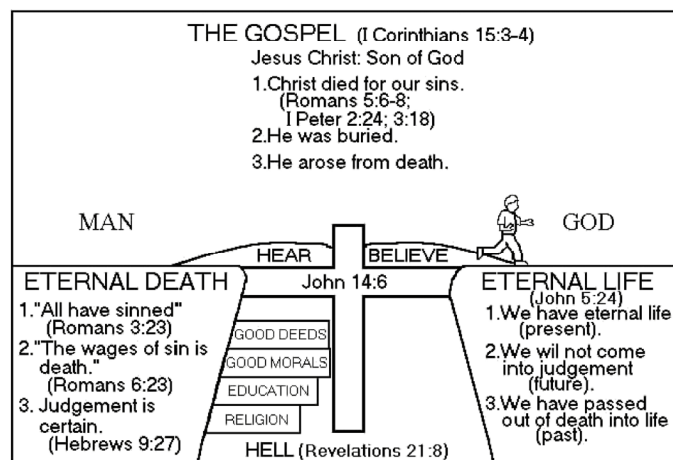
Yet Christ not only died to pay for my sins, He arose from the grave that I might be made righteous (Romans 4:25) and might live forever as a child of God.

This is the Good News, the historic gospel, "...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3,4).

Conclusion: Man's Response

Jesus died to save all men, yet all men are not saved. Why? Because God will not force you to believe. You have a choice, and that choice will determine your eternal destiny. How can you be saved?

Jesus says, *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life"* (John 5:24 NIV).



Since you have already heard Jesus' words, you must only believe in order to possess eternal life. Believe what? Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, was buried and rose again from the dead. Believe He is truly the Son of God, and accept Him as your personal Savior. When you do so, you have everlasting life. You will not be judged by God in the future or sent to hell, because all your past, present and future sins have been forgiven by God and covered by the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross. You have indeed already passed from death to life.

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" (Revelation 3:20, NIV). Jesus knocks at the door of your heart. To believe is to "open the door" and invite Jesus in.

Now that you have heard the Gospel, you need to answer several specific questions:

1. Do you understand this?

If you don't understand the basic facts of the gospel, you have no basis for faith. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

If you do understand this presentation, then...

2. Are you willing to believe right now?

Through faith alone you are saved; it is a personal decision of the will--your will.

If you are willing to believe now, then...

3. Will you pray aloud and ask Christ to come into your heart?

"For whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). To be saved:

- the mind must be enlightened
- the emotions must be stirred
- the will must be changed.

Pray in your own words something like this:

Dear Father in heaven, I acknowledge that I am a guilty sinner and deserve Your judgment. But I believe that You loved me and sent Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for my sins. I pray that Jesus will come into my heart, forgive my sins, and give me eternal life. Amen.

History Of The Bridge Illustration *by Roy Robertson*

During his early ministry, Dawson Trotman taught his Sunday school class of junior high boys to present the gospel by using the following set of verses:

The fact of sin	Romans 3:23
The penalty of sin	Romans 6:23
Judgment is certain	Hebrews 9:27
Christ paid the penalty	Romans 5:8
Salvation is a free gift	Ephesians 2:8-9
You must accept Christ	John 1:12

In my Navy days, we used Daws's same sequence of six passages, but by then there was a seventh point. This was the Assurance of Salvation, with John 5:24 as the key reference (*1943 TMS 108*).

Later, while I was working in Asia, we thought of combining Daws's logical sequence of verses with a dramatic poster used by China Inland Mission workers in order to present God's plan of salvation to people who knew little of the gospel message. The poster pictured many people traveling down a broad road that ended abruptly at a cliff. Their hands reached frantically upward trying to escape the burning abyss at the foot of the cliff, into which they were tumbling.

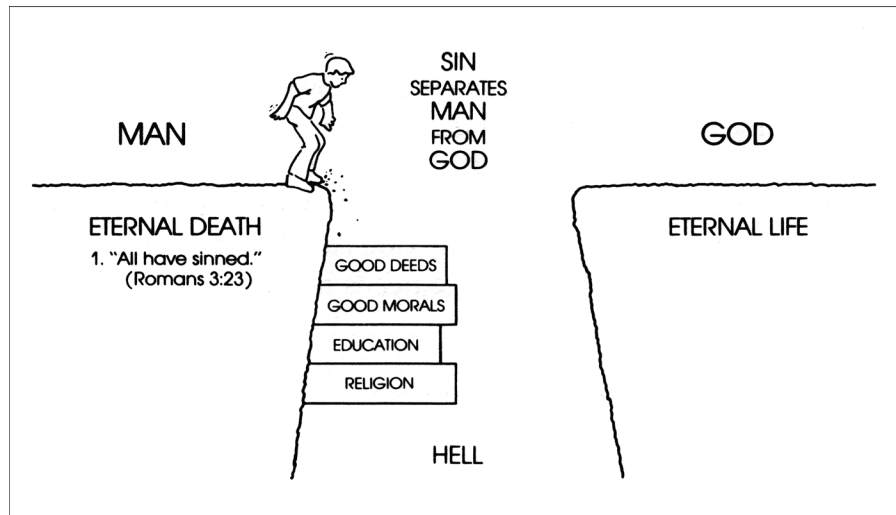
However, there was also a Cross at the edge of the cliff. A few people turned and, using the Cross, went on to an upward path that led to heaven. Chinese evangelists certainly know how to paint vivid pictures of heaven and hell!

This combination became the Bridge illustration, and fit in well with the Chinese culture, which requires a mediator for all-important transactions. The Chinese transact marriages and buy property through a *pao jen*, or a "go-between." Jesus Christ is the go-between for the sinner to get to God. Gradually, after refinements, we had a workable "bridge" that clearly explained the gospel. Others used it, making modifications to fit their way of presenting Christ.

As a tool, the Bridge can be used in many forms, each suiting the individual user, giving liberty and power to the presentation of salvation.

How To Use The Bridge Illustration by Roy Robertson

Leading someone to Christ is an inexpressible joy. But how is it done? There are some basic elements of presenting the gospel that everyone should know. A very helpful tool, used internationally, is the Bridge illustration. Here is one way to use the Bridge in explaining the gospel:



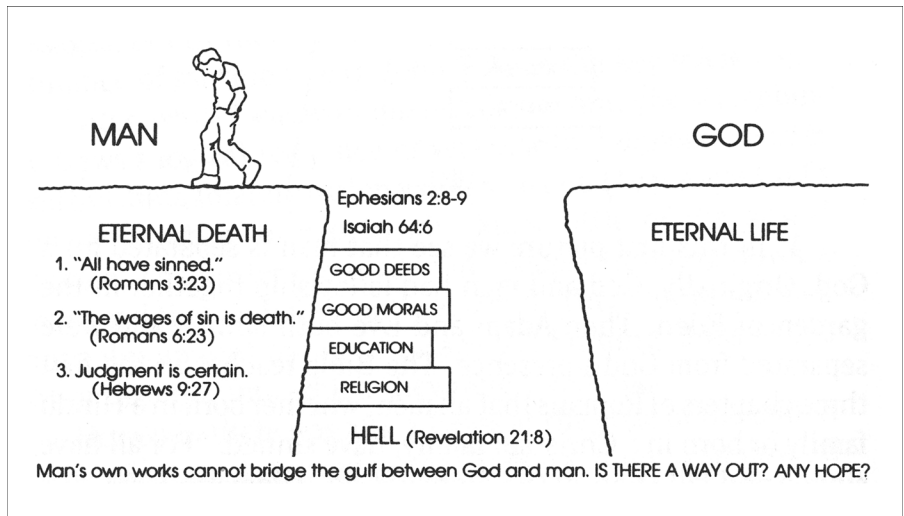
1. In this first picture we see that man is separated from God. Originally, God and man had fellowship together in the Garden of Eden. Then Adam and Eve both sinned and were separated from God's presence. The Bible teaches in the first three chapters of Romans that all men, whether born in a Hindu family or born in a Christian family, have sinned. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

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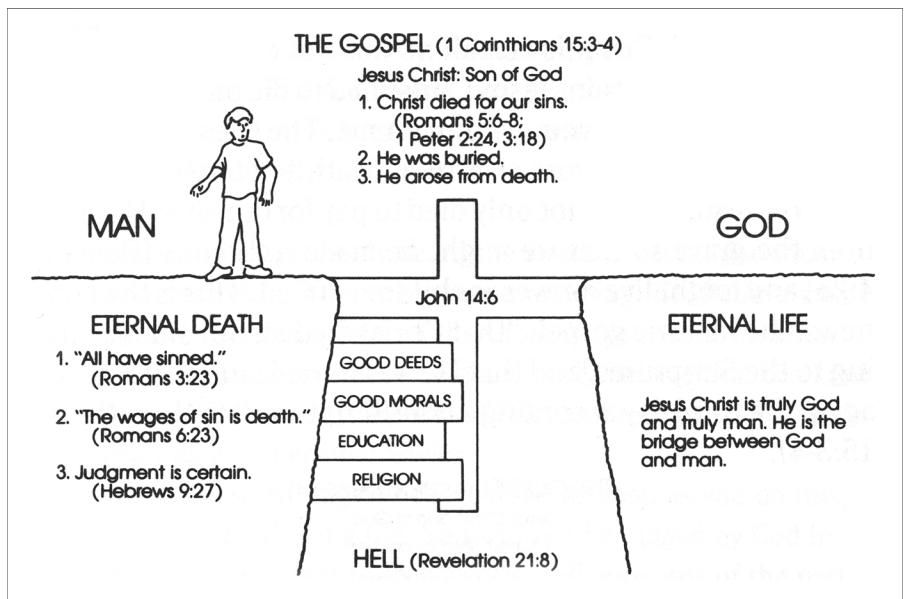
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2. Not only have all people sinned, but the result of their sin is death. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Man was not created to die but to live in fellowship with God. Yet because of Adam's sin, man inherits death. And that is not all. The Bible tells us that "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Judgment is certain; it is inevitable. Every person is judged by the Almighty God, and those whose sins are not forgiven are eventually sent to hell, a place originally prepared for Satan and his demons (Matthew 25:41).

It is a terrible picture. Alone we cannot bridge the gap to heaven. Left to our own devices we are helpless—cut off from God and condemned by our own sins. Sin . . . death . . . judgment . . . hell. Our spiritual condition is utterly hopeless (Ephesians 2:12).

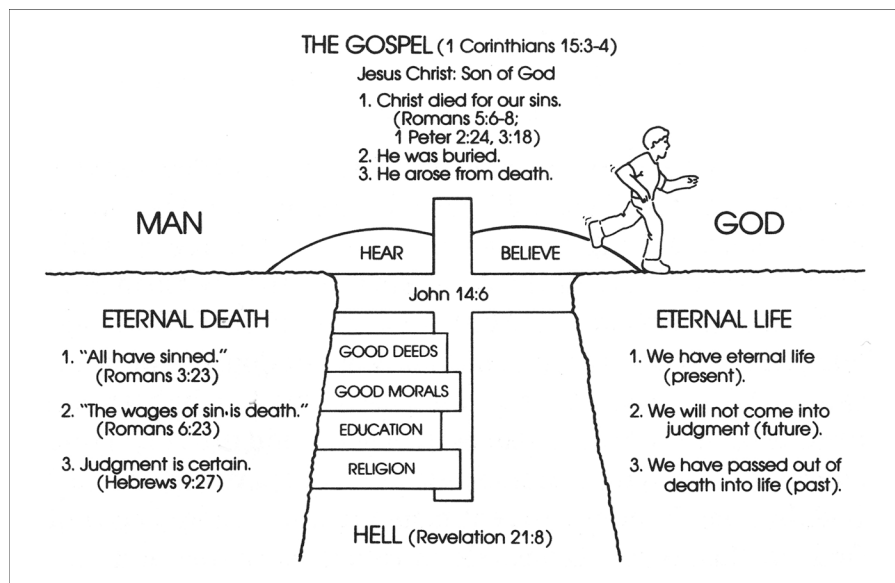


3. But God in His great love provided a way of deliverance. He had a wonderful plan, designed before the world began, to bring sons and daughters back to live with Him forever. Only one person could bridge the gap of sin that separated man from God. And

that person had to be both man and God. If he was not man, he could not represent us; if he was not God, he could not save us. So God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be born as a man. Jesus is the Son of Man born of Mary, and the Son of God conceived through the Holy Spirit. He is not part man and part God, but one hundred percent man and one hundred percent God. In theological terms, He is called “very God and very man.” There is but one person qualified to become our Savior: the Lord Jesus Christ.

This man Jesus did many wonderful miracles, but we are not saved by the miracles. He taught many beautiful lessons, but we are not saved by following the ethical teachings of Jesus. He healed many from sickness, but the healing of the body does not heal the soul. The fact is that we are not saved through all those marvelous things Jesus did during His three years of ministry. The life of Jesus demonstrated that He was the Son of God. But this fact alone was not enough; more was necessary for salvation. Jesus Christ had to die on the Cross for our sins. He died for you . . . and for me. The Cross of Christ is the bridge for us to cross over from death to eternal life.

Yet Jesus Christ not only died to pay for our sins; He arose from the grave so that we might be made righteous (Romans 4:25) and might live forever as children of God. This is the good news, the historic gospel: “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).



4. Jesus died to save all men, yet all men are not saved. Why? Because God does not force anyone to believe. Each person has a choice, and that choice will determine one's eternal destiny. How, then, can one be saved?

Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

At this point in your explanation of the Bridge illustration, it is appropriate for you to make a personal challenge to the unbeliever. The following paragraphs are an example of what you might want to say to the person who needs to cross the bridge to Christ:

Since you have already heard the words of Jesus, you must only believe in order to possess everlasting life. Believe what? Believe that Jesus died on the Cross for your sins, and that He was buried and arose from the dead. Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, and receive Him in your heart as your personal Savior.

Are you willing to believe now? As soon as you do this, you have everlasting life. You will not be judged by God in the future and sent to hell, because all your sins of the past, present, and future have been forgiven by God and covered by the blood of Jesus that was shed on the Cross. You have already passed from death to life.

Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Revelation 3:20). Jesus knocks at the door of your heart. Only you can open your heart. Won't you open your heart right now and call on the Lord in a prayer of faith? Pray in your own words something like this: "Dear Father in heaven, I believe that Jesus died on the Cross for my sins. I pray that Jesus will come into my heart. Forgive my sins and give me life everlasting. Amen."

To everyone who calls on the Lord in true faith for salvation, God gives the eternal life He has promised. All who are willing to believe will be saved. If you are still lost, it is because you love your sins more than you love Jesus, and thus you are not willing to believe. If you have believed in Jesus, then rest in hope and peace, because He will bring every one of His children into heaven.