

HOME BIBLE STUDY

~ Lesson 4 ~

HOW CAN I BE SAVED FROM MY SINS?

The last lesson examined who Jesus is and why we need Him. He is the One God has sent to save us from our sins. Now, let us look more closely at how to have a saving relationship with the Son of God, the Savior.

SIN SEPARATES

In the garden of Eden, God created man and woman in a state of goodness, purity and innocence (Gen. 1:27, 31; Ecclesiastes 7:29). He supplied them with all they needed physically and spiritually. He had open fellowship with them (cp. Gen. 2:16; 3:9-10). God, in making man in His image, also gave him free will. We see this in the fact that God gave man a choice of whether to obey Him or to disobey.

God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden (Gen. 2:9). "And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17) Clearly, Adam was given a choice.

Then the devil, disguised in the form of a serpent, entered the garden. He says to Eve, "Has God really said, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1) Satan questioned God's instructions. He did not do so out of ignorance or out of a desire to learn, but

out of a desire to trick, tempt and deceive. He wants to place doubt and disbelief into the hearts of men and women.

Eve replied by repeating God's instructions: "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (Gen. 3:2-3) But "The serpent said to the woman, 'You won't surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" (Gen. 3:4-5)

Notice what has just happened here. Eve has knowledge of what God's will is. Satan does too. Satan then contradicts God's word – denying the consequences that God foretold if they should eat of the tree and "explaining" that God was really just being stingy and keeping poor Eve from something that is really wonderful. He said all this in a very crafty way. If Eve would hold to God's word and refuse Satan's suggestions, she would overcome.

But "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit of it, and ate; and she gave some to her husband with her, and he ate. The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:6-7). Here Adam and Eve both disobeyed God. They did what God said not to do. This is what sin is, disobedience, breaking God's rules.

In Genesis 3 we also read how this one sin led them to hide from God, feel shame and guilt, and try to shift the blame to others. They also received some physical consequences to their sin. But the most important consequence was the

one stated back in Gen. 2:16-17: "In the day that you eat of it you will surely die". They did not die physically that day, but spiritually they did die. Spiritually they were separated from God by their disobedience.

This is what sin is (disobedience) and how it comes to all mankind. Some believe Adam & Eve's sin changed their nature so that all born after them were depraved and can only do evil. But this is not what the Bible teaches. In fact, God Himself said that even Cain (Adam & Eve's son) had the ability to rule over and resist temptation (Gen. 4:6-7). Also, passages like Ezekiel 18:20 make it very clear that, "The soul who sins, he shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be on him."

And as Romans 5:12 says, sin entered the world through one man (Adam) and spiritual death entered the world by that sin, "and so death passed to all men, **because all sinned.**" Friends, read this carefully. Why has spiritual death passed to all men? Because we have all committed sin. It is not inherited. It is not caught like the flu. It is something we ourselves choose to do, just like Adam and Eve did. Just like Cain. Yes, all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and sin is the breaking of God's rules (1 John 3:4). And by committing sin, we are separated from God, spiritually dead (Is. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23a).

So, what can we do? How can we be saved? Thanks be to God who has sent His Son to open the way of salvation and pardon (John 3:16). He has placed all spiritual blessings in Jesus (Eph. 1:3). Therefore, let us learn and understand what is involved in having a saving relationship with the Son of God.

GRACE

What is grace? Some think it is an irresistible force that is infused into man, a supernatural experience. But simply, it is favor or good will. God has in His heart and mind an attitude of grace, an inclination to show favor toward mankind. It is undeserved. We, because of our sins, do not deserve His good will and blessings; yet His favor has moved Him to provide a way of pardon for us. As it is written of Jesus: "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of **his grace**, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known unto us the mystery of **his will**, according to **his good pleasure** which he purposed in him" (Eph. 1:7-9).

We see clearly that God's will is favorable or gracious toward mankind. It is His good pleasure that provides the opportunity for salvation in and through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must know more about Jesus in order to participate in this salvation.

KNOWING HIM

Many say they know Jesus. Perhaps we even feel very close to Him. But, it is important to understand that claiming or feeling like we know Him and actually knowing Him can be two very different things. Let us see what God Himself says about "knowing" Him.

"And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep his commandments. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him..." (1 John 2:3-4) This passage says that those who say they know Him, but who do not obey Him are liars. This may seem harsh, but remember, God has every right to set the rules of how things work.

Even so, many today will protest and say, "But that is work's salvation!" Many today do not understand the difference between earning salvation and conditions of salvation. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). No one deserves or earns salvation. Thus, if anyone is to be saved it must be by the favor (grace) of God. And if God should choose to place one condition upon salvation or a thousand conditions, the one who submits to God's terms of pardon can in the end only rightly say he has been **pardoned**. Once we commit sin, we can **never** rightly claim we deserve to be saved, even if there are many things God requires us to do in order to be saved. There is a universe of difference between earning salvation and conditions of pardon.

As God Himself has recorded in the scriptures: "we know that we know Him, **if** we keep His commandments." It is easy to let our beliefs, religious traditions and feelings blind us to what the Bible actually says. But friends, **the Bible actually says this!**

LOVING HIM

Again, let us look at the inspired word to see what God identifies as "loving Him." "Whoso keeps His word, in him truly has the love of God been perfected" (1 John 2:5). "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3). "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loves Me not keeps not My words: and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14:23-24). Again, dear reader, what does God tell us about loving Him? If our love is not like this, can we truthfully and rightly say we love Him?

UNDERSTANDING HIS SPEECH

Jesus spoke in John 8 to those who believed in Him, saying: "If you abide in My word, then are you truly My disciples; and you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Please note that Jesus said this to those who already believed in Him (v. 31). He did not tell them they were already saved. He did not tell them that they were already free from sin (see John 8: 33-36). He told them that to truly be a disciple ("learner") of Christ and to be set free from sin, one must abide ("remain") in His word. If anyone wishes to differ with this, perhaps calling it "works salvation", then please take it up with Jesus. For it is the Lord Himself that said it.

In this same text Jesus explained that they did not do the **works of Abraham** (John 8:37-40). Yes, Abraham did works. What works did Abraham do? He walked or **stepped by faith**, he was obedient by faith (Hebrews 11:8-10, 17; Rom. 4:12). This kind of works, as noted above, is different from "works of the law" or "living perfectly". Paul points out that there is a "law of faith", which stands in contrast to "the law of works" (Romans 3:27). The law of works required perfect works or "sinless perfection." No man has ever done that (except Christ) (Rom. 3:23; Heb. 4:25). But, works of faith are conditions God has placed before man that we must submit to in order to be blessed.

Until our faith is obedient, it is dead and barren. As it is written, faith is made profitable, alive, fruitful and perfect by this kind of works (James 2:14-26). Works of faith do not nullify grace, rather they are the means and conditions by which God extends His favor (grace) unto men. Notice that "grace" has appeared bring salvation and that grace "instructs us" (Titus 2:11-12). Can we ignore the instructions of God's grace, and still be a

partaker of grace? And notice that we can turn our backs on and despise God's gracious Spirit (Heb. 10:29).

Therefore, works of faith are works that **God** has required, not what man has invented. These Heaven revealed works exclude man's boasting in himself. For even though we are to "**walk** by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7); we still do not have a basis to boast in "our perfect works" (Rom. 3:27). And how could we boast in ourselves when we are not earning our way to Heaven, but being pardoned by God? Truly, Jesus is the author of "the law of faith" and He is the perfecter of it (Heb. 12:2). We must recognize that Jesus requires **our submission** to Him. And until we submit to Him **on His terms**, we remain outlaws, rebels, and sinners.

Turning back to John 8, Jesus asked, "Why do you not understand My speech? Even because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of you father it is your will to do" (8:43-44). Jesus is clearly rebuking those He was speaking to. These believers **who were not obeying** were not able to understand His words **because their will** was set on doing the desires of the devil. In other words, even though they knew & believed who Jesus was, **they preferred** to be worldly-minded. They showed that they did not love Jesus or the Father by refusing to **obey** Jesus (John 8:42).

This is not difficult to understand. It is like the son who says he loves his parents, but who does not listen to them. He does not clean his room, does not come home by the time his parents direct, he goes to places his parents tell him not to go; because he loves to do what pleases himself. He loves himself more than his parents. What Jesus is saying is that our actions speak very loudly about where our heart is. The proof of truly believing, knowing, loving and

understanding Jesus is in the doing of His will.

SO, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

We know that Jesus is the Savior. What does He say to do as a condition of saving faith? Jesus told His apostles to preach this message: "You go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. **He that believes and is baptized shall be saved**; but he that disbelieves shall be condemned." (Mark. 16:15-16)

Believing in Jesus as Immanuel (Matt. 1:23), "God with us", is essential. Connected with this is baptism. Baptism literally means "immersion". Many today think baptism is sprinkling, pouring OR immersion, but that is not what the word means in the Bible. A good example of the Bible definition is in Romans 6:3-4. It is written there that: "All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death... we were **buried** therefore with Him through baptism into death." A burial is a complete covering or "immersion" and is likened unto a death.

Next, we must realize the purpose that Jesus Himself gave to baptism. Perhaps you are thinking you have been baptized "to show that you are already saved" or to be added to a particular denomination; if so, then that is not the baptism that Jesus spoke of. For, Jesus placed belief and baptism **before** "shall be saved." Jesus also said that this being "born again of the water and the spirit" is how one **enters the kingdom** (John 3:3, 5). Men may change this, but Jesus' words are clear and understandable.

The apostles that Jesus appointed and guided by means of the Holy Spirit taught this same message. Notice in Acts 2, Peter convicted men of their sins and taught that Jesus was raised and enthroned in Heaven (Acts 2:23, 34-36). At this point, the hearers cried out with

conviction: "What shall we do" (v. 37)? Peter responded with the same teachings Jesus commanded: "You repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ **unto the remission of your sins**" (Acts 2:38). And we then read that those who were baptized were **added to the church** by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:41, 47 KJV).

Friend, have you done this? Have you believed, repented and been baptized **unto** the forgiveness of your sins and **to be added** to the Lord's church/kingdom? If not, then you are lost. You need to hear the voice of Jesus the Savior. Listen to the words of the Son of God. Submit your will to Him and repent, that you may receive the greatest of all blessings. He offers pardon and mercy for your sin-stained soul, cleansing for your guilty conscience and the hope of heaven! Friend, do you know Jesus? Do you love Him? Do you understand Him? Then obey Him today!

"And why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', **and do not do** the things which I say?"
(Luke 6:46)

"Or are you ignorant that all we who were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into his death**? We were **buried** therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in **newness of life**..."
(Romans 6:3-4)

"Know you not, that to whom you present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants you are whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that whereas you were servants of sin, you became **obedient from the heart** to that **form of teaching** whereunto you were delivered; and

being made free from sin, you became servants of righteousness."
(Romans 6:16-18)

"And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep his commandments. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him..." (1 John 2:3-4)

"Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation."
(Heb. 5:8-9)

"And now why do you delay? arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16)

Please complete the Home Bible Study questions page for lesson #4, then send it in to be checked. After checking it, we will return it with the next lesson in the series. Also, if you have any questions please write them down and let us know. We are here to serve you and will point to the Bible for the answer to all things.

HOME BIBLE STUDY #4

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