

**The unabridged writings of Fred Morris, Manna Publications**

## **The Meaning of . . .**

# **Salvation**

**To the reader:** Keep your Bible beside you to read the references given. Invite a friend to study with you. You will be blessed.

### **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SIN**

**Read: John 3:16-17**

God said all men have sinned and that they are perishing (Romans 3:23). They are perishing because they are cut off from the life of God. God is the giver of all life. Because men and women are sinners God will not draw near to them or have fellowship with them.

The prophet Isaiah told the people of Israel, "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God, your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). God cannot look on sin, so He turned His face away from the people He loved.

It is God's great desire to fellowship with His creation. This is most important when it comes to men and women. God takes pleasure in having a relationship with men and women who worship and honor Him. He called them His "special treasure" (Ex 19:5).

God says that He created man and woman for His own pleasure. But sin came into their hearts, they rebelled against God's command and they lost the relationship they had enjoyed at the beginning (Gen 3:8).

Adam and Eve did not obey God's command and they put themselves under Satan's control. They were in bondage to their own evil desires and they were helpless to free themselves. Sadly, their sinful nature passed to all men and women; we were all born sinners.

#### **TALK ABOUT**

1. Will God look on sin? Why not?
2. Does God desire a special, intimate relationship with men and women.
3. He had that relationship with Adam and Eve at the beginning. How was it broken (Gen 3:1-10)?

### **GOD'S PROMISE TO THE WORLD**

At that point in history God made a wonderful promise which included every person who ever lived on this earth. He said to Satan, who is the source of all evil, "I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman (Eve), and between your offspring (those men and women who follow Satan, John 8:44) and hers; He (Jesus) will crush your head, and you will strike His heel" (Gen 3:15).

Jesus came into the world as the son of a woman, Mary (Gal 4:4). He lived a sinless life and died on the cross to save us from our sins. In His death, He 'crushed' Satan's head, or his authority to hold men and women as his slaves, in bondage to sin (Heb 2:15).

God gives grace to all who open their hearts to His call, He gives grace which draws them into His kingdom. By faith and the power of God's Spirit, they can throw off Satan's bondage. This is the **salvation** God offers every person. It is the "good news" of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When Jesus began preaching He said, "The time has come! The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15).

## **HOW CAN I BE SAVED?**

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter told the crowd, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Two things are plain. If you want to be saved from your sins, you must:

- Repent (be sorry for them) and turn away from the wrong things you have been doing.
- Be baptized in the name of Jesus as a testimony to the world that you have left your old way of life and, from that day forward, you will follow Jesus Christ and obey Him only.

You can be saved and not baptized. Baptism, of itself, means nothing to the person who has not received Jesus as their personal Savior. Baptism is an outward witness to the change that has taken place in a person's heart.

Some people grow up in Christian homes and have always thought of Jesus as their Savior. They cannot remember a special day when they received Jesus as Lord of their life. That does not mean they are not saved.

Others have a dramatic experience, when their lives are turned upside down and everything is different for ever. Paul said, "If anyone is in Christ (saved), he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God...." (2 Cor 5:17).

There must be a change in the way a person lives, or we may doubt that they are truly saved (James 2:14). This change may come very slowly. But each of us must strive to "grow in grace and a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

### **TALK ABOUT**

1. When Adam sinned, what promise did God make (Gen 3:16)?
2. Who did God send into the world to 'crush' Satan's authority (Heb 2:15)?
3. At the time they are saved, does everyone have the same things happen to them?

## **ALL THIS IS FROM GOD**

Why did Paul say, "all this is from God" ? Because God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, comes to our hearts and gives a "new birth" to our spirits (John 3:5-8).

Nicodemus was a leader in Israel and a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court. He came to Jesus at night to ask Him some questions. He had seen the miracles Jesus did among the Jews and he believed these miracles were done by the power of God.

"Rabbi, we know You are a teacher who has come from God," he said to Jesus. "For no one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God was not with Him" (John 3:2).

He believed that Jesus had come from God. That, in itself, was a miracle that many of his fellow Pharisees did not believe (Luke 24:25).

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). Nicodemus did not understand, so Jesus said, "No one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless he is born of water and of the Spirit."

He spoke of God's Spirit coming into our hearts and bringing new life in Christ to us. As Paul told the Ephesian Christians, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world... Like the rest, we were objects of (God's) wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph 2:1-2; 4-5).

## **GOD'S GLORIOUS GRACE**

We cannot understand God's grace toward us or the love God has for each of us. Paul wrote, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly... While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:6-8).

Jesus, by His death on the cross, delivered us from the wrath of God and everlasting punishment. He saved us when we were drowning in our own transgressions.

My sister and I grew up on a farm. I was about 10 years old and she was two years younger. One day when dad was working in a far corner of the farm, we went along to see what he was doing. In one corner of the paddock there was a small pond fed by a spring. The pond was almost completely overgrown with a heavy layer of water cress.

Elsie tested the cress with her foot. The next thing I knew she had slipped into the pond. All I could see was her thick, dark, curly hair above the green cress. I got my fingers into it and held on yelling, "Dad. Dad. Come quickly! "

Dad came running - he was only 50 yards away - and pulled Elsie out of the water. That day I **saved** my sister from a watery grave. God loves you and me and wants to save us from perishing in hell. So He has done everything He can to redeem us and bring us back into fellowship with Himself.

## **HOLD ON TO THE TRUTH**

When you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, you begin a new life. You are like a baby; you need "the milk of God's word" and sound Bible teaching to help you "grow in grace and a knowledge of our Lord Jesus" (2 Peter 3:18).

If you neglect or 'starve' your new life it will remain stunted and weak. New Christians are told to "hold on to" what they have received. Every living thing needs food to grow and the food the Spirit needs is the word of God.

Paul wrote to young Timothy, "What you have heard from me keep as the pattern of sound teaching... Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you - guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (2 Tim 1:13-14).

What God has worked in you by His Spirit must be "worked out with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12). This 'fear' means respect, honor and awe.

## **PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

We note that **salvation** is past: "For in this hope we were saved..." (Rom 8:24). "He saved

us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5-6).

**Salvation** is also spoken of in the present: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18).

Peter wrote, "Though you have not seen Him (Jesus), you love Him, and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:8-9).

And **salvation** is spoken of as being in the future: "Since we have been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him" (Rom 5:9-10).

## MANY WORDS USED IN SCRIPTURE

Salvation is so important that many words are used to describe its nature. Conversion is one of the most used; we are **converted** from what we were – sinners on our way to hell – to believers who worship God. **Regeneration** means **forgiven** by God, we are **justified** by faith and **sanctified** by the truth, **adopted** as sons and daughters into God's family.

The Bible presents salvation as a radical and complete transformation worked in the soul of man, where "You are made new in the attitudes of your mind" (Eph 4:23).

After writing this, Paul gives a list of bad habits that hold us and must be "put off", like old clothes and a list of good habits that must be "put on" (Eph 4:25-32). If we do these things, we will not give Satan a foothold in our lives.

## GOD CALLS ALL MEN TO REPENT

Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). Now He calls all men to repent (Luke 5:32). They must change their life style and put God on the throne of their lives (Luke 8:2).

We are saved by the blood of Jesus. "**Salvation** is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Jesus preached this gospel, Paul and the apostles preached it, believers down through the ages preached it, and now we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### TALK ABOUT

1. Are there many ways to heaven, or just one (John 14:6)?
2. Are you on the right 'road' to heaven?
3. You can be very sincere, but badly mistaken in what you believe. Read God's word for yourself and ask Him to show you the truth.

## A GREAT CHANGE

There is no regeneration that does not produce spiritual activities and a great change in the life of the believer. Those who are regenerate do righteousness (1 John 2:29). They become, in God's hands, "instruments (or slaves) of righteousness" (Rom 6:13, 18).

So **conversion** or **salvation** is a life-giving union with Jesus Christ. Baptism is a picture of the sinner being buried with Christ and raised in resurrection life to walk with Him (Rom 6:3-10); or to be already seated with Him in heaven (Eph 2:5-6).

It is by the “washing of the word” that God renews the heart (Acts 16:14-15). He sows the seed there from which faith and repentance spring (1 John 3:9). And repentance brings faith and faith brings good works. Good works can never save you, but they always grow up out of true faith.

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