

die, taking our place under God's judgment. Because He had no sins of His own, He alone was in a position to bear the judgment of God that was due to us. This He did on the cross, suffering and dying in our place. But He did not remain in the grave: three days later, He rose from the dead and shortly thereafter returned to His Father in Heaven. Now God offers us eternal life with Him, instead of eternal torment separated from Him. It will be the most blessed, happy, and good place to be: with the Lord in heaven!

So how do you choose between condemnation and eternal life for the hereafter? The answer is simple: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). There is no ritual to perform, no good works that can earn the gift God offers freely. All you have to do is believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died in your place to take away your sins. If you believe, why don't you tell your Savior? Thank Him for what He has done for you.

Perhaps you aren't sure what to say. You can put it in your own words but you could pray something like this:

"Dear Lord Jesus, I do believe that you are the Son of God. I acknowledge that I am a sinner and deserve to spend eternity in hell. I do believe that you died in my place and that you rose again from the dead. Thank you for paying for my sins so

that I could be forgiven. Please reveal yourself to me in a deeper way. Help me to come to know you better. Amen."

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Or send a note to us at:

Peace and Purpose
P.O. Box 34
Southbury, CT 06488

**"No matter
how I struggle
and strive..."**



Hank Williams

“...I’ll never get out of this world alive.”

So goes the refrain of a song written by country music legend Hank Williams, Sr. For six verses he bemoans all the bad things that have been happening to him, and at the end of every verse he concludes he’ll never get out of this world alive.

Amusing as these words are, they are so true, and the song reveals an attitude that I’m afraid is all too common among people.

We all know that everybody dies eventually, but in day-to-day life, we regard this knowledge as not terribly important. We entertain a concept of not living on this earth forever, but usually don’t stop to think about death, or about what comes after.

Some people apparently believe they can take all their possessions with them when they leave this world. They work hard all their lives, climbing the corpo-

rate ladder, or growing a small business into a multi-million-dollar company. They buy larger houses, more cars, and more expensive clothes. Some people are not as visibly ambitious but rather strive for more modest pleasures. Nevertheless, very many of them have the same desire rooted deep in their heart—to somehow leave this earth “alive.”

**No matter how I struggle and strive
I’ll never get out of this world alive.**

Hank Williams’ words indicate a knowledge that he will get out of this world, and a desire for a kind of conscious existence after death. I am quite sure these thoughts are also in the heart of every other person, especially when they know death is around the corner



due to old age or terminal health problems. However, though death is the only portal out of this world, we can be alive on the other side of death. Let me explain.

Obviously, your body will die someday, but the spirit, the immaterial part of you, will exist forever. In God’s Word, the Bible, it is plain that your spirit will exist in one of two conditions after your body dies: spiritual life in the presence of God, or spiritual death, involving eternal punishment. (Romans 6:23, John 5:28-29). The Bible also makes it clear that the choice is up to you.

How is your soul’s destiny determined?

Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death....” Sin is simply a failure to meet your Divine Creator’s moral standard of perfect thought and behavior. If you have told one lie, that is sin. If you have ever been envious or selfish, that is sin. Truly, everyone is guilty of sin, as our own consciences testify and God’s Word confirms (Romans 3:23). God has decreed that the judgment for sin is death—not oblivious non-existence, but a tortuous eternity cut off from everything good, pleasant, and familiar, with no escape.

On the other hand, the second half of Romans 6:23 states, “...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Eternal life is a gift, absolutely free, given by God Himself. God sent His Son Jesus Christ to earth to live as a perfect man, and then to