

Salvation in Jesus Christ

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1. WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

There is but one answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31.

"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

"By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:9, 10.

Its not you, then, that do the saving. If you could save yourself, that very fact would show that you were not lost. "It is God that worketh." Eph. 2:13. Your part is to receive Him by faith. "But I don't feel as I ought to; I can not feel that I am saved." If you have never been saved,

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how do you know how you ought to feel? You don't know how a *saved* man feels. If you depend on feeling, you will never know whether you are saved or not, for you will never be sure that you have the right feeling. You may think you are saved all right, and then have your feelings give way and leave you more uncertain than ever. Out feelings are always changing.

How can you feel a thing that you don't take hold of? Feeling is touching. If you want to feel that you are saved, the most sensible thing to do is to lay hold on salvation, and that is done only by faith. "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6:12.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. The Word of God gives life to the dead; and life is salvation. But a dead man cannot feel anything. The Word awakens him to feeling; but a live man does not by any means always have the same feeling. You therefore receive the living Word of God, and you will find life. Then no matter what your feeling may be, you will *know* that you are saved.

Jesus saves! That is what His name means. "I even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour." Isa. 43:11. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. xlv. 22. Thank God for salvation that depends not on our fitful feeling, but on His eternal, almighty power! "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Do it, then, do it!

2. CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

"I am crucified with Christ," says Paul; "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ was crucified; He was "delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25. But unless we are crucified with Him, His death and resurrection profit us nothing.

No one was ever saved simply by looking forward to a cross to be erected and a Christ to be crucified at some indefinite time in the future, and no one can now be saved simply by believing that at a certain time in the past Christ was crucified.

Sin is in the heart of man: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, . . . all these evil things come from within." Mark 7:21-23. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 18:9.

What I need is freedom from my own personal sin,-that sin which not only has been committed by me personally, but which dwells in the heart,-the sin which constitutes the whole of my life.

My sin is committed by myself, in myself, and I can not separate it from me. Cast it on the Lord? Ah, yes, that is right, but how? Can I gather it up in my hands, and cast it from me, so that it will light upon Him?-I can not. If I could separate it but a hair's breadth from me, then I should be safe, no matter what became of it, since it would not be found in me.

It is evident from what has been said that whoever bears my sins must come where I am, yea, must come into me. And this is just what Christ does. Christ is the Word, and to all sinners, who would excuse themselves

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by saying that they can not know what God requires of them, He says, "The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Deut. 30:11-14. Therefore, He says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:9.

What shall we confess about the Lord Jesus?-Why, confess the truth, that He is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, and believe that He is there risen from the dead. The risen Saviour is the crucified Saviour. So as Christ risen is in the heart of the sinner, therefore, Christ crucified is there. A man may believe that Jesus was crucified eighteen hundred years ago, and may die in his sins; but he who believes that Christ is crucified and risen in him, has salvation.

What a glorious thought that, wherever sin is, there is Christ, the Saviour from sin! He bears sin, all sin, the sin of the world. Sin is in all flesh, and so Christ is come in the flesh. Christ is crucified in every man that lives on earth. This is the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, which is to be proclaimed to all.

3. OUR SINS PURCHASED

Christ "gave Himself for our sins." Gal. 1:4. That is to say, He bought them, and paid the price for them. This is a simple statement of fact. When we hear a man say that he gave so much for a certain thing, we know that that thing belongs to him, because he has bought it. So when the Holy Spirit tells us that

Christ gave Himself for our sins, we should be equally sure that they belong to Him, and not to us. They are ours no longer, and we have no right to them.

Not only has Christ paid the price for our sins, but He has accepted the goods. He has taken the sins all on Himself. He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Peter 2:24. He bears the sins of the world. John 1:29, margin. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. He "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us," and since He did not die in vain, He has delivered us. He has wrought deliverance for every soul.

Jesus comes proclaiming "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isa. lxi. 1. His commission was, to "say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." Isa. xlix. 9. Herein is the comfort of the Gospel of salvation: The Lord has taken all our sin upon Himself, having purchased it, so that we do not need to bear it.

Christ gave Himself for our sins, "that He might deliver us from this present evil world." This present evil world is composed of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." 1 John 2:15, 16. Christ said to the Father: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." John 17:15. Men and women have gone into cloisters and convents, and have lived in deserts and in caves as hermits, in order to be separate from the world,

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that is, from "this *present* evil world;" but every one has found that the world went along. It was *present*, always present; they could not get rid of it, because it was within them. It is not our associates that cause us to sin, but the evil that is within us. No man can escape from this present evil world, until he escapes from himself, and every soul can say, if he will, "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; Thou hast loosed my bonds." Ps. 116:16.

But our sins are part of ourselves; nay, they are the whole of us, for our natural lives are nothing but sin. Therefore Christ could not buy our sins without buying us also. Of this fact we have many plain statements. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." Titus 2:14. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 6:19. "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver and gold, from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1:15, 19, R.V.

The fact that Christ has bought us, together with our sins, and has paid the price. Therefore there is no room for the question, "Will He accept us?" He has already accepted you. Why does a man buy an article at the store?-Because he wants it. If he has paid the price for it, having examined it so as to know what he was buying, does the merchant worry lest he will not accept it?-Not at all; the merchant knows that it is his business to get the goods to the purchaser as soon as possible.

There is no chance for any one to object, "But I am so sinful and unworthy." That makes no difference; a man will accept what he deliberately purchases,

especially if he has paid a great price for it; and Christ "gave Himself for our sins." There is nothing in the whole universe that God desires so much as us and all the sins we have. We have only to praise "the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6.

4. FREE INDEED

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Gal. 5:1.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36.

A practical example of the way in which Christ makes men free is recorded in Luke 13:10-12:-

"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." Luke 13:10-13.

Notice how exactly this woman's condition corresponds with our own:-

1. We are bound by Satan. "Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin." John 8:34. R.V. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." Prov. 5:22. Sin is the cord with which Satan binds us.

2. We have a spirit of infirmity, and can in no-wise lift ourselves up. It was when we were "without strength" that Christ died for us. Rom. 5:6. These two words, "without strength," are translated from the very same word that is rendered "infirmity" in the account of the woman whom Jesus healed.

What now does Jesus do for us?-He takes the weakness, and gives us in return His strength.

"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Matt. 8:17. He becomes all that we are, in order that we may become all that He is.

Although He knew no sin, He was made "to be sin for us; . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

What is sin?-"Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. To be a bond-servant of sin,

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therefore, is to be unable to keep from transgressing the law. Why does Christ make us free? Only in order that we may walk in the law blameless. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Rom. 8:3, 4.

Pay special attention to the words of Jesus to the woman, uttered while she was yet bound down, and unable to lift herself up: "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity." "Thou *art loosed*," present tense. That is just what He says to us. To every captive He has proclaimed deliverance. "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down." Ps. 145:14. There is not a single

soul that is bowed down with the weight of sin which Satan hath bound on him, whom Christ does not lift up. Let the message be sounded far and wide. Let every soul hear it, that Christ has given deliverance to every captive.

Does anybody doubt it? Let me prove it to you. You will agree that we are made free by faith. When faith comes, we are no longer in prison. That is what we have learned in the third chapter of Galatians. But we can not believe a thing that is not so. Faith lays hold of acts, things actually accomplished, and nothing else. Faith does not make facts, it only believes them. We do not make a thing so by believing it; we believe it, or at least ought to, because it is so. Therefore the fact that we get freedom in Christ by faith, and that anybody can have the same freedom by faith, proves that the freedom is already given to all. They have only to grasp it, and walk at liberty. Our part is to say with the psalmist, "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; . . . Thou hast loosed my bonds." Ps. 116:16.

Don't go to arguing with the Lord, and saying that you can not walk straight. He says that you are loosed, and that is enough. Hold fast to His words in the face of the devil, and you will find that they will never fail you. The word which says, "Thou art free," is the word that keeps you free. Don't let it go from your mind.

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