

SERIES

ON

JUST WHAT IS?

written by
EDGAR LEE PASCHALL
Pastor
NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
1661 Griggstown RD
Calvert City, KY 42029
E-MAIL: edgarleepaschall@juno.com
WEB SITE: www.thepersuader.org

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JUST WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

In dealing with salvation there are many terms we hear and think we know what they mean. But sometimes when they are defined Biblically many have to say they did not know what those terms meant. Repentance is one of those terms that little is written about, especially in modern days, and few preach about it which results in even fewer experiencing it. Therefore, there are very few really saved in our so-called "Christian society."

Just what is repentance? To answer that question let me ask and answer some other questions.

1. Where does repentance come from?

From heaven which is above. (John 3:27) Repentance is included in this verse. The goodness of God brings it. (Rom. 2:4) It is granted (to give or bestow as a gift) by God. (Acts 11:18) It is worked by godly sorrow. (II Cor. 7:10)

2. Who is to repent?

Sinners as well as saints need to repent. (II Peter 3:9; II Chron. 7:14) For a sinner it is necessary to go to heaven and for saints it is necessary to maintain fellowship.

3. Why do they need repentance?

- 1) The Lord commands it. (Acts 17:30)
- 2) John the Baptist preached it. (Mat. 3:1-2)
- 3) Jesus preached it and warned about it. (Mat. 4:17; Luke 13:3,5)
- 4) The apostles were sent forth to preach it. (Mark 6:7,12)
- 5) Commanded in the great commission. (Luke 24:46-47)
- 6) Paul preached it. (Acts 20:21)
- 7) Peter preached it. (Acts 2:38)
- 8) It is a message from hell. (Luke 16:30)
- 9) It is a must if we are to have forgiveness of sin.
- 10) It glorifies God. (Luke 15:7,10)

4. When can one repent?

When Holy Ghost conviction is completed. (John 16:8-11) Now in this age (day) of grace while there is an open door, a preacher of righteousness, and a striving Spirit. It will be too late after the day of grace had ended and the wrath falls. (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:10-11)

5. Just what is repentance?

To answer this we need to first look at what it is not:

- 1) Religion--It is not doing penance or afflicting the body in any manner. It is not being baptized nor just praying the words "I repent."
- 2) Remorse--It is not crying or weeping, even though you will when repentance is worked. It is not a phobia or fear of hell. Many are just sorry they got caught in their sin but were not willing to repent.
- 3) Reformation--it is not turning over a new leaf nor changing the outside by quitting drinking, cursing, and etc. It is not law keeping.

b. What is repentance?

The Greek definition means a change of mind which involves a change of attitude and a change of direction--a turning around from sin, self, and the world and turning to the Lord, taking up sides with God against yourself. A person will not and can not do that without a completed work of Holy Ghost Conviction. (John 16: 8-11)

One departed saint of God gave this definition of repentance: "Repentance is an awakened sinner giving up all pretension to righteousness and natural goodness, and taking his place as an utterly lost, wicked, condemned, hell-deserving sinner at the feet of a Holy God realizing his only hope is for God to pardon him and forgive him for Jesus sake. Whether it takes the Holy Spirit a few days, a few weeks, or even years, to bring a sinner to that place, he must be brought there or he will never be saved. The sinner who never comes to that place never gets saved."

Many say that all a person has to do to be saved is just believe. But faith without repentance is a structure in mid-air, without a foundation and that will not stand.

6. What are the results of repentance?

A good example is found in the model church of Thessalonica. In I Thess. 1: 9-10 we find where they turned (work of repentance) and five things were brought about. These same five things will be worked in some form in every heart where repentance has been worked.

1) Hunger for God--they "turned to God" (verse 9) which made them new creatures (II Cor. 5: 17) and produced new desires.

a. Desire for the milk of the Word. (I Peter 2: 2; II Tim. 2: 15)

b. Desire to follow the Lord. "Not my will but thine" will be your attitude.

c. Desire to fellowship with the Lord and His saints. (Heb. 10: 25) A good example is Legion. (Luke 8: 35, 38)

2) Hatred for sin--turned "from idols." (verse 9)

a. Legion clothed himself. (Luke 8: 35)

b. In Ephesus they burned their idols. (Acts 19: 18-19)

c. One who repents hates sin because he fears God. (Pro. 8: 13) Fear means a reverential awe of God with a hatred for evil.

3) Heart for service--turned "to serve the living and true God." (verse 9)

a. Legion began to publish (same word as preach) how great things Jesus had done for him. (Mark 5: 19-20)

b. The Woman at the well began to testify of all the Lord told her and many believed because of her testimony. (John 4: 28-29, 39)

c. All saints, not just preachers, are commanded to proclaim the gospel. (Mark 16: 15; Acts 1: 8)

d. We are to serve when, where, and how the Lord so directs.

4) Hope for the rapture--"wait for his Son from heaven." (verse 10)

The word "rapture" is not a Bible word but a Bible principle. We are taught to wait (speaks of waiting with patience and confident expectancy) and look (expectant longing; Titus 2: 13) for the Blessed hope who is Jesus--the same one God raised from the dead and the same one God promised would come again to rapture His saints. (Acts 1: 11--this same Jesus; I Thess. 4: 16--the Lord himself, not another)

5) Happiness for deliverance from wrath to come. (verse 10)

Wrath abideth on all the lost. (John 3: 36; Eph. 2: 3; Rom. 1: 18) But saints are

delivered from all of God's wrath in any form. (I Thess. 5:9) If a person has experienced true repentance he will be delivered from:

a. Wrath during the end time. (Rev. 6:17) This wrath is described in Rev. chapters 8,9,10,11, and 16 as the trumpets, vials, and thunders but the saints are already caught out and are seen in Rev. 7:9.

b. Lake of fire after the Great White Throne of Judgment. (Rev. 20:11-15) The saints will not be cast in the lake of fire because they are in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) and the second death (separation from God forever in the lake of fire) will have no power on them.

Have you experienced genuine repentance? If so, that is great! But if you haven't, you can, while there is a striving Spirit, an open door, and a preacher of righteousness. There is hope in this age (day) of grace. Continue in His Word (John 8:31-32) and allow the Lord to finish His work of repentance in you.

This article just gives the basics. If you would like to receive the tapes (2) on this message please let us know. They are at no charge, just for the asking. If we can be of help please let us know. We care. Sept.-Dec., 2001

JUST WHAT IS GODLY SORROW?

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." II Cor. 7:9-11

In our last paper I dealt with repentance and stated that repentance is necessary for one to be saved. I also stated that repentance was worked by godly sorrow. Therefore, if repentance is necessary for one to be saved, then you can be sure that godly sorrow is necessary also, for godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation. (II Cor. 7:10)

We sometimes use the terms godly sorrow, reproof, and Holy Ghost conviction synonymously for they are so closely connected it is hard to separate them. But, in this article, I would like to make a distinction and separate these three terms.

Holy Ghost conviction is a phrase used by old time preachers and saints who knew what real salvation was. No where in the Bible can we find the words "Holy Ghost conviction" but the principle is found in the Bible. Holy Ghost conviction is the umbrella that includes both reproof (John 16:8) and godly sorrow. (II Cor. 7:10) That is why we have used these terms interchangeably.

When we break it down, we find godly sorrow is the emotional part of Holy Ghost conviction while reproof is the fact producing part of Holy Ghost conviction, and you must have both for salvation to be a reality. Reproof, which means conviction, can come in facts only and there be no emotions involved. For example: Have you ever heard of a man sentenced (convicted) to life in prison and the news media says, "He showed no emotion?" You can have your emotions stirred and not have understanding. This results in a false profession because there must be some understanding in the areas of sin, righteousness, and judgment before one is saved. (John 16:8-11) A person is not saved by just an

emotional experience, but your emotions will be involved when you are saved because of godly sorrow.

Just what is godly sorrow?

Godly sorrow is a deep God caused grief and when that occurs you will grieve outwardly and inwardly. In II Cor. 7:9 Paul said, "Ye were made sorry after a godly manner." This means "ye were grieved according to God" because godly sorrow is a work of God. I know that II Cor. 7:10 is dealing with a saved man in context but the principle for repentance to be worked is the same in a sinner; therefore, this verse can be used for doctrine as II Tim. 3:16 bears out.

Worldly sorrow worketh death. (II Cor. 7:10) This is all Judas had in Mat. 27:3. "Repented" in this verse means little or nothing more than a selfish dread of the consequences of what one has done. A lot of sorrowfulness in our altars today is really just sorry that they were caught up with--a regret because of the consequences of one's act or acts. Worldly sorrow worketh death, which is exactly what Judas did--hanged himself. A lot of people had rather commit suicide than allow godly sorrow to work repentance in their heart.

Just what is Godly sorrow?

To answer this question we can look at the final product worked by godly sorrow in II Cor. 7:11. "Wrought" in this verse is the same Greek word as "worketh" in verse 10 and means result in, accomplish, or achieve. There are seven things listed in verse 11 that are a result of a person being grieved according to God--godly sorrow.

1. Carefulness.

Carefulness means diligent, watchful earnestness, or moving in the right direction with a careful, steady effort. It means to give serious attention to detail. Godly sorrow working in a person before they are saved will cause that one to look at what is working in him in detail. The Bible says, "try the spirits." (I John 4:1) If it is godly sorrow it will bring a disgust for sin and it will cause you to give serious attention to detail. If it is not godly sorrow, it is not of God and it will come to naught.

When godly sorrow is finished or complete and a person is saved, it will cause him to examine with a careful, steady effort as he searches out the ingredients of salvation. (II Cor. 13:5)

2. Clearing of yourselves.

Clearing means verbal defense or apology. Before one is saved he will put up a verbal defense with God, saying "I am not guilty." He will try to settle the account by doing--works. (Eph. 2:9) As he looks at the balance sheet of his life, all he sees is liabilities--sins--because of the sin of unbelief. Then when conviction (means to prove guilty; condemned; sentenced: John 3:18) comes he sees himself as a sinner for the first time and realizes his lostness (separation from God). Why is this? Because he adds everything up, sees himself as a sinner, gets backed into a corner, and ask the question, "How is this debt going to be taken care of?" Thus, he states, "I am guilty"--apology. But when saved he is cleared--the account is settled--justified--no longer condemned. (John

5:24)

3. Indignation.

Indignation means anger or scorn resulting from injustice, ingratitude, or meanness. It also means righteous anger. Before a person is saved, when godly sorrow starts working, he has a tendency to get angry at God and then others. He usually gets frustrated and blames everyone else, especially the preacher who preached specifics about real salvation. Then he gets mad at his sin and then, himself. Godly sorrow is working. After he is saved, he will experience righteous anger--hatred for evil. (Eph. 4:26)

4. Fear.

The word fear means to be afraid, alarmed, scared, reverence, or respect. When godly sorrow begins to work on an unsaved person, he usually becomes afraid and trembles in his soul over judgment--fear of hell. But as godly sorrow continues to work it will produce a reverence and awe toward God with a hatred for evil in that person. When one is afraid of their dad and the discipline he administers, that fear will cause him to respect and reverence him. The same is true with God. First, there will be a fear of divine wrath (the Lord does not save you just to keep you out of hell but for His glory) then a fear of sinning against the Lord again.

5. Vehement desire.

The word vehement means hot, strong, intense, and earnest. When coupled with desire it means a longing. For what? When godly sorrow begins working in a person it begins with being awakened which is more than just being made aware. His heart is stirred or pricked which causes him to begin to seek the Lord Jesus. The reason for this is because the Lord sought him first. As the Holy Spirit convinces of sin and righteousness--which is a person--Jesus (I Cor. 1:30), there comes a longing (vehement desire) in his heart for Jesus. The longing is not just to be saved to escape hell but a longing for Him. (I John 5:12) After one is saved there is a longing to love Him, which causes you to desire to be what you should, do what you should, and go where you should.

6. Zeal.

The word zeal means intense enthusiasm and, or devotion. Before a person is saved, while godly sorrow is working, when he recognizes his condition, he has an eagerness to do something about it, even though he is helpless because salvation is of the Lord. Therefore he meets his responsibility by actively seeking the Lord Jesus. This is actively waiting (Luke 13:24), not passive waiting, for godly sorrow to have a complete work. After one is saved he has a zeal in immediately taking a right course and in seeking a remedy for the effects of sin and for God's honor. Also there will be an eagerness to worship the Lord, come to church, and serve the Lord in whatever capacity he sees fit.

7. Revenge.

The word revenge means punishment or vengeance. Before a person is saved godly sorrow passes sentence on your sin. (Rom. 6:23) He will say, "I deserve hell." But through the working of godly sorrow by the Holy Spirit he sees God punishing His Son for his sin on the cross. God took vengeance on His Son instead of him. When saved he can say, "I'm vindicated, justified, and righteous because He imputed His righteousness upon

me at the instant I believed."

These seven things are a work of godly sorrow. Notice the phrase, "ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" in II Cor. 7:11. The "matter" referred to is godly sorrow working repentance to salvation. The word "approved" means to prove, to show, and to establish without doubt--to yourself and others. (II Cor. 13:5)

Your actions, attitudes, and speech will prove to others you are a work of God--godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. How long does it take for godly sorrow to complete its work in you? Just as long as it takes. How much godly sorrow do you need? Enough to produce repentance.

Godly sorrow will work when it works, and when it works, you do not have to work because you are the work. When godly sorrow is finished, repentance will be worked, faith will be given, then and only then you can and will believe unto salvation.

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Jan.-March, 2002

JUST WHAT IS REPROVAL?

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. (John 16:7-11)

This is the third message in the "Just What Is" series. We have written on repentance and godly sorrow, both of which are necessary in a person's life for them to be saved. Now we are writing on "Just What is Reproval?" which is also necessary for one to be saved. We have used the terms godly sorrow, reproof, and Holy Ghost conviction synonymously, for they are so closely connected, it is hard to separate them. But, in this article, I would like to make a distinction and separate these three terms.

Holy Ghost conviction is a phrase used by old time preachers and saints who knew what real salvation was. No where in the Bible can we find the words "Holy Ghost conviction" but the principle is found in the Bible. Holy Ghost conviction is the umbrella that includes both reproof (John 16:8) and godly sorrow. II Cor. 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." That is why we have used these terms interchangeably.

When we break it down, we find godly sorrow is the emotional part of Holy Ghost conviction, while reproof is the fact producing part of Holy Ghost conviction, and you must have both for salvation to be a reality. You can have your emotions stirred and not understand some facts about sin, righteousness, and judgment. This will result in a false profession. You can have some understanding of facts and your emotions not be stirred, which will also result in a false profession. There must be some understanding of some facts--reproof and your emotions must be stirred--godly sorrow, for your salvation to be

real. Today I want to deal with the factual part of Holy Ghost conviction as we deal with the subject "Just what is Reproval?"

The Greek word for "reprove" in verse 8 is also translated "rebuke," "tell a fault," "convince," and "convict" in the Bible (KJV). II Peter 1:20: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." Therefore, we need to look at these five English words that are translated from the same Greek word to find out "Just what is reproval?"

A. Definition of Reproval.

1. Reprove. verse 8

"Reprove" means to lay blame on someone with the purpose or intention of correcting the problem. When the light of reproval is turned on, we are put in a position to have the real condition of our heart exposed and we have a tendency to blame everyone else for the problem--pass the buck, so as to speak. We usually blame the preacher who is just a light "turner-oner." But, in reality we are blaming God, who is the Light.

We place blame on others to get the pressure off of us or to get the attention off of us or to get others in trouble. But that is not the case with the Holy Ghost. When He lays blame (reproves) us, He does it for the purpose of correcting the problem.

2. Rebuke. I Tim. 5:20:

"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

"Rebuke" means to reprove--sharply and sternly with authority. The Holy Ghost has the authority to lay blame on us. When He rebukes us we have two choices. One choice is to seek more light. After Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost pricked (rebuked) the heart of those present and they chose to seek more light. Acts 2:37: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The second choice one can make is to reject the light they have. When Stephen preached to the Jewish council in Acts 7, the Holy Ghost used the message to rebuke them and they were cut to the heart. Acts 7:54: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." Instead of them seeking more light and being saved like those in Acts 2, they rejected the light they had and tried to put out the light by stoning Stephen.

3. Tell a fault. Mat. 18:15:

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

"Tell a fault" means to give evidence of. That is done by life and lip. Phil. 1:27 says to let your life be such that it adds to the gospel--to give evidence of the gospel. ("Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ. Phil. 1:27) Also one can give evidence that a real work of grace has been done in his life by preaching and testifying. But, if his life does not give evidence first, then it would be better for one to keep his lips sealed, for your actions speak louder than words. When your life and lip gives evidence of what the Lord has done in your life, that reproves others.

4. Convince. Titus 1:9:

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound

doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

"Convince" means to persuade by argument using the evidence at hand. The Holy Ghost argues with you because you argue with Him. He speaks to your heart and says you do not have fruit of your profession—you are not saved. And you argue back using your empty profession as your justification. Then He gives evidence of what real fruit is by showing you someone whose life and lip give evidence they possess something real. If you do not reject what He shows you, it will lead you to the place in your life to where you are convinced "I need what they have" or better yet "I need who they have."

5. Convict. John 8:9:

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."

"Convict" means the state of being proven guilty; it also means a firm belief based upon the facts at hand.

The summary of these five words and a full definition of the Holy Ghost's work of reproof is to lay blame on someone sharply and sternly with authority using the evidence at hand to persuade by argument that individual and bring him to a state of being proven guilty. This is all done with the purpose or intention of correcting the problem--bringing them to salvation.

B. Reproof consists of three things.

1. Sin. Verse 9; John 3:18:

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

"On" in verse 9 and "in" in John 3:18 means to come to a point, place, and time with a purpose. This can only be done after the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost is completed in all three areas--sin, righteousness, and judgment. "Sin" is singular not plural; therefore, the Holy Ghost reproofs of the root of sin, not the fruit. He may deal with the fruit to get to the root. Man deals with the fruit--sins such as lying, stealing, drinking, stealing, and adultery. The Holy Ghost deals with the root--unbelief. Unbelief is wicked and must be dealt with by the Holy Ghost and then, by you, if you are ever going to be saved.

2. Judgment. Verse 11

One must see judgment before he will be saved because wrath remains (abides) on an unbeliever. John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." This is more than knowing you are going to hell. The Lord does not save you to keep you out of hell but for His glory. If all you had before your profession was a fear of hell, you did not have a completed work of reproof. Once we see judgment rightly, it will back us into a corner of desperation and no hope within ourselves and then the Holy Ghost will show you the Door which is Jesus--Righteousness--the third part of the work of reproof.

3. Righteousness. Verse 10

This righteousness does not refer to self-righteousness nor acts of righteousness man may think he can perform. Mat. 5:20: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness

shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." It refers to the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:") who is hidden in the bosom of the Father and must be revealed to you by the Holy Ghost. The Jew's problem as well as ours, is that they would not submit to Jesus Christ as Lord. Rom. 10:3: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." For one to be saved he must submit to Jesus Christ as his Lord at the point of salvation.

For a person to be saved he must be reprov'd of all three--sin, righteousness, and judgment. Many are "short-circuited" by well meaning preachers and so called "soulwinners" who do not allow the Holy Ghost to complete His work of reproof. Remember, connected and intertwined with reproof is godly sorrow which, when completed, works repentance unto salvation. II Cor. 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

Has the Holy Ghost worked reproof and godly sorrow to completion in your life? If He has then you can say, "I'm saved." But if it is not a complete work yet, get honest with your self and seek more light. I beg you not to reject these truths. To do so will cause an awful announcement one day at the Great White Throne of judgment. Mat. 7:23: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

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April-June, 2002

JUST WHAT IS FAITH?

"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. 3:6-9

This is the fourth message in the "Just What Is?" series we have written on repentance, godly sorrow, and reproof, all of which are necessary in a person's life for them to be saved. Now we are writing on "Just What is Faith?" which is also necessary for one to be saved.

I heard of a group who were given a pen and a paper and told to write down a definition of faith and the best answer would win a prize. Many definitions were written out but when the winner's definition was read it was Heb. 11:1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." How could anyone improve on what God's inspired, breathed Word said? Faith is trust in the unseen, not trust in the unknown, for we may know by faith what we cannot see with the eye. Faith is the ultimate assurance and the ultimate evidence that things not

seen are realities. Faith is heavenly currency with which one can enter the market place of heaven and purchase what is available, which is far more than our minds can handle for Paul said in Eph. 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Therefore, Heb. 11:1 is a true definition of faith.

The Bible has much to say about faith and there are different kinds of faith. Therefore, I want to look at the subject of "faith" from the Bible.

1. The Steps of Faith.

"And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." (Rom. 4:12) Rom. 4:12 speaks of the steps of faith Abraham had which led him to receive imputed righteousness in Gen. 15:6. "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

What are these steps of faith?

1) 1st Step: Intellectual faith.

The first step of faith is an intellectual faith which consists of recognizing that God is or that He exists. Heb. 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Abraham, as an idol worshipper in the Ur of the Chaldees, had light of his conscience (Rom. 1:19: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.") and light of creation (Rom. 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.") but he needed a human instrumentality to tell him from experience about God. (Rom. 10:14-15: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!") This could have been Shem (Noah's son) who was still alive in Abraham's day. He or someone who had experienced God went to Ur and told the whole crowd of idol worshipers about God and his experience with Him. Out of the whole crowd only Abraham believed. Does that mean he was saved? No. He just had intellectual faith that God is. For a person to be saved, he must have this step of faith because it will lead him to another step of faith.

2) 2nd Step: Seeking Faith.

The second step of faith--seeking faith--caused Abraham to leave his country. (Heb. 11:8,10: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.") Does that mean he was saved? No. In fact he, as yet, had not even been told about the seed which was Christ. Acts 7:2-4 tells us what God spoke to him in Ur and then Gen. 12:1-3 tells us what God spoke to him in Haran when he was 75 years old. Neither of those encounters mentions the seed--Christ. For a person to be saved he must have this step of faith--seeking faith--and it will lead him to the next step of faith.

3) 3rd Step: Saving Faith.

Abraham exercised saving faith in Gen. 15:6 ("And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.") nine years after entering Canaan. This could have been as long as 41 years after he left Ur. During these nine years in Canaan, Abraham was tested by famine, which caused him to go to Egypt where he lied about his wife, saying she was his sister. While he failed this test, Abraham did a lot of things right such as: built altars and worshiped, called on the name of the Lord, separated from Lot, fought a battle to deliver his nephew from captivity, paid tithes, and had the promise enlarged to include the Seed--Christ. The main thing he did right was that he continued seeking and never went back to his former country. (Heb. 11:15: "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.") He was still frustrated in Gen. 15:1 ("After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." but saving faith came and He was saved in Gen. 15:6. ("And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.") If a person has this step of faith in his life, it will lead to another step of faith.

4) 4th Step: Serving Faith

This step of faith was very evident in Abraham's life when he was 99 years old when Isaac was conceived by two dead bodies. (Rom. 4:18-21: "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.") The evidence of this step was also seen in Gen. 22 when he offered up Isaac. (Heb. 11:17: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.")

These are the steps of faith. Which step or steps have you taken? Let me say, salvation only comes at step 3. Also I want to clarify, salvation is not progressive but instantaneous. It comes at the point saving faith is exercised.

Space does not allow me to go into detail with some other points concerning faith but I will just give you the points.

2. Faith works. (James 2:17)

This is true of intellectual, seeking, saving, or serving faith.

3. Faith comes from above, from the Lord Jesus, given as a gift. (John 3:27; Eph. 2:8) It is not your faith, it is His faith. (Gal. 2:16, 20; Eph. 3:12)

4. We are blessed if in the steps of faith. (Gal. 3:6-9)

5. We are justified by faith alone. (Rom. 3:28)

6. We are to live by faith. (Heb. 2:4, Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11)

7. We have access to the grace wherein we stand by faith. (Rom. 5:2)

8. We see many had victory by faith in Heb. 11.

This article just gives the basics. If you would like to receive the tape on this message, please let us know. We have it available in the series "Just what is?" They are at no charge, just for the asking. If we can be of help in any way please let us know. We care.

July-September, 2002

JUST WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 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." Rom. 3:21-25

This is the fifth message in the "Just What is?" series. We have written on repentance, godly sorrow, reproof, and faith, all of which are necessary in a person's life for them to be saved. Now we are writing on "Just What Is Righteousness?" which is also necessary for one to be saved.

The word righteousness is used 289 times in the Bible (198 times in the OT and 91 times in the NT). Greek dictionaries define righteousness as 1) the condition acceptable to God; 2) the character or quality of being right or just. Webster's says righteousness is nearly equivalent to holiness, comprehending holy principles, affections of heart, and conformity of life to the divine law. "Just what is righteousness?"

1. Required to enter heaven

Remember the definition--the condition acceptable to God. Thus self-righteousness will not be accepted by Him. Jesus makes this clear in Mat. 5:20. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Pharisees are a country mile ahead of us in their self-righteousness yet that is not good enough and will not be accepted at the judgment. Mat. 7:22-23: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

2. Resounded in every generation

Noah was a preacher of righteousness in His generation. II Peter 2:5: "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." His work of building the ark in obedience to the Lord's command sounded out righteousness in his generation. The same is true in every generation, for God has had His men heralding forth the righteousness of God as the only

way to enter heaven. In Elijah's day, which was a dark time, he thought he was the only one heralding out righteousness but the Lord told him in I King 19:18: "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

3. Read in the Scriptures

In Rom. 3:21, the phrase law and prophets is a designation of the OT, thus the Scripture states plainly the righteousness that God requires is witnessed (testified--to give a first hand detailed account) in the OT. The righteousness God requires is "without the law." This verse clearly shows that men even in OT times were not justified by the law because the law was not given to justify man. This is stated plainly in the NT in Rom. 3:20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." and in Gal. 3:24: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Man has always been justified by the righteousness of God. This is not a new doctrine because it was witnessed by a 2-fold witness (Rom. 3:21)-- the law and prophets--OT Scripture. Deut. 19:15: "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." Therefore, it is established that righteousness is required to enter heaven.

4. Revealed in the gospel

Rom. 1:16-17: "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." "Therein" of verse 17 refers to the gospel of Christ in verse 16 which Paul defined in I Cor. 15:3-4, ("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.") where he referred to OT Scripture as the "death, burial, and resurrection" of the Lord Jesus. The gospel includes the virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious death, burial, resurrection, ascension, ministry of intercession, and His bodily coming back again. Isa. 53:4-11 bears out that God will not put His stamp of approval on our self-righteousness but was satisfied with the finished work on Calvary which reveals, manifests, or makes clear and plain the righteousness of God. (Rom. 3:25)

5. Reproved by the Spirit

When Jesus was about to go to the cross, He promised He would send another comforter (the Holy Spirit) whom He said in John 16:8: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The word reprove means to convict and convince. The Holy Spirit convicts of the sin of unbelief (John 16:9: "Of sin, because they believe not on me.") and judgment which is hell--the punishment of sin. (John 16:11: "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.") He also convinces a person of his need of the righteousness of God as God's requirement for justification. (John 16:10: "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.") No one will be saved until this work of reproof is complete of all three areas--sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Many have been convicted of sins yet not of the sin of unbelief; therefore, they are not saved. Many have been convicted of judgment (hell) but the Lord does not save you to keep you out of hell. He saves you for His glory; therefore, you must be convinced of the righteousness of God before you will ever be justified and this is a work of the Holy Spirit. Oh! How many so called "Christians" need to be convinced of the righteousness of God?

6. Received by saving faith

We wrote on this subject in the last volume of "The Persuader" in which we dealt with the steps of faith. Neither intellectual faith nor seeking faith will save you. You need saving faith. Rom. 3: 22,25a This is a gift (Eph. 2: 8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.") and comes from God. (John 3:27: "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.") "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." This refers saving faith.

7. Really Jesus

I Cor 1: 30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." This verse states plainly that God made Christ Jesus to be our righteousness. John 16: 10: "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." The language of this verse reveals clearly that Jesus is the righteousness one needs to be convinced of. When Jesus walked upon this earth His disciples were convinced by His life that He was the Righteous One. But now, since He no longer walks upon this earth in human form, man needs someone to convince him that Jesus is the Righteous One and that is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the righteousness we need. The OT declared that in Jer. 23:6, "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And the NT states plainly that one must have the Son to be saved. I John 5: 12: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The Son is Jesus who is the righteousness of God.

8. Results

The results of having the righteousness God requires, is peace, (Rom. 5: 1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." quietness, (Isa. 32: 17: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.") assurance, (I Thess. 1:5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.") and righteous living. (Titus 2: 12: "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.") Self righteousness causes man to clean up the outside by doing certain things or abstaining from certain things, while God's righteousness cleans up the inside first and continues to clean up the outside. Jesus made this clear to the Pharisees in Mat. 23:25-26: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

9. Real problem

Submission is the real problem and that was Israel's problem. Rom. 10:3: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Israel as a nation would not submit to Jesus the Christ (Messiah) as their Lord. Therefore, they were not saved. Jesus said to them in John 5:39-40: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Jesus must be submitted to as Lord before one can be saved. He will not be Saviour until He is Lord. Rom. 10:13 ("For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.") does not say Saviour but Lord and I Cor. 12:3 says, ". . . No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." For this to happen it takes the complete work of reproof of John 16:8 which we previously dealt with in depth.

One must be convinced that Jesus is the righteousness he needs and submits to Him as Lord to be justified. By the way, this is true in every dispensation. God granted Abraham righteousness in Gen. 15:6 "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." because he was convinced the seed (singular, who was the Lord Jesus) was more than just Isaac.

Do you have self-righteousness or God's righteousness? Do you have the Son?--God's righteousness. If you do not, you will never enter heaven. May the Lord give you understanding of "Just what is righteousness?" and then enable you to get honest with yourself and enable you to submit to Jesus as Lord--the Righteousness of God.

This article just gives the basics. If you would like to receive the tape on this message, please let us know. We have it available in the series "Just what is?" They are at no charge, just for the asking. If we can be of help in any way please let us know. We care.

October-December, 2002

JUST WHAT IS ASSURANCE?

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Isa. 32:17

This is the sixth message in the "Just What is?" series. We have written on repentance, godly sorrow, reproof, faith, and righteousness, all of which are necessary in a person's life for them to be saved. Now we are writing on "Just What Is Assurance?" which a person has when he has been saved.

In context our text is dealing with Judah. Pro. 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." When righteousness is practiced in Judah, peace shall be brought about as opposed to war and upheaval. Also quietness--rest from war--and assurance--a place of refuge or a place of protection from danger--shall be brought about when righteousness is practiced. Isa. 32:18 describes this. "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." This is what the context means, but I want to use this verse as a practical application to show that assurance comes when a person is saved. The Scripture gives us the right to do this. II Tim. 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Rom. 15: 4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Notice our text speaks of:

1. The work of righteousness.

The Lord, who is Jesus Christ, is our righteousness (as we dealt with in the last paper on this series). Jer. 23:6: "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." I Cor. 1:30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." We know that salvation is of the Lord which means He is the One who produces salvation. It is His work or we can say it is the "work of righteousness" since He is our righteousness. He is now manifested (Rom. 3:21: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.) and revealed through the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17: "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.") which is defined in I Cor. 15:3-4. ("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.") The gospel also includes the virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious death, burial, resurrection, ministry of intercession, and His bodily coming back again.

"Work" means to result in, accomplish, or achieve. Therefore, our text states that righteousness achieves peace. The verb "shall be" is future tense which means that the end product is peace when His work of salvation is complete. Rom. 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Really peace is a person not a feeling, even though feelings will be present when a person is saved. Eph. 2:14a: "For he is our peace." Therefore, when peace comes it is really due to the fact that Jesus moves inside your heart in the person of the Holy Spirit thus having "peace with God." Rom. 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "With" carries the idea of intimate and personal relationship as being face to face. "Peace" means to bind together that which was broken in the first Adam in the garden of Eden. This was made possible by the last Adam--Jesus--on the cross of Calvary.

When Job was going through all his trials, he said, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. (Job 9:33) He desired someone who was as much God, as God is and as much man, as man is to plead his case. A "daysman" is someone who is like an umpire or arbitrator--one who is authorized and qualified to judge or decide. Jesus is the only one who meets the qualifications. He is the arbitrator between God and man. He understands both sides. And when He finishes His work of righteousness in an individual, it will result in peace with God and it (He) will never leave. Isa. 26:3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Also notice our text speaks of:

2. The effect of righteousness.

“Effect” means to bring to pass or to achieve. Therefore, quietness is achieved in one’s soul. “Quietness” means to rest, be settled, and be still. This amounts to rest in one’s soul and spirit, but it is not like that with the wicked. Isa. 57:20-21: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” The storms may rage around a child of God but there is a deep settled peace in their soul because Jesus is on board and He can calm the storm like He did for the apostles in Mark 4:39. (“And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”)

Also “assurance” is achieved. “Assurance” means a place of refuge, which is a shelter or protection from danger and difficulty. That shelter comes from the Lord our righteousness who abides within a saved person. Psalms 46:1: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 62:7: “In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.” Isaiah 25:4: “For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.”

“Assurance” also means to attach one’s self, to trust, confide in, feel safe, be confident and secure, to rely on, and describes a confident mind. It expresses the sense of well being which results from knowing that the “rug won’t be pulled out from under you.”

The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew) uses the word for hope to translate this Hebrew word “assurance.” This type of hope is a confident expectation, not a constant anxiety. To depend upon God alone in hope is assurance, while relying upon anything or anyone else is folly.

I Thess. 1:5: “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” Assurance in this context describes the willingness and freedom of spirit enjoyed by those who brought the gospel to the Thessalonians. They could see the assurance in those who brought the gospel. But also the principle applies when the gospel (righteousness) comes and completes its work in you--there will be much assurance--a perfect feeling of absolute sureness that overcomes any doubt.

I John 5:13 (“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”) states one can know for sure that he is saved--without doubt. Doubt is a result of examining one’s experience and not being able to find all the ingredients necessary for salvation. Also doubt means to be in uncertainty which is the opposite of assurance. But the Bible teaches that when the work of righteousness is complete we have peace, quietness, and assurance. That assurance is described as “much” in I Thess. 1:5 (“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”) and “forever” in Isaiah 32:7. (“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”) And it comes from the Holy Spirit, who lives inside a saved person, as He bears witness with his (saved man’s) spirit. Romans 8:16: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” This witness will agree with the Bible. The Word by itself is not enough to give you assurance. You must have the indwelling Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit.

If you do not have this assurance, then the gospel has never come to you in power and the Holy Ghost. I Thess. 1:5: “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” And if the gospel has never come

to you in power and Holy Ghost, you have never been saved. This is not what I say, this is what the Bible says.

I know many, who have made a profession of faith and doubt whether they are saved. They hear a voice saying, "that is just the devil making you doubt." They believe it is the voice of God while it is the Devil. They are deceived. Jer. 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" The underlying problem is that they are lost and the Holy Spirit is moving on them trying to get them to see they are not saved and they listen to the Devil's lie and continue holding on to their false profession and doubt.

I know you can find many preachers who will tell you everybody doubts. That is not what the Bible says. By the way those preachers will not stand with you when you face God. Rom. 14:11-12: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." It would be best to have what the Bible says you will have when the work of Righteousness has been completed in you. Get honest and allow the Holy Spirit to work in you all that is needed and when that is completed, you will have much assurance forever.

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April-June, 2003

JUST WHAT IS JUDGMENT?

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." John 16:8,11

This is the seventh message in the "Just What Is?" series. We have written on repentance, godly sorrow, reproof, faith, righteousness, and assurance, all of which are necessary in a person's life for them to be saved or are present when one is saved. Now we are writing on "Just What Is Judgment?" which is also necessary ingredient in Holy Ghost conviction for one to be saved.

1. Definition.

Webster defines judgment as: 1) in law: the sentence of doom pronounced in any case, civil or criminal, by the judge or court by which it is tried to condemn (to pronounce to be guilty); 2) in Scripture; an extraordinary calamity inflicted by God on sinners. This definition is consistent with judgment in our text.

In our text our Lord said He would send the Holy Spirit to reprove (convict) of judgment (verse 8) and He explained that in verse 11. The "prince" or ruler He is referring to is Satan who is called a "prince" in Eph. 2:2 ("Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.") and "god of this world" in II Cor. 4:3-4. ("But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded

the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.") He is called "the anointed cherub" in Ezk. 28: 14-15. ("Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.") Due to his sin (Isa. 14:12-15: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.") he had a sentence of condemnation passed on him and he was cast out of heaven and shall be brought down to hell which was prepared for him. (Mat. 25: 41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.") If God judged His right-hand archangel ("the anointed cherub") and appointed him to judgment, who are we to think we can get by. Nahum 1: 3 says the Lord "will not at all acquit (to clear of a charge) the wicked." Sin must be paid for and the only way for that to happen was for sin to be placed upon God's dear Son on the cross and there He paid our sin debt--our judgment in full. That is one of the reasons Jesus was robed in flesh--to destroy the works of the devil. (I John 3:8: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.") Therefore, for a person to be saved he must be reprov'd of judgment--prov'd guilty before a holy God. If God spared not the "prince," nor the angels, nor the old world in Noah's day, nor Sodom and Gomorrha, neither will He spare any sinner whose sins are not covered by the blood. (II Peter 2:4-6: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.")

2. Translated.

The same Greek word translated "judgment" in our text is translated "condemnation" in John 3:19 and 5:24. (John 3:19: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.") In these verses the requirement not to face judgment or not to be condemned is to believe--to have saving faith. (We have written an entire article about this topic a few months ago.) Anything less than saving faith brings judgment. Also the same word is translated "damnation" in Mark 3:29 ("But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.") and Mat. 23:33. ("Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?") This refers to the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.") which will be awesome. If "the heaven and the earth

fled away" what will it be like for lost sinners to stand there? How sad it will be when they try to justify themselves and then hear the words of a holy God as He pronounces a sentence of condemnation upon them. (Mat. 7:22-23: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.") Then they will be cast into the lake of fire forever. (Rev. 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.") There they will not be burned up but will feel the torments of God's judgment throughout eternity.

3. Synonymous with wrath.

Paul stated that before a person is saved they are a child of wrath. (Eph. 2:3: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.") That wrath abideth (remains) on all who have reached the knowledge of accountability and not yet saved. (John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.") What an awful predicament to be in.

4. But God!

But God loved us enough to die on the cross for our sins—in our place. (Eph. 2:4: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.") Also He is longsuffering with sinners even though they fight against Him and He forbears (holds back that wrath). Why? To give sinners a space of repentance so that they might be saved. (Rom. 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?") As a preacher friend of mine would say "What a God!"

This article just gives the basics. If you would like to receive the tape on this message, please let us know. We have it available in the series "Just what is?" They are at no charge, just for the asking. If we can be of help in any way, please let us know. We care. Oct.-Dec., 2003

JUST WHAT IS SIN?

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23

This is the eighth message in the "Just What Is?" series. We have written on repentance, godly sorrow, reproof, faith, righteousness, assurance, and judgment, all of which are necessary ingredients in a person's life for them to be saved or are present when one is saved. Now we are writing on "Just What Is Sin?" which has to be dealt with by Holy Ghost conviction for one to be saved.

1. What is sin?

A. Defined.

Webster's states sin is any offence or fault. It is the breaking of a religious or moral law. The Greek dictionary defines sin as missing the mark; to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honor. The Greek also states sin is a violation of the divine law in thought or in act. What does the Bible say?

I John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." A transgression means to over step, to cross over the line God has drawn, or to jump the fence. The Word of God (Law) is the fence referred to. Therefore, transgression is an act of rebellion against the known will of God.

I John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." Unrighteousness is wickedness, iniquity, inward crookedness, perversity, and stubbornly contrary.

Rom. 14:23b: "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." If our actions are not those motivated by faith then it is sin. Open sin is probably not hindering revival as much as a lack of faith.

James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." If a person fails to practice what is good, his action or his lack of action is sin.

B. Named.

There are several verses that name sins specifically. Each one of these lists are just representative lists of sin. I have heard that theologians have said that there are 726 sins named in the Bible. Whether or not this is true, I do not know, but I know there are many that are named. One of these representative list is Gal. 5:19-21. ("Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.")

All these named sins can be classified two ways, sins of commission and sins of omission. Sins of commission mean when God says not do something and we do it. This is overstepping God's fence, thus a transgression or sin. Sins of omission mean when God says do something and we do not do it. This is unrighteousness--stubbornly contrary to God's law. You may say, " But we are not under law but grace." That is true in one sense but God has always had laws to which He said to man, "Do not over step my boundaries."

2. Where did sin come from?

Sin came from the Garden of Eden in which He placed the first man, Adam, and gave him a law. (Gen. 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 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.") Notice: that one law had teeth in it--if you eat you will die. The problem in the garden was that Adam and Eve did not believe God. Eve listened to the devil when he said in Gen. 3:4, "Ye shall not surely die." Therefore, the real problem was unbelief which is the root sin from which all fruit (sins) come from. The sin of unbelief resulted in all Adam's descendants being born with a sin nature, in unbelief. (Rom. 5:12: "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." Psa. 51:5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my

mother conceive me.”)

Sin also comes from temptation. (James 1:12-15: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”) Temptation is an enticement to sin but temptation, itself, is not sin. But when lust is enticed or the hook baited, then conception brings forth baby sin. And when baby sin grows then comes death--the teeth of the law. (Rom. 6:23a: “For the wages of sin is death.”)

3. How does sin affect us?

Conception of sin pollutes the mind and corrupts the imagination. (Gen. 6:5: “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”) They did everything imaginable and caused the whole world to be destroyed by the flood. Therefore we can say sin:

A. Separates

- 1) From your creator. (Isa. 59:2: “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”) It does not stop here.
- 2) From your church.
- 3) From your children.
- 4) From your companion. You may say I do not love her or him any more. That is not the problem. It is sin. The grass looks greener on the other side but when you get there, you will find out it is astroturf.
- 5) From your career.

B. Scars.

- 1) Your conscience.
- 2) Your character.
- 3) Your children.
- 4) Your career.

C. Steals

- 1) Your peace. (Isa. 59:8a: “The way of peace they know not.”) Sin will steal the peace and keep the lost from being saved. Also sin will steal the peace of God from the saved.
- 2) Your power. (Isa. 59:11: “We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves.”) Your testimony will lose its effectiveness and become just a loud roar all because of sin.
- 3) Your perception. (Isa. 59:10: “We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.”) Sin blinds you so you can not see clearly.
- 4) Your purity. Sin steals your virtue.

This is basically a word portrait of the Laodacean church age which we are in at present. (Rev. 3:17: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and

naked.”)

Then finally death comes--physical and spiritual. (Rev. 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”) There is a high cost of sin. Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer that you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.

4. What should we do with sin?

The lost need to deal with the root of sin (unbelief) and get it under the blood. Therefore, you need to get honest with your self and allow the Holy Spirit to convince and convict you of your sin of unbelief. (John 16:9: “Of sin, because they believe not on me.” Rom. 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”) Also allow the Holy Spirit to convince you of your need for righteousness, who is Jesus. (John 16:10: “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” I Cor. 1:31: “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”) Then allow Him to complete His work in you that you may be saved.

The saved must deal with the fruit of the flesh--sins, (note: plural). Sins need to be confessed. (I John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”) There are three ways you sin and you need to confess these same three ways--privately, personally, and publicly. Confess means to agree with God. That is what David did when he wept his way back to God. (Psa. 51:3-4)

After you confess, you need to cry out for mercy not justice. David also did this. (Psa. 51:7-12) Then you need to forsake your sin. (Pro. 28:13: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”)

In the beginning of this article we stated that sin was overstepping God’s boundary or fence which is the Law--the Word of God. There has always been the Law of God and even in this age of grace we still have Law--the Law of Christ or commandments of Christ. (Gal. 6:2: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” I John 5:3: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”) May we walk therein and have victory in our lives instead of habitual sin.

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January-March, 2004

JUST WHAT IS ATONEMENT?

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Rom. 5:11

This is the ninth message in the “Just What Is?” series. We have written on repentance, godly sorrow, reproof, faith, righteousness, assurance, judgment, and sin, all

of which are necessary ingredients in a person's life for them to be saved or are present when one is saved or has to be dealt with by Holy Ghost conviction for one to be saved. Now we are writing on "Just What Is Atonement?"

The word translated "atonement" is used 70 times in the Bible, 69 in the OT and one time in the NT. The same Hebrew word is translated "reconciliation" two times and the same Greek word is also translated "reconciliation" two times. Just what is "atonement?"

1. Defined

Webster defines "atonement" as expiation and satisfaction made by giving an equivalent for an injury. In theology, Webster says that "atonement" is the expiation of sin by the obedience and personal sufferings of Christ. "Expiation" is the act of making satisfaction for an offense, by which the guilt is done away and the obligation of the offended person to punish the crime is canceled. "Reconciliation" is the means by which sinners are brought into a state of favor with God.

Bible dictionaries state "atonement" is the restoration of the favor of God to sinners that repent and put their trust in the expiatory death of Christ. Vines dictionary states that the Greek word for "atonement" corresponds to the word for "propitiation" and "mercy seat" which describes the means by which God shows mercy to sinners. And that is in and through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His death on the cross by the shedding of His blood in His vicarious sacrifice for sin. "Vicarious" means substituted in the place of another. "Propitiation" means bringing together, a sacrifice or gift which averts the wrath of God and enables Him to be merciful and favorable to the sinner.

The first time the Hebrew word for atonement is used is in Gen. 6:14: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." "Pitch" is the same word and it means to cover up. The Lord told Noah to cover the ark with "pitch" within and without; therefore, it was made judgment proof. Noah did not suffer the wrath of God because he was protected--covered.

2. Old Testament Types

In OT time sacrifices of bulls, goats, sheep, pigeons and etc. were made--the innocent dying for the guilty. This was God's way for His people. It started in the garden by God sacrificing an animal (probably a lamb) of which He used the skin to cover Adam because he had sinned--the innocent dying for the guilty. When Cain offered the fruit of his labor to God for a sacrifice, God refused it while accepting Abel's sacrifice because it was the blood of a lamb. He then told Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Gen. 4:7) In essence He told Cain to go get a lamb and offer the sacrifice He required and He would accept it as a covering for his sin.

All down through the OT for 4000 years, sacrifices by the millions have been offered to atone (to cover) for man's sins. The innocent dying for the guilty. Death required blood shed (Leb. 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Heb. 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.") But in OT time they had to continually offer sacrifices year after year after year. And yet all these sacrifices could do was cover (atone) man's sin from sacrifice to sacrifice. (Heb. 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then

would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”)

3. New Testament Reality

Those OT sacrifices were just types or pictures that pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ--the Lamb of God. No wonder John cried out when he saw Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29: “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”) In OT time the blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat that satisfaction might be given to Jehovah. The mercy seat hid the two table of stone in the ark--evidence of Israel’s guilt. But the work of Christ was more thorough. At the cross there was no partial dealing with sin. Christ’s work does not pass over or overlook sin but takes it away. The Levitical offerings only covered their sins. Their sins were passed over if their sacrifices were offered in faith of a coming redeemer. In other words their sins were covered and they secured the promise of Divine pardon. But their sins were not put away until Jesus died. (Rom. 3:25: “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.”)

4. Conclusion.

- 1) The reason for atonement--sin.
- 2) The meaning of atonement--to cover up.
- 3) The source of atonement--God Himself. (Isa. 53:6, 10-11a: “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.” Isa. 10-11a: “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”) It was God who devised this plan.
- 4) The foundation of atonement--love. John 3:16: “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.”
- 5) The method of atonement--blood. Lev. 17:11: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”
- 6) The essence of atonement--Jesus Himself. I John 2:2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” One writer once said, “Jesus is the Atonement” and then he wrote down this: “This is the atonement, not the sufferings and not the death, but the Person of the Son of God in the sufferings and in the death. He is the propitiation. He is the Atonement--not He Himself without the act, but He Himself in the act.”--referring to the cross.
- 7) Result of atonement--salvation. With regard to sin, it means that sin is so covered up that God regards it as neutralized, disarmed, inoperative to rouse His anger. If covering of sin meant salvation in the OT, what a wonderful salvation we have on this side of the cross--in the putting away of sin.

Atonement means expiation, which is the act of making satisfaction for the offense by

which the guilt is done away and the obligation of the offended person to punish the crime is canceled. We sinned and offended God but the Lord Jesus satisfied a Holy God by the perfect sacrifice of Himself on the cross of Calvary, shed His blood, and sprinkled it on the heavenly mercy seat. Therefore our sin is taken away, our guilt is gone and the obligation to punish our sin in us is canceled because God was satisfied with the sacrifice of His Son. May we say with John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.")

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April-June, 2004

JUST WHAT IS MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY IN SALVATION?

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mat. 6:33

This is the tenth message in the "Just What Is?" series. We have written on repentance, godly sorrow, reproof, faith, righteousness, assurance, judgment, sin, and atonement. Now we are writing on "Just What Is Man's Responsibility In Salvation?"

Salvation is of the Lord but man has responsibility. What is that responsibility? Jesus told the multitudes who were lost to seek the kingdom of God. To seek the kingdom of God would be equal to seeking God. "Seek" means seek in order to find, to desire, or to crave. Most preachers say a lost man doesn't seek God and quote Rom. 3:11 ("There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.") as their proof text. But we need to rightly divide the Word. (II Tim. 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.") If the Lord told the lost to seek then he needs to seek, for the Lord will not tell a man to do something he can not do. (Isa. 55:6: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.") I know a person can not do this in his own power but the Lord enables him to if he obeys the light he has.

I. Equivalent to coming.

Heb. 11:6 ("But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.") uses the word "cometh" which is continuous action verb and equivalent to "seek."

II. Problem--an obstacle.

Jesus told the Pharisees in John 5:39-40 to "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." It is not as easy to come to the Lord as most modern preachers think. (John 6:44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.") In fact, "coming" is an impossible act to a

fallen and depraved creature unless and until Divine power enables him. Therefore, every man has an obstacle to keep him from coming to the Lord--total inability to meet his responsibility because of his corrupt nature. The reason for this total inability is due to the fall. Natural man does not realize the terrible havoc that the fall produced. Therefore, it is impossible for any man to come or seek the Lord until the Spirit of God awakens him.

The fall made havoc and brought three things: 1) Complete darkness of man's understanding, 2) Complete corruption of man's affection, and 3) Total perversity of man's will. A three fold cord is not quickly broken according to Eccl. 4: 12. (" . . . a threefold cord is not quickly broken.") Yet, before a person will be saved he must seek the Lord in all three areas--understanding, affections, and will.

1. Must seek with your understanding.

Jesus said in John 6: 45: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." "Learned" = means to understand. In the parable of the sower the only ones saved were "good ground hearers" and they had understanding. (Mat. 13:23: "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.") To have some understanding requires some knowledge about sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:8: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.") Knowledge comes from the preached Word. Paul told Timothy in II Tim. 4:2 to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Thus, a human instrument is required. (Rom. 10:13-15a: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?") This knowledge must be in the heart and not just the head. Revelation must be made a reality--a heart experience. And it takes a supernatural work of the Holy Ghost for this to happen. You may ask how do I know if it is in the heart? The answer: by the effect. (I Thess. 1:5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.") Holy Ghost power makes the Word more than just facts, more than just revelation. He made it a reality--a heart experience.

2. Must seek with your affections.

For this to happen one must first be awakened. When the awakening and understanding comes, no matter how little it may seem, then the heart is drawn unto Christ with a tender desire for Him. This involves loving Him. (James 1: 12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.") To love, one must be awakened and his affections stirred. That takes being drawn by cords of love. (John 6:44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." I John 4: 19: "We love him, because he first loved us.") But man makes excuses as we see in the allegory of the great supper (Luke 14:16-24), that he will not taste thereof. Therefore, his heart must be opened by the Lord for you can not open your own heart. (Act. 16:14: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she

attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.") Also there must be a love of truth not just for truth. Love for truth is natural love not spiritual. It is only when understanding comes by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that one's affections will be stirred and thereby enabled to meet his responsibility--seek the Lord.

3. Must seek with your will.

All three faculties of man--understanding, affections, and will--were affected by the fall. They were defiled and totally corrupted and as a result they are used in the service of self and sin, rather than the service of God and of Christ. One faculty is influenced by the other. (Gen. 3:6: "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.") First, Eve saw that the tree was good for food--a conclusion drawn by the understanding. Second, the fruit was pleasant to the eye--a response of her affections. Thirdly, she desired the fruit of the tree--that was the moving of her will. As a result, she took and lost.

In salvation every faculty of the soul is used in seeking Christ or coming to Him. And one faculty is influenced by the other. The Holy Spirit first causes the sinner to perceive (understand) his deep need of Christ by revealing to him his sin and rebellion against God and that none but Christ can atone for his sin. This takes the work of Holy Ghost conviction or reproof. (John 16:8-11) Second, the Spirit creates in one's heart a desire (affections) for Christ by making him sick of his sin and makes him in love with righteousness which is really Christ. (I Cor. 1:30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.) Thirdly, the Spirit loosens man's will and enables him to set the highest value on Christ and to esteem Him far above all else, thus making the sinner willing to forsake all for Him. That's what happened to Paul. (Phil. 3:8: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.")

The sinner is not saved when his understanding is enlightened nor when his affections are stirred. There must be the act of the will, surrendering to God and laying hold of Christ as Lord and Saviour, not just Saviour. Nothing short of the throne of our hearts will satisfy the Lord Jesus. That is Lordship salvation. He will not play second fiddle. You may say I can not do that. That is true in yourself but you can in the day of His power. (Psa. 110:3: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. . .") Yet, the Spirit does not force one or drag the sinner with ropes but He persuades and draws by cords of love bringing one to a place that they willingly become obedient, whereas they were once rebellious and stood against the most High, but now they have thrown down those weapons of rebellion and cried "calf rope." This is all made possible by the completed work of the Holy Spirit in His drawing.

No sinner ever savingly comes to Christ until the will freely consents (not with the ear but the heart) to the severe and self-denying terms by which Christ is presented in the gospel. You may say I have never heard terms of the gospel like that. Most haven't, because for the most part it is not presented that way. But Christ Himself presented it that way in Luke 14 right after the allegory of the great supper where excuses were made. (Luke 14:26,27, 33: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my

disciple. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.") This is what Jesus said in John 6:53 ("Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.") and the people said it is too much for us and walked away. They were not willing to consent to the severe and self-denying terms of the gospel. Neither was the rich young ruler, "One thing thou lackest." (Mark 10:21) Neither were the Pharisees. (John 5:39-40: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.")

You may say that doesn't give me much hope. But it really does, for all those who have not come that way (did not meet their responsibility) and were content with their "professions" will one day stand and say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Mat. 7:22-23) They are the ones with no hope. But you have hope if you will hear the Lord's promise. (John 8:31-32: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.") Continue in His Word, which is the equivalent to obeying the light you have. I know it will be a battle to do so. The Lord knew that for he said in Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "Strive" does not mean to work for your salvation but it means you must strive to overcome the obstacles the devil, flesh, and world places to keep you from entering the straight gate. Salvation is of the Lord but man has a responsibility to seek Him in their understanding, affection, and will.

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July-Sept., 2004