



A Publication of Bible Doctrines To Live By, Inc.

Winter Special Edition 2024



Can you imagine what it would have been like to hear the most outstanding choir of the universe singing a "Hallelujah Chorus"? Wouldn't you have liked to be there when this great multitude of the heavenly hosts shouted, causing the hills and valleys of Judea to echo and reverberate at the announcement of the good news of Christ's coming? The world had waited 4,000 years for this announcement! Wouldn't you have loved to be there for the greatest event in human history? Give God praise and glory!

But before we savor the peace, joys, and delights of Christ's coming to save the lost (Lk. 19:10), let's think, about the **HEAVENLY** World Christ left behind and the Earthly World He came to save.

The Heavenly World. Heaven was Christ's Eternal Home – from eternity to eternity – a Home beyond imagination and splendor far beyond the words of men to describe - a place of perfect peace and righteousness. Only a few members of the human race have ever been privileged to see the place the Bible calls Heaven - and then, only briefly when the clouds and stars of the stratosphere have been rolled back. Heaven is real! It was seen! The Apostle John saw the magnificent glories of Heaven when the "Door of Heaven" was opened (Rev. 1:12ff; 4:1ff; 15:5ff; 19:11ff; 21:1ff). The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel saw Heaven (Isa. 6:1ff; Ezek.1:1ff). The Apostle Peter (Acts. 10:11ff) and Deacon Stephen saw Heaven (Acts 7:55ff). And the Apostle Paul tells of a man he once knew that was granted access into the "Throne Room" of God (the Third Heaven). He reported of the "visions and revelations" "and unspeakable words" which were "not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:1-7). How exquisitely beautiful and wonderful Heaven must be!

While Christ was at home in the "Father's House," He was described as "rich" but when He came to earth He was" made poor" (2 Cor. 8:9). In terms of riches, power, and glory, Christ has no equal.

The song writer has attempted to put into words what only faith in the Scriptures and a sanctified imagination can see afar-off, articulating something that is better felt than seen.

"We read of a place that's called Heaven, It's made for the pure and the free; These truths in God's Word He hath given, How beautiful Heaven must be. How beautiful Heaven must be, Sweet home of the happy and free; Fair haven of rest for the weary, How beautiful Heaven must be."

(A.S. Bridgewater)

When the fulness of the time was come, God

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Ephesians 3:9

#### **Truth Aflame**

sent forth His Son. The fact that Christ willingly left the Ivory Palaces and Hallowed Halls of His home in Heaven must have been very painful. It meant, among many other things, that Christ had to be of "no reputation" and to be "humbled." This means that the "King of Glory" (Ps. 24:10, Lk. 19:38) came to earth and was made "poor" by laying aside the robes of royalty, the adulations of thrones, principalities, cherubim, seraphim and the treasure vaults of His majestic homeland. He became something that He was not before: a member of the human race, and as a "servant" He took to calling Himself "the Son of Man." What an amazing condescension!

In my opinion, this is one of the most profound passages found in the Bible and can only be explained in terms of the deepest love that the Godhead had for the fallen and sinful race of Adam. And, now, having finished the work the Father had "given Him to do" - He now prays to go back to His Home to be "glorified" with the "glory" which He had "before the world was" and to be enthroned side by side with His Father (Jn. 17:1-10).

The <u>EARTHLY</u> World Christ came to save. Christ came to Planet Earth, an earth that had been made a ruin by the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). The "prince and power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) and mankind, the crowning jewel of God's creative power, were in rebellion (Rom. 3:19, 23). The powerful forces of sin were in control and man became burdened, and the whole creation groaned under its power (Rom. 8:20-24).

Can you think of a greater contrast? Christ's coming to earth was not a gradual, leisurely journey, but an instantaneous departure from the bright, white, blinding lights of Heaven where there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning" to the spiritually dark night of a barn (Jas. 1:17).

Even though Christ came unto "His own" and they had notice from Old Testament prophets to prepare for His coming, there were no preparations made. Where was the fanfare, the trumpets, or excitement? What was wrong here? The wise men from the East knew Christ was coming and brought aifts!

But what about the Jews, His privileged country men - where is their response? It seems like no one cared! However, God the Father cared and would not let His Son come into the world without a celebration because He "so loved the world!"

# On that night, the gates of Heaven swung wide open to let Christ COME DOWN!

**On that night**, God celebrated by lighting up the skies with the dazzling radiance of the Shekinah Glory of the Lord!

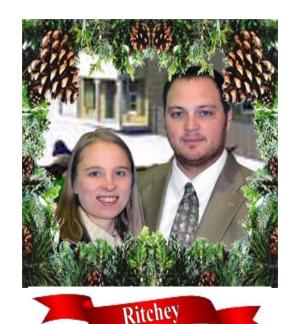
**On that night**, a multitude of joyful, excited angels descended through the Gates of Heaven to capture the attention of the "shepherds abiding in the field" by praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk. 2:14)!

On that night, the Angel of the Lord said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Lk. 2:10-12). Oh, the breadth and length and depth and height of the love and mercy of God shown toward us! Wonderful matchless, amazing, marvelous divine grace and love!

Christ came down, down to the Cross where He was made a sin offering and numbered with the transgressors. There is no sinner for whom Christ did not die. The sin debt – Christ paid it all! He became "POOR." There is nothing more – suffering, harassment, torment, torture, or death for Him to pay. Since that is true, the Gates of Heaven will again open to let the believing sinner in!

**Question:** What comes to mind when Christmas comes? Santa? The gifts? Tinsel and lights? Ornaments and trimmings? Or, do you think of the baby Jesus, born in a manger Who will one day wake the dead? Or, do you think of Him as the unique God-Man Savior of the world?

God gave us Jesus, sent down from above.
He gave Him because of incredible Love.
God wanted us to know the reason Christ came,
To save us from sin, on His cross He was slain.
After three days and three nights He arose again!
And, He is the reason for Christmas!
(Goldie Bristol).



Greetings in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ,

The end-of-the-year holidays signal the closing of another year. We trust you can look back through the year and see growth in the Lord. He is good in pleasant times and difficult ones.

Much has happened at BDTLB during the year. January brought the Board's formal recognition of me as the new President and Executive Director of Bible Doctrines To Live By. It has been a humbling honor to be entrusted with this important ministry spearheaded by Lee Homoki and Joel McGarvey in decades past. Our ministry 's focus remains to see souls saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). I arrive end the year still trying to juggle the day-to-day decisions that arise, the growing to-do list, as well as set the vision for the future.

As you will likely read in their own letters, Joel remains full-time as the Associate Director and our Ambassador at Large. He and Susan have traveled many miles to visit churches, and they continue to stream our online content (Sunday Bible Hour, Tuesday Bible Time, Miss Susan's Bible Buddies, etc.). Paul and Rebecca completed their first solo Family Bible School summer and are

working hard on getting their other ministries up and running. Cindy and Jennifer have been entrusted with the important tasks of making sure the ministry runs in the background. They work together well. We have a wonderful team at Bible Doctrines To Live By. We appreciate the blessing of being able to connect with many of you this past year and look forward to continuing to serve the Lord with you in the year ahead.

On a personal front, Jennifer and I experienced the first marriage union of our oldest son Isaac and our daughter-in-law Meredith. They have moved closer to home, so both sets of parents are happy to have them closer. Noah and Jonas work for the same electric company together, working at the same job site. Micah made the decision to homeschool for his junior year of school. He remains active in sports and social events. Miriam has begun high school (freshman) and enjoys band, sports, and friends. Jennifer and I appreciate your financial support and prayers through the year.

Finally, as we get closer to the Christmas season. Two verses are on my mind this year. First, "for there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus Christ voluntarily took on flesh, identifying with humanity, in order to be the only intermediary between holy, eternal God and sinful human beings. The second verse tells us why He did this: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Because God the Son took on flesh and fulfilled the requirements of a sinless life, He became our substitute, taking OUR sin upon Himself in order to pay the penalty. Now, through this mediator, we can be connected to God by faith alone in the work of Jesus Christ. Have you trusted Him alone for salvation? If not, I urge you to do so today. If you have, rejoice today and everyday that you have the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your support and encouragement of the ministry of Bible Doctrines To Live. Your prayerful and financial investment in the Lord's ministry brings eternal results.

## Matthew and Jenn Ritchey



#### **Truth Aflame**





The chilly temperatures and changing fall colors reminds us that winter weather will soon arrive and with it the business that accompanies this time of the year.

festivities Bevond the and exchanging, the focus must be upon the Savior, for without Whom the holiday, as we know it, would not exist. This is the season we must remain focused on the Savior. Look beyond the babe in the manger, beyond the cross on a hill, or even an empty tomb; the celebration of this season is a risen and glorified Savior seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15) and freely offers a gift of life to all who simply, in faith, believe in His finished work on Calvary's cross (1 Cor. 15:15; Eph. 2:8,9). This is the true meaning of Christmas, and Susan and I sincerely trust that He is your Savior. If you are uncertain, we would invite you to take this moment and put your faith, trust, belief in the work finished for you, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Believing that He has paid the debt of your sin (Rom. 3:23; 6:23) and brought to you the forgiveness of sin (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). Trust Him today.

Susan and I want to express our deepest appreciation to everyone for your faithful prayers and gifts throughout the year. Your continued prayers and financial support make our ministry labors easier and is truly a blessing. In ministry, it's not always easy to plan too far in advance. During the winter months, we were blessed to minister in churches in Florida and Georgia, then returned to Grand Rapids for several weeks before heading to meetings in Wisconsin and South Dakota. The plan was to minister through the central portion of the country throughout the summer and into the fall. But God's plan took us to the Bethesda Church in North Branch, Minnesota, where we served as Interim Pastor (July and August). Additionally, in July, we were blessed to speak at the Midwest Grace Fellowship conference in Wellsville, KS. And then again, our winter plans were altered and we are returning to North Branch for another 5-6 months. After that we are awaiting His plans.

We were blessed this past year to welcome into our family two grandaughters-in-law with the marriages of Isaac Ritchey to Meredith Wiles, and Ethan Turner to Elsie Klahn; two new grandchildren, Jaxon, to Joel and Kayleigh, and Damian, to Paul and Xandy; **plus**, a new great grandson, Theodore Eugene, to Elise (Turner) and Zack. That's seventeen grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Solomon wrote that grand children are "...the crown of old men..." (Prov. 17:6); my crown is getting heavy.

As for Susan and I, well, our lives are changing. When others speak of retirement (I will be 73 in April), we continue to seek the Lord's leading through the ageborne aches and pains. Our nation and our world desperately needs Jesus Christ; hence our ministry emphasizes the need for believers to rise up and be heard, to share the saving Gospel of the Grace of God. Too much of the church's time and money has been spent attempting to change the world's conduct and too little on changing its heart. To that end we covet your continued prayers and financial support as we seek to follow the Lord's leading and proclaim, without apology, God's message of love and grace, the wonderful Word of God Rightly Divided.

We love you all, and count you all as dear friends and family. As the Apostle Paul wrote, we also keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

Merry Christmas and a very Christ-centered blessed New Year.

\*\*Tocl and Susan McGarrey\*\*



The days are getting shorter and the nights are colder and longer. The fire in the woodstove gives off an inviting glow as our family is settling into our winter routines. It is a time to reflect on where and how God has used us these past months and a time to look to and prepare for the future. It is a time to give thanks for all our many blessings.

This past year has been full of blessings indeed! Our four youngest children are busy with their homeschool studies and are adjusting to school at home and on the road wherever ministry takes us. Our twins Elizabeth and Lydia celebrated their nineteenth birthday on our  $27^{th}$  wedding anniversary back on September  $20^{th}$ . In April, our oldest son Ethan married. We are so thankful for him and his bride Elsie. They are a wonderful couple enjoying married life as they daily grow together in unity. Our oldest daughter Elise and her husband Zack have been married for several years and this past October blessed us with our second grandchild, Theodore Eugene Klahn. Proverbs 17:6 says grandchildren are the crown of old men. We are so thankful for our children, their spouses, and our grandchildren.

We also thank God for his provision and safety in our travels. Our family experienced blown tires and ruptured brake lines in the truck as well as broken welds in the fifth-wheel framing, but through it all we were safely delivered. God brought people as blessings into our lives to help us find and fix those problems in amazing ways. We could not accomplish what we do without God's protection and provision every step of the way.

We cannot thank you all enough for your prayers, financial support, and friendship. God's amazing design for the Body of Christ is truly not bound by church walls, borders, or any other barriers.

In 2025, we are looking forward to another full summer of Family Bible School, but there is so much more to undertake in a year. In February, Lord willing, I (Paul) will be





traveling to Brazil for 3 weeks with my daughters Elizabeth (19), Lydia (19), and Molly (14) to minister with the Word of Grace missionaries in Brazil. When we return, we will go into FBS preparation mode to be on the road by early May. The between times will be spent putting into writing biblical issues and topics that impact lives for the glory of God!

Our families prayer to God for you is that you too will take stalk of your blessings and reflect on how God has used you this past year. Then, with purposefulness and intentionality, make plans to serve the Lord in 2025

From our family to yours, Merry Christmas!

### The Turners



Truth Aflame is published by Bible Doctrines to Live By, Inc., and is an independent Bible study and evangelistic journal. We are a fundamental, evangelistic and dispensational ministry endeavoring to teach the whole Word of God from a mid-Acts Pauline perspective. We believe and proclaim that Christ died for all and that the offer of salvation is extended to all and received by simple faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The *Truth Aflame* is published at least three times a year (Winter, Spring/Summer, and Fall) and is sent free of charge to all who desire to know and grow in their knowledge of the Word of God.

#### Bible Doctrines To Live BY

PO Box 564 Comstock Park, MI 49321

#### Truth Aflame

Praying you have a blessed Christmas and joyful New Year. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Bible Doctrines To Live By, I send greetings. As we gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, I am reminded of how we are blessed to be one in Christ. An important aspect of this oneness is proclaimed in 2 Corinthians 4:15: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." This word "redound" can be understood today as super abounding. Our thanksgiving for who we are in Christ, together as members of His Body, is counted as abounding far above our abilities in human effort. How matchless is His Grace!

We express our thanksgiving for all of our fellow members in Christ, for your prayerful support of Bible Doctrines. We could not carry on this most effective ministry without the prayers and financial support of you all.



To God be the Glory

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Meil Schnaath
Board Chairman



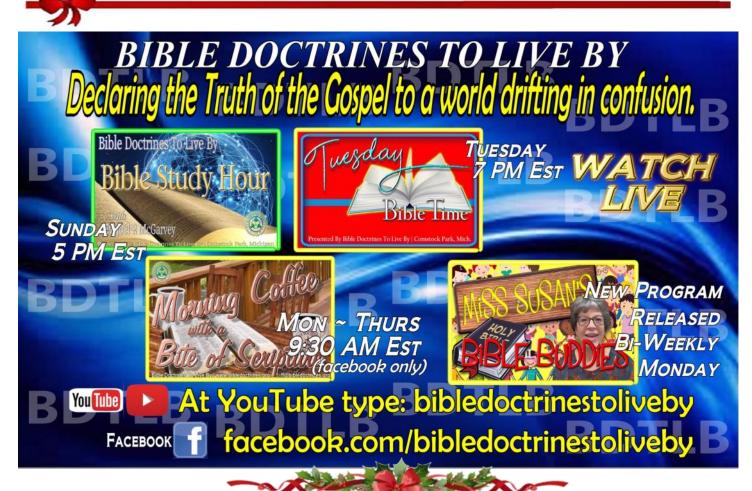




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For a Catalog of all BDTLB Evangelistic and Bible study Materials call: 616-785-3618 or email: staff@bibledoctrines.org today.



## Why Are We Here?

#### HOW DID WE GET HERE?

"God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen 1:27). God created us as human beings – male and female. That is how humans got here.

#### WHY ARE WE HERE?

He created us to give glory to Him. Psalms 29:2 declares, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Paul stated the desire of His heart is "to know Him" (Philp. 3:9-10).

#### SOMETHING IS WRONG

Genesis 1: 31 says, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, [it was] very good." God created a world for man to worship and know Him. But something happened because the world is now full of sadness, loss, failure, hurt, sickness, and death.

#### SO WHAT HAPPENED?

When Adam choose to sin against God, sin and death entered the world. Romans 5:12 records, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Each of us is born into this world unable to worship God in the way He wanted. We are spiritually separated from God.

#### THE WAY BACK

Jesus Christ went to the cross to pay for our sins. He was buried and rose again, providing the way to God. The only thing we need to do to be saved is to trust in Christ alone for salvation. We are told to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). When we believe Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, the Holy Spirit gives us new life. Ephesians 2:4-5 describes, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."



#### OUR REASON FOR LIVING

Since Jesus Christ paid the price of our sins so we can be with Him, Paul says, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (2 Cor. 6:20). As a believer in Christ, we still live in a creation full of death and sin, but now we have One who understands. We can lean on Christ for strength and depend on Him for comfort. We can trust His ways. We now have an eternal reason to live – to honor the One who gave us life. May our desire be to know Him. May our lives be lived to serve our Savior Jesus Christ.

#### **Verse Ornament**

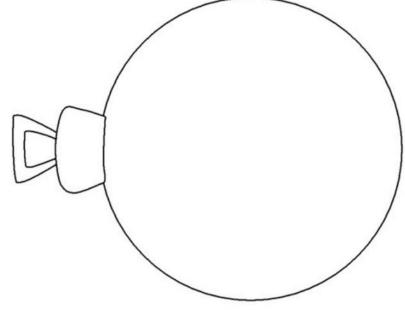
Cut out the ornament.

Write "1 Timothy 1:15" on the ornament and color it.

Look up the verse.

Hang up the ornament on your tree or around the house.

If anyone asks what the verse on your ornament says, you can tell that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."





#### **Special Edition 2024**





As I write this, my mom is struggling with cancer, and we are caring for her and trying to keep her comfortable the best we can. This brings to mind all she has accomplished in her life. Besides raising a godly family- 7 children, 19 grandchildren, and 17 great grandchildren, she taught in many ways. Of course, teaching high school for many years was a big one. But I also think of all she has done through the printed page. There is the curriculum which includes two volumes of the *Life of Christ* and the two volumes of the *Life of Paul*. Her most recent works are her

women's Bible studies on Romans 12, Living Gracefully, and on Ephesians, Alive in Christ. Since her third Bible study, Praising my Savior, is nearly completed, this is what was on her mind as she lay in the hospital bed. She wanted to discuss the songs to include in each chapter. What a testimony to us! Are we praising our Savior through our lives regardless of what we face? I am so thankful for her heart for the Lord. That is what I pray for on behalf of my family of 7 children, their spouses and 11 grandchildren. (It was a blessing to gain a daughter-in-law and granddaughter-in law this past year.)

This Christmas let's remember why! Why did Jesus come to earth?

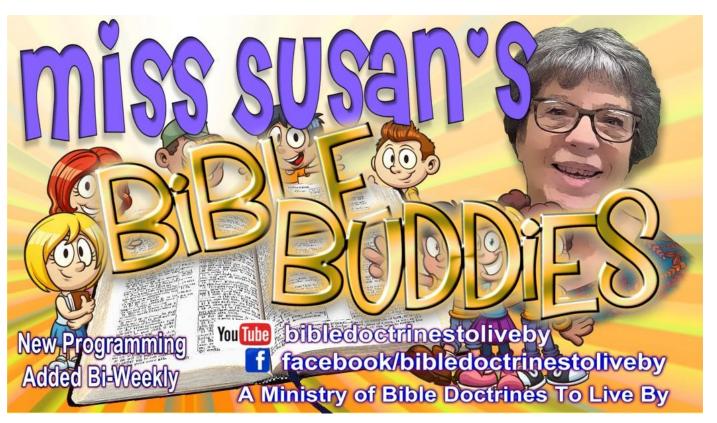
To show us true love
To reconcile us with God, our Creator
To forgive us of our sins and give us eternal life
To give us bold access to God
To carry our sorrows.

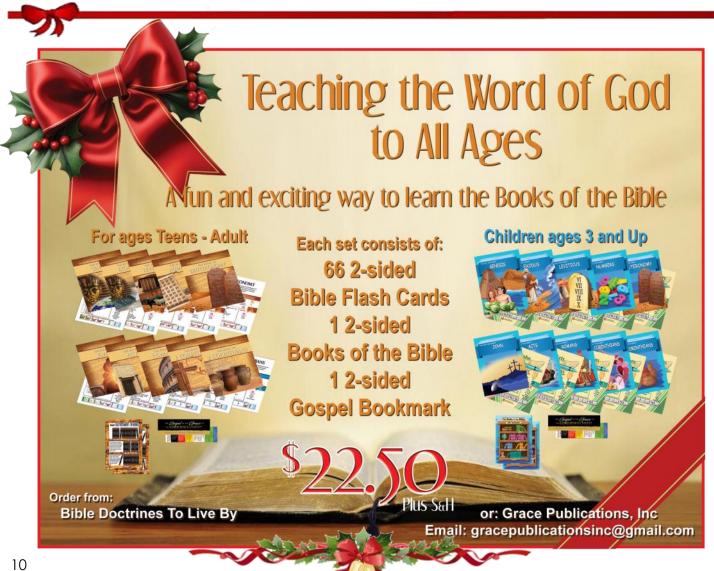
His mission was not complete at His birth, but through His death and resurrection He won the victory. Why did Jesus come to earth? He came to do His Father's will. Why should we do any less? Allowing Christ to live through us, this Christmas, let's consider what He wants. I pray your Christmas season is blessed and that your new year is focused on doing the Father's will, as that is the only thing that is lasting!

Cindy Lippincott

camera to grab the link.







# **Our Mission**

# Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Timothy 2:4

For over 40 years Bible Doctrines To Live By has remained true to our central purpose set forth beautifully in the verse above. It is a two-fold purpose, first we seek to be ambassadors of the ministry of reconciliation, seeking to reach the lost for Christ. Second, we strive through our preaching and printing to train up the saints in the Word of God rightly divided (the Truth). Every ministry endeavor by BDTLB over the years has had both of these as our driving purpose. As a result many thousands, young and old, have joined the ranks of the saved. Still others have come to a better understanding of the Word of God. We praise the Lord for the opportunities He has given us over the years.

But little of this would have been possible without your partnership with us in this ministry. Your financial and prayerful support has been greatly used to bless and encourage us, as well as provide the ability to continue advancing the ministry of the Gospel of Grace.

But as you know, times are tough, we know you are experiencing the same strain of funds as we. It is not easy at this time to ask, but we must, we need your financial help, we need your prayers. BDTLB has never used "commercial standards" as a measuring stick for the price of our materials. We have never set a charge for our services. As a missionary endeavor, each member of the staff must seek to raise their own financial support. For some, the inability to travel and visit churches and individuals makes this take even more difficult. In addition, prices of materials has risen 40-50% putting a tremendous strain on budgets. We need your help. Please prayerfully consider how you may help BDTLB. Perhaps you have never financially supported the ministry. Would you consider beginning? And if you do, are you consider a small increase? Regardless, we thank you for your prayers.

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## Christ Died for your sins

e Need:

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

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a) "...there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Romans 3:12b)

The Result:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

God's Response

Man's Response

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins..." (Ephesians 1:7)

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved...For I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures; And *that he was buried* according to the Scriptures, and that He *rose again* the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

## Believe it. Have Eternal Life

Receiving multiple copies of Truth Aflame? Please tell us, help us reduce mailing expenses. 616-785-3618 Thank you.