

The Gospel of Your Salvation

By Norman H. Wells

I

“SO GREAT SALVATION”

We are living in a day of apostasy! The fundamental truths of God’s Word are not being emphasized. The trumpet of modern day Christianity is giving forth an uncertain sound.

In this uncertain age when man’s hearts are failing them for fear, we need a sure word, an anchor of the soul. We need to turn again to the simplicity of God’s Word and find there the certainty that brings assurance and peace.

Do you feel a need in your own heart? Has religion been as dry husks in your mouth? Are you searching for a satisfaction you have never found? Underneath it all, does doubt, fear and guilt continually tug at your very being?

What do you really know about your personal relationship with God?

Will you, right now, determine to let God speak to you — directly to you from His Word? Are you willing to put aside all personal ideas, past opinions, preconceived notions, etc. and let God speak?

This is the only way. Let’s follow it!

It will be our purpose to point you to God’s Word and God’s Word only! This you can believe. Here is certainty.

Salvation! This is a much used and little understood word. The theme of salvation soars through the entire Bible. It is the central theme. Everything else is secondary.

Modern day Christianity, in its pride and intellect, pictures itself as having progressed beyond a need for salvation. Deep in the individual heart we know different.

The Bible knows different. God’s Word speaks of a “great salvation.” “How shall we escape, if we neglect *so great salvation*; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb. 2:3).

Great Salvation. This is the wonderful song of the Bible.

Great Salvation. The prophets, poets and historians of the Old Testament proclaimed this salvation.

Great Salvation. This was the thrilling message of Christ. Listen to His words: “For the Son of man is come to *seek and to save* that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10)

Great Salvation. The New Testament writers join in the same chorus. Listen to the words of Paul: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for *it is the power of God unto salvation* to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

Great Salvation. The Apostle Peter proclaimed the same message: “Receiving the end of your faith, even *the salvation of your souls*” (1 Pet. 1:9).

Great Salvation. The salvation of souls! This is God’s Word. This is His message. Hear ye Him.

Our sophisticated age scoffs. Man’s wisdom makes him too proud to hear. In sophistication, pride and wisdom, this age has produced many religions. Conflicting claims and confusing cults are on every hand. *In the midst of all this chaos, God’s message of a great salvation remains unchanged.*

Let us hear Him. Let us turn from everything else and determine to hear what God says about this great salvation. *After all, if this is the central theme of the Bible, it has to be the most important thing in your life.*

II

Saved Or Lost?

The Bible truths concerning salvation are expressed in the simplest terms. Man has tried to make it complicated, but the message itself remains simple — all may understand.

The Bible speaks of two classes of people, those who are saved and those who are lost.

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in *them that are saved*, and in *them that perish*” (2 Cor. 2:15).

Please remember — this is God’s Word. Look at it again. It speaks of two classes of people, “*them that are saved*” and “*them that perish.*”

Saved or lost? We do not hear this kind of language in our modern day religion. We have been led into thinking that everyone is eventually going to heaven. We make a joke of hell. Despite the attitude of popular religion, however, it still remains a fact of God’s Word that *there are those who are lost and those who are saved*. This fact is stated many times in God’s Word.

“For the preaching of the cross is to *them that perish* foolishness: but unto us *which are saved* it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18).

Again notice the language of God’s Word to you. It speaks of just two classes of people, “*them that perish*” and “*us which are saved.*” Nothing complicated. Nothing hard to understand. This is God’s simple statement of fact that is repeated many times.

“He that believeth on him *is not condemned*; but he that believeth not *is condemned* already” (Jn. 3:18).

“*Not condemned*” ... “*Is condemned.*” Which are you? No greater thought can occupy your mind. No

greater concern can fill your heart. Listen again to God’s Word:

“And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the *resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil unto the *resurrection of damnation*” (Jn. 5:29).

“*Resurrection of life*” or “*resurrection of damnation.*” There are just these two so it must be one or the other.

Saved or lost? Condemned or not condemned? Life or damnation? What is your answer?

This is not merely a philosophy of life or a man-made creed. In all its simplicity and purity, this is God’s Word. This is what you face. Do you have an assurance or is there nothing but cold doubt and uncertainty that grips your heart?

One of the great blessings that God has given us is the privilege of coming directly to God’s Word for ourselves. It is an extremely easy thing to be confused by the conflicting claims of today’s multitude of religions. How wonderful to turn to the sure Word of God.

Who is lost? Who is condemned? The Bible speaks plainly. Are you willing to accept the Bible description that is given to you?

“As it is written, *there is none righteous, no, not one*” (Rom. 3:10).

“*There is none righteous.*” The Bible states this fact many times. We like to think of ourselves as pretty good, or, at least, not so bad. God says that none of us are good, none of us are righteous. Somehow, in our heart, all of us know this is the truth. Listen to the Scriptures:

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all *the world may become guilty before God*” (Rom. 3:19).

“*Guilty before God.*” We hear much today about a “guilt complex.” In a very real sense, we all have experienced this feeling. A vague uneasiness about our relationship with God. A feeling of need to appease God for our wrong doing. We all are aware of being “guilty before God.” Hear God’s Word:

“*For all have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). This is the fact we find so hard to face. “*All have sinned.*” There are no exceptions. This means me and it means you. This is the diagnosis given by God. All have sinned and all are guilty before God. Somehow we find ourselves resenting this picture of ourselves as guilty sinners, yet, we know it is true. God again speaks:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for

READ

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M. L. Moser, Editor

**Pastor Emeritus
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH**

**15601 Taylor Loop Rd.
Little Rock, Arkansas 72223
Email: mlmoser1@juno.com**

that *all have sinned*" (Rom. 5:12). Again the same statement — "*all have sinned.*"

Here we face our greatest difficulty. Everything in us seems to rebel at the idea of facing the fact that we are guilty sinners. We want to look at our goodness, but God reminds us of our sin.

Before we can ever approach God we must accept God's diagnosis of our condition. It is necessary to acknowledge our sin and our guilt.

What are the results of being a guilty sinner?

Sin Separates Us From God!

"But *your iniquities have separated between you and your God*, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2).

Read it again. God says our sins separate us from Him. Sin hides God's face from the sinner. The Bible speaks of this as being alienated from God (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21). Listen to what the Bible says about God:

"Thou are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and *canst not look on iniquity*" (Hab. 1:13). God cannot tolerate sin. This means God is separated from each sinner.

We have already discovered that God says, "*There is none righteous, no, not one.*" Now listen to God's Word: "Know ye not that *the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?*" (1 Cor. 6:9). God says that we are unrighteous and that as such we cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We are guilty sinners, separated from God and shut out of the kingdom of God. The Bible speaks of those away from God as lost and condemned.

Let us think again of what God has said to us. We have seen that salvation is the central theme of the Bible. The Bible only speaks of two classes of people — saved and lost. The lost sinner is separated from God and cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

To be saved means *eternally saved* and to be lost means *eternally lost*. We have been deceived into thinking of this life and neglecting eternity. Again, God's Word speaks:

"And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*; but the righteous into *life eternal*" (Mt. 25:46). The Bible says that the lost "*go away into everlasting punishment*" and the saved "*into life eternal.*" "Everlasting punishment" or "life eternal?" This question has to be faced. These facts are not to be debated — they are God's Word. What is your eternal destiny? Do you know?

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;

and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36).

"*Everlasting life*" or "*the wrath of God*"? These are the eternal realities we face. The Bible uses such terms as "*eternal damnation*" (Mk. 3:29) and "*everlasting destruction*" (2 Thess. 1:9) to describe the eternal state of those who die lost.

III

"Christ Jesus Came Into the World To Save Sinners"

What was the mission of Christ? Why did He come into the world? *What does the coming of Christ into the world mean to you?*

The most wonderful sound that can come to the sinner's ear is the glorious news of the gospel. "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*" (1 Tim. 1:15). All have sinned! All are guilty! All are condemned! Give praise to the glory of God because Jesus came to save sinners. Listen to Christ's own words: "For the Son of man is come *to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Lk. 19:10).

There is hope. There is a promise. There is a way of salvation. Christ Jesus came to save you. *Is that salvation a reality in your heart?*

How Does Christ Save?

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. How can He do this? How is salvation made possible? Again, we ask one simple thing. Listen to God's Word:

"*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24). Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross. He took our place and bore our penalty. "*Christ died for our sins*" (1 Cor. 15:3).

This is God's wonderful salvation. We are sinners, yet God made Christ "to be sin for us." Our sin was placed upon Christ. We are unrighteous, yet God says, "*we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" By this wonderful salvation it becomes possible for the lost, unrighteous sinner to be reconciled unto God. "*We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*" (Rom. 5:10).

Now the Bible picture begins to come into focus. Two classes of people are described — the lost and the saved. The lost are described as perishing, condemned,

guilty, and separated from God. Their fate is everlasting punishment. The saved are pictured as possessing eternal, everlasting life.

How do the lost become saved? Through Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Christ died for our sins. When Jesus died on the cross He was taking the sinner's place and bearing the sinner's penalty. On the cross Jesus paid the sin debt and set the repentant sinner free.

When the lost, guilty sinner looks to Jesus in repentance and faith, all his sin and all the penalty of sin are placed on Jesus and the sinner is saved — eternally saved!

This is why the Scriptures can say, "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 Jn. 1:7).

The theme of the entire Bible is salvation. There are those who are saved and those who are lost. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. *The salvation that Christ obtained is a possession we can have now.* It is a reality — now. The New Testament speaks of a definite salvation that is already possessed. Salvation is not something that we might get some time in the future. It is a present possession. It is not a mythical maybe, but a present reality. Once more — listen to God's Word.

The Bible speaks of Christ "*who hath saved us*" (2 Tim. 1:9). Salvation was a finished transaction. Being saved was a certainty, a reality.

"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in *them that are saved*, and in them that perish" (2 Cor. 2:15).

"*Them that are saved.*" This is speaking of a real, positive condition of salvation. It is that which we possess — now, or not at all.

Are you saved? Has your religion produced an assurance of salvation? You can have this assurance and you can have it now.

IV

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

The question is, "How can the individual be saved?" How does salvation become a reality?

Let us take two texts: "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *Repent ye, and believe the gospel*" (Mk. 1:15). "Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts

20:21).

Notice these expressions — "*Repent ye, and believe the gospel*" and "*repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Repentance and faith are the only essentials to salvation. The Bible teaches that if a sinner repents of his sin and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he is saved. *There is nothing else necessary.* Let us establish this fact from God's Word.

The Word of God calls for sinners to repent. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent ye and believe the gospel*" (Mk. 1:15).

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at: *but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30).

"For I am not come to call the righteous, but *sinners to repentance*" (Mt. 9:13).

In our text the command is "*Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*" Beginning with John the Baptist, the gospel message has called sinners to repentance. The preachers of the New Testament "*went out and preached that men should repent.*" Jesus Christ said, "*I came — to call — sinners to repentance.*"

God commands all men to repent. It is easily established that the Word of God plainly teaches that sinners should repent. Repentance is simply the act of recognizing sin, regretting it and rejecting it.

Repentance Is An Absolute Essential

The Bible teaches that if the sinner does not repent he is lost. Regardless of what else he does, he must repent. *You cannot be saved without repentance.* "I tell you, Nay; but, *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*" (Lk. 13:3, 5). The phrase "*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*" establishes the fact that repentance is essential to salvation. It is an absolute necessity.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but *that all should come to repentance*" (2 Pet. 3:9). This verse teaches that to fail to repent would be to perish, that is, to be eternally lost. Again it is revealed that repentance is absolutely essential to salvation.

"For godly sorrow worketh *repentance to salvation* not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). The phrase "*repentance to salvation*" reveals that repentance is essential to salvation. The gospel message calls sinners to salvation. Without repentance there can be no salvation.

Now let us look at the other essential to salvation

Faith

The Word of God calls for sinners to believe. “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” (Jn. 3:16). “*Whosoever believeth*” — this is the gospel invitation. “*He that believeth on him* is not condemned” (Jn. 3:18). “*He that believeth*” — this is the gospel requirement for salvation. “He that *believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life” (Jn. 3:36). To have everlasting life is to have salvation and this is a present reality to all that believe.

“He that heareth my word *and believeth on him that sent me* hath everlasting life” (Jn. 5:24). In answer to the question “What must I do to be saved?” The Bible answers: “And they said, *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ* and thou shalt be saved and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

From these Scriptures, and hundreds like them, it is easily established that the Scriptures invite men to believe and be saved. The call is always to faith.

Faith Is Essential To Salvation

The Bible teaches that if a sinner does not believe he is lost. The sinner cannot be saved without faith. He *must* believe. “He that believeth on him is not condemned: *but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed* in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn. 3:18). “*He that believeth not is condemned.*” To fail to believe is to be eternally damned. It is to be lost forever. Believing is an essential to salvation.

The reason for condemnation is also given in this verse in the phrase, “*because he hath not believed.*” A sinner is lost because “*he hath not believed.*”

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; *and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him*” (Jn. 3:36).

Let the Bible say what it obviously intended to say. “*He that believeth not shall not see life.*” The only way that an individual can see life, that is, be saved, is to believe. There can be no eternal life without faith. “That all might be damned who believe not the truth” (2 Thess. 2:12). The gospel message calls men to believe. Without faith there is no salvation.

“*Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*” As has now been established, repentance and faith are essentials to salvation. Repentance and faith are the human responsibility in

salvation. Repentance and faith are inseparable. True repentance cannot exist apart from faith, nor can there be faith without repentance.

In repentance the sinner turns from sin and in faith he turns to God. They are both parts of the same move. True repentance involves faith and true faith involves repentance.

This is the only way that God has given for the sinner to be saved. Nothing more — nothing less. In all its simplicity this is what God says:

1. All have sinned.
2. The sinner is separated from God and condemned.
3. Christ died for our sins and made salvation possible.
4. All who repent and believe in Jesus Christ are eternally saved.

Will you, right now, turn from sin and by faith believe in Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior?

V

How Can I Know I Am Saved?

It is not necessary to rely upon emotional or personal feelings in order to have a wonderful assurance of salvation. We have assurance through the Word of God. When we turn from sin in repentance and by faith accept Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior, God’s Word says many things become a reality.

Read these Scriptures we are going to list. This is what God says. When we believe Him *we know* these things are a fact. This gives us the grand assurance. *When we repent and believe, God says we have eternal life.*

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 Jn. 5:13).

“*Ye may know ye have eternal life.*” What a wonderful statement. No doubts, maybes or fears, but wonderful assurance. Read this verse again. When we believe, we know, that is, we accept as a fact, that we have eternal life. We know we are saved because God says so and we believe Him.

When we repent and believe, God says we have redemption. “In whom *we have redemption* through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7). “*We have redemption.*” This is not something we are going to have, but something that the repentant believer already has in his possession.

When we repent and believe, God’s Word says we are saved. “For the preaching of the cross is to them

that perish foolishness; but unto *us which are saved* it is the power of God.”

When we repent and believe, God says we are forgiven. “I wrote unto you little children, because *your sins are forgiven* you for his name’s sake” (1 Jn. 2:12).

When we repent and believe, God says we are justified. “And by him *all that believe are justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

When we repent and believe, God says we shall never perish. “And I give unto them eternal life and *they shall never perish*, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (Jn. 10:28).

“*They shall never perish.*” The believer is saved, eternally saved. He shall never perish. This is blessed assurance. This is an anchor of the soul. This is peace. This is salvation.

These Are the Promises of God

When we repent and believe we have eternal life — we have been redeemed — we are saved — we are forgiven — we are justified — we shall never perish. How do we know these things are so? *God said so and we believe God!*

One more thing. This is an urgent matter. Don’t put it off. Listen again to God’s Word. “*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (2 Cor. 6:2).

You can be saved! You can be saved now! Will you, right now, turn from sin and by faith trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? When you do, all these things become a reality in your heart. Blessed assurance will be yours.

