

What Is Salvation?

The two biggest questions are:

1. To the unbeliever - "**What must I do to be saved?**"
2. To the believer in our Lord Christ Jesus - "**How can I be 100% certain that I am saved?**"

Jesus Christ called us to freedom. His work on the cross redeemed us so that we can be free. We who are children of God need to live in that freedom. Jesus said to those who believed Him, "*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).*" For us to live free, we first and foremost need to know that we are free in Christ Jesus. So let us now begin our journey in the quest for truth and what the Scripture has to say regarding our salvation.

There are many unbelievers searching and seeking for answers to some of life's questions such as: "Who am I?" "Why was I born?" "What is the purpose of life?" "Is this all there is to life?" "What happens after I die?" "Is there a God?" "Were we created or did we evolve by chance?" "Did we evolve from monkeys?"

Then, there are other people who have come to know Christ as youngsters, teenagers or as grown-ups. Some were born into Christian families and grew up with the Scriptures, others may have known Christian individuals who sparked their curiosity, and then there are many others who were just seeking and searching for answers and eventually came to know Christ Jesus. Many of these people walk around in life with an uncertainty about their salvation, with the fear that they might not be in the fold. As these people come to know Christ they get involved in all the rules; the do's and don'ts and that's what Christianity became for them. When you ask some of them if they are saved, they would say they are fairly sure that they are saved, but there is that 5 to 10%

uncertainty. There is just that little nagging doubt. And you know when things don't go well for us in our Christian life that 5 to 10% can start weighing pretty heavily on our minds. It can disturb our day-to-day walk with the Lord. They may say "I'm 95% sure but it's that 5% that's driving me crazy."

I'm sure a lot of new Christians experience something like that and ask the question: "How can I know with a 100% certainty that I am saved completely?" Well it brings up another question. And the next question is this: "What is salvation?" I think that if we know what salvation is, then we can answer the previous questions. For me personally, at the beginning, I didn't know what salvation was. I didn't know what this gospel message was all about and what takes place in the life of a believer the moment faith is exercised. Now let us turn to the Scripture for answers to these two big life-changing questions.

Now in Romans 5:10, the apostle Paul gives us a concise statement concerning salvation. *"For if when we were God's enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved through His life."* That's salvation. We were enemies of God, sinners by name and when we were in that state, God did something for us. He sent Jesus to die on the cross and through His death and resurrection He reconciled us to God; to those of us who exercise faith in Christ Jesus.

That barrier of sin that stands between us and a relationship with God the Father, through His Son Christ Jesus, had been removed once and for all. Reconciliation has taken place. That happened when we were God's enemy? God reconciled the entire world unto Himself and then He said, *"How much more, having been reconciled shall we be saved through His LIFE?"*

Salvation is much more than forgiveness of sins. Salvation is more than what Christ accomplished for us through His death on the cross. The gospel message is the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus died to take away our sins once

and for all, so that He could raise us from our (spiritual) death, so that we can walk in the newness of life.

So salvation is a "DEATH" to "LIFE" issue. Salvation is being saved from the consequence of sin. Romans 6:23 tells us that, "*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" So what are the wages of sin? Death! Spiritual death or separation from God! That's God's punishment for sin. You may be alive physically, but from God's perspective you are a dead man walking and spiritually separated from Him.

A lot of people get confused in Scripture because they don't understand the difference between spiritual death and physical death. Both believers and non-believers alike die in the flesh, but true believers never die spiritually; instead they are re-born of the spirit (born again) and they have eternal life in Christ.

So salvation is being saved from that consequence; spiritual death. "*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam) and death through sin and in this way death came to all men because all have sinned* (Romans 5:12)."

God told Adam not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam decided to follow Eve and do exactly that (deceived by Satan). And God had said, "*on the day that you do, you will surely die* (Genesis 2:17)." So Adam disobeyed God and sinned, the consequence of that sin was death and death spread to all men. So that when we come into this world, we come into this world born dead spiritually-separated from God. We're alive bodily, but we're born spiritually "dead." We're separated from the life of God. God is spirit and we can only worship God in spirit.

In Romans 7:10, Paul wrote this, "*I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.*" Paul thought that eternal life was going to come through obedience to the Ten Commandments and the Jewish law. So he did everything he could in his power to live up to those righteous requirements. Then finally when he looked at himself in the mirror

and got honest with himself, he realized that as good as he tried to be, he had failed miserably. The wages of sin became his. Paul had thought that these Ten Commandments were to bring him life but actually when he looked at himself in the mirror, he found out he was dead; dead spiritually. He then realized his true condition.

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18)." We're born into this world spiritually "dead" and we're under the condemnation of God. That's our status. That's our position in this world. Now something has to change before our physical death occurs for our status to change. When we believe in Christ we are no longer condemned. God is offering this gospel message so that a change can take place inside of us; that we can go from "death" to "life." That's what needs to take place and indeed that's what happens at the moment of salvation. But for now man's condition is; we're spiritually "dead." It seems so stark, so dismal, so final, and there is not a lot of hope in that reality until we realize what Christ came to accomplish.

So what is God's solution? Let us look at this based upon what Paul wrote in Romans 5:10, *"While we were yet enemies, He reconciled us through the death of Christ."* Now let us look at what Christ accomplished through His death and then part two of this; looking at what He accomplished for us through His resurrection. In Colossians chapter 1, verses 19 and 20, Paul tells us that, *"God was pleased to have all of His fullness dwelt in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things; whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through His blood shed on the cross."* So Jesus' death on the cross makes peace. It reconciles not only children of God but all things unto Himself. We have to really understand what the cross is all about.

God has reconciled us by Christ's physical body through death; being the atoning sacrifice for our sins, to present us holy in His sight without blemish and free from accusations. That is like taking supposed enemies and bringing them together as friends.

Now, God was never our enemy and He has always loved us. John 3:16 tells us that, "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" God's plan to bring us back unto Himself has always been in His mind and this plan was executed nearly 2,000 years ago through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus. God was always going to reach out to us in love, in mercy and in forgiveness.

We were the problem because of our fallen sinful nature and our lifestyles after Satan deceived our grandparents Adam and Eve. Through Christ's death, He reconciled us and brought us together so that we could be friends. And in this reconciliation Jesus Christ does something for us that we could never do for ourselves. He presents us to God, the Father, as holy in His sight and without blemish and free from accusations. Isn't that amazing? To think, and to know, and to have confidence in the fact that we can stand before God, holy, without blemish and free from accusations. Not because of what we have done but because of God's mercy and the work of Christ on the cross and what He has accomplished for us.

The apostle Paul carries on with this theme in 2 Corinthians, verses 18 through 21. Paul says, "*All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and He gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*" So He reconciled us unto Himself and then He has imparted to us this very ministry of reconciliation so that we can go out and let people know the "Good News." Here is the "Good News!" God was reconciling the world unto Himself in Christ, not counting man's sins against him. Isn't that great news? What a privilege we have because of Christ's work on the cross!

It doesn't matter if someone is engaged in sin. To each and every one of those persons who are engaged in this, we can say to that person "God is not counting that sin against you." That's the ministry of reconciliation and we can say that with full confidence and full authority because of the finished work of Christ Jesus. God is not counting your sins against you. In 1 John chapter 2,

verse 12; John says this, "*I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of His name.*" If you're a child of God, who has come to Christ by faith, you have received this forgiveness that He provided for you nearly 2,000 years ago. And as a result of that, you can say, "my sins have been forgiven." Now, is that just some of them? No, it is all of them: past, present and future. All your sins, from start to finish have been forgiven. Jesus shed his blood on the cross, "*and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Heb.9:22).*" He shed it once and for all and when you come to Him by faith you receive that forgiveness and can stand before God as a forgiven person. Do you believe that? It's absolutely true, you are a forgiven person.

Jesus' death on the cross was a historical event. Historians have looked at it, have examined all the writings about it and they have concluded that indeed Jesus lived. He had His ministry in Capernaum, at the Sea of Galilee. He went to Jerusalem on a number of occasions and there He was crucified on a Roman cross in around 32 A.D. They know that to be historical evidence; to be true. His crucifixion happened in a point in time that had eternal consequence. From that point it went backwards and it went forwards throughout eternity as all sins for all times have been taken care of, once and for all. Jesus dealt eternally with the cause of death and then He rested eternally from His work of reconciliation. His victory cry on the cross "*It is finished*" were His very last words before He handed His Spirit over to God, the Father. After His ascension into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God, the Father.

Hebrews 10:12 says, "*But when this Priest (Jesus) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.*" So the thing that kills us or separates us from God is sin and Jesus has dealt with that issue once and for all. There is nothing more for God to do. God condemned sin and sinful man, and Jesus stood in our place as the sacrifice and took the punishment for sin. He bled, He died, and He offered up His Spirit to God, the Father. God, the Father said I am satisfied. Jesus said it is finished, it is

done and as a result of His sacrifice on our part; you are a forgiven person.

Salvation is going from "DEATH" to "LIFE." Going from being "spiritually dead" to becoming "spiritually alive."

But that is not the entirety of the story. Jesus had to die for sin, once and for all so that He could carry out His real purpose for you and me and that is to restore "life" for the "dead." You and I were "dead spiritually" and separated from God. This was our condition and Jesus came and dealt with the cause of death which was sin and He did that once and for all and now through His resurrection He can provide to you and me; "life." So what is salvation? It is being saved by His resurrected "life."

In John 11:25; 26, Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live (eternally), even though he dies (physically). And whoever lives and believes in Me will never die (spiritually)*" and then He asked the question, "*Do you believe this?*" Martha said "yes."

Lazarus had been dead for four days. Martha and Mary had sent an urgent message to Jesus to come quickly. Their brother was sick, he was dying, and he was on his deathbed. They had seen Jesus perform miracle after miracle and they were hoping for a miracle for their brother and so they sent this urgent message out, full of anticipation and hope. They knew Jesus would be there as quickly as he could.

Jesus gets the message and He decides to do His own thing for a couple of days. After a few days He gathered up His disciples and they journeyed to Bethany. By the time He got there Lazarus had been dead four days and they had put him in a tomb. This is very significant because on day four decay starts to set in and the human body starts to smell. Jesus comes on the scene and it's time for Him to do something. Martha and Mary were kind of disappointed that He hadn't come sooner and Martha said to Jesus, "*Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.*"

You see Jesus had something else in mind and that's why He stayed away for a few extra days on purpose so that He can teach us this lesson. And that's why He said this, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die."* Then He asks Martha, *"Do you believe this?"* And Martha answers; "yes."

So why did Jesus come? So you and I could have "life" and He demonstrated this "life" here in this miracle, one of the last that Jesus performed before His death, burial, and resurrection. He raised Lazarus from the dead. Why? So that we can see that this is what He wants to do for us. We're all like what Lazarus was, we're all "dead" spiritually. We're all wrapped in the grave cloths of the law, under that condemnation and Jesus wants to set us free by giving us His spiritual "life" – the Spirit of God to live in us; eternally. Just as He called Lazarus to come out of the grave, He calls you and me to come out from our spiritual death graves. And He is saying to us today, *"Come out, so you can have life everlasting."* Do you believe this? Because this is what salvation is; going from "DEATH" to "LIFE."

In Ephesians chapter 2, which we just read a few pages back, it said we were dead in sin and here in verses 4 and 5 we see that because of His great love for us; Paul goes on to say, *"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."* That's the message. You were born "DEAD" spiritually, and you needed "LIFE" and because of God's great love for you and His mercy, He did for you what you could not do for yourself. He raised you from the "dead." That is the grace of God. It is God's act to bring "life" to the spiritually, "dead." That's what grace is. We didn't deserve that. We didn't earn that. There was nothing we could do to cause God to do that. He was compelled by His love for us and He reached down to those who were "dead" spiritually, and raised us to "life" making us spiritually alive together with Christ. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, physically, you and I who **believe** in Christ are raised up from the "dead", spiritually.

Jesus said in John, chapter 5 in verse 24, *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has everlasting life and will not be condemned."* So we hear the Word and hear the message concerning Christ Jesus; His death, His burial, and His resurrection and WHEN we believe that message, our hearts respond with faith in what Christ has accomplished for us. As believers, we believe in Him and we put our full weight of trust on the Lord Jesus. And when we do that, eternal life becomes ours and we will never be condemned.

"God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24)." Were we condemned when we were born into this world? Yes! We're all born spiritually "dead." We were under the condemnation of God, but through faith in Jesus we are brought out from underneath that condemnation because now that we're in Christ, the Spirit of God is living in us. Jesus concludes verse 24 of chapter 5 by saying, *"When that happens you have crossed over from "DEATH" into "LIFE."*

What happens to you at the moment of salvation? You went from being a "DEAD" person spiritually to being one fully "ALIVE" in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God came to live in you and you are now spiritually "alive." God is the source of spiritual life. God is the source of life everlasting and it comes from above and you can't find it in religion, philosophy or anything else in this world.

So once again, "What is salvation?" Salvation is restoring man to his true humanity. God created Adam and Eve fully "alive", spiritually (body, soul, and spirit). They had a relationship with God, the Father. There was nothing that stood between them and God until the moment they were deceived and believed Satan and disobeyed God. At that moment when they sinned God's Spirit left Adam and Eve and spiritual "death" entered their lives. Death entered the world and impacted all of us. Through this gospel message God restores that "life" in each and every one of us who put our faith and trust in Christ Jesus. God's intention and plan was for us to be fully "alive" in Christ Jesus with the Spirit of God living back in us just as it was when God created Adam and Eve so

we can have that love relationship with God for all eternity.

In John 3:3, Jesus said to the religious man Nicodemus, "*I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is BORN AGAIN.*" That's what happens at our new birth, we're born again of the "spirit." God's Spirit left mankind when Adam and Eve sinned and we were all born into this world "dead", spiritually. But when we come to Christ by faith, He sends the Holy Spirit to take up residence in us and in our lives. At that moment we're fully "alive", with God's spirit living in us and we're exactly what God had intended us to be just as in the beginning when He first created Adam and Eve. Here you have God restoring man back to his true humanity – born-again of the spirit.

We can't live the so-called Christian life on our own. It's an impossibility to try to walk that path through human efforts. It just can't happen. Jesus (God's Spirit) had to come and take up residence in us so that we can have hope of experiencing what God desired for us all along. Jesus Christ in us is our hope of glory (Col.1:27). Christ in man just as God intended it from the very beginning. Jesus took away our sins at the cross. He was raised from the dead so He could make us "alive" together with Him and when He comes to live inside of us; the transaction is complete. That's why Paul says, "*If anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come** (2 Corinthians 5:17)!*" Becoming a believer in Christ can be likened to a caterpillar being transformed into a butterfly. Although you might not always act like a good "butterfly," you're never going to be a worm again!

Salvation is 100% assured. You can never lose your salvation.

Here's God's testimony concerning believers. In Hebrews 13:5 God says, "*Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.*" I think it is one of the most comforting words that we can ever read as we go through the pages of the New Testament. We come to this point and Paul makes this declaration: it's a statement of fact. God said He will never leave us nor forsake us. Do you believe that?

Well, you may say, "What happens if we sin now that we have the Spirit of God in us?" Well, He just said He would never leave us or forsake us. **If Jesus won't leave you; how are you going to leave Jesus?** This is just not possible!

So when we as believers do wrong, guess who's there with you: Jesus? Guess what He is going to say to us at that very moment. You see that wrong you just did? Well, I took it away once and for all at the cross. I stood in your place and took the punishment and died, so that you can have life everlasting. You are a forgiven person. Wow, and all that we can say is thank you, Lord Jesus. Thank you that you have promised that You would never leave us and never forsake us and that you can give us a deeper understanding of truth. For apart from you I can do nothing. Thank you for showing this to me for what it truly is so that I can get my eyes and mind refocused on You. Thank you that you're here with me forever regardless of what I may do and that there is no longer any condemnation to those who are in Christ.

Some people may think this, that every time you sin there is a black checkmark next to your name and you have to do everything that you could possibly do to get that black mark erased. Pretty soon by your name you could not distinguish the checkmarks anymore as it was just one black line. But that's not how God operates. The checkmarks are gone and He remembers our sins no more.

The Bible is God's testimony concerning Jesus, and here at the end of the New Testament we get a conclusion in 1 John 5:13. To those believers in Christ, God has given them eternal life and that was God's desire for you and me all along; that we have eternal life and to be with God everlasting, never again to be separated from Him. John wrote these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know with 100% assurance that you have eternal life and that you could never lose your salvation. So why is this true? I am going to ask a couple of questions to review what has been said.

1. What caused Adam's "death" or spiritual separation from

God? Sin! Adam sinned, he died and he brought spiritual "death" to all the entire human family.

2. Now does your sin carry the same penalty? Yes! Who took the penalty (punishment) for your sins? Jesus did! Is Jesus going to come back to die again for you when you do wrong in your day-to-day walk with Christ? No! He did it once and He did it for all. Did His death on the cross take away your sins once and for all; past, present, and future? Yes!

Because of the cross; will the Spirit of God ever depart from you when you sin? No, that would be death; wouldn't it? The wages of sin certainly is death but who took your punishment for you? Christ Jesus did. He took your punishment for you and there is none left for you. Now, you could not have eternal life until the cause of death was dealt with eternally. Therefore, because of the finality of the Cross; you as a believer are complete in Him, who is the head over every power and authority. You have been given completeness in Christ. There is nothing more to add to you; Jesus has done it all, and because you're in Him; you are complete. Now, can you add to that? No! His divine power has given us everything that we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. So are you lacking anything as far as this life of godliness is concerned? No, you have it all! His divine power has given us everything.

Now in Him we have redemption through His blood; that's freedom. We were bound to the law of sin and death and were prisoners of sin but through the blood of Jesus we have been set free. We have been redeemed from that old way of life so that we could walk in newness of life. So, if you're in Him, you have redemption and you have the forgiveness of sins.

So what is the conclusion to all of this? When Jesus saves, He saves completely. He did not offer a partial salvation. He didn't offer a temporary reprieve but saved us completely. Because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood (Heb.7:24). Jesus died, the body of Jesus was put into a grave and then He was raised three days later. And now He has taken up His rightful place at the

right hand of God, the Father, in heaven. He lives forever and because He lives forever His priesthood endures forever and therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because He always lives and intercedes for us.

In 1 Timothy 2:5; Paul says, "*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*" So I want to ask you:

1. Can your religion mediate between you and God? No!
2. Can your church mediate between you and God? No!
3. Can your minister or priest mediate between you and God? No!
4. Can the Pope mediate between you and God? No!

There is only ONE who can intercede for us, the Man Christ Jesus.

So, do you want to continue in your religion and traditions; to be religious but lost eternally, or to be in Christ Jesus and have "life", eternally? The choice is yours and whatever you choose, you will have to live with that for all eternity. If you're still unsure of your salvation, it's time for you to get anchored to the gospel message of His death, burial and resurrection. It's time for you to rest fully in what Christ Jesus has accomplished for you, once and for all.

God views our relationship with Him as permanent. Referring to all those who believe in Him, Jesus Christ said of us, "*I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall NEVER perish, and no one shall SNATCH them out of My hand (John 10:27-29).*" Rest assured if you are in Christ Jesus, you can't lose your salvation.

Once you come to this realization, I want you to write down in the front of your Bible, this date. Today, I know for sure that I am saved. Is Satan going to try to raise doubts? Absolutely! Guess what you can do when Satan tries to do that. You can just look right there in the front of your Bible; look at that particular date and you can say, "Satan; thanks for reminding me of this complete salvation that Jesus gave to me." Satan may try other tactics but as far as your salvation is concerned he knows you are secure.

***"It is finished."* Believers have been redeemed and reconciled to God through the finished work of Christ Jesus on the cross.**

In the very beginning of this chapter, I said, "Christ Jesus calls us to freedom." Now I'm not talking just about heaven when we die physically. I'm talking about something that happens now, the moment that faith is exercised. You have this opportunity to know Jesus now, to know God, the Father, now. God has brought you to this point where you can have a personal relationship with Him now; where you can grow in His love, in His grace, in His mercy and where your heart can align with His. Why not experience that freedom that God offers, now? What's holding you back from experiencing this relationship with God the Father, now? There's nothing in life that is more important than this; nothing. It is the most important decision you'll ever have to make. How you respond to Him, determines your eternal destination.

God is not going to send anyone to a place reserved for Satan (hell) because of his sins. That issue has been dealt with once and for all by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus on the cross, who took away the sins of the entire world; past, present, and future, never to be held against you again. The only thing that can keep you from heaven is your **unbelief** in Christ Jesus and what He has accomplished for you on Calvary's cross nearly 2,000 years ago. It's all of what He did for us and it's none of us or what can we do!

We can never again be "*children of wrath*" once we have been indwelt by God's Spirit and become "*children of God.*" **Will you open your heart's door and invite Him in?** (Read John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23)