

# Salvation: The Gift of God

***“By grace are ye  
saved through  
faith; and that not  
of yourselves: it is  
the gift of God.”  
—Ephesians 2:8***

**SALVATION MEANS TO BE** saved from death, but the question is sometimes asked concerning what death really is, and how can anyone be saved from it. Some may ask

whether salvation is a promise now to all believers in our Lord Jesus, or does it describe a condition of future happiness? The scriptures concerning these questions may help to give us a better understanding of what it means to be saved, and of how the grace of God will ultimately bring this great promise of his grace to all mankind.

## **GOD'S LAW TRANSGRESSED**

At the present time, the human family continues to die and is in desperate need of being saved. Death was introduced to the human family by our first parents, Adam and Eve, when they transgressed the Divine law and suffered the consequences of disobedience as we read in the scriptural account. “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.” (Gen. 2:17) The Apostle Paul further explains, “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.”—Rom. 5:12

It is important to keep this fact clearly in mind and to not distort the meaning of the Scriptures. There is the erroneous claim that there is no death, but only a separation from God. Many Christian people believe that those who are separated from him by sin will be eternally tortured in a fiery hell. The whole subject of salvation sometimes becomes one of confusion and error.

God created man to live on the earth as a perfect human being. Every necessary provision was made by the Creator to insure that his human creation might enjoy a continuance of life on the earth. It was only necessary that they obey his law. The warning was given that disobedience would result in death, which is the loss of life. There is no mystery concerning this, and nothing that requires any interpretation. The result of disobedience has been manifest throughout all the ages since, for man has continued to die and the reign of sin and death continues to exist.

## **GOD’S GRACE MANIFEST**

Adam was justly condemned to death. There was no further requirement on God’s part that anything be done to set aside the penalty or to hinder the operation of the Divine principle which had decreed that the wages of sin is death. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through

Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23) God’s grace and love made provision whereby the sinful race would not have to remain dead eternally. This provision was Christ, who came to redeem the fallen race and to die for them. Jesus explained the purpose of his mission to earth saying, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—Luke 19:10

Salvation is provided by the wondrous grace of God. In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul wrote, “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.” (II Thess. 2:16) “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” (I Pet. 3:18) “In whom we have redemption through his [Christ’s] blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”—Eph. 1:7

## **INHERITED DEATH PENALTY**

Adam had sinned willfully, and the penalty of death was inflicted directly upon him. His children were born in sin, and while they came under condemnation along with Adam, they were not directly involved in the guilt as he was. The Apostle Paul explains, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” (Rom. 5:14) Why did Paul say that this was true from Adam to Moses? This was because through Moses God gave his Law Covenant to Israel, and told them that by keeping that Law they could live.

This gave them an opportunity to be released from the original condemnation. In this respect, they were placed in the same position as Adam. But like Adam they too failed. The Law, which was ordained to give life, brought death instead, thus demonstrating that no member of the fallen and sinful race could by his own righteousness prove worthy of salvation. There was no other way for salvation to come to mankind except as a provision of Divine grace.

That mankind might not perish forever, God's abounding grace provided a Redeemer, even his beloved Son. The coming to earth of Jesus to die, the just for the unjust, was an evidence that the Creator had not turned his back upon his human creation, that he still loved them and would provide a way whereby he could be just in demanding the death penalty for sin, and yet justify those who would accept the provisions of his grace through Christ Jesus.

## **FAITH IN CHRIST**

God bestows some of his blessings upon mankind despite their beliefs or attitude, and whether or not they are worthy or unworthy. He causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust alike. However, this is not true with respect to salvation. God's grace has provided an opportunity for salvation, but only those who accept it on his terms will benefit by this manifestation of his grace. As the apostle wrote, "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."—Eph. 2:8,9

This thought harmonizes with the great truth expressed by John, when he said, "God so loved the

world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:16,17) No one can enjoy the blessings of God unless he has faith in him and in his promises. Those who have full confidence in him are glad to accept his will as their rule of life. Those who do not have such confidence may imagine that their own ways are better than his, and thus drift away from him and into the paths of sin.

Because of the blinding influences of Satan, the vast majority of mankind have no faith in God. Even when told of his grace through Christ they cannot believe it, and have no confidence or faith in him. There is thus no basis upon which the Heavenly Father can deal with them, and his grace which provided salvation is of no avail to them. Faith in God and in his ways implies humility, and an understanding of one’s own fallen condition. One who exalts himself is not truly upright, except in his own eyes. The Prophet Isaiah speaks of this condition and says, “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”—Isa. 64:6

## **THE POWER OF FAITH**

The Prophet Habakkuk wrote, “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.” (Hab. 2:4) The Apostle Paul quoted from this prophecy and included his perspective by emphasizing, “Therein is the righteousness

of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written [Hab. 2:4], The just shall live by faith.”—Rom. 1:17

Paul also quoted from Habakkuk’s prophecy two other times. When he wrote to the church at Galatia, he said, “That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” (Gal. 3:11) In the apostle’s letter to the Hebrew brethren, he warned, “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” (Heb. 10:38) Our Heavenly Father has no pleasure in those who draw back by losing their faith in him and in the glorious provision of his grace. They thus fail to continue their obedience to him and his will.

### **THE LAW OF FAITH**

In his letter to the brethren at Rome, Paul again emphasizes the vital necessity of faith in the acceptance of God’s grace. “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; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:23-26) The apostle asks, “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”—vs. 27

### **THE WORKS OF FAITH**

The faith which saves us through the grace of God must be a living and active faith. Faith in Jesus which makes the merit of his blood acceptable for

our salvation is one that must be demonstrated by a full surrender of our lives to the Father and to the doing of his will. It would be meaningless to profess faith in Christ while failing to conform our lives to the pattern he has set for us. James puts this matter in perspective and says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:17,18) James then adds, "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"—vs. 20

## **JUSTIFIED BY FAITH**

Salvation means to be rescued from death, but believers in Christ appear to die in the same manner that all the rest of mankind do. The question may then be asked, In what manner are they being saved? During Christ's future kingdom, believers are promised life if they have faith in Christ and will obey the laws of the kingdom. This is the provision of God's grace for the sin-sick and dying human family.

During the present Gospel Age, a special feature of the Heavenly Father's ultimate plan of reconciliation is being accomplished. During this time, he is selecting a class of people who will participate with our Lord Jesus in his future kingdom. There is offered to these followers of our Lord Jesus the glorious prospect of sharing a heavenly home with Christ, and reigning with him in his kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth. This special offer has conditions attached to it, and those who are being called must first suffer and die with Jesus.

Paul spoke of these faithful followers of Jesus and said, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:14-17) In his second letter to Timothy, the apostle also wrote, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."—II Tim. 2:11,12

These Christians are invited to follow faithfully in Jesus' footsteps. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:5) Paul confirms, "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."—vs. 8

## **LIVING SACRIFICES**

Those who are dead in Christ and have responded to the High Calling heed the Apostle Paul's admonition to present their bodies in consecration to the Heavenly Father. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1

The question arises as to how members of the fallen and dying race can offer themselves in acceptable sacrifice to God. We know that Jesus gave his perfect life in sacrifice, but how can we be 'planted together in the likeness of' (Continued on page 35)

*(Continued from page 31)* his death?" Consecrated followers of Jesus are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness, and receive the provision of justification by faith. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."—Rom. 5:1,2

At the present time, the world remains alienated from God because of sin and its penalty, but the believer has been brought to the Heavenly Father by the blood of Christ. He is at peace with God, and is no longer under condemnation. By faith he has received the salvation provided by the blood of Christ, and he is justified in the sight of the Heavenly Father. There is only one purpose for this standing of faith that is granted to believers during this present Gospel Age. That reason is that they might, in turn, offer themselves as an acceptable sacrifice to God. By faith they have been made alive by the blood of Christ, but they return that justified life back to God in sacrifice.

Paul makes this clear, when he says, "In that he [Christ] died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:10,11) From the world's standpoint, the consecrated Christian appears to die just like everyone else. But God views the new and justified life as dying with our Lord Jesus. These New Creatures in Christ Jesus are laying down their lives in sacrifice. The apostle said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which

I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20) “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”—chap. 5:24

## **THE GREAT SALVATION**

The reward that is being offered to those who walk in the narrow way of sacrifice with our Lord Jesus, and are faithful unto death, is much greater than merely being restored to perfect life here on this earth. We are promised a heavenly or spiritual inheritance. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?”—Heb. 2:3

The ‘great salvation’ is promised to those who walk in newness of life—“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.” (Rom. 2:7) The Apostle Peter says, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”—II Pet. 1:3,4

This great salvation is to participate in the “first resurrection” to live and reign with Christ. (Rev. 20:4,6) The faithful will be made like Jesus and “see him as he is.” (I John 3:1-3) They will sit with him “in his throne” (Rev. 3:21), and they will have “power over the nations.” (Rev. 2:26) It was by his grace that provision was made for the great salvation to

become the possession of those of us who respond to the calling to suffer and die with Christ that we might share in the glory of his future kingdom of justice and peace.

## **THE GIFT OF GOD**

When we consider the unspeakable promises of God in connection with our High Calling in Christ Jesus, we know that we could never attain to such heights of glory by our own righteousness or worthiness, as we read, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (II Cor. 3:5) It is only through our blessed Savior that we are able to offer our lives in sacrifice to the Heavenly Father that he has made acceptable to him by his wonderful provisions of grace. In return, we have the blessed privilege to become partakers of the Divine nature.

God's grace is manifest to us through the gift of his beloved Son, while we in turn lay hold upon this wonderful gift, which is acceptable to him through our faith. God gave us his Son, and those who believe on him will receive life. We can then offer our acceptable sacrifice to the Heavenly Father by his abundant grace on our behalf.

## **UNMERITED GRACE**

Jesus is God's great gift which manifests his unmerited grace or favor, which through our faith results in salvation. Everything we possess is ours by the grace of God, and this includes our faith. "That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith." (II Thess. 3:2) Some have been called who have sufficient faith to lay hold upon the wonderful promises of God,

and accept the terms of the great salvation. Thus they run diligently for “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:14

If we have such a faith, let us rejoice and endeavor to have it increased through prayer and active use. The disciples prayed that their faith might be increased, and we should do the same. As we become better acquainted with the plan and purpose of God, its glorious beauty cannot help but increase our faith. Blessed are we if our faith has been able to recognize and accept the marvelous gift of God, even Jesus who is our personal Savior. May we drink of the water of life which he has provided for all who come to the Heavenly Father through him. If we have partaken of this life-giving water, it will be in us as “a well of water springing up” into everlasting and abundant life.—John 4:14

## **SALVATION FOR MANKIND**

It is a blessed thought to realize that the water of life which now springs up in our hearts like ‘a well,’ will continue to flow out to the world even more abundantly under the righteous terms and administration of Christ’s future kingdom of blessing to the whole sin-sick and dying human family. The faithful members of his church will share in dispensing those blessings of truth, life, and peace to all who are willing to obey the laws of that righteous kingdom.

The Prophet Isaiah points forward in time to that blessed kingdom which we believe is drawing ever near. “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”—Isa. 12:3-6 ■