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THE MEANING OF SALVATION

by

Brian Sherring

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The Meaning of Salvation

by

Brian Sherring

Author of

Ten Words
The Book we Trust

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PREFACE

This booklet was originally written for use by the younger generation. Where one is born again and is, as it were, a babe in Christ, it is helpful even to an adult in years to have spiritual matters spelt out in an easy fashion. We hope therefore that this issue will serve a wider range of readers.

Everyone appreciates that a human child, above all, needs nourishment and every help to grow to maturity. Even so the child in Christ needs to go on to the perfect or complete man of God, able to use the Scriptures wisely, so that delivered from the bondage of himself, he at all times is able to sympathise and understand the needs of others. When in this state and attuned to God through Christ he will be able to offer comfort, strength and wisdom to the world and moreover find joy and peace for himself.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Biblical references are abbreviated thus:

Luke 2:40-51 is short for:

Luke's Gospel, chapter two, verses forty to fifty-one.

1 John 5:11,12 is short for:

The first epistle of John, chapter five, verses eleven and twelve.

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is in three parts. The first part is much shorter than the others and you should read it all through at one time. The second and third parts refer to verses of Scripture so have your Bible ready to look up the references given there.

Part 1.

The Lord Jesus Christ is called in the Bible a Saviour, that is, One Who saves. He is called this because He was sent by His Father to *save* us from the punishment due to us because we are sinners. All people who have ever lived have been sinners and the punishment for sin is death. The Lord Jesus Christ, Who was not a sinner, accepted the punishment of death which was due to us, when He died on the cross. He died in our place and for our sins.

On the third day after His death, He rose from the dead, and showed that He had broken the power of death, for it was not able to hold Him. He was made alive again, and through Him God now gives everlasting life to those who believe in Him.

God requires that we should believe in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in what He has done for us. We are to believe that He died and rose again for us. If we do this then we are saved and have everlasting life.

The Lord Jesus not only saves those who believe, from the punishment of sin, but also from its power. He will help them not to give in when they are tempted to sin.

When they look to Him and remember that He has saved them from sin and death, they find that they are able to lead lives pleasing to Him. God never meant anyone to be a sinner, but to live according to His wishes, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, will give believers the necessary strength to live such lives.

God showed His love to us when He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to deal with sin and death. Believers can show their love to Him by the lives they live. When they are kind, helpful and loving to parents, friends and even those not liked so much, then they show their love to God and please Him. Are you one of these believers?

If you have not understood this first part of the booklet read it again. The important thing is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and so be sure of everlasting life. If we reject Him we will be judged for it.

Part 2.

Our need for a Saviour

We are now going to think about our need for a Saviour, how we all became sinners, and what it means to be a sinner.

The word 'sinner' is used by men of some particularly bad person, but God says that we are all sinners. Read Romans chapter 3, verses 9 and 10 and notice these words:

'both Jews and Gentiles ... they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one'.

Since 'Jews and Gentiles' includes all people, then all are under sin, and there is not one righteous person by God's standard. If we are honest, we will already know that we are sinners, for every time we do wrong it shows us that we are not righteous, and are therefore sinners. Some people live very good lives and some very bad lives, but this does not alter the fact that God has said that all are sinners, and all therefore need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Who saves them from sin. It will help us to understand how that even good people are looked upon by God as sinners when we answer our next question.

How did we all become sinners?

Romans chapter 5, verse 19 will answer this question:

‘by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners’.

The ‘one man’ spoken of here is Adam, who disobeyed God’s commandment in the garden of Eden. Read the whole story in Genesis, chapter 2 verse 15 to chapter 3 verse 6.

Through his disobedience Adam became a sinner, and since we have all descended from him, then we are also sinners. We are sinners because we are *related* to the first man Adam; we have inherited a sinful nature from him. This may seem unfair at first, for if we have become sinners because of Adam’s disobedience, then it is not our fault. This is true, but God is not unfair. He will not condemn any person for being a sinner because he has descended from Adam. He will judge a person by what that person chooses to be, when he either accepts the Lord Jesus Christ or rejects Him. We will see more of this later. For now, we should note that we are sinners because of our *relationship* to Adam.

What does it mean to be a sinner?

When Adam was created he was not a sinner, but he was warned against being disobedient to God. Read Genesis chapter 2, verse 17 and notice the words:

‘in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die’.

By disobeying God and eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die. If he became a sinner he would die. Adam did become a sinner, and although he lived for a very long time, in the end he died. Read Genesis chapter 5, verse 5:

‘And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died’.

The punishment for sin is death. Read the first part of Romans 6:23 :

‘the wages of sin is death’.

We may say first of all then that a sinner is *a person subject to death*. When Adam let sin into the world, death came in with it and passed on to all men, for all were sinners. Read Romans 5:12 and remember that the ‘one man’ in this verse is Adam.

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Before Adam sinned he lived in the garden of Eden, a place where he was able to talk freely with God. When he became a sinner however, he was driven out of the garden of Eden and became *separated* from God. Read Genesis 3:23,24 :

‘the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden ... He drove out the man’.

A sinner is therefore *a person separated from God*.

There are a number of ways in which God speaks of this separation in the Bible. We are all looked upon as separated from God because:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| (a) we are unrighteous | } | and we are also |
| (b) we are enemies of God | | |
| (c) we are servants of sin | } | subject to death. |
| (d) we are debtors | | |

All this helps us to understand how great is our need of the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation for us. How thankful we should be that He has delivered us from all this.

How has the Lord Jesus Christ saved us?

Before we can answer this question, we must note that God is different from us in one very important way. He is *righteous* and keeps His word. If He says that ‘the wages of sin is death’, then it is so. Sin must be paid for by death. God cannot simply forget about our sin, for He would then be breaking His word, and if He did this, He would be no longer righteous. Our sin must be paid for by death, and this is what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. He took our place and bore the punishment which was really due to us. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3 :

‘Christ died for our sins’.

Read also Romans 5:8. God’s great love to us was shown when the Lord Jesus Christ died for us.

The Lord Jesus did not remain dead, but after three days was made alive again: God raised Him from the dead. His resurrection proves that our sins have been fully paid for, and we have now only to believe in Him in order to be saved. We can see just how important the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is, by reading 1 Corinthians 15:17 :

‘If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins’.

Our belief in the Lord Jesus would be pointless apart from His resurrection. We would still be in our sins and have to pay for them ourselves by death. How thankful we should be that God raised Him from the dead, and that by believing in Him, we have been saved from our sins.

The Lord Jesus has saved us by His death and resurrection, both are important, but only if we believe in Him. Read 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’.

God’s love to us was shown when He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay for our sins, but we must accept Him as our Saviour. We do this by believing in Him, and we then have everlasting life.

What does it mean to be saved?

We saw that a sinner is a person subject to death. We are all sinners so we are all subject to death. The Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Read 1 Timothy 1:15, where we are told this. He came to save us from death.

We can say first of all then that, to be saved means to be *saved from death*. This does not mean that we will not one day die, but that death will not be able to hold us, we will be saved out of it. So death will not have the victory over us. See what believers can now say about death in 1 Corinthians 15:55 :

‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’

We who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ can now think of dying as though it meant going to sleep. In 1 Corinthians 15:18 (which you may look up) we read of those believers who have died, and they are called, ‘they which are *fallen asleep in Christ*’. We are not frightened of going to sleep at night, for we know we shall wake up in the morning. When we die it will be like this, so there is nothing to be afraid of. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken the fear out of death and we will be saved out of it. Read 2 Timothy 1:10 and note the words:

‘Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death’.

The word ‘abolished’ here means ‘brought to nothing’. The Lord Jesus has broken the power of death so that it cannot hold believers, and therefore we need not fear it if we are trusting in Him.

Through Adam all die; through the Lord Jesus Christ believers will be saved out of that death and made alive. Read 1 Corinthians 15:22 :

‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’.

The important thing, as we noticed before, is *relationship*. Being related to Adam means that we are sinners subject to death. Being related to the Lord Jesus by believing in Him means that we shall be saved out of that death and made alive.

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We also noticed that because we are sinners we are *separated from God*. The salvation provided by the Lord Jesus ends this separation. Read 1 Peter 3:18 :

‘For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that He might bring us to God*’.

The sins which brought a separation between God and us, have been paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us who believe to God. We noticed four ways in which we are looked upon as being separated from God - because we are unrighteous; enemies of God; servants of sin; and debtors. The Lord Jesus has dealt with each one of these as we shall see.

JUSTIFICATION

Firstly we are looked upon as being separated from God because we are *unrighteous*. In 1 Peter 3:18 we are called ‘the unjust’, which means the same thing. God’s remedy through the Lord Jesus is *justification*. This means that if we believe in the Lord Jesus, He looks upon us *as though we are righteous*. It may help us to think of it like this. When I am justified it is JUST-AS-IF-I’D never sinned.

We must be clear about this. Justification does not mean that God has *made* us righteous, but that He *counts* us righteous. If God had made us righteous then we could no longer sin, but we are still able to do wrong, so we cannot have been made righteous. It is because God looks at us through the Lord Jesus Christ that He can count us righteous, and our faith in Him is very important in order that He can do this. In Romans chapter 4 we have an example of a man who was looked upon by God as righteous. Read verse 3:

‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness’.

Now read verse 5 and notice especially the words:

‘his faith is counted for righteousness’.

Abraham was a sinner just like us, but because of his faith (he believed God) he was looked upon as righteous. His faith was counted for righteousness. Verses 23 and 24 tell us that the same can be true of us:

‘Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed (counted) to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed (counted), if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead’.

Abraham believed in the God Who can bring life out of death. When we believe in Him as the One Who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, then He counts that faith of ours for righteousness. He looks at us as though we are righteous. Now read Romans 5:1 :

‘Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ’.

This verse suggests the second way in which we are looked upon as separated from God, and God’s remedy.

RECONCILIATION

We are by nature *enemies of God*. Notice the words in Romans 5:10 :

‘when we were enemies’.

We were enemies because the things we did hurt God; they were wicked works. Read Colossians 1:21 and note the words:

‘you, that were sometime alienated and *enemies in your mind by wicked works*’.

God’s remedy, provided in the Lord Jesus, is *reconciliation*. Peace has been made with God, and believers are no longer separated in this way. Romans 5:10 tells us how God has done this :

‘When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God *by the death of His Son*’.

How important are the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has reconciled believers to God, so that they are no longer His enemies, separated from Him. Read the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-24 which gives some idea of the meaning of reconciliation.

REDEMPTION

Thirdly we are looked upon as separated from God because by nature we are *servants of sin*. Really we should say *slaves of sin*, for a servant may leave his master, but we were bound like slaves to serve sin. Read Romans 6:17 and note these words:

‘ye were the servants (slaves) of sin’.

God’s remedy to set us free from sin is known as *redemption*. This redemption is provided by the Lord Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection. Read Titus 2:13,14 where these words appear :

‘Our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might *redeem* us from all iniquity’.

An example which may help is found in the history of the people of Israel. They were slaves in Egypt under hard taskmasters, but God delivered them - He *redeemed* them. We all know the story of how God brought them out of Egyptian slavery with Moses as their leader. Read what God said to Moses about this in Exodus 6:6 :

‘Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will *redeem* you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments’.

What God did for Israel in days of old, He has done for us who trust in His Son. Sin is no longer our master. We are no longer its slaves. We now have a new master, even God Himself. This we read in Romans 6:22 in these words:

‘being made free from sin, and become servants to God’.

Believers are also looked upon as being servants to righteousness in Romans 6:18 :

‘Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness’.

The Lord Jesus, by His death and resurrection, has freed every believer from sin so that they may now serve God and His righteousness. He paid the price of freedom from sin and death. We will say more about service to God later.

FORGIVENESS

Fourthly we are looked upon as being separated from God because we are *debtors*. The justice of God requires that sin shall be *paid for* by death. This we have already seen in the first part of Romans 6:23, ‘the wages of sin is death’. As sinners we *owe* our lives to pay for sin - we are *in debt* in this way.

The Lord Jesus Christ, by dying for our sins, has paid this debt, so that now we can have the *forgiveness* of sins. We could have no forgiveness apart from His death. This we can see by reading Hebrews 9:22 :

‘without shedding of blood is no remission (forgiveness)’.

The shedding of blood is a way of describing death, and unless the Lord Jesus had died for us, we could not have forgiveness. By His death He *carried* our sins. Read 1 Peter 2:24, which speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ says:

‘Who His own self *bare* our sins in His own body on (or to) the tree’.

The ‘tree’ in this verse is the cross on which He died. He carried (bare) our sins so that we might have forgiveness. The debt has been paid and we who believe in Him are released from it. We are no longer debtors.

Summing up so far.

We have noticed the following important points :

- (1) All people are sinners because of their relationship to Adam.
- (2) Sinners are subject to death and separated from God.
- (3) The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.
- (4) He accepted the punishment for sin and rose again from the dead.

(5) When we believe in Him we are saved.

Then we saw what it means to be saved, under four headings :

- (1) **Justification** - God looks on us as though we are righteous.
- (2) **Reconciliation** - We are no longer enemies of God; peace has been made.
- (3) **Redemption** - We are freed from being servants of sin to serve God.
- (4) **Forgiveness** - Our sins are forgiven; we are no longer debtors.

The Gift of Eternal Life

We have looked at Romans 6:23 before, but have only so far read the first part of the verse. Now we must look at the whole verse :

‘The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord’.

Eternal life is a gift from God which we accept by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Read John 3:16 again. The opposite of eternal life is ‘death’ (in Romans 6:23) and ‘perish’ (in John 3:16). There is no middle way, it is either life or death. This has always been so.

In the garden of Eden there were two trees, the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Read what is said of these two trees in Genesis 3:22 and 2:17 :

‘take ... of *the tree of life* and eat, and *live for ever*’ (3:22).

‘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*’ (2:17).

Adam had a choice of life or death; he chose death. Each one of us makes a choice also. We choose either life or death.

It may seem at first that all people will choose life, for surely nobody would choose death, but this is not so. Read 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*’.

Life can only be had in the Lord Jesus Christ, and here were some men who would not go to Him for life. They refused to believe in Him. (Read verse 38). The question of having or not having life is put in 1 John 5:11,12 :

‘God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life’.

Our relationship to Adam means death. God has cancelled this death in Christ Who gives life. By accepting Him as the One Whom God *gave*, we accept the *gift* of eternal life in Him. Not to possess Christ in this way means not possessing eternal life for ‘He that hath not the Son of God hath not life’. Let us be sure that we choose life in Him.

The Judgment of God.

We have already said that God will not condemn a person for being a sinner because he has descended from Adam. God judges a person by *what he chooses to be*, when he either accepts or rejects the Lord Jesus Christ. If life can only be found in Christ, then he who rejects Him, rejects the only means of life. Read 1 John 5:11,12 again.

In the world in which we live, life depends on light. If the sun’s light were to be taken away from the earth, we would all die. Without light we could not live. This explains why one of the names of the Lord Jesus is ‘the Light of the world’. Read John 8:12 :

‘Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am *the light of the world*: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have *the light of life*’.

In order to have life it is necessary to receive the Light, the Lord Jesus Christ, otherwise we remain in darkness and death. To receive Him it is of course first necessary to know about Him, and this is why there are ministers and missionaries who tell of Him and His salvation. Once we know that in Him only is life and light, then God will judge us according to whether or not we receive Him by believing in Him. Read John 3:18,19 :

‘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. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light ...’.

A person is condemned *if he chooses to remain in darkness*, by not coming to the Light and by not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be sure that we do not reject Him as the Light Who gives life.

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The next part of this booklet is for those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and have believed that He died and rose again from the dead for them. If you have not accepted Him and His salvation then the things you are about to read do not apply to you. If you do believe in Him then you should be concerned how you might serve Him, and this part of the booklet is meant to help you to do this.

Part 3.

What does salvation mean for the believer now?

We know, if we are saved, that one day we will be raised from the dead into a life with the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not know very much about that life or what we will do then, but we are sure that it will be more wonderful than we can imagine. But this is future, what about now? What difference does being saved make to us now?

Firstly we have a new *relationship* to God. Read John 1:12 :

‘As many as received Him (the Lord Jesus), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name’.

The word ‘sons’ really means ‘children’ in this verse, but the important thing for the moment is to notice that this means that God is our Father. This of course depends upon whether or not we have received Him (the Lord Jesus) as the verse states, and to receive Him means to believe in Him.

If God is our Father then we can go to Him as such. If we need help or are worried about anything we can tell Him and He will listen to us. We call our talking to God, ‘prayer’. We should also remember to thank Him, as we would do our earthly father, for all that He does for us. Read Ephesians 5:20 :

‘giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ’.

The last part of this verse is very important. When we speak to God our Father we should always remember that we can only do this because of what the Lord Jesus has done for us. By asking our prayers ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ’ we remember this. Nobody can approach God the Father except through Him. Read John 14:6 :

‘Jesus saith ... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me’.

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As our Father, God is concerned over us in a similar way to any father, but more so. He is concerned that we grow properly and has provided for our growth, something to make us strong believers. This we call the Bible, the word of God, or the Scriptures. By reading the Bible we learn of the Lord Jesus and His ways, and so we grow stronger and are made ready to serve God. He prepares us for good works by His word. Read 2 Timothy 3:16,17 :

‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’.

Putting these verses more simply we could say :

‘All Scripture is inspired by God and is good for teaching, for conviction, for correcting errors and learning what is right; so that the man of God may be completely ready for doing good works’.

The ‘man of God’ is the saved person who wants to serve God, and the Scriptures prepare him for that service of good works. Through the Scriptures God speaks to us.

Summing up this section, we may say as believers:

- (1) God is our Father and we His children.
- (2) We should speak to Him (in prayer) as we would our earthly father.
- (3) All our prayers should be asked in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (4) We should read His word, the Bible, for by it He speaks to us.
- (5) By reading the Bible He prepares us to serve Him.

Saved to serve Him

When we are saved we begin a new life. This new life is to be spent serving God by good works. We must be clear about this; we are not saved by good works, but having been saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we should *then* serve God by good works. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and notice these words :

‘By grace are ye saved through faith ... not of works ... we are ... created in Christ Jesus unto (or for) good works’.

Notice the difference here:

We are saved ‘*by grace*’, ‘*through* faith (in the Lord Jesus)’.

We are saved ‘*for* good works’.

God always intended that we should live good lives and do good works, but these come *after* our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. So we may now say this, that the second thing which salvation means for us now, is that we should *serve God by good works*. We are saved to serve Him.

When we grow older and more mature, God may call us to serve Him in one particular way, but we do not have to wait for this day to come, for we can serve Him now. This can best be done by the kind of life we lead. Here are some points to notice about this service for God, which are found in the Scriptures. Remember that the Scriptures prepare the believer for good works.

(A) Love to others.

Read 1 John 4:7-11 and notice especially verse 11:

‘Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another’.

God’s great love was shown to us when He *gave* His Son, the Lord Jesus, to bare our sins. God’s love was shown by *giving*. We may serve God by *loving* those around us - by *giving* our love to them. This will include being kind and helpful, but especially does it mean forgetting about ourselves and thinking of others. Read Philippians 2:4 :

‘Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others’.

We should not simply think about our own things, but also look to see if we may be of help to others. This was how the Lord Jesus Christ thought; He was concerned about us, and so we should be concerned about others also. We should follow His example and love others. Love includes all the service we may do for Him.

(B) Forgiveness.

Read Ephesians 4:32 :

‘Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you’.

Again we are to follow an example, this time of God’s forgiveness in Christ. He has forgiven us all our sins against Himself, and so ought we to forgive those who hurt us. This may not be easy sometimes, for people can

be very unkind, but we should remember that it was not easy for God either. His Son suffered for us and went through the death of the cross for our forgiveness. Surely we can forgive and forget the wrongs done to us when we think of His example.

(C) What we say.

When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ we have to be careful what we do and say. Especially do we have to take care about what we say, for it is very easy to speak evil without thinking or in a moment of anger. Once we have said something it cannot be taken back, so we must be careful. If we can control our tongue we are able to control all that we do. Read James 3:2 :

‘If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle (control) the whole body’.

We see then just how important it is to control our tongues, to be careful what we say. Notice the following verses in Ephesians 4:25-31 :

‘Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour’ (verse 25).

‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good ...’ (verse 29).

‘Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you ...’ (verse 31).

As believers we should always speak the truth, never use hurtful words or bad language, never speak angrily or bitterly, but always in kindness and love. What we say and how we say it are of great importance. Again we have the example of the Lord Jesus to follow in this, in 1 Peter 2:21-23 :

‘Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile (deceit) found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled (insulted), reviled not again ...’.

Others spoke against the Lord Jesus Christ, using unkind words and accusing Him of things He had never done, but He never answered them back - He never insulted them. We should do likewise, not only when others speak against us, but all the time. Read Colossians 4:6 :

‘Let your speech be always with grace ...’.

(D) Obedience.

Here is a verse of Scripture written especially for young people - Colossians 3:20 :

‘Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord’.

It has always been right for young persons to give honour to their mothers and fathers. This was one of the ten commandments given to the people of Israel (see Exodus 20:12). This honour is shown by obedience, and the Lord is pleased with such, and gives His blessing.

The Bible warns us of a time when there will be disobedience to parents (2 Tim. 3:2), and we seem to be already living in these days. Young believers may show that they love God by love to their parents, and this is done by obedience in all things. The Lord Jesus is again the example to follow, for He was *subject* to Joseph and Mary when a young man of twelve years old. (Read Luke 2:40-51). He was also obedient to His Father in Heaven when He gave up His life for us. Read Philippians 2:8 :

‘Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became *obedient unto death*, even the death of the cross’.

If we believe in Him, let us follow His example by honouring our parents, as He honoured not only His heavenly Father, but also those set over Him when He was a young person here on earth.

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These verses of Scripture give us some idea of the life every believer should live for the Lord, the way we may serve Him, when we are saved. All that we either do or say should be done for Him and in His name. Read Colossians 3:17 :

‘Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him’.

As He is

The words of this heading, 'As He is', are taken from 1 John 3:2 :

'Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him *as He is*'.

It is the hope of every believer to 'be like Him', like the Lord Jesus Christ, and one day we shall be. We shall be 'as He is'.

When man was first created by God, he was made like God in one way at least. Read Genesis 1:26,27 :

'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ... So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him'.

When the serpent (Satan or the devil) brought about the fall of Adam, then he (Adam) became a sinner, and the likeness to God was spoilt. The coming of sin into the world interfered with the purpose of God for man, and made necessary the death of the Lord Jesus Christ to undo this work of the devil. Read the second part of 1 John 3:8 :

'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil'.

Read also verse 5 of the same chapter:

'He was manifested to take away our sins'.

The Lord Jesus Christ was given to destroy the devil and his works, and to take away our sins. Read also Hebrews 2:14,15. By the death and resurrection of the Lord it was made possible for us to be 'like Him' one day. This is one of the objects of salvation for us, to make us like Him. But this is yet future; what difference should there be in us now?

In 1 John 3:2 we saw that our hope as believers is one day to 'be like Him'. But God desires that *even now*, in our everyday life, we should 'be like Him'. Read 1 John 3:2 again and then notice the following verse:

'We shall be like Him ... And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He (the Lord Jesus) is pure'.

The word 'pure' here means separated from all sin. God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, has delivered us who believe in Him from sin and we should now have nothing more to do with it. We still have to live in a world in which there is much that is sinful, and we will find ourselves tempted to sin from time to time, but the Lord knows this and helps at these times. See what the Lord prayed for His disciples in John 17:15 :

'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest *keep them from the evil*'.

The Lord has prayed that those who follow Him should be kept out of the evil of this world, that they should be kept separate from sin. If we are following Him, as believers in Him, then we should see that we keep away from all that is sinful in the world. We should be like Him even now, in the way we live.

What does salvation mean to us now? It means that we should strive to be like Him and this includes being separated from the sin in this world.

God's tests

All things that are of any worth have been tested or tried. Many of these tests are unpleasant, but they are necessary. So God tests us believers to find out our worth and to examine our faith in Him. These tests are really for our benefit of course, for God knows beforehand how we will react under any circumstances, and He is well pleased when our faith is not shaken. How does He test us ? Read firstly the word of God to Israel in Deuteronomy 8:2,3 :

'Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to *prove (test) thee*, to know what was in thine heart ... and he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee ...'.

Israel were tested during their forty years in the wilderness by being allowed to hunger for a while. God never allowed them to starve but kept them *waiting* before supplying their need. This was a test to see whether or not they would turn to Him in faith for their food. But instead of *believing* in the One Who had so wonderfully brought them out of the slavery of Egypt, they murmured against Him - their faith failed. They should have known that God, having saved them, would not allow them to starve in the wilderness.

So God tests each believer. It is unlikely that He will test us by hunger in the way He did Israel, but He may well keep us waiting, to test our faith. This could be true of our prayers. God does not always answer prayer straight away, but may keep us waiting, to see just how strong our desire is and to test our faith in Him.

God may also test us by the circumstances through which He allows us to pass. Life is not always easy. Sometimes we have difficulties and troubles; things happen which depress and sadden us, or somebody is unwell and we begin to worry. Sometimes we wonder why God allows such things to happen at all - why do good people suffer, and bad people prosper? We may even be treated unkindly because of what we believe.

In times past believers have been punished and ill-treated simply for being believers, and they have often been wrongly accused of something, or laughed at. These things could happen to us, but especially could we be laughed at for what we believe. Whatever may happen to us we may look upon it as a test of our faith in God. He does not of course make people unkind to us, that is something *they* are responsible for, but God is concerned how we react to such treatment. In this way He examines our faith and trust in Him.

Peter wrote to some believers who were passing through a testing time in 1 Peter 1:6,7 :

‘Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness (sadness) through manifold temptations (various trials): that the trial of your faith ... might be found unto praise and honour and glory ...’.

God was allowing the faith of these believers to be tested, and He will do the same to each believer, though not necessarily in the same way. May we trust Him always whatever may come and however unpleasant may be the test.

God’s discipline

A wise and loving father will correct his children when they go wrong. He disciplines them because he wants them to take the right path in life and be happy. So God, as our Father, may correct us. Read Hebrews 12:6 :

‘Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth (disciplines) ...’.

If the Lord disciplines us who believe in Him, it shows His love to us, and it proves we are sons of God. Read Hebrews 12:7 :

‘If ye endure chastening (discipline), God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?’

God may use some of the trials which we have been considering under ‘God’s tests’, to discipline us. It may not be pleasant at the time, but He desires only our good, and one day we will look back and thank Him for the way He has led us. Read Hebrews 12:11 :

‘Now no chastening (discipline) for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous (saddening): nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby’.

The discipline of the Lord is for our good, even though at the time it may be unpleasant. The future will show God’s great wisdom in dealing in such ways with us, even though we do not understand why just now. May we trust Him when corrected, and not speak against Him as a resentful son may do to his earthly father.

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As believers in Christ, touched by the salvation of the Lord, we may pass through many trying times and unpleasant circumstances, but we may be sure that the Lord will not forget about us. Always He is planning for our good. He is not taken by surprise at anything that either His great enemy Satan or sinful men may do. He is able to work all things, whether good or evil, for good. Read Romans 8:28 :

‘We know that *all things work together for good* to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose’.

If we believe in Him; if we have accepted the salvation offered in His Son, the Lord Jesus, then we need fear nothing that may come. All is in the hands of God, and if He is for us, who can be against us?

A Summary of what salvation means for the believer now

- (1) We have *a new relationship to God*. He is our Father and we His children. We should go to Him in prayer, thanking Him for all things and telling Him all our desires and problems. We always remember that we can approach Him only through the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks to us through His word, the Bible, which we should read regularly. By His word we are prepared to serve Him.
- (2) We have been *saved to serve Him* by good works. The life we lead is service for Him when we are loving, kind, forgiving, obedient to parents etc.. We should be very careful about what we say, for if we can control our tongue, we can control all that we do. All that we do should be done for Him.
- (3) We should *be like Him*. Especially should we be separated from sin. We are still in a sinful world, but just as He was able to live in the world without sharing in its sinful ways, so should we avoid all sin. We may be tempted to sin, but He will help at such times.
- (4) We will have *times of trial*. God, like any father, is concerned about His children. He allows us to be tested by troubles or difficulties and looks for us to turn to Him at such times, and trust Him. He also disciplines us for our own good, even though the trial may sadden us for the present. He is in complete control and works all things together for good.

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Salvation means all that is written in this booklet, *and very much more*. It would not be possible to write a book to include all that salvation means for us, but we have mentioned some of the more important points. One day we shall know even more about God’s great salvation in Christ Jesus. Until then we should never cease to thank Him for what He has done for us, for the gift of His Son, and all that comes to us through Him. Our last reference in Romans 8:31,32 shows what confidence every believer in Christ should have:

‘What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?’

CONCLUSION

Our booklet is ended. It was not written simply for interest but to challenge you also. If you call yourself a Christian what right have you to do this? Many people who live in a civilised country call themselves by this name ‘Christian’, but they are not Christians by God’s standard.

A Christian IS NOT a person who:

- (1) Lives in a civilised country.
- (2) Goes to church.
- (3) Lives the best life he can.
- (4) Is christened or baptised and confirmed.

A Christian IS a person who:

BELIEVES IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS HIS SAVIOUR.

That is why we have used the word ‘believer’ in this booklet instead of the more popular ‘Christian’. Are you a believer?

It is easy to say that we believe in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, but if we do, it should make a difference in our lives. A person who *really* believes in Him has new life, he starts all over again like a new born babe. He thinks differently to what he did before he believed; he now has new interests. He should want to spend time with God by reading His word, praying, and meeting with others who also believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. His life should be lived for the Lord Who has saved him, and not selfishly.

Are you like this?

Before you put this booklet to one side ask yourself where you stand, and be sure to answer honestly, because you will one day stand before God to give account.

FOR YOUR NOTES