



How to get a suntan

Several years ago the Hoover Company offered free flights from Britain to America to anyone who bought one of their appliances. But so many people bought a Hoover product and claimed their free flight that Hoover was unable to meet the demand! A huge row followed, as customers demanded that Hoover keep its promise.

God offers us eternal life, and it really is free to us, even though it cost God the death of his Son. And God, unlike Hoover, is fully able to satisfy the demand. No one who applies for this free gift will go away disappointed.

What exactly is the gift of eternal life? Jesus tells us in the Bible, 'Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent' (John 17:3). The gift means knowing God as Father, Lord and Saviour. It is an introduction to the grace and mercy of the living God.

Perhaps you think this gift is boring, or not very exciting. You might say, 'If God were to offer me a vast amount of money, then I'd be interested.' Many people have this attitude, but it just reveals the desperate need we have. It shows we don't appreciate what we are. Human beings are not animals with a limited existence upon earth:

we're made in the image of God! We are beings with an immortal soul! Life does not end in the grave: there is an eternity before us in either heaven or hell.

The certainty

God's Word, the Bible, says, 'This life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life.' This means that the gift does not merely come *through* Jesus, it is *in* Jesus: you cannot have the gift apart from Jesus.

Over the summer months people go away on holiday. Most just like to sit in the sun, relax, and come back with a suntan. Imagine you meet a man with a deep tan that you admire, and you ask him where he got it. 'In Spain,' he replies. You'd like a tan like that, so you dash around to the travel agent and get all the available brochures on Spain. Then you go to the library and borrow

some travel books on Spain. Lastly, you begin to attend night classes to learn Spanish. You do all this, and know lots more about Spain than you did, but you don't have the suntan. Of course—you don't get a tan by learning *about* Spain; you get it *in* Spain.

In the same way you can learn lots of things about God and Jesus, but you will only get eternal life in Christ Jesus.

To be 'in Christ' means to be one with him, to love him and to trust him. It means to rely only upon him for salvation. It means that you are part of him, and he is part of you.

Such a gift is too important to

be unsure about it. And God never intended that we should be uncertain. He says very clearly, 'He who has the Son has life.' This is a certainty. The gift is received by coming to Christ in repentance and faith, and asking for it.

Is that too simple? It's what Jesus said: 'Ask and it will be given to you' (Matthew 7:7). If someone told you that he thought you didn't look too good, and that he felt you needed a holiday, and then he offered you two free weeks in Spain, how would you respond? Probably you'd just grab the ticket thankfully.

God says that you need salvation and that it is free in Jesus.

How will you respond?

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