



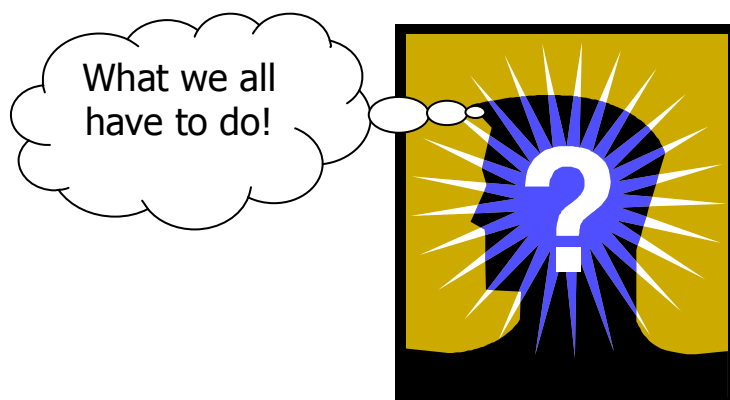
SALVATION FROM SIN

"We have all sinned" (Romans 3:23), *"and we are all worthy of death"* (Romans 6:23). *"But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* God certainly is full of grace to offer every person in every nation salvation. *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"* (Titus 2:11). God shows the depth of His love by even giving us the opportunity to be saved, since we have been rebellious and sinful. *"But God demonstrates His love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

How does God save us from our sins? He saved us by letting Jesus pay our penalty for sin. Since we all are guilty of sin, we could not take each other's places. Only someone without sin could suffer our punishment. Jesus *"committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth"* (1 Peter 2:22). Therefore, He was qualified to take our place.

The price God required to save us was the blood of an innocent sacrifice. *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission"* (Hebrews 9:22). [*Remission* means "the forgiveness" of sins.] Though He was not guilty of committing any sin, Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross by wicked and sinful men. He suffered great pain for hours. After He died, a soldier pierced His side with a spear; blood and water came out (John 19:34). This blood was offered for our sins (Hebrews 9:12). With this blood Jesus washes our sins away (Revelation 1:5). Nothing else can make us clean or remove our sins but the blood of Jesus.

If our sins are not cleansed by the blood of Jesus, we will be punished by being separated from God (and all His goodness) forever (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Jesus was separated from the Father on the cross as He tasted spiritual death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). The pain of that separation was so awful that it caused Him to cry out, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* (Matthew 27:46). How much more love could Jesus show than to be punished for our sins and then take His blood and wash them all away? But the question remains, "How do you get your sins removed and receive eternal life?"



MAN'S PART IN SALVATION

Although salvation comes by the grace of God and is available to all, there is a response man must make; otherwise all men would be saved no matter what they *did*, no matter what their attitudes were. Jesus died for everyone's sins--for all the sins of every individual in the whole world (1 John 2:2), but not all people will be saved because many will not accept the terms of God's gift. In order to receive salvation, we must meet God's requirements, which are discussed below. First of all, we must believe and know that God exists.

"But without faith is it impossible to please Him, for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarded of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

We must also believe that Jesus is His Son, whom He sent to save us from our sins. *"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins"* (John 8:24). [Lesson 2 dealt with the identity of Jesus.]

The second step is to repent of our sins. Jesus made it clear that *"unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). What does the word *repent* mean? There are several parts to the definition of this word. To begin with, we must understand what sin is (see Lesson 3). Next, we must recognize what sin does to us: it separates us from the fellowship of God and condemns us to eternal punishment. Sin also caused the innocent Jesus to be crucified; He had to shed His blood for our sins.

Thinking about these truths should cause us to feel sorrow for what we have done. That feeling of sorrow is not repentance, but it can bring about repentance. *"For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death"* (2 Corinthians 7:10). Genuine sorrow over our sins will cause us to change our way of thinking and our actions, also.

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John, who prepared the way for Jesus, told the people to *"bear fruits worthy of repentance"* (Matthew 3:6). In other words, there must be a change in the way we live.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age" (Titus 2:11-12).

If we are ready to change the way we live (doing God's will instead of our own), then we should be ready to confess before men that Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32-33, Acts 8:37, 1 Timothy 6:12). Faith and confession of Jesus are combined in the passage cited below.

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart man believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

The last step in having one's sins removed is to be baptized for their forgiveness. Faith and baptism are combined in Mark 16:16, in which Jesus said, *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."* Notice that salvation occurs after a person both believes and is baptized. It is not a matter of doing one or the other; both are necessary before sins can be washed away.

The New Testament book of Acts contains several accounts of people being saved from their sins as the gospel spread into the entire world. The very first gospel sermon was preached on the day of Pentecost after Jesus had ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) and after the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4). Peter's sermon convinced many that they had crucified Jesus (the Son of God), and they wanted to know what they should do to be forgiven (Acts 2:36-37).

Then Peter said to them, *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38). *"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them"* (Acts 2:41).

These people had become convinced through Peter's preaching that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Since they believed that fact, they wanted to know what else they should do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized *for* the forgiveness of their sins. The solution to the problem of sin is the same today. Anyone who wants to be forgiven of sins must repent and be baptized in order for them to be forgiven. It is not the water that cleanses us. Jesus washes away our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5). He washes them away *when* we are baptized (Acts 22:16). Why does He wait until then to do it? Lesson #5 will show the answer to that question more clearly. But part of the reason is that He has given us a commandment; will you willingly obey it?

There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:21).



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE PROPER ANSWER

1. Jesus committed no _____.
2. Jesus shed His _____ for our sins; without it there is no _____.
3. When a soldier pierced His side, _____ and _____ came forth.
4. Jesus tasted spiritual _____ for every man.
5. In order to be saved we must believe that God is _____ and that Jesus is His _____. Unless we believe, we shall _____ in our _____.
6. Sin separates us from the _____ of God and condemns us to _____ punishment.
7. God commands all men everywhere to _____. If we do not, we shall all likewise _____.
8. Repentance means denying _____ and worldly _____ (Titus 2:11-12).
9. Peter told people on the day of _____ to _____ and be _____ for the _____ of their _____.
10. The _____ of Christ washes away our sins _____ we are baptized.

MARK THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE

1. There are some nations to which God will not give grace. _____
2. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. _____
3. Jesus washes our sins away with His blood. _____
4. Jesus was separated from the Father on the cross. _____
5. All men will be saved no matter what they do. _____
6. Repentance means feeling sorry for our sins, but we do not need to change the way we live. _____
7. Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God precedes salvation. _____
8. Baptism has nothing to do with salvation. _____
9. Salvation occurs after one has believed and been baptized. _____

Please use the space below for any questions or comments you may have concerning this study.

Please Note:

You can e-mail your answers to the above questions to mike@greatbarrchurchofchrist.com for marking and I will happily send you your mark and the next lesson in this series.

We also have a number of different studies for all levels; a certificate of achievement will be awarded to those who complete any of our studies.

May God bless you as you strive to understand our God and His word.

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