

## LESSON IX

# Salvation and How to Acquire it

## CHAPTER I

### THE MEANS OF SALVATION

The death of Christ had as its main reason the Salvation of mankind. Thus it was mostly a redemptive act, as far as man was concerned. And in this act of redemption could be seen the tremendous love God had for man. To say that the death of Christ was for the Salvation of mankind, presupposes that man needed to be saved and naturally to talk about man's need for Salvation through Christ also presupposes that man could not save himself. Therefore to understand the doctrine of Salvation and to go about acquiring Salvation for our individual lives we need to also know and realize man's need for such a Salvation.

**The Need for Salvation:** God created man in His Own image and endowed him with many powers and with great privileges. He was to have dominion over all the other created things and to subdue the earth. As a preventive against falling into evil, God warned man. The warning was in the form of prohibition against the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But man in the Garden of Eden, through the tempting of Satan, fell. Eve took of the forbidden fruit and ate and so did Adam. Thereby, sin and evil entered the human race and the need for Salvation arose.

When Adam and Eve sinned against God, they hid themselves, not knowing how to face God. This also meant that they could not by themselves get back into the intimate relationship with God that they had originally possessed. But when God punished Adam and Eve, by sending them out of the Garden of Eden, He at the same time spoke of the means of their Salvation. God said that the seed of the woman would some day crush the head of the Serpent. Meaning that sin and Satan would be destroyed through the seed of the woman. This was a reference to Christ in that He was to be born of a woman, even though He was to be God.

Therefore, it was in God's eternal purposes that the redemption of mankind was to come about through His Son, Christ. We may not understand all of the mysteries attached to the purposes of God, but we can know what He has revealed to us that man sinned and was unable to save himself. God loved man and promised him Salvation through His Son.

**The purpose of Christ's Death:** The purpose of the Death of Christ could be beautifully summed up in the words of John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God loved the world so much that He gave His Son. He gave His Son to die for our sins. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians says the same thing. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (I Corinthians 15:3). And again in Romans chapter 4 verse 25, Paul talks about Christ being delivered for our offences or being put to death for our sins. Only the Divine Son of God could do what Christ did. Only the Son of God could overcome sin.

In the teaching from the Bible concerning the death of Christ, we can see the extent of the accomplishment made by Christ on the Cross. Scripture teaches us that the death of Jesus was a Substitutionary Death. Or it can be called a Vicarious Death. In the Book of Hebrews we can read a comprehensive discussion concerning the Atonement. In the Law of Moses, animals were sacrificed for the sins of the people. In this way the lesson was provided that the blood that was shed was the substitute for the punishment of the man who had himself sinned. And it is declared in Hebrews chapter 9 verse 22 that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. So it was necessary that a sacrifice be made as an Atonement for our sins. The Law of Moses with its animal sacrifices was never fully sufficient. In Hebrews chapter 10 verse 4, it says it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. But Christ's death on the Cross of Calvary made a permanent atonement for our sins. He provided Himself a permanent sacrifice, so that our sins could be removed. He became the substitute for our punishment. He took our place. We could read this beautifully in the Book of Isaiah chapter 53 verse 4 to 6, "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 chastisement 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." We see then that our sins and our iniquities were placed upon Christ and His death was the substitute for our punishment. Read I Peter 2:24 and Galatians 3:13.

Also, Christ died on the Cross of Calvary as a Propitiation for our sins. Propitiation can be expressed as "an appeasement". It is the "turning away of wrath by an offering." Another word that describes propitiation is reconciliation. Christ through the shedding of His blood reconciled men to God. Man because of his sin fell into disfavor with God. It is sin that makes men displeasing in the sight of God. But Christ by shedding His blood for our sins and taking upon Himself the sins of all mankind through the Cross of Calvary has provided man the means of a reconciliation of God. So man through Christ is reconciled to God and can stand once again in the presence of God as pleasing in His sight. The blood of Jesus Christ became the means of our reconciliation. It should be remembered that this reconciliation was provided by God Himself. The means of reconciliation originated with God and not with man. Roman chapter 5 verse 10 says that we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Colossians 1:20 says that Jesus made peace by the blood shed on the Cross. We can read about this reconciliation in II Corinthians chapter 5 verses 17 to 19; Ephesians chapter 2 verse 13; Hebrews chapter 2 verse 17 and in many other passages. The New Testament declares grandly that Christ was our propitiation, and reconciliation, and expiation for our sins. "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2).

Similarly, we can say that Christ is our Redemption. He redeemed us. We owed a debt to God, because of our sin. This debt was our punishment. Christ paid this debt of punishment by being our punishment; by taking our punishment on Himself. Hebrews 9:12 tells us that Christ obtained for us an "eternal redemption."

The Death of Christ was also the means of conquering Satan and the powers of evil. We could look back to the Book of Genesis where the prophecy was given that the seed of the

woman was to crush the head of the Serpent thereby signifying the conquest of Satan (Genesis 3:15). Hebrews chapter 2 verse 14 says that, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Christ) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he (Christ) might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” So the death of Christ on the Cross was a means whereby Satan was destroyed and the power of death was removed. And therefore through the death of Christ, man too can be victorious over himself and be a new person in Jesus Christ. Paul says that our old person of sin is crucified with Christ on the Cross. And therefore we can become, through obedience, people who are given a new life in Christ. We can understand how this old man or old self of ours is crucified, because Christ took all our sins on the Cross of Calvary. Therefore our sin and our sinful nature was crucified on the cross, and if we put our faith in Him and obey Him we can avail ourselves of the new life He provided through His death.

The death of Christ on the Cross of Calvary showed man the love of God and God’s righteousness. The love of God has no equal on earth. The Cross is the greatest story of love man will ever know. How God sent His Son from the Glories of Heaven above down to this earth of ours just so that He could die to save man from sin. The Cross reveals God’s love for us. We should be careful though, that we do not limit the Cross of Calvary to the Revelation of God’s love alone. Christ died on the Cross of Calvary to remove man’s sin. And this is why we can understand God’s great love for us. To say that Christ died to show His love, but did not remove sin, is to destroy the Scriptures. The love of God was revealed on the Cross of Calvary as Christ died to remove man’s sin. Thus Paul could say in Galatians 2:20 that “Christ loved me and gave Himself for me.”

And the righteousness of God is also revealed through the death of Christ on the Cross. In Romans chapter 3 verses 23 to 25 we read, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” So through the death of Christ on the Cross of Calvary, we are declared justified by the righteousness of God. We by ourselves could never be righteous. But God declared us righteous by giving His Son to shed His blood to save us from our sins. So the blood of Christ shed on the Cross covered our sins and erased our guilt, so that God could look down upon us, not as sinners, but as cleansed and righteous beings. We stand then in His sight justified. Justified only because of the death of Christ. So God wanted us righteous and knew we could not do it on our own. So He gave His righteousness to us through the death of Christ on the Cross of Calvary.

So as you and I gaze upon the Cross of Calvary and see the dying form of our Saviour Jesus Christ hanging there, let us see the complete and total work of Salvation that was wrought upon it through mercy and love of God. The work on Calvary was a work of Salvation. The Cross of Calvary was the means of providing man Salvation, full and free. And God has declared that Salvation is freely available to those who will accept it. God has provided the Salvation through the Cross for all mankind. But yet His love does not force in on anyone, but He demands that we accept it in faith, as we obey His Son.

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## CHAPTER II

### CONVERSION

The work of Salvation by Jesus Christ was a ‘finished work’. That is, God in His mercy provided the means for our Salvation through the giving of His own Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. For our sins, therefore, Jesus need not die again. Neither need there be any other or any more means for us to be saved. Salvation was completed on the Cross of Calvary.

Again, Salvation was provided for all mankind. There is no exception regarding the recipients of the Salvation of God. But yet God in His love, does not force this Salvation on any one. The Bible says, that Salvation is freely given to all those who want it and respond to it. Therefore we can read John 3:16 and understand it better. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God loved the world and gave His Son for the whole world. And anyone who believes can get the benefits of Salvation. So we see Salvation is for all mankind, but yet only given to those who want it, and those who respond to it.

The response of a sinner to the work of Salvation is called Conversion. The sinner under the conviction of God’s Holy Spirit responds to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance of his sin.

Conversion is a conscious process. By that we mean it is something that a person does voluntarily and with full awareness. This is why it is called a response. When somebody does not willingly respond, or does not do it with full awareness, then there cannot really be conversion. In conversion, as the term implies, the condition of man is changed and therefore he is not the same person afterwards.

We must realize that conversion is absolutely necessary in order to be pleasing in the sight of God. The Bible tells us in John chapter 3 verse 3, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” In Matthew 18:3 Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, except ye turn and become like little children ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” Conversion therefore, is very necessary in order to stand in God’s presence as those who love and obey Him.

We mentioned that conversion constitutes faith and repentance. It can be said that repentance is the negative aspect, while faith is the positive aspect. There are arguments as to which comes first – faith or repentance. But we should realize nevertheless that both figure in conversion can really be a simultaneous process. Repentance can be viewed as the turning away from sin, by the sinner, in a conscious manner. The intellect is involved when one recognizes his own sinfulness and realizes that by himself he cannot be saved. This can only come about by the person knowing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The emotions are involved because when there is recognition of sin there will be, or there has to be, sorrow for past sin. We cannot rejoice for being sinners in the past. We rather are grieved because of our past sins. And there is the active or the volitional element of repentance which means that we turn determinedly away from sin

and towards God. And in this determination we put our complete trust in Jesus Christ to save us from our sin.

Faith we said is the positive aspect of conversion but we should also realize that faith is the foundation. Without faith there can be no true repentance. So they really go hand in hand. Faith underlines Salvation. Without faith it is impossible to please God and therefore it is impossible to be converted without it. Faith is both *assent* as well as *trust*. Assent, meaning we recognize and we agree that Jesus Christ alone is the means of Salvation, being the Son of God. We recognize that Jesus is the Son of God. We recognize that Jesus is the Son of the Living God, and He did complete the work of Salvation on the Cross of Calvary. And faith, as trust, is the putting of our complete confidence in Jesus Christ and trusting Him to save us. This trust, of necessity leads to obedience. It involves surrender and commitment. Because when we trust God, we will be willing to do what He says. And also we could say that trust in God leads us to surrender our lives to Him. So while faith as assent is believing that something is true, faith as trust is believing in something or somebody.

Now we could look at conversion in yet another way. Conversion is faith and obedience. Believing in Jesus Christ and obeying His Word. From this standpoint repentance is obedience just as other elements of conversion are also obedience. The Bible talks about the confession that Jesus is Lord and God. In Romans chapter 10 verse 10, Paul says that “with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation.” Confession is simply that Jesus is Lord and God. And again the Bible says that with faith and baptism we are saved. In Mark 16:16 we read that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Now it is necessary to put all these elements or steps of conversion together. We find therefore, for a person to be converted he needs (1) to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:17). (2) He needs to be convicted of his sin which is done through the Holy Spirit. (3) He needs to put his faith and trust in Jesus Christ. (4) He needs to repent of his sin. (5) He needs to confess his Lord and God. (6) Christian baptism is necessary and (7) Christian discipleship has to follow.

The focus of our faith should be trust in God’s promise to give us life and raise our dead souls. We trust in His promises and Resurrection power. The foundation of our faith is the Resurrection. True repentance is really inseparable from faith. While faith is primarily our attitude towards God, repentance is our attitude towards sin. In repentance there is a change of attitude towards sin, a change of mind and a change in will.

Confession of Christ as Lord and God is also an act of faith. And baptism is an act of faith. It is confession acted out. It is the occasion when God keeps His promise, i.e. He meets us in baptism. The physical act is symbolic of the spiritual death, burial and resurrection.

Faith is still the foundation, even in baptism. Baptism becomes effective only through faith in the power of God to save us from sin. Our faith is not in the water but in the power of God.

The form of baptism is immersion. The root word of baptism in the Greek is *baptidzo*, meaning to immerse. And further the symbolism involves a burial or an immersion. Hence baptism by immersion alone will suffice.

Can we be sure that by responding to God in this manner will save us? Can we know that in baptism we are spiritually raised to a new life? Yes we can!

But how do we know this is happening to us? How can we be sure? Is there a sharp pain or a bright light or some kind of physical change which assures us that God has so worked within us? No, we do not need evidence of this kind. Instead, our assurance that God raises us from death in baptism is grounded on the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In baptism you are raised to life with Christ through your faith in the active power of God, the very God who raised Jesus himself from the dead (Colossians 2:12). The resurrection of Christ is thus the foundation of our faith that God can give life to our dead souls. The power which he displayed in raising Christ is the measure of the power which he exerts upon us (Ephesians 1:19 & 20). Thus Peter can say that baptism “brings salvation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (I Peter 3:21, NEB).

“We must not lose sight of the significance of baptism, nor of the inseparable connection with faith, nor of the power of Christ’s resurrection which makes it effective. The act of baptism is the act of trusting surrender in which Christ raises our dead souls to life. He hereby makes us into living stones and adds us to his new creation, the Church.”

Conversion is something every person needs. Have you responded to God in conversion? Have you accepted God’s Salvation? Have you been willing to believe in Christ and to obey Him? God finished the work of salvation through Jesus Christ on Calvary’s Cross. You can respond to Him and accept His Salvation and acquire that Salvation for yourself as you repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ and obey Him.” (Jack Cottrell, Unpublished Class notes in Basic Theology; Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A.)

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## CHAPTER III

### THE NEW BIRTH

When a person is converted he enters into a new relationship with God and this new relationship is called a new birth or putting on of the new man, etc. All these terms are found in the Scriptures and refer to the new life spiritually that the convert experiences. Sometimes we refer to this new birth, spiritually, as a re-generation. It is only God who could give a person such a new life. And because He loves us, He waits for us to respond to His invitation for such a life.

Christian baptism is symbolic of this new birth. The example of a seed being planted in the ground, i.e., buried, and then bursting forth into new life is used to show how a person in sin must die to his sin, be buried in baptism and rise to a new birth or to a newness of life. The act

of baptism does not provide by itself newness of life, but it is symbolic of the new birth and is commanded. And therefore, as we believe and as we are baptized, i.e., as we have faith in God and as we obey we can be assured of this new birth.

God, when He looks down upon the Christian, or the person who now has new life, looks at him as a justified person. **Justification** is God's provision for the converted person, so that in the sight of God as Judge, he stands as righteous and not guilty. It is just as though we had never sinned. Justification could be illustrated by a court room scene. An accused criminal stands before the judge, waiting for condemnation. The punishment is announced and then somebody else steps forward to take that punishment and to pay the penalty. Therefore, the judge declares that the accused has been justified and declared 'not guilty'. But the justification was only because somebody else took the punishment and paid the penalty. So justification, then is a gracious gift of God to a sinner who responds in faith and obedience. God's grace and God's mercy provided the basis for our salvation. And through the blood of Jesus Christ we are able to stand in the presence of God as justified. And so the book of Romans tells us in chapter 8 verse 1, "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." And again in the fifth chapter of Romans, it says in verses 1 and 2, "We are justified by faith and therefore we have peace with God." Let us remember it is not something that we do that provides justification. It is the gracious gift of God's Son who took our price and our penalty whereby we are justified. Righteousness is imputed to us and we become heirs and sons of God in divine adoption.

The grounds or the basis of justification is the blood of Jesus Christ. And the means is faith. The act of faith does not deserve Salvation. But yet, it is a means of gaining it. We gain justification through grace. Hence we could say that the essence of justification is God's Grace. In II Corinthians chapter 5 verse 21, we read that "Christ took our sin and we in turn gain His righteousness." In Romans chapter 3 verse 28, we read that man is justified by faith, and in the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> verses of Romans chapter 3 we see that we are justified freely by the grace of God.

Also as a result of conversion we are immediately regenerated. **Regeneration** is actually the beginning of sanctification. Justification makes us 'not guilty'. And regeneration changes our actual state. As the word itself implies, regeneration is a change. There occurs at our conversion a basic change of nature in the converted person. Particularly, it takes place at baptism, even though a change of some form might begin before it. Regeneration can also be termed as a new beginning or as a revival. The image of Christ is renewed in us as we are raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). In Ephesians 4:23 & 24, we read that we are renewed in the spirit of our mind and we put on a new person. In Galatians 6:15, it says, "for in Christ Jesus . . . we are a new creature." So the chief factor in regeneration is the giving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit provides us with a new source of life and power. Thereby we can see a radical change in our nature.

But we should remember that regeneration changes our actual state, but yet it is only the beginning of renewal. It is the giving of the power to overcome. It is the turning around to faith in the right direction. The process of living a holy life is sanctification.

**Sanctification** is being set apart unto holy living. The Holy Spirit is given to us to make us holy. And through a period of time, this can be attained. We read in I Thessalonians chapter

5 verse 23, that the God of peace can sanctify us, wholly. The Biblical concept of sanctification is growing in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 8:1, we read that though the Christian might experience sin, yet it will not overcome him as he lives according to God's way. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1).

Complete sanctification can only come after the death of the old body and the resurrection of the new. We do not experience justification because of the degree of our sanctification, but because of the grace and mercy of God. But our goal should be to strive to a situation of total holiness, knowing that should we fail, when we come back to God He is willing to forgive and to accept us.

Being justified and regenerated we are united with Christ in His Body, the Church (Ephesians 1:22 & 23). The Church is His New Creation. It is God's new "Kingdom of Life."

Life in the Spirit of God is a sanctified life. The in-dwelling Spirit given to us at our baptism (Acts 2:38) transforms us from death to life and confirms our adoption as children of God. In Romans 8:26 & 27, we read that the Spirit of God helps us in times of distress. So while the Christian life is a continual struggle between the earthly desires of the flesh and our spiritual desire to obey God's law, we can count upon the Holy Spirit to help us through in this battle. The Holy life can be lived through the power of the Holy Spirit.

These are the benefits of Salvation. The guarantee that these things happen and are possible is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ has promised to make us new creatures if we come to Him (II Corinthians 5:17). The Resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees this and confirms this promise. The power that was evident at the Resurrection of Jesus Christ can make us sure that we too will live again as new creatures in Christ Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the life (John 11:25 & 26). And by virtue of the Salvation He has given us we too can know the power of His Resurrection (Philemon 3:10).

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Name:.....

Student No.....

Grade.....

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON IX

### SALVATION AND HOW TO ACQUIRE IT

**Note:** Answers to the questions below are found in the lesson material. Read the lesson carefully before answering. Try to answer in your own words, as much as possible. Wherever necessary, just fill in the blanks, or choose the correct word. Print out this page if you like. If you wish to send in the answers or to write further comments, or ask any questions yourself, do so on a separate sheet of paper and put your name and student number in a prominent place.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BASIS OF SALVATION

1. Many people ask, why did Jesus have to die for our sins? An understanding of the words *atonement*, *propitiation* and *redemption* tells us why. Define those three words.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **CONVERSION**

1. What are the elements involved in conversion?

2. What do you mean by faith?

3. Baptism is necessary for salvation. Why?

