

God's Word Saves

***Key Verse: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
—John 3:16***

***Selected Scripture:
John 3:11-21; Num.
21:4-8***

"AS BY THE OFFENCE OF one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Rom. 5:18,19) An explanation of this verse reveals to us that as many as have shared death on account of Adam's sin will have

life-privileges offered to them by our Lord Jesus, who died for them and sacrificially became Adam's substitute according to God's plan. Jesus gave himself "a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (I Tim. 2:6) He died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."—I Pet. 3:18

The apostle's statement is that the sentence of condemnation extended to all the seed of Adam, and was able to be lifted through the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the Father's plan. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8) By the willing sacrifice of himself on the cross, a free gift is then able to be extended to all. This gift is one of forgiveness which, if accepted, will constitute a justification or basis for

everlasting life. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa. 53:11) So, by the “obedience of one many shall be made righteous.”

This is also illustrated for us in the scriptural account from Numbers 21:4-9. Fiery serpents “bit the people.” This represents sinners bitten by sin and suffering the consequences of the fall. The “serpent” that Moses fashioned was a symbol of sin. (Gen. 3:14,15) Although the ransom price was paid by the Redeemer, only a few during the Gospel Age have been made righteous, or justified, “through faith in his blood.” (Rom. 3:25) Since Christ is the “propitiation [satisfaction]” for the sins of the world (I John 2:2), all men will, on account of this, be released from the penalty of Adam’s sin, under the New Covenant. God is perfectly just and righteous, so “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—I John 1:9

The completeness of the ransom is the strongest argument for the restitution of all of mankind who accept it on God’s terms. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17) The very character of God in justice and honor stands pledged to it, and has made it possible by the sacrifice of his Son—“The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Since death is the penalty for sin, when sin is canceled the wages must also cease.

This is truly a demonstration of God’s love for mankind, for “God so loved the world.” The whole world has been provided for in the glorious offering and sacrifice of Jesus, and the whole world is to have the benefits resulting from that sacrifice—“they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10; Gen. 22:17,18; Gal.3:8; I Tim. 2:6,4:10 ■