

MAN

His Fall And Redemption



by

Howard Winters

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WIN-MORE PUBLICATIONS
P.O. Box 117
West Jefferson, N.C. 28694

DEDICATION

To the memory of Dad and Mother (Ed and Bessie Winters) whose union brought me into this world, whose love and hard work provided for me the necessities of life, whose principles trained me, whose faith gave me character, whose encouragement sustained me, and whose aspiration for my future motivated me to dream impossible dreams and to work hard to achieve them. How fortunate I was to be their child!

PREFACE

"We have good news for you!"

With these words each of the following sixteen chapters was begun when it was originally delivered as a five minute radio program over the local station in West Jefferson, North Carolina.

The programs were designed with a double purpose in view: First, to publicize a campaign being conducted by the Barnett Street Church of Christ in West Jefferson. Two programs were presented each day from July 1 through July 10, 1981, except on Saturday and Sunday. The first minute was used to promote the campaign. The remainder of the time was used to present the lessons just as they appear here. The second purpose was to point fallen and sinful men to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Both of these aims were considered exceedingly good news for the listener. Nothing is more vital than human redemption; and no work is more important than preaching the gospel of Christ, God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). Thus with one stroke we were able to proclaim redemption and promote the preaching of the gospel.

Both the programs and the campaign were such huge successes that it was decided to publish the radio sermons with the hope that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to point many others to Christ and His plan to save.

It is therefore the hope and prayer of the author and publisher that this booklet will prove to be good news for you -- that it will bring you to Christ and the salvation of your soul from sin.

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WHAT IS MAN?

What is man? This is one of the most intriguing questions ever raised . . . and one of the most serious. But it is a question which cannot be fully answered by the unaided reason and research of man alone (Jer. 10:23). The final answer must come from the Maker Himself. He made man and He alone knows fully what man is. We must, therefore, go to the Scriptures and seek God's reply, God's revelation, about the origin of man.

The Bible says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7). This verse reveals three fundamental facts about man: (1) God formed him from the dust of the ground; (2) God breathed into him the breath of life; (3) man became a living soul.

First, then, man is a creation of God -- he is here by special act of the divine Creator. God personally formed him from the dust of the ground. This means that man is not the product of chance, the offspring of lower forms of life, the results of a long evolutionary process, the outgrowth of no power above and beyond himself and nature. Evolution is a science falsely so-called, denying both the power and handiwork of the Creator and the dignity of man. But God leaves no doubt as to man's origin. He said, "I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." (Isa. 43:7). There are three expressions here, each adding a shade of thought to the other. God created man -- brought him into being; He formed him or gave him his present shape; and He made him what he is. Man is therefore a created being.

Second, God breathed into man the breath of life. Whatever else this may mean, it certainly reveals to us that life is from God. It is divine. And throughout the remainder of the Bible human life is looked upon as sacred (e.g. Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13). Man is therefore more than the dust of the ground -- more even than the beast of the field or any other created thing. His life is from God and it demands special protection.

Third, man is a living soul, an eternal spirit. He is a material body in which God breathed the breath of life. But that is not the whole of man; he is more than a body. He is a soul (spirit) living in a body. The body is one thing; the spirit is another. Paul said, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:23). Solomon, the wise man, wrote, "Then shall the dust (body) return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccl. 12:7).

But consider this: if man is no more than an accidental product of evolution, he is not a soul, not a spirit, and is not a responsible being. He is therefore not guilty of sin (sin is only a delusion) and thus does not need a revelation from God to guide him or a Savior to save him. The standards of morality are only options developed by society. There is, in reality, no right and wrong -- such concepts are only developments of the animal mind. Man is no better (and no worse) than the beast of the field, the fowl of the air, or fish of the sea.

What is man? He is a creation of God, who received his life from God, and is an eternal soul accountable to God. When man is viewed in this light, his origin, existence, and future become meaningful -- meaningful because he came from God, is here to serve God, and has the promise of being with God throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. But viewed in any other way, his origin is obscured in mystery, his existence is meaningless and useless, and his future is dark and gloomy, unknown and unknowable.

THE WORTH OF MAN

The physical part of man, when one considers only his organic value, is not worth much. But man is more than the physical. He is a spiritual as well as a physical being. And because of his spiritual nature man is the most valuable of all created things. While the Bible most certainly teaches us to be humble, humility does not require one to deny his worth; in fact, it must lead him to affirm it.

In my short lifetime I have heard a number of people say, "I am not worth killing" or "I am not worth the bullet it would take to shoot me." A television commercial has a beautiful young woman saying that the product she represents cost more, but, she concludes, "I'm worth it!" Here we have expressed two philosophies about man's worth. Which is correct? Does man have worth or is he worthless? The Scriptures answer clearly and concisely:

Man is a creature of great value -- he is made in the image of his Maker! The Bible says, in revealing the origin of man, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Gen. 1:26-28, 31).

Man's position in creation indicates his great worth. He is made only a little lower than the host of heaven. David wrote beautifully in Psalm 8: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou has ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou has put all things under his feet." (ps. 8:3-6).

Man's worth is also seen in the fact that God loves him -- the

Creator loves His creature! The degree of God's love for man is incomprehensible. "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).

But the ultimate standard by which the value of man can be measured is the death of Christ. He gave up the riches of heaven (2 Cor. 8:9), came to this sinful world in the form of a man (Phil. 2:5-11), and died the cruel shameful death on the cross for man's redemption (1 John 2:2; Eph. 1:7). "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:6-8).

The value of man is thus established by the facts that he is made in the image of God, created a little lower than the angels, loved by God, and redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

--Longfellow.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MAN?

Man was created by God and placed in the beautiful garden of Eden to live a happy carefree life. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccl. 7:29). But man is no longer in that garden, he is no longer upright, and his life (outside of Christ) is anything but happy and carefree. What happened to him?

When God placed him in his garden home He said to man, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16, 17). Note in particular two facts revealed in these verses: (1) man had access to everything in the garden but was forbidden to eat of the fruit of a certain tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; (2) to eat of the forbidden fruit would be to transgress God's law and the penalty would be death. Man was thus made a creature of volition -- a being who could choose between right and wrong. His choice would determine his relationship with God.

But man was not alone in God's created universe. The devil soon appeared on the scene to disturb man's tranquility. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field . . . And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The woman replied that they could eat of all the trees except the one. The devil then changed God's truth to a lie by saying, "Ye shall not surely die." Eve was thus deceived and believed him. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Gen. 3:1-6). Because of this violation, God pronounced a curse upon the woman, upon the serpent, and upon man (Gen. 3:9-19). They were driven from the garden. "Therefore the Lord God sent forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (Gen. 3:23).

Satan through the serpent, led man to disregard the word of God -- the woman believed the devil's lie instead of God's truth. They therefore fell from their high and holy estate into the degradation of sin and shame. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12). This simply means that all the sorrow, all the suffering, and all the woes have come upon man because of sin.

But what is sin? In the final analysis it is the dethroning of God by the improper use of created things. By virtue of creation all things belong to God (cf. Ps. 24:1, 50:10-12; Hag. 2:8; 1 Cor. 10:28). Even man's soul belongs to Him (Ez. 18:4). "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1:31). Thus everything is right when put to its intended use. Sin is therefore the wrong use of created things.

God made all things, and He has the divine right to determine how they are to be used. He made all the trees of the garden for a purpose, even the forbidden tree. Eve sinned when she violated the will of God by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil contrary to the plan, purpose, and word of God. This is the very nature of sin -- the misuse of God's created things.

What happened to man? He sinned and by that sin was separated from God (Isa. 59:1, 2).

WHAT HAS SIN DONE TO MAN?

Sin has brought man to the brink of eternal ruin. It has robbed him of the paradise in which God placed him at the time of his creation. It has made him a fallen and degraded creature, only a shadow of what he could have been. Man was not made for sin. He was created upright (Eccl. 7:29), made for righteousness. But he sinned . . . and he has kept on sinning, even after the means of salvation have been so graciously provided by a loving God. What does sin do to man?

1. Because of sin, the earth has become hostile to man. When he was first placed in his garden home, he had a perfect environment, as far as material things were concerned (Gen. 1:31). But he transgressed God's law, disobeyed God's word, and as a consequence the whole earth has changed (Gen. 3:13-21). That which was made for his pleasure now became hostile to him. God said to man, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field." (Gen. 3:17b, 18).

2. Sin has separated man from God. Originally God walked and talked with man (Gen. 3:8-12). They obviously had sweet and intimate fellowship. But all this was changed when man sinned. Sin broke the relationship, and God drove him from the garden (Gen. 3:22-24). Isaiah describes this lost state of man by saying, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 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. 59:1, 2). Sin now stands between man and God, and only the blood of Christ can bridge the gap.

3. Sin has brought man under the penalty of death. God said to the original pair when he placed them in the garden, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16, 17). They disregarded God's warnings and ate of the forbidden fruit. They thus

sinned and death passed upon them. (Rom. 5:12). This was more than physical death (although physical death may well be a consequence); it is spiritual death -- a separation from God. It is what we call the lost state. In the fall man passed from his state of close relationship with God to a state of separation from God.

But what is true of Adam is true of all men: for all have sinned (Rom. 3:9, 23; 5:12; 11:32). And the wages of sin is death (Rom.6:23). When man sins he must pay the price -- the demands of God's word (that sin brings death) must be met. Thus death, spiritual death, separation from God, must now be paid for sin. This is why men are lost. They have sinned, and the penalty of sin, all sin, sin in all men, is eternal death.

4. Because of sin, man now faces eternal damnation (Mark 16:16). He has violated the will of God. The penalty of that violation is death. He has absolutely no means of paying the penalty and thereby escaping death on his own. Without divine intervention, which comes only in the person and work of Jesus Christ, man is hopelessly lost.

Sin is therefore at the root of all man's ills. It has made the earth hostile to him, separated him from God, placed him under the penalty of death, and brought him face to face with eternal damnation. His only hope is for a Savior to divinely intervene for him -- that his sin debt be paid by another.

THE SCARS OF SIN

When Adam sinned, thereby plunging humanity into rebellion against God, the die was cast -- man was under the penalty of death, lost, separated from God. Sin reduced man to a new low in human existence. It was more than an abstract concept -- it was a reality. It was destructive. And while we may not like either the word or the concept, and while we may shun the very mention of it, sin is a scaring scourge upon humanity. It leaves its mark wherever it appears.

When I was a boy my parents often reminded me that one cannot play with fire without eventually being burned. I soon learned this by bitter experience. But this is ever more true of sin. Sin, however, is far more dangerous than fire. Its mark is always an ugly scar in the mind, body, or spirit. No one can sin with impunity. That is simply to say that no one can sin without the guilt and consequence following. Moses warned two of the tribes that if they did not keep their agreement they would sin, and he said, "Be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23). Paul stated the same concept: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7, 8). The consequences of sin may appear in many different ways and from unexpected sources, but they are always there. Sin leaves its mark.

When one is scared by sin, he may have to live with the undesirable mark for the rest of his life, not to mention eternity. For example:

A young girl who ignores God's will for sexual union may suffer the consequences of becoming an unwed mother. No matter how long she may live, or how constructive her life may be in the future, she must bear this mark throughout life.

A young man wants to overcome his inferiority complex. He experiments with drugs. He finds the high fascinating. He continues experimenting until he is entrapped by the habit. His mind is damaged beyond repair. He may break the drug habit but he cannot

restore his intellect. He must go through life scared.

In order to be social, an adult takes a drink of alcoholic beverage. He becomes addicted -- an alcoholic. He loses his job, his wife, his family, and finally his sanity. He is scared by sin.

And so it is with all sin! But, thank God, even though one cannot remove all the scars, God has provided us with the means whereby we can be forgiven of, freed from, and overcome sin. This is the good news! Jesus died to pay the penalty of sin. And while we cannot escape sin's scars, we can, through the Lord Jesus Christ, escape its guilt. And then, after forgiveness, one may so live as to overcome the scars of sin.

There is a story that has come down to us from the frontier days of our country of two brothers who were caught and convicted of sheep stealing. They were each branded on the forehead, as was the custom in those days, with the letters "ST", meaning "Sheep Thief." One of the brothers was unable to bear the stigma and tried to bury himself in a foreign land. But men constantly asked him about the strange letters. So he kept wandering restlessly, and at length, full of bitterness, died and was buried far from home. The other brother said, "I can't run away from the fact that I stole sheep. I will stay and win back the respect of my neighbors." As the years passed, he built a reputation for integrity. One day a stranger came and saw the old man with the letters on his forehead. He asked a native what they signified. "It happened a great while ago," he said. "I've forgotten the particulars, but I think the letters are an abbreviation of "Saint."

Sin, scars, and we may never be able to eliminate the scars completely, but there is a cure. When one turns to the Lord in complete obedience, it is forgiven and we can stand in right relationship with God. The scars may and often do remain but the guilt is blotted out.

SIN AND UNHAPPINESS

Man was made for happiness. He was designed for happiness in this world while he prepares for the joys of life eternal in the world to come. God gave him dominion over all the earth, sea, and air; everything was placed under subjection to him and given to him for his use (Gen. 1:26-30). Man should therefore be the happiest of all creatures. But he sinned, violated the law of God, and sin always brings unhappiness.

Sin is a departure from the law or design of God. The Bible says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4). Again, "All unrighteousness is sin." (1 John 5:17). For this reason it has long been my conception that sin runs contrary to the very nature of man. Sin in the life is as much out of place as a grain of sand in the eye or a tack in the shoe. It always causes friction, and friction in the life always results in unhappiness.

This is a fact we cannot escape. Sin always adversely effects the life.

Some years ago I received a phone call from a lady who had heard me preach on the radio the previous Sunday. She said, "Your lesson was such an inspiration to me that I am convinced that you can give me just the help I need. Will you come over and talk with me?"

Of course I would. I immediately dropped everything and went to the address she had given me. When I arrived a most pathetic sight met my eyes. She was an alcoholic in the extreme stages. She had descended to the very bottom of human anguish and misery. She was as miserable as anyone I have ever seen. After she did much talking (mostly incoherent), walking, swearing, crying, praying, begging, and obscene abusive language, she wailed out, "O God! Why do I have to suffer so? Why must I be so unhappy?"

There was no doubt about the answer, and I could have truthfully replied, "You have ignored the laws of God and the very purpose of your being, and you are paying the consequences and receiving the rewards of sin. God did not make you to be a drunkard. He made

you to be sober -- to be in full control of your mental powers. But you have violated God's law and you must suffer for it,"

As we have already observed, man was made for righteousness, not for sin. To disregard this fact and follow another course will inevitably lead to unhappiness and misery. We understand this principle well when it is applied to other things. Fire both warms and burns; water both quenches thirst and drowns, depending on how we use them. This is true also of life itself. When used for righteousness, happiness results; when used for sin, the consequence is unhappiness.

When I was a boy in the mountains of East Tennessee, I worked many a hot day in a hay field with a pitchfork (not many people use them now but they served the purpose then). It worked well to put up hay because it was made for that purpose. But one would be insane to try to type with a pitchfork. A pitchfork is made for putting up hay but not for typing.

Just so, man was made to live by the principles of righteousness. Paul forcefully stated this when he said, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." (1 Cor. 6:13). To disregard God's standard of living, which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, is to put one's whole being in jeopardy -- he makes life as God intended it to be impossible.

It is just as insane to try to build a useful and happy life on the principles of sin as it is to try to type with a pitchfork. It cannot be done. Thus wherever unhappiness is found, the heart needs to be examined for sin -- and the sin removed by obedience to the revealed will of God.

BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT

One cannot sin with impunity. Neither can he sin without paying the price -- sin always carries its own built-in price tag. Man was simply not made for sin and when he sins, he goes contrary to his design. This takes a terrible toll in one's life and character.

When the children of Israel were preparing to possess the land God had promised them, the tribes of Reuben and Gad asked Moses to give them their inheritance on the east side of the river Jordan. Moses agreed to this arrangement upon one condition, namely, that the two tribes go over Jordan with the other Israelites to help them conquer the land. To this they agreed. Moses then warned, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23).

When I was a boy, doing mischievous things I desperately wanted to hide from my parents, I thought this meant that all sins would be found out, that they could not be concealed from public view. And while I learned from bitter experience that it is not easy to hide sin, this is not really what Moses had in mind. He was pointing out the fact to the tribes of Reuben and Gad that sin will manifest itself or make its presence known. They could not fail in their duty without having to bear the shame of it in their lives. One simply cannot sin without becoming a sinner.

Some years ago I was in a meeting in High Point, North Carolina with the church where Clifford Davis served as local preacher. Each morning he would go down town to the Post Office. I always rode down with him (mostly to take advantage of the air condition in his luxurious car). One morning as he came out of the Post Office, he met a man carrying two leather bags. He stopped and talked with the man for a few minutes and then came on to the car. He asked, "Do you know what is in those two bags?"

"No," I replied.

He answered, "Twenty thousand dollars in unmarked bills." He then jokingly asked, "Do you want to steal them?" In the same jovial manner I replied, "No, I would not become a thief for twenty thou-

Paul presented this difficulty by saying, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3:26). Here then is the question: How can God be just (true to His word) and save a sinner (who must die in order to pay the penalty of sin)? God said, When you sin you will die. But man has sinned. How can God save him from that sin without nullifying His word. If God does not keep His word then He is not just. But if He keeps His word, the sinner must die. Thus the problem in salvation is how God can save the sinner from the penalty of death and still be just, still be true to His word which says that the penalty of sin is death?

The solution to this profound problem is found in Christ. Christ died for man's sins -- He died to pay man's sin debt. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2). "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Heb. 9:28). "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isa. 53:5). Thus when the sinner through faith and obedience accepts Christ, God accepts the death of Christ as the sinner's death. The sinner is therefore freed from the penalty. In this arrangement, death is paid for sin but the sinner does not have to die. God remains just and the sinner is justified -- set free from the penalty. The death of Christ satisfied the demands of God's word. God is just and still justifies the sinner who accepts Christ's death as a substitute for his own.

Thank God! Our sin debt has been paid.

CHRIST CAME TO SAVE

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15). In His own words, He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." (Luke 19:10).

This fact cannot be fully appreciated unless we understand that before Christ came man was hopelessly lost. He had sinned (Rom. 3:9, 23), and the penalty of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). For man to pay the just penalty of sin would mean eternal destruction for him. But to justify man without exacting the penalty, to remit sins without satisfying the demands of God's violated law, would make God unjust or untrue to His word (Rom. 3:26). This clearly presents the problem in salvation: For either (1) the penalty must be paid by man himself (which means he will be lost forever without hope); or (2) God, out of His love and mercy, must unconditionally remit the penalty (which would nullify God's word and reduce His law to a sham); or (3) a substitute for the penalty must be found, a substitute that will pay the price of death for man and satisfy the demands of God's word. Since both justice and the word of God demand that each one must die for his sin, the only hope that man has is for an acceptable substitute (a substitute which he does not have on his own and he has no way of attaining one on his own merits).

But all is not hopeless. A substitute has been found! Christ came into the world, incarnated in human flesh, to die in man's stead. That is, He has come to pay the price of death for man's sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ paid the sin debt in full (1 John 2:2).

This is the central message of the whole Bible -- the Old Testament points forward to its coming; the New Testament proclaims it as a reality. Isaiah gives what is perhaps the clearest statement of the coming redemption in the Old Testament when he says: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chas-

tisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken." (Isa. 53:4-8).

That which was so forcefully foretold in the Old Testament reaches its culmination in the New Testament, in the coming of Christ and the Christian system. The penalty of sin was death. Thus Jesus had to die in order to save man. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9:22). But not just the shedding of any blood would do. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." (Heb. 10:4). It had to be the blood of the sinless Son of God. And so the message of the whole Bible is, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3).

By this marvelous scheme (by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross) death is paid for sin but the sinner does not have to die. God now says, in essence, "Christ died for you. If you will accept Him as your Lord and Savior, then I will accept His death for the full payment of your sin debt." By accepting Christ the sinner, therefore, has a sufficient sin offering, an offering that he can take to God and pay his full penalty -- a substitute death which pays for his sins.

The penalty of death is paid for sins and the sinner can now be saved.

REDEMPTION

Redemption is the grandest theme in all the earth -- a theme of such magnitude that no mortal tongue can adequately express it or sound out its profound depths. Some unknown poet has beautifully said:

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
Were every blade of grass a quill,
Were the world of parchment made,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love
Of God above
Would drain the ocean dry:
Nor would the scroll
Contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Or as Paul exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

Redemption is the theme of the whole Bible. Every book, every chapter, every verse, every word contributes in one way or another to this theme. In the Old Testament everything (prophets, poetry, history, types, absolutely everything!) points forward to that which was to come, namely, Christ and the Christian system (cf. Isa. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9, 10). A failure to observe this fact would be to miss completely the purpose and the message of the Old Testament. The New Testament reveals the coming of Christ and proclaims that in Him is fulfilled all that which the Old Testament foretold (Luke 24:44). In short, the New Testament tells how God brought to fruition His purpose, promise, and plan to redeem sinful man through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament points forward to the coming of redemption; the New Testament is a proclamation that it has come.

The Biblical concept of redemption is to buy back -- not to buy back from the devil or the world, but from death. Because of sin man was under the penalty of death, but Christ came to die in his stead, to pay his sin debt, to make it possible for him to be justified in the eyes of God. Christ is thus the blessed Redeemer "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14).

Redemption is therefore made possible by the shed blood of Jesus Christ upon the cross. The Bible says: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4, 5). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7). John, in the Revelation, saw the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fall down before the Lamb, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5:9). "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

The death of Christ is the consumation of all God's plans and promises to redeem man from sin. Man can now be saved from death by the blood of Christ." The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (Ps. 19:7; cf. Isa. 55:10, 11). There is no need for man to die (Ez. 18:31). He can be redeemed.

Redeemed -- how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed thro' His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am.

Only one thing is lacking in God's scheme to redeem -- YOU. All God's plans and promises were made and then brought to full fruition that you might be saved -- all the work of God, the sacrifice of Christ on the cruel cross, and the revelation of the plan in the Bible were for your benefit. God has done His part. The next move is yours.

WHAT IS THE DUTY OF MAN?

Man was made for the glory of God. The Lord said, "I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." (Isa. 43:7). Again, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11). But man sinned and fell short of God's glory -- his life sunk to a purpose for which he was not made. But God still loved him and in order to redeem fallen man He sent His only Son into the world to pay man's sin debt by His own death on the cross. God thus graciously provided the scheme of human redemption to all men. All can now be saved. But this does not mean that all will be saved. Man has a duty (or a part) in his own salvation.

The duty of man is to fill the purpose for which he was made, to live and do as the Creator designed him to live and do.

This has far reaching implications. If man is no more than the chance product of evolution, the word "ought" ought to be stricken from the dictionary. For we all understand that an animal, one not specially made in the image of God, has no duty. Who ever said to a dog, "It is your duty to bark." Or to a vulture, "It is your duty to clean the earth of carrion." Or to a canary, "It is your duty to sing." Or who ever reprimanded a cow for neglecting her duty to give milk or a swine for not producing ham or a sheep for not growing wool?

While on the other hand, if man has a Creator (and he does), he is bound to Him. Man's duty is to do the will of God. Solomon, the wise man, summed it up by saying, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl. 12:13). Four fundamental concepts should be observed from this verse:

1. The conclusion stated is the conclusion drawn from the whole book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon had sought life's values in riches, pleasure, popularity, etc. but found it all to be vanity of vanities. He here states the secret for successful living, namely, to do one's duty.

2. Duty begins with the fear of God. This means to reverence God, to stand in awe of Him, to recognize Him as the Creator of heaven and earth. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" and wisdom. (Prov. 1:7, 9:10).

3. Man's duty is to keep God's commandments. This is simply to do God's will as it is revealed in His word. God has always dealt with man on the basis of obedience. Abel obeyed God. Noah obeyed God. Abraham obeyed God. Moses obeyed God. Joshua obeyed God. David obeyed God. They all pleased God. On the other hand, there were those such as Cain, Achan, Saul, etc. who disobeyed God. None of them were pleasing to Him. We conclude then that all who please God must obey Him. Even the Son of God was not exempted from the principle of obedience (Heb. 5:8, 9).

4. The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandment. Interestingly enough, the word "duty" is not in the original. It was added by the translators to clarify the meaning. But, while the whole duty of man is unquestionably summed up, the added word may serve only to detract from the verses basic meaning. Young's Literal Translation renders it, "For this is the whole of man." That is it exactly! The whole of man, all there is to him, his whole purpose of being, is to fear God and keep His commandments. Thus to do God's will in everything commanded is to live life as God meant it to be.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

The Lord does not save in an arbitrary manner, picking one here and another there and leaving all in-between. He has a plan or system by which He saves. And that plan is the gospel of Christ. Paul wrote, by divine inspiration, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:16, 17).

The gospel is the power of God to save because it contains God's plan of salvation, the scheme of human redemption. "For therein (in the gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed." "Righteousness of God" here does not mean that the gospel reveals the fact that God is righteous (and that it does elsewhere), but that God's plan to make man righteous is revealed -- the righteousness which is provided to man by God. To be saved one must stand righteous in the sight of God -- that is, he must stand in a right relationship with God by having done the will of God. But the means by which this righteousness is attained is revealed in the gospel. The gospel is, therefore, God's power to save because it reveals the plan by which He saves -- the plan to make man righteous.

But what is the gospel? Paul defines it in the following manner: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:1-5). The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is the heart of the gospel, the center around which the whole system is built.

But how is one saved by the gospel? He is saved by appropriating to himself the divine scheme revealed therein -- by obeying its precepts and following its instructions. Paul made this as clear as a

cloudless sky: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18). One is saved when he obeys from the heart that form of doctrine, and that form of doctrine is a form of the gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

One cannot obey the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ *per se* -- that is he cannot literally die, be literally buried, and then be literally raised from the dead. But he can obey a form (or mold) of this doctrine. He can die to the love and practice of sin; he can be buried with Christ in baptism; and he can arise from the watery grave to walk in a new life. And this is precisely what Paul was teaching in Romans 6. So one obeys the gospel, and is thereby made free from sin, when he obeys from the heart that form of doctrine delivered to us, namely, when he dies to sin, is buried with Christ in baptism, and is raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-4).

While God has provided a plan by which all could be saved, He does not save everyone. He saves only those who through obedience to the gospel apply the saving truth of Jesus Christ to their own sins. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). Truth frees -- frees from falsehood and sin, but it frees only those whose belief in it is strong enough to lead them to follow its instructions. God saves and blesses only the obedient; those who refuse to submit to His will are lost -- lost because they have not applied to themselves the power of God to save.

FAITH IN CHRIST

The plan of salvation, as provided by the marvelous grace of God in the gospel of Christ, requires that one exercise faith in order to be saved -- not just any faith, but faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Jesus Himself said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). The basic and fundamental fact of Christianity is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This one fact is the foundation of every other fact -- that is, it is essential to all other facts. And it is the fact that one must believe before he can be a Christian (John 3:16; 20:30, 31; Acts 16:31).

This is why Paul could say, "For by grace (God's part in providing the plan) are ye saved through faith (man's part in accepting and obeying the plan); and that not of yourself: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8). Scriptural faith is more than just giving mental assent to the correctness of certain facts; it is accepting all that is involved in the facts. Saving faith thus necessitates the belief of other essential facts:

1. To believe in Christ is to believe in God -- believe in God because Christ is the Son of God. A non-entity could not have a son.

2. To believe in Christ is to believe that He is the Savior of the world. But to believe that He is the Savior means that one must believe in the reality of sin, the need of salvation, and man's inadequacy to save himself.

3. To believe in Christ is to believe the Bible to be the word of God. The Bible is the only source of information we have about Christ. It reveals God's will to man -- what man must do to please God.

4. To believe in Christ one must believe in the Holy Spirit as the revealer of God's will to man. Or as Paul put it, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12:3). The Spirit reveals God's will through God's word (1 Cor. 2:9-13), and by no other means today.

5. To believe in Christ is to believe in and accept the church (the one He promised to build and the one we can read about in the New Testament) as His body (1 Cor. 12:12-27). "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22, 23).

6. To believe in Christ is to accept implicit and explicit obedience as the principle by which one is to live. There is simply no way one can follow Christ without full submission to the will of God. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8, 9).

7. To believe in Christ is to believe in Christianity as the religion which He established -- the system by which one's life is controlled and directed (Heb. 12:1; James 1:27).

In short, to believe in Christ is to believe all the facts of the gospel; it is to accept the whole Christian system as God's means of redeeming lost man. It is a grave error to try to separate belief in Christ from a belief in His word. To accept the one is to accept the other; to reject the one is to reject the other. Actually faith comes by the hearing of the word (Rom. 10:17). Thus without the word there could be no faith.

Salvation is by faith, a faith that is strong enough to accept God's plan as the only means of salvation and apply it by doing all that it requires (cf. Heb. 11).

REPENTANCE OF SIN

All men have sinned (Rom. 3:9, 23). And since the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), all are lost because of sin. But Jesus came to save lost man. He did not come, however, to save him in his sins, but to save him from them. This simply means that in order to be saved one must turn away from all sin. This turning away from sin is what the New Testament calls repentance.

Repentance is a fundamental and essential part of God's plan to redeem man, a condition upon which his salvation is predicted. Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:15). In giving the Great Commission He charged His disciples, saying, And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among the nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47). In carrying out this commission, Peter said to believers on the day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). Paul told the Athenian philosophers, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30).

But what is repentance? Primarily it is a change of mind -- a change of mind produced by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) for sin which leads to a change of life or conduct (cf. Matt. 21:28-30; 12:41; Jonah 3:10). Young's Concordance defines it as "To have another mind." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament says it means "To change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins." This can be seen in the following facts:

1. Repentance is a change of direction -- from sin to righteousness, from Satan to Christ. When one lives in sin he is on the downward road to destruction, but repentance turns him around and starts him on the upward road to heaven. This is illustrated in Jesus' beautiful story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24). The son first wanted his portion of his father's goods. He was given them. He then went into a far country (going away from home) where he wasted

all on riotous living. But he came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father's house" (going toward home). This he did. There was thus a going away and then a returning -- a complete change in direction.

2. Repentance is a change of attitude about sin. It is produced by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) and results in a death to sin (Rom. 6:1, 2) -- the putting off of the old man and putting on of the new (Eph. 4:21-24). Saul of Tarsus is a good illustration of this change. He was, according to his own words, "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." (1 Tim. 1:13). But his experience on the Damascus road changed his whole outlook about Christ and Christianity. Instead of blaspheming Christ he now glorified Him; instead of persecuting the church he now preached the gospel to build it up; instead of injuring Christians, he now became one of them. He thus underwent a complete change of attitude.

3. Repentance is a change of allegiance -- a change from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). Jesus said of some, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do." (John 8:44). One is the servant of whomsoever he serves (Rom. 6:16), "Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." When one becomes a Christian he renounces his allegiance to Satan and becomes a servant of Christ (Rom. 6:17, 18). His allegiance is changed.

"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; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55:7).

BAPTISM INTO CHRIST

Christ died to save all men, but all will not be saved. Why does He save some and not others? In this country there is a well known boundery known as the Mason-Dixon line. All above that line is considered northern; all below it is southern. And so it is with salvation. There is a line, bounded out by God Himself, which stands between the lost and the saved states. All on one side of that line are lost; all on the other side are saved. Thus if we are to be saved, we must determine from the holy Scriptures where that line is and how we as lost sinners may cross over it into the saved state.

Faith in Christ as God's Son is indispensable to salvation, but faith standing by itself is not the line. The Bible specifically says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24). We have examples of those who believed but were still lost (e.g. John 12:42). Believers have the right or privilege to become sons of God (John 1:12) -- they are not over the line but they do have a right to step over it.

The line is not crossed in repentance, even though repentance is required of all who cross it. Judas is said to have repented (Matt. 27:3) but few would consider him to be in the saved state. Saul of Tarsus had obviously repented while he prayed and fasted in Damascus for three days and nights. Yet he did not have his sins washed away (Acts 22:16).

Crossing the line into the state of salvation is the consummating act in the God's scheme to redeem. That act alone does not save *per se*, but it is the point, place, or time when God says that one ceases to be a lost sinner and becomes an adopted child of His.

But what is that line, that point, that place, that time? We must let the Scriptures themselves answer:

One crosses the line into the saved state when he enters Christ -- when he establishes covenant relationships with Him. But the Bible is clear on this point: one enters Christ when he is baptized into Him. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

(Gal. 3:26, 27; see also Rom. 6:3, 4). The line of demarkation then is baptism. That is not man's line; it is God's line.

As amazing as it may seem, every passage in the New Testament which deal with this subject draws the line between the lost and the saved at baptism. Consider just a few of the many passages which could be cited:

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized (watch the transition now) shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). Both faith and baptism are put before salvation.

In carrying out the Great Commission, Peter told believers on the day of Pentecost who wanted to know what they must do to be saved, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ (observe the change of state here) for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). Again one crosses the line at baptism.

Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor of the early church (1 Tim. 1:13). He was sent by the rulers of Israel to Damascus to imprison and kill Christians. But on his way he underwent a great change. He became a believer in Christ and for three days and nights of prayer and fasting showed a penitent attitude. Ananias, a preacher of righteousness, was sent to him. When he arrived where Paul was praying, he said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized (here, again, is the transition), and wash away thy sins." (Acts 22:16). Again baptism is seen to be the line between the sinner and sins washed away.

SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN?

Sin, in any form, is man's most devastating enemy. It was the cause of the original fall, the source of man's complex problems, the reason for the world being in the condition it is in today, the cause of man being lost and doomed to death, and it will be the reason countless millions will spend a vast and endless eternity in the flames of destruction, without God and without hope. In view of this, the question Paul asked in Romans 6:1 is eminently pertinent to all of us. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Shall we continue in sin? Ponder it well.

1. Shall we continue in sin ... after we know what it is? John said, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."* (1 John 3:4). Again, "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin unto death." (1 John 5:17). There are many other Scriptural ways to express the concept of sin, but they can all be reduced to one fact: sin is the rejection of the Lordship of God. When man violates the revealed will of God, either deliberately, by neglecting to do what is commanded, or by substituting something in its place, he is in effect rejecting God as his rightful ruler and exalting man to the position which belongs only to God. To reject God's law, or to replace it with human rules, opinions, and conjectures, is to say that man knows better than God. This is in essence rejecting God's right to rule over man. Shall we continue in sin now that we know that it is a rejection of the Lordship of God?

2. Shall we continue in sin ... after we know what it does? "For the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23). This is separation from God, from His approval and fellowship. This is precisely what happened in Eden (Gen. 2-3) and what Isaiah described (Isa. 59:1, 2). One cannot willfully dethrone God, reject His law, trample under foot the blood of Jesus, and disgrace the scheme of human redemption without paying the penalty. Shall we continue in sin after we know what it does to man?

3. Shall we continue in sin ... after we know that redemption

is available? "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:9, 23). All are therefore under the penalty of death. But through His infinite and marvelous grace God has devised a plan whereby a substitute is made for the sinner's death. Christ died in man's stead. He came into the world, lived a perfect life, died a sacrificial death, and ascended back to God with the full payment (His own precious blood) for our sins. When one accepts Christ, through faith and obedience, then God accepts His death as the full payment of our sin debt. By this means, redemption is available! Shall we continue in sin now that God has made salvation possible?

4. Shall we continue in sin . . . after we know what we must do to be saved? God has done His part in salvation (He has provided the plan); the remainder is up to us (our part is to obey the plan). The plan requires of us to believe in Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24), to repent of all sins (Luke 13:5), and to be buried with Him in baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4). Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). These words are plain and concise. They tell us what we must do to be saved. Shall we continue in sin after we know this?

Shall we continue in sin . . . after we know that each sin we commit binds us tighter with the powerful web of evil and serves only to increase our problems and woes? The way sin increases our difficulties can be illustrated by an anecdote told by Daniel Summer. He said there was a boy who spent much of his time with a team of horses trying to clear up a muddy place on a road. He was asked, "Do you stay here working in the mud all the time?" "Yes," he replied, "except when I am hauling water to pour into the mud holes!" Trying to correct one's life by continuing in sin is worse than trying to dry up a mud hole by adding water.

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