

6 - JESUS, A COMPLETE SAVIOR FROM SIN

HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED?

This is a common question that many people have been asked by well meaning Christians. The question raises other questions.

What do I need to be saved from? How can I know if I have been saved? If I have been saved in the past, is it possible to turn away from Jesus later? Can Jesus forgive and accept me if I repeat the same sin again?

Jesus took the initiative to be our Savior to take “away the sin of the world” John 1:29. In order to have a balanced perspective, we need to understand how Jesus saves us from every aspect of the sin problem.

1. What are the 3 aspects of the sin problem Jesus saves us from?

A. Legal Consequences Of Sin = D_____ H

Romans 6:23 “The _____ of sin is _____, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

B. Spiritual Consequences Of Sin = S _____ E to sin

John 8:34 “Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a _____ of _____.”

C. Physical Consequences Of Sin = P_____ & Evil Effects of Sin

Genesis 3:16-19 “To the woman [God] said: ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in _____ you shall bring forth children; your desire *shall be* for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ Then to Adam He said, ‘Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat *of* it all the days of your life. Both _____ and _____ it shall bring forth for you. . . .’”

2. How did Jesus save everyone from the legal consequences of sin?

- A. 2 Corinthians 5:14 “For the love of Christ _____ us, because we judge thus: that if One died for _____, then _____ died.”
- B. Galatians 2:19,20 “I through the _____ _____ to the law that I might live to God. I have been _____ with Christ.”
- C. Hebrews 10:10 “By that will we _____ _____ _____ through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Paul is motivated by the truth that, “through the law,” everyone has already died, in Christ, the death that is the “wages of sin.”

This means that everyone can say, “Legally, I have been saved from the wages of sin. Legally, I have been sanctified by the offering of Jesus.”

The offering of Jesus on Calvary enabled God to:

- A. Restore our individual freedom of choice (2 Corinthians 5:19,20).
- B. Be just when forgiving sinners (1 John 1:9, Romans 3:26).
- C. Qualify the human race for eternal life (Colossians 1:12-14).

3. How are believers being saved from spiritual consequences of sin?

- A. John 8:31,32 “If you abide in My word, . . . you shall know the truth, and the _____ shall make you _____.”
- B. Romans 8:2-4 “The law of the _____ of _____ in Christ Jesus has made me _____ from the law of _____ and _____. . . . He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirements of the law might be _____ _____ us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”
- C. Hebrews 10:14 “For by one offering He has _____ forever those who _____ _____.”

In John 8:36, Jesus said, “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” Jesus did free everyone from the legal consequences of sin when He redeemed the human race from curse of the law (Gal. 3:13).

However, many people are unaware of this good news. As a result, they have not experienced the freedom the gospel brings.

Jesus says that those who abide in His word will know the truth and the truth will set them free. They will experience freedom from guilt, shame, and condemnation. They will also experience freedom from slavery to sins such as pride, bitterness, hypocrisy, immorality and rebellion. They will begin to love others as Jesus has loved them.

The King James Version translates Hebrews 10:10 and 14 in the same way, “are sanctified.” However, the Greek uses the perfect tense in verse 10 and the present tense in verse 14 (Robertson’s NT Word Pictures).

The perfect tense refers to something that has happened in the past, but its effects are ongoing. The present tense describes actions that are in the process of happening today. Since there are two different tenses being used, there must be a different focus in each verse.

The focus of verse 14 is on those who have surrendered their lives to God and have given Him permission to transform them. They are able to say, “Through the indwelling Holy Spirit I am being saved from slavery to sin and am being sanctified spiritually.”

It is important to remember that this process doesn’t make us more qualified for heaven, for Jesus already did that for the human race. Instead, this transformation enables believers to:

- A. Bring glory to God by being a blessing to others (Matthew 5:16).
- B. Experience transformation in their lives so they are able to enjoy fellowship with believers and will want to live with God forever.
- C. Enjoy the abundant life that comes from living with Jesus.

4. Who are the ones who remain “perfected forever”? Heb. 10:14

“Perfected forever,” refers to the truth spelled out in verse 10, “We have been sanctified.” However, in verse 14 there is a qualifying statement. The only ones who remain “perfected forever,” are the ones who allow the Holy Spirit to continue the process of sanctifying them spiritually.

Verse 10 relates to our title to heaven and verse 14 to our fitness for heaven. If we do not allow God to transform us from within, we will not enjoy the fellowship with God and His followers. We would rather “tear up our title” and cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on us, rather than live with God forever (Revelation 6:14-16).

Our security in Christ is always based on the perfect life and death of Jesus, not on our performance. All the while we are growing, we can have peace with God and the assurance of salvation (1 John 5:13). This enables our focus to be on living for God’s glory and not for the “selfish” motive of trying to make it to heaven (2 Corinthians 5:15).

As the Holy Spirit is leading us into all truth and transforming us, He may convict us to turn away from something that we don’t want to surrender. If we persistently resist and reject the Holy Spirit, then we are saying, “I don’t want a Savior from sin, for I love darkness rather than light” (John 3:19). Out of love for us, God will honor our choice and we will perish in the end (John 3:16).

5. How will believers be saved from physical consequences of sin?

A. 1 Cor. 15:52,53 “The dead will be raised _____, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

B. Rev. 21:4,5 “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more _____, nor _____, nor _____. There shall be no more _____, for the former things have passed away.”

C. Revelation 21:27 “There shall by no means enter it anything that _____, or causes an abomination or a _____, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.”

When Jesus returns believers will be resurrected with brand new bodies. Our sinful, corruptible natures will be no more (See Romans 5:19b). After God creates a new heaven and earth, there will be no more death, sorrow, crying or pain. All the evil effects of the curse will be no more.

These promises enable believers to say:

- A. Receiving Jesus as my Savior and Lord, I can have the day by day assurance of living forever with God (1 John 5:13; 2 Timothy 4:8).
- B. I will be made holy physically when Jesus returns and He gives me a brand new body without a sinful nature (1 Corinthians 15:52,53).
- C. I will be saved from the pain and brokenness that sin has caused when God creates a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:4,5,27).

GOD IS THE ONE WHO MAKES US HOLY

6. What gift did God give the human race to remind us He is the One who makes us holy? Genesis 2:1-3; Ezekiel 20:12; Mark 2:27

To sanctify means to make holy. Every Sabbath God says, “Remember, I am the One who created you and I am the One who makes you holy.”

When God made the Sabbath holy, He was giving us a weekly reminder of the true meaning of life. Rightly understood, the Sabbath answers:

- Where we have come from? A loving and powerful Creator
- Why we are here? To live for Jesus who redeemed us
- Where we are going? To live forever with Jesus, unless we reject Him as our Savior and Lord

Each Sabbath God calls us to rest from our daily chores and activities so we can come together to celebrate His wonderful love and amazing grace. Each Sabbath reminds us that we are to rest every day in Christ for our salvation and trust Him to provide for our needs (Leviticus 23:3; Matthew 6:33; 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:1-10; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:13,17).

7. What does God promise to do for those who trust Him?

A. 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24 “Now may the God of peace Himself _____ you _____; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you *is* faithful, who also _____ do *it*.”

B. Ephesians 5:25-27 “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might _____ and cleanse her with the washing of water by the _____, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be _____ and without blemish.

C. Philippians 1:6 “He who has begun a good work in you will _____ it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

D. Jude 1:24 “Now to Him who is able to _____ you from _____, and to present you _____ before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

WHAT IS OUR PART?

8. What are we asked to do when we are convicted of sin and the truth? We could summarize our response in 4 steps:

A. Believe The Truth

Acts 16:31 “_____ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be _____.”

Paul saved the jailer's life by stopping him from killing himself. The jailer recognized Paul had something that he needed: love, joy, peace and hope for the future. He asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

Paul responded by telling him of a person to believe in, rather than by giving him a list of rules to obey. A modern word for "Lord" is boss. It refers to the One we give our allegiance to; the One we attentively listen to because we love and trust Him. The name Jesus means Savior – A Savior from sin (Matthew 1:21). All who believe in Jesus will give Him permission to save them from whatever sin they are convicted of.

B. Confession:

1 John 1:9 "If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and just to _____ us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Confession is being honest with God and acknowledging we personally have sinned and are in need of a Savior. Confession and repentance are not for the purpose of convincing or begging God to forgive us. He took the initiative to reconcile us to Himself before we did anything. Paul assured us that He is not counting our sins against us (2 Cor. 5:19).

Confession and repentance are our way of communicating to God that we want to be reconciled with Him (2 Corinthians 5:20).

In the New Testament, there are two main Greek words translated forgiveness: charizomai and aphiemi.

Charizomai comes from charis which means grace. It communicates that God took the initiative to forgive us through Jesus. The underlined words in the next two verses are translated from charizomai.

"When you were dead in your transgressions. . . , He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" Col. 2:13.

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" Eph. 4:32.

Aphiemi means to let go, send forth, leave or left. When it is translated forgive, it is sin or a debt that is being let go, sent away or left behind.

Jesus used this word in Mark 11:25,26: “Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

If we refuse to forgive someone, we are saying we want to hold onto our bitterness and resentment. In other words, we don't want a Savior from this. If we persist in this attitude, we will not confess our sin to God. We will not want Him to forgive us and cleanse us from our resentment. He will then honor our choice and we will perish in the end.

An illustration: If we have hurt someone and want to be reconciled with them, we need to sincerely confess and repent of our wrong. We also need to accept the consequences of our choices, make appropriate restitution, and recognize we need to earn back the trust that was lost.

When we have confessed and repented, the other person has the choice:

- To hold onto our sin (with resentment) and refuse to be reconciled.
- To forgive (letting go of) our sin and be reconciled to us.

Forgiveness (from aphiemi) means a person chooses to let go of resentment and any desire to seek revenge. It opens the door for a relationship to begin to be restored when it is appropriate and for trust to be rebuilt as evidence is given that a person is trustworthy.

(This process takes time and sometimes needs the assistance of a trusted friend or counselor. Often the one who caused the hurt will ask or demand to be trusted before evidence is given. The person choosing to forgive need not give in to any demand or manipulation by others. They can follow the example of Jesus. He did not automatically trust people who believed in Him. John 2:23,24.)

In 1 John 1:9, the word translated forgive is aphiemi. When we confess our sins to God, we are bringing our sins to Him. He must then do something with them.

He took the initiative to reconcile the world to Himself. He has already communicated He is not counting anyone's sins against them. Therefore He assures us that He is going to forgive (let go of) the sins we confess to Him. We can then pray, "Thank you for already forgiving me." We may not feel forgiven, but we can believe the truth because it is true.

C. Repent:

Acts 3:19 "_____ therefore and be _____, that your sins may be _____ out, so that times of _____ may come from the presence of the Lord."

Repentance comes from the Greek word metanoia, meaning change of mind. It is making a choice to follow God and turn from sin. (Many have heard of a similar Greek word, metamorphis, which means change of body. A caterpillar goes through a "metamorphis" when its body changes into a butterfly.)

If we fall, we need to acknowledge we have sinned (confession) and choose again to surrender our lives to God's will (repentance).

D. Renew the mind:

Romans 12:1,2 ". . . present your bodies a living sacrifice, _____, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be _____ by the _____ of your _____, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

In view of God's mercy and grace, we are invited to offer our lives as a living sacrifice to God. When we come to Him just as we are, God receives us as "holy and acceptable" because of Jesus. Notice that the transformation process begins after we come to Him just as we are.

We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Renewing the mind could be described as reprogramming the mind. We have been told

many lies about God, ourselves, and others. Satan has told us lies, the world has told us lies, and we have told ourselves lies. We need to replace the lies with the truth from the Bible's perspective. The truth will then set us free from fear, guilt, shame, pride, greed, and slavery to sin (John 8:32-36; 16:13).

The lifestyle for the Christian is a continual process of following these four steps. As we believe, confess, and repent in response to the truth the Holy Spirit brings us, He will then be able to lead us into more truth. God will work only as fast as we are willing to give Him permission. Jesus told the disciples, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" John 16:12. He had to wait for them to be ready.

If God flooded us with light all at once, it would be too much for us. We would have a tendency to resist and harden our hearts. So God works patiently with us as He brings the emotional and spiritual healing that we need. While Jesus was able to instantly heal people physically, He is not able to instantly heal people emotionally and spiritually.

The more open we are to surrendering to truth, the more quickly the Holy Spirit will be able to lead us into all truth and into the plan God has for each of our lives (Galatians 5:22,23; Jeremiah 29:11-13).

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

In my family growing up, I was the youngest of four boys. We enjoyed many kinds of recreational activities. We loved playing basketball, football, softball, tennis, ping pong, and volley ball. We also enjoyed family outings of water skiing in the summer and snow skiing in the winter. We often watched professional football on television. Once in awhile we went to see a professional basketball or baseball game.

While our family was very active in our local church, sports and recreation were definitely the activities we looked forward to. During my freshman year in a Christian high school, I was excited to be playing football, basketball, softball or whatever sport was in season.

When I was 15, my family moved to Texas. There I attended a smaller Christian high school. The spiritual atmosphere on campus was very positive. But what impressed me the most was that the sports leaders on campus were also the spiritual leaders. Their influence, along with several of the faculty members, led me to seek and find a living relationship with Jesus for myself. No longer was it just my parents' religion. Jesus was becoming my Savior.

At this boarding school, the opportunity to watch professional sports was limited, for there were always things to do: work, study, and activities that were planned. For the next 16 years, I watched very little.

After I lived in Wisconsin awhile, I began to hear a lot about the Green Bay Packers. As they became a winning football team in the 90's, the excitement began to build. I read about the upcoming games and learned about the challenges and the stakes involved. Then I would watch some of the games when I had the chance. After awhile, I began to experience a growing conviction that sports could easily get out of hand. For many people it seemed more like a religion than a game.

Every season the excitement would build. I began to recognize the need to keep it under control. I would tell myself that as long as I only watched part of a game, I wouldn't be wasting too much time.

When we moved to Indiana, I didn't hear much about the Green Bay Packers. Then I was given tickets to an Indiana Pacers basketball game. In preparation for attending, I wanted to read up on the game so I could know better what was happening and what to look for.

Both the Pacers and the Indianapolis Colts football team were doing very well. I found myself getting caught up in the same excitement that I had experienced in Wisconsin. I enjoyed watching or listening to the games, but would try to keep it under control. I didn't want to waste too much time.

THE CONVICTION

Then the Holy Spirit brought a conviction that cut to the heart. “The passion for sports was stealing from the passion that belonged to God.”

Ouch! That hurt. “I guess I need to be more careful,” I thought to myself. But then the conviction went deeper. “It’s poison to your soul!”

The conviction was clear. I knew it was the Holy Spirit speaking. I realized I had to make a choice. It was a choice that I didn’t want to make. I enjoyed watching football games when I had the opportunity. I thought I was keeping it under control. I thought I wasn’t wasting too much time, at least not compared to other people that I knew.

My rationalizations seemed reasonable. But the Holy Spirit wouldn’t let up. “It isn’t about the time. It’s about the passion of the heart. It is stealing from the passion that belongs to God. It is poison to your soul!” The still small voice spoke gently. There was no condemnation. It was a simply call for a decision. I then remembered something I had read in a wonderful devotional book entitled, Steps To Christ, page 58.

“There may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.”

A PRAYER AND A PLAN

“Dear God,” I prayed. “I don’t want anything to come in between You and me. I’m sorry that I have allowed the passion for sports to steal from

the passion that belongs to You. I choose You. But I am going to need You to save me from this, for I enjoy watching the games. I will make a choice to surrender to your will because I know it is what is needed, not because I feel like it. I am going to need help with this. I am not going to be able to change on my own. What should I do?"

Then a thought came to me. "Cancel the newspaper." The idea made sense. Reading the sports page is what fueled the passion for the sports.

I had tried previously to tell myself and others, "I am not going to watch any more games." But those promises and resolutions would melt away as I rationalized that I would be careful to only watch a part of a game, maybe the last half or quarter or even just the final minutes.

Colossians 2:20-23 fit me perfectly. "If you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle?... These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh."

Just making rules and promises wasn't going to work. How much time I was or was not spending was not the issue. The passion of the heart was what needed to change. I needed a Savior to restore the passion for God on the inside. Colossians 3:1,2 affirmed the idea that canceling the newspaper was a good idea. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

That day I canceled the newspaper. Without access to the sports page, the interest in the sports began to fade away little by little. I knew I could have gone to the internet to read the sports news. However, I was not in the habit of doing that and I did not want to create a new habit that would open the door to more temptations. I made a deliberate choice to avoid going to those pages. Instead of making rules and promises, I simply chose to seek God and be careful what I fed my mind.

“Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.” Philippians 4:8.

Little by little the passion for God began to be restored.

LIVING WITH JOY!

I share this story as an illustration of how the Holy Spirit will continue to bring truth and conviction to our hearts. We will never be able to say, “I have arrived! I don’t need to learn or grow anymore.”

I am thankful the Holy Spirit brought the conviction to my heart. God’s plan for my life is so much better. I have a joy and a purpose that is lasting and meaningful. As a result of the gospel foundation, I am able to experience an inner security and peace.

Instead of being motivated by guilt, fear, or a desire to get to heaven, I have a passion to live for God’s glory. As I maintain a sensitive conscience and a surrendered heart, the Lord is helping me to experience healing in life as I grow into maturity. God has a plan for each of us. And that plan is centered on a living relationship with Him.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord.” Jeremiah 29:11-14.

A WORD OF CAUTION!

Each person is unique. Each of us has our own journey and relationship with God. What may be a problem for one person may not be for another. I do not condemn others for watching sports. It is not my place to condemn anyone for anything. If anyone had the right to condemn us, it was Jesus. He came to save us, not to condemn us (John 3:17).

The issue is not a specific activity. The questions we need to ask are:

1. On who or what is the passion of my heart focused on?
2. Is there any activity, person, or possession that has become more important to me than God?

If something has become more important to us than God, then we need to acknowledge the truth, surrender our hearts to God, and give Him permission to restore the passion that belongs to Him. Even religious activities can become more important to us than having a loving relationship with God. Jesus pointed this out to some Jewish leaders.

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” John 5:39,40.

They thought studying the Bible earned them merit before God. The Scriptures pointed them to Jesus who wanted to give them the abundant life their hearts longed for. However, they refused to come to Him.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment of the law was, He focused on the passion of our lives, not a specific activity. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” Matthew 22:36-39.

We are not able to create this kind of love and passion in our own lives. Jesus invites us to come just as we are and give him permission to do this for us (Romans 12:1,2; Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 3:19,20).

9. Read Psalm 139:23,24 - Ask God to reveal to you any areas of your life that are stealing from the passion that belongs to Him and are keeping you from experiencing His love and freely loving others. If God brings something to your mind, would you be willing to surrender it to Him and ask Him to restore the passion for Him?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ I'll think about it

DON'T CONFUSE ME WITH THE TRUTH!

By Clinton Meharry, © 2006, 2012

“Don't confuse me
With the truth that's clear!
I know what I believe.
Just tell me what I want to hear
Or I may have to leave!”

“I'm comfortable the way I am;
I really don't like change.
The truth might make me feel . . .
Condemned,
Or lead to something strange.”

“When evidence is pointed out
From the Bible that is clear,
I'd rather question, run, or doubt!
For change is what I fear.”

“Don't confuse me
With the truth just yet,
Life is difficult enough!
With rejection, guilt, stress, and debt!
Adding change would make it tough.”

“Look and see! The majority
Would not believe a lie!
They are my authority;
On them I will rely.”

In the heart and in the mind,
The battle rages long.
God is patient and very kind
When He shows us right from wrong.

Like a Shepherd Jesus guides us
And gives us what we need.
But if we murmur and complain
And refuse to let Him lead,

Then with sorrow He'll let us go,
Knowing the pain that sin will bring.
He'll wait for us to call on Him
To relieve our suffering.

With love He understands and hears
The earnest prayers of all.
He sees the grief, the pain, the tears,
And answers every call.

He doesn't use a Band-Aid though
To deal with cancerous sin.
He has to be more thorough
And free us from within.

With everlasting love He draws
The sinful human race.
He says to all,
“You're not condemned!
For You've been saved by grace!”

“Please let the truth now set you free.
You're loved and redeemed!
You're not ignored!
Please let me be
Your Savior and your Lord?”

For those who choose to turn from sin
And invite the Savior in,
The Holy Spirit will come to them
And they'll be born again.

They'll love and share
The truth that heals;
That enables us to be
Loving and lovable Christians now
And through all eternity.