

## Salvation – What It is and Why We Need It

When Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they also had disobeyed the instructions given to them by God. He had told them, “... *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 shall surely die.*” (Genesis 2:16–17 NKJV) God had commanded them not to eat from that tree or there would be a consequence to their actions that would be extremely costly. That consequence was death. But what was death and why was it so bad?

Whenever we disobey a command given by God, we sin. In Ezekiel 18:4, God says, “*Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die.*” In Romans 6:23 Paul says, “*For the wages of sin is death...*” In I Corinthians 15:56 it states, “*The sting of death is sin...*” It says in Romans 7:9-10, “*I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and it killed me.*” So death is the consequence of sin. Death is the cessation of the life that can only be given by God. (See Deuteronomy 32:39, Genesis 2:7, Acts 17:24–25)

The Scriptures teach that there are two types of bodies – the natural body and the spiritual body. (I Corinthians 15:44) By observing the world around us, we all know that the natural body dies a natural death. After Adam and Eve sinned, God said to Adam, “*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.*” (Genesis 3:19) The adversary (the serpent) had deceived Adam and Eve by telling them that they would not surely die. (See Genesis 3:4) But God assured them in Genesis 3:19 that they would surely die. But then the question becomes the one asked by Job. He asked, “*If a man dies, shall he live again?*” (Job 14:14) Therein lies the problem confronted by all mankind.

Remember that “...*the wages of sin is death.*” (Romans 6:23) Death is the penalty, or what we owe, for sinning or disobeying God. When a penalty is paid for committing a crime, it is not returned at some point to the person who paid it. If a fine is paid, the fine is not returned. The fine is the penalty, or wage, that is paid. You don’t get it back! Likewise, death is the penalty for sin.

You don't get it back because your life is the payment. (Genesis 3:19; Ezekiel 18:4) We know that the physical body dies. But what about the spiritual body that is mentioned in I Corinthians 15:44? Well, there are also two deaths. In Hebrews 9:27 we read, "...it is appointed unto men to die once, but after this the judgment..." This verse speaks of a time of judgment after we die once. We can read about that judgment in Revelations 20:11–15. It says:

*"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things that were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death.** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Death was meant to be final and the second death is final. It is the permanent separation from life and from the One who gives life. There are two components to both life and death. Jesus referred to this when He said in Luke 12: 4–5, " *And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!*" If there is a second death, there has to be a first death. Remember that the natural body, which is made from the dust, dies. The first death must therefore be the one to which we are all appointed. (Hebrews 9:27) It is the death that was appointed to Adam and Eve and all their descendants. But it is plain from the Scriptures that we will all be returned to life at some point to be judged. (Matthew 25:31–46; Daniel 12:2; Luke 10:12–15; I Corinthians 15: 21–26) But why is this possible if we have paid the penalty for sin and that penalty is death? How can we live again? And if we can live again, can we escape that second death? The answer is "Yes!" In Revelation 20:6, it states, " *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*" Also, in Matthew 25:31–34 we read about how the Son of Man [Christ] will separate His sheep from the goats. The "sheep" refer to those who follow Christ. (John 10:1–16) The "goats"

are those who follow their own way. (Matthew 7:21–23) How did the people mentioned in Revelations 20:6 receive a pardon from the second and final death penalty? After all, we have all sinned and therefore have all incurred the death penalty. (Romans 3:23)

### **The Good News**

When John the Baptist was born into the world, it was said of him in Luke 1:76–79,

*“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

This passage tells us that we can obtain salvation and that sins can be remitted, or forgiven. How? In Hebrews 9:22 it states, *“And according to the law almost all things are purified [cleansed] with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission [forgiveness].* This is where God’s plan for salvation takes effect. This is where Jesus enters the picture as Savior of all mankind. As stated before, all men have sinned and are therefore guilty before God. But God’s mercy allowed Him to send His Son into the world to live a sinless life so that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:14–17) How did He do it?

Jesus is also known as the second Adam. (I Corinthians 15:21–22, 45–47; Romans 5:14) He came into the world clothed in flesh. (Hebrews 10:5; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14–17) Next, He lived His life doing the will of God, the Father. (Hebrews 10:7; John 6:38) Because of this, Jesus never sinned. When the appointed time came, He was killed and His blood was shed. (John 19:16–34; Luke 23: 32–48) His blood was shed not for Himself but for us. He took upon Himself the sins of all of us. (Romans 5:6–8; Hebrews 2:14; I John 2:2; I Peter 2:21–24) Finally, He was resurrected that we might live through Him by His Spirit. (Romans 14: 8–9; Romans 6:4–11)

Now that Christ has been resurrected, His blood pays for our sins. He died unlawfully. Therefore, death could not hold Him because He had never sinned and therefore had not incurred the death penalty. But He did take upon Himself our sins so that He could die for us – on our behalf – because of His love for us. (John 15:13; Isaiah 53:1–12) In effect, He purchased us with

His blood. (I Corinthians 6:20; 7:23) Now that He has paid for our sins, we can be saved. We can now receive salvation through Him. (Hebrews 2:9–10; 4:14-16; 5:5-11; 9:24-28; Ephesians 2:1-10)

If we do not want to die the second death, what must we do to receive salvation - to be saved? In Romans 10:4-13 it states:

*“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him, will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” (Also see Romans 6:1-11; John 11:25-26; John 6:39-40)*

Test all things; hold fast what is good. ~ I Thessalonians 5:21

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March 8, 2015*