

WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

MAN

GOD

IN THE BEGINNING . . . The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

MAN

SIN

GOD

OUR CONDITION TODAY . . . Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

MAN

JESUS

GOD

GOD'S PLAN . . . God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

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GOD'S ARTISTRY IN MY LIFE

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A London artist tells of tragic loss in his teen years, and how God gave him a reset on life.

By Adebangi Alade

At the age of sixteen, I experienced tragic events that shaped the whole landscape of my life. It was December of 1988 and my family was living in Lagos, Nigeria. My father and brother decided to travel to our hometown while the rest of the family stayed behind. They left on the 17th, which was my brother's twenty-sixth birthday. There were no cell phones at that time, so we had no contact with them after they left. Eventually, we found out that they were in a ghastly accident late in the night. My brother was killed instantly and my father died from his injuries twenty days later. Suddenly, two of the people I loved most in this world were gone forever.



Aside from my brother, I also had two sisters, but they were older and had already moved out of our house, so only my mum and I were left at home. Losing her husband and son was terribly difficult, and she was not the same after the accident. On the first anniversary of my father's passing, she took her own life.

There I was at age seventeen, having lost both parents and my brother. I felt alone and had no hope for the future. However, God's plan to rescue me was about to unfold.

AN UNEXPECTED CONNECTION

After my mum's passing, an auntie surfaced seemingly from out of nowhere. She was my father's half-sister, but she had never been introduced as my auntie before. Looking back, I believe she had been ostracized from the family because of her Christian faith. Though we were not devout in our religion, my father had raised us under a simple value system he believed in. When this new auntie introduced herself to me, she told me that God had directed her to adopt me. She wanted me to move in with her. That seemed crazy to me because I barely knew her, and my sisters also thought it was a strange idea. Besides that, I had another option: a wealthy auntie we knew very well was also ready to take me in.

It would have been easiest to go with the relative I knew best. However, I found out something about my new aunt that changed my mind. She said she was part of the Apostolic Faith Church, and that brought back a memory from a few years earlier. I'd never had much exposure to Christianity, but I had attended a boarding school and met some Christians there. One day, I saw a tract on the floor titled "For Another's Crime." It was a powerful testimony

that really touched me. For some reason, that day I promised God that if I ever found the people who had produced that tract, I would follow them. After hearing that my auntie was from the Apostolic Faith, God reminded me that those were the people who produced the tract. I felt God was leading me in the decision, so in January 1990, I took the biggest risk of my life and moved in with this relative that I hardly knew.

HOPE AND JOY RESTORED

My auntie did not force me to go to church with her, but she let me know that I was welcome. I did start going to services with her and also began to read the church magazines and other literature. These raised many questions within me; I had never heard that people could live without sinning and I did not understand how it could be possible.

As I continued hearing the Gospel message, I came to see my need for salvation. I realized that my sinful habits of lying and stealing were a real problem, not to mention the unhealthy ways that I was coping with the pain of losing my family. My grief had turned to anger, which I could not control.

One night in April, just a few months after losing my mum, I prayed through to salvation at the downtown church at 49 Moloney Street. That night, the destructive chains of sin in my life were broken, and it felt like God gave me a reset on life. For the first time in a long time, I had hope for the future.

Salvation was the starting point of my life getting better, but I had a long journey of healing ahead. I was still deeply grieving the loss of my family members and I did not always handle it well. I struggled with wondering, *Why am I alive?* At times, I wished I were not. It took about two years to recover from the trauma I had experienced, and during

that period there were ups and downs and some outbursts of emotion. At the same time, I was numb to what others experienced. When people would tell me good or bad news, it meant nothing to me.

Thank God, my auntie showed tremendous wisdom and helped keep me on track. I also continued going to church and reading the Bible. I devoured every piece of Gospel literature I could lay my hands on. I don't know exactly how God did it, but as I continued to grow spiritually, He healed my broken heart. In time, my normal feelings came back, and then I knew God had given me the victory. Now, I not only have the hope of Heaven one day, but I actually have joy and excitement to live each day until I get there.

TALENT THAT BECAME A CAREER

At the time I was saved, I was eighteen years old and had been planning to study architecture. My auntie let me know that I should ask God to guide my future, so at camp meeting that year I asked God, "What do You want me to do with my life?" He showed me that He wanted me to make the best of the talent He had given me. I knew He was referring to my artistic abilities, so I switched to a career in the arts.

At that same camp meeting, as I sought God in prayer He sanctified me. I did not fully understand what sanctification was, but it gave me a deep love for others. There was no hint of tribalism anymore; I just loved everyone. In time, God also filled me with His Spirit.

During my years at university, my top priority was serving with our church group on campus, yet God helped me to also graduate with the best results in my department. Soon after that, I made a major life change: I relocated to the

United Kingdom. I had been born in the UK and lived there for several years before my family moved back to Nigeria. In 1999, I returned to the UK, but the transition was not easy. The culture was entirely different and did not seem to be a good fit for me. For several years I worked odd jobs, unable to find regular work as an artist.

Truly, God had a plan and a purpose for my life, and I am so glad I chose to trust Him.

I felt discouraged and wanted to go back to Nigeria. However, I knew that God had directed me to pursue a career with the talents He had given me. So in 2003, I went back to art school in London. Then I started pursuing every possible avenue of art, and God opened doors for me. I won a small competition and was invited to talk about it on a BBC program called *The One Show*. During the recording, the host of the show mis-read the script, and somehow in the confusion I ended up in the limelight. After that, the show started offering me work, which eventually escalated to me becoming the host of an art documentary series for the BBC. In addition to that, I also paint and exhibit as an artist, teach at two art colleges in London, and I am the President of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters.

Without God, I believe I would have followed in my mum's footsteps. But God rescued me from a dungeon of depression and pain, and brought me to a place where I can see beauty everywhere and in everyone around me. Truly, God had a plan and a purpose for my life, and I am so glad I chose to trust Him.

■ **Adebanji Alade is an Apostolic Faith minister in the United Kingdom.**

STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

ACKNOWLEDGE

Admit that you have sinned and need God's help.

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

CONFESS AND REPENT

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)

FORSAKE

Determine that with God's help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

BELIEVE

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

RECEIVE

God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)