

GOD'S DESIRE FOR YOU

God, the Creator of the world, wants you and me to be saved. How can we know this? The Bible tells us so. The Bible says that God *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Timothy 2:4). That is great news.

GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU

What would motivate God to want us to be saved, that is, to have our sins forgiven? His great love for us. *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). Have you also heard or read the message of 1 John 4:9? It says, *“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”*

GOD'S GRACE FOR YOU

Would it be safe to conclude that God's grace made our salvation possible? Absolutely! *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”* (Ephesians 2:8). It is clear that without God's grace, man could have no chance to be saved. Just what is grace? It is unmerited favor – kindness that we do not deserve and cannot earn. By God's grace He gives us that which we do not deserve. Is it possible for you and me to earn our salvation? No! Can we be saved by our good moral deeds? Never! Would it be possible for us to devise our own plan or “checklist” of actions by which we might save ourselves? Still, the answer is, “No.”

GOD'S SAVIOR FOR YOU

Here is the “picture” that the New Testament gives us: God, because of His love for us, desires for all people to be saved. Thus, by His grace God sent His Son to this earth. And what was the point in sending Jesus? *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief”* (1 Timothy 1:15).

Why was the Son of God given the name “Jesus” when He lived among men? Simply because “Jesus” means “Savior,” as we see in these words: *“... and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21).

OUR GREATEST NEED

The Bible's teaching about sin is very easy to understand. Do you know what sin is? The Bible says that it is *“lawlessness”* or *“transgression of the law”* (1 John 3:4). What that means is, a “sinner” is one that breaks God's law. Well, which people does the Lord consider to be sinners? The Bible's answer is too plain to miss: *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

Man's greatest need is to be saved from sin. You see, sin causes men to be separated from God, as we read in the Bible: *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear”* (Isaiah 59:2). The horrible consequence of committing sin is to be separated from the God of heaven.

Does this not put every one of us into a hopeless situation? Without Jesus, yes. But, through Jesus there is hope! Remember, Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And just how did He accomplish this? By willfully sacrificing Himself on a cross (at Calvary) and shedding His blood in order that our sins might be washed away. Through Jesus' blood we can be justified and reconciled to God. Hear these words: *“Much more then, having now been justified by His (Jesus') blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son . . .”* (Romans 5:9,10).

But isn't there some other way to receive the remission of sins and be reconciled to God? No. Jesus is *“the way, the truth, and the life,”* and no one can come to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

WILL ALL MEN BE SAVED?

If Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all people, does this mean that every person will be saved and go to heaven? Listen to what Jesus said: *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it”* (Matthew 7:13,14). Jesus also said, *“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven”* (Matthew 7:21).

WHAT WILL YOUR RESPONSE BE?

Jesus invites all men unto Him for salvation, saying, *“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28). Please understand that the God of heaven forces no one to receive the grace that He extends to us through Jesus. Each of us has the freedom of choice to either accept or reject God's grace, love, and salvation. God calls or draws men to Jesus through the teaching of His word, the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14; John 6:44,45). As you and I hear that gospel message, it is then up to us either to receive it or reject it. What will your answer be? Are you right now *a receiver or a rejecter* of the spiritual life and salvation that God offers you through Jesus?

WHAT MUST YOU DO TO BE SAVED?

You mean there is something that a person must do in order to be saved? Yes. But isn't salvation a gift? It certainly is (Ephesians 2:8). However, it is a *conditional* gift. That simply means that God grants salvation unto us only when we comply with the conditions that He has set forth in the Bible.

The New Testament clearly teaches that we can have the forgiveness of sins only through the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7). Thus, if the question is, *“What can wash away my sins,”* the answer is *“the blood of Jesus the Christ.”* But, if we ask, *“When*

does the blood of Jesus wash away a person's sins," that is an entirely different question.

Perhaps you have heard or read something like this statement: "In order to be saved from your sins, all you need to do is pray to Jesus, confess your sins to Him, and receive Him into your heart as your personal Savior." There is no doubt that this is a very popular teaching that unnumbered millions of people have accepted. But do you know what? Such an idea is nowhere to be found in the Bible. It is just not in there! If that is the case, then why do so many support and spread such a teaching? Good question!

The truth is, if one will take time to study the New Testament of the Lord Jesus, he will learn that the following are the actions that one must take in order to have his sins cleansed by Jesus' blood:

* **Hear the gospel preached:** "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:17). Hearing God's word comes before faith.

* **Believe in God's existence:** "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him*" (Hebrews 11:6).

* **Believe in Jesus as the Son of God:** "*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*" (John 3:18).

* **Repent of every sin:** "*The Lord . . . is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9). "Repent" does not mean simply to say, "I am sorry." Rather, it means to change one's mind. In the process of genuine repentance, after one has sinned against God, he will: (1) regret what he has done/be sorry for it; (2) determine in his heart not to repeat this mistake (i.e. he will change his will); and (3) change or reform his life.

* **Confess faith in Jesus:** "*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (Romans 10:10).

* **Be baptized:** "*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16). The Bible does not teach that one should be baptized after he is *already saved*, or that one ought to be baptized as an outward sign to show that he *has been saved already* by faith prior to being baptized. Jesus Himself said, "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*" (Mark 16:16). According to these words of Jesus, who will be saved? Is it one that just believes? No. Is it one that is just baptized? No. Rather, it is one that both believes *and* is baptized. Note: In the New Testament the word "baptism" means an immersion, not the sprinkling or pouring of water.

* **Continue to be faithful to Christ:** Being "*baptized into Christ*" (Galatians 3:27) is not the end of one's spiritual life in the Christ, but only the beginning. Following baptism, one must live a life of faithful service to the Lord. He does this by living in harmony with His teachings. Following Jesus is no small matter, but rather a life-long commitment.

Like we said, **God wants You to be saved!** Now it is up to You. Do *You* want to be saved? If we can help You in Your study of the Bible or obedience of the Lord's will, please contact us.

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