

THE WORD OF

TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

4

HOW WE RECEIVE THE SALVATION OF CHRIST

The previous lesson clarified that our salvation depends totally on the work that Jesus has done and is now doing on our behalf. His death, on this earth, is the sacrifice for sin, while His ministry in the heavens, is where he offers His blood as an atonement for our sin. This offering of Himself, as the Lamb of God, is the death sacrifice that pays the penalty for our sin and is applied at the time we come to Him for forgiveness. If it were not for the grace of God, the process of the heavenly ministry could never take place

For Christ's priestly ministry to be effective for us, we must have faith and belief in His power to save, otherwise He cannot represent us before the throne of God. He says: *I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands, thy walls are continually before Me (Isaiah 49:16)*. It is by faith we are with Him in the heavenly places, by "grace" are ye saved through "faith" (Ephesians 2:8). But what is grace and what is faith? Let us now study the Scriptures to see how these terms apply in the way we receive the salvation of Christ...

When man sinned, Christ immediately stood between man and death. Because of His love for His creation, God, with kindness we do not deserve (i.e. grace), gave us a probationary period (this earthly life), wherein we may decide to either choose unselfishness and loving obedience, the way of eternal life, or choose selfishness and rebellion, the result of which is separation from God and ultimately death (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

GRACE... is the undeserved opportunity God gives us (in this life only, Titus 2:11,12) to live without practising sin. Through the power of Christ we take that opportunity to become renewed, or transformed in our thinking; as new creatures, Jesus has redeemed us free from sin. Grace is NOT God ignoring our sin and allowing us into heaven regardless of that sin. While we are still attached to our sin and not renewed in our thinking, God cannot give us eternal life (Revelation 21:27; Revelation 22:14,15).

FAITH... is the part we play in our salvation. In the previous lesson we stated that there is no human content in the work of Christ for our redemption. However, infinite though the work of Jesus is, it stands helpless when the sinner fails to embrace the conditions upon which it is offered (Hebrews 10:26,29). Those conditions and the appropriation of faith, will now form the bulk of our study.

1. What is the Bible synonym for faith?

Galatians 3:22 _____

Note: A synonym is a word that has the same meaning as another word.

2. Because God loves us, He gave us His son. What are we required to do in response to this gift, that we may receive everlasting life?

John 3:16 _____

Note: Jesus died to save us from our sin. If we do not believe, or have faith in what He can do for us, we are outside of the salvation plan (Hebrews 11:6).

3. So what is our status if we believe and what is our status if we do not believe?

John 3:18 _____

4. Expanding on this text, what does it mean if we are condemned.

John 3:19 _____

Note: As the light is the truth of God's word, it will reprove the wrongdoer for his sin (John 3:20: 2Corinthians 4:4).

5. Conversely, he that comes to the light is doing what kind of deeds?

John 3:21 _____

Note: The same truth that rebukes the sinner, confirms the righteous man in his way (John 16:8,13; 2Cor. 2:15,16). For such a man delights in the word of God (Psalm 40:8,9,10; Psalm 119:165-168).

6. If we are in the light, whom then are we following?

John 8:12 _____

Note: Hence, those who believe in Jesus Christ are not condemned, they walk in the light of truth, follow His example and do His works.

7. So if we are doing the works of Christ, who is righteous, what does this mean concerning the sin in our life?

1John 1:5-7; John 1:29; 1John 3:7 _____

8. The belief, or faith, we are talking about here, is the belief that transforms the soul (mind) from unrighteousness to righteousness (Hebrews 10:39). What evidence is there that the devils "believe" in God and Christ and recognise Jesus and His authority?

James 2:19; Mark 5:1-13; Acts 19:15,16 _____

9. This "belief", as held by the devils (fallen angels), is it the type of belief, or faith, that will save them?

2Peter 2:4; Jude 6 _____

It is clear then, that when God said whosoever believes on Christ shall have everlasting life (John 3:16), He is referring to a belief that results in a changed life, a turning away from sin.

The belief that is no more than a mental ascent, intellectual acceptance, or an acknowledgement of God and His sovereignty, is not a belief that will save the soul. This kind of belief will lead to perdition (death) (Hebrews 10:39).

10. What is the first step in applying saving faith to receive the salvation of Christ?

1John 1:8-10; Jeremiah 14:20 _____

Note: To confess, is to acknowledge or recognise our sinful condition and hence our great need of a Saviour. Without this awakening, there is no sense of need and therefore no seeking after God.

11. To help us have this awareness, for what should we pray?

Psalms 139:23,24 _____

12. Acknowledging our sin alone will not bring about our salvation. What next should be done?

Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7 _____

13. When we kneel in prayer before the high and holy God, what is to be our attitude?

Psalms 51:17; Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 5:3 _____

Note: To be poor in spirit has nothing to do with money, but rather describes our humble recognition of the greatness of our transgression and desperate need of compassion from a loving God.

14. What is the attitude of the two men contrasted in the following parable and which of the two received the blessing of God?

Luke 18:11-14 _____

15. What changes will there be in the life of the one who is truly repentant (sorry for sin)?

2Corinthians 5:17; 7:10,11 _____

16. When we come to God and pray for forgiveness, what is the condition upon which He will hear?

2Chronicles 7:14 _____

17. The work Jesus has done and is now doing to effect our salvation is of infinite price (review Lesson 3). Who are to be the recipients of this holy treasure?

Hebrews 5:9 _____

Note: We can only obey as we are filled with the Spirit of Christ. He gives the power to obey and the love of it. But we will not receive this blessing unless we **earnestly** pray for it. There is no such thing as obedience without the Holy Spirit, for He makes the difference in the heart.

18. Is there a sin that God will not forgive? If so, what is it?

Matthew 12:31,32 _____

19. What is part of the work of the Holy Spirit?

John 15:26; John 16:13 _____

20. How are we sealed as God's people or disciples?

Ephesians 4:30 _____

Note: The Holy Spirit gives us the truth concerning salvation through Jesus Christ. If we reject this, we are rejecting Christ and the whole salvation plan. A decided refusal of His pleading will harden our heart and we shut ourselves off from God. We have separated ourselves and grieved the heart of God. This is the unpardonable sin.

But this need not happen if we humbly surrender to the loving call of God (Romans 2:4). Now is the time of salvation, later may be too late; for the spirit of God will not always strive with men (2Corinthians 6:2; Genesis 6:3).

Do not put it off any longer. Quietly kneel before Him and pour out your heart to Him in prayer. Tell the One who cares for you, the heart's deepest longing, confess to the Father every known sin and plead for His forgiveness and that He place within you a true heartfelt repentance. Until you do this, you will never know the truth of what God's word is trying to say to you. Continual procrastination only makes it easier to put it off even longer. Satan can have us self deceived, thinking we can embrace Christ at any time. But time will only make us more rigid in our refusal. Thus hardened, it will be impossible for us to change. Opportunity will have passed and then with bitter regret, we will know that we are lost (Luke 12:35-46). But NOW, TODAY Christ is waiting, the opportunity is open and no-one need miss out on heaven. If we do lose eternal life, it will be because that is what we have chosen, either by resolution or procrastination.

Let none flatter themselves that sin cherished for a time can easily be given up by and by. This is not so. Every sin cherished weakens the character and strengthens habit and physical, mental and moral depravity is the result. You may repent of the wrong you have done and set your feet in right paths; but the mould of your mind and your familiarity with evil will make it difficult for you to distinguish between right and wrong. Through the wrong habits formed, Satan will assail you again and again. Christ's Object Lessons p.281.

We are often discouraged by our failures to do the right (Romans 7:18,19) and wonder if we will ever be like Christ. His ideal for us is just so far above us, it seems as though we will never make it. How do we really gain the victory over all our cultivated and inherited tendencies to sin and live without transgressing the law of God? Notice the following passage...

*Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
1John 3:9*

This text is somewhat sobering to the serious Christian. It says that he will forsake every sin! Impossible? When we realise that ALL OF CHRIST'S BIDDINGS ARE ENABLINGS, God's encouragement leaves us in awe and our heart overflows with gratitude and love toward Him (Philippians 4:13).

In our next lesson, we will learn of God's failproof plan for a continuing victorious life. He says, we CAN be victorious, as the text states. For when God says we are saved by grace, this is what He means, His grace is sufficient to keep us from sin (2Corinthians 12:9,10; 2Timothy 4:18). Grace does not only provide us with time to become right with our Maker, it supplies the power for the miracle of change to take place at the very centre of our being.