
CHAPTER 2 : SALVATION

But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

(Gal 3:22)

A. Man's Need of Salvation

God's original intent was one of covenant and relationship with mankind. However the "fall" and "sin" have caused a separation and enabled death to reign. Man's need of salvation is as a result of sin, as a holy God cannot touch sin.

A.1 Sin Separates

"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God" (Isa 59:2a)

A.2 Sin is Universal

No one understands; no one seeks for God. (Romans 3:10b)

All of mankind is party to sin.

- By birth:

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12)

"For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5)

Therefore, sin is our spiritual heritage as a result of the fall.

- By action:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
(Romans 3:23)

A.3. Sin Has A Penalty

The penalty for sin is divine judgement and death.

“For the wages of sin is death.” (Ro 6:23a) “The soul who sins shall die.” (Eze 18:4b)

A.4. Summary

All of humankind is subject to sin. Sin separates humankind from God’s intent which is covenant relationship and intimacy. Sin enables death to reign.

B. God’s Provision Of A Saviour

B.1. Man Cannot Save Himself

“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment”. (Isa 64:6a)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast”. (Eph 2:8-9)

B.2. This Does Not Leave Us Without Hope

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.: (Jn 3:16)

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us”
(1Jn 3:16a)

B.3. What Qualifies Jesus To Remove The Effects Of Sin?

- He was born to a virgin and therefore was not subject to sin passed on as a heritage (original sin, see, for example, Ro 5:12).
- He committed no sin himself (Heb 4:15).
- Jesus suffered the punishment (wrath) of God for sin and so He became the sacrifice who atones for sin and stands as a substitution in the place of sinful mankind: “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”(Ro 5:8-9) “But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;”(Isa 53:5a/Ac 4:12)
- He broke the power of death in that He rose from the dead (see 1Co 15:3-6 and Heb 2:14-15).

B.4. Summary

God created man, man fell, and all are subject to the power of sin. God has provided a saviour as the solution: the Saviour died as a substitutionary¹ sacrifice. Clearly, however, this redemption does not apply to everyone because the Bible states that some will be committed to hell at the judgement.

C. Who Can Be Saved?

Potentially, all people can be saved. It depends on their response to the revelation of God. It is God's desire that all should be saved (1Ti 2:4), He died for the "world" (Jn 3:16). But in actuality not everyone is saved. The question then is, "How is one saved?"

D. How Is One Saved?

Paul exhorted the people to "repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ac 20:21). Jesus began His preaching saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."(Mk 1:15). Both of these texts highlight the twofold biblical requirement for salvation: repentance and faith (see Heb 6:1-2). What do they involve?

D.1. Repentance

The Greek word "metanoia" literally means "to change one's mind." This means that repentance is not a state of remorse or feeling sorry but rather a decision. It is an act of the will rather than an issue of emotion. Of course, the decision may be accompanied by great emotion but repentance itself is the changing of our mind.

This changing of our mind and consequently of the direction of our entire life is:

- A recognition of our sinfulness.
- A decision to live according to God's revealed will for His chosen people.

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Ac 2:38a).

¹ In other words, to stand in the place of.

D.2. Faith

This requires us to put our trust in—and adhere to—the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. There is no work or action that a person can do to entitle him to justification.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works”(Eph 2:8-9a) A gift cannot be earned it can only be received.

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith” (Ro :1a) Justification is a legal term which applies to those who have been absolved of their guilt. To be absolved from the guilt applicable to all mankind as a result of sin one must believe in the saving work of Jesus Christ. Faith then is believing God’s word.

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Co 5:21) God’s word is truth (Jn 17:17) and contains no lie. Therefore we can trust it wholeheartedly.

E. Working Out Your Salvation

From the moment we repent and believe in Jesus, we enter God’s kingdom. This is described as being “born again” (Jn 3:3). From this point of entering the kingdom until the end of our earthly life, we need to live in repentance (a constant bowing to the word of God) and faith in Jesus as Saviour.

Jesus said in Jn 10:27-30, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” So once we are saved our salvation is protected by Jesus—no one can rob us of it. But the Bible also says in 2Ti 2:12b, “If we deny him, he also will deny us;”

And so we are encouraged to persevere in our faith until we die, or until Christ returns. Heb 10:35-36 says, “So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.” As we persevere in righteousness, good works, faithfulness and persecution we are rewarded with eternal treasures by God (see, for example, Heb 11:26, Mt 6:1-6, Mt 6:16-21, Mt 10:41-42, Mt 16:27 and Lk 6:22-23).