

CHRIST AND SALVATION

The reality of death is one of the most terrifying realities of this human experience. Moreover, no matter what we do or how hard we try to preserve our life, we will die.

But is death the end or is there life after one's physical life? According to the Bible physical death is not the end because God the Father has provided a way for one to live forever if one will believe his good news message concerning Jesus Christ and follow his instructions concerning how to be saved from eternal death.

The saving from eternal death and being given immortal and eternal life is defined in the Bible as salvation. The prophets, Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the early church all proclaimed the good news message of salvation as the **only** hope of life after death.

In the introduction to his letter to the elect at Rome, the apostle Paul talked about the Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ. Notice what the apostle Paul has to say:

"So, for my part, I am ready to preach the good news to you that are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the good news of Christ: for **it is the power** of God the Father to salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God the Father revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith".

Did the Sovereign God have the Creator God create humanity just to have them live for a short time and then die, just as animals die and cease to exist? No the Sovereign God had a grand purpose in mind when he said: "Let us make man in our image".

The apostle Peter said:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that **any** should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The desire to save humanity was **so great** and **so important** to the God family, that Jesus Christ, the Creator God, came to earth and became the perfect

sacrifice in order to remove our death sentence.

While speaking to Timothy about the duty of a righteous person to his fellow man, the apostle Paul said that God wants all people to be saved, and to come to the **knowledge of the truth**".

God the Father wants everyone to escape eternal death and he has revealed how to live forever in the pages of the Bible.

God the Father and Jesus Christ earnestly desire that all people be saved from eternal death and become spirit-beings in the God family. However, Whether or not we die for eternity or live forever after our physical death is entirely our choice.

It is not the choice of some religious leader, your father, your mother, or a social worker, or some psychologist, or some governmental official. Whether you live or die for eternity **is your choice** and your choice **alone**.

After Moses repeated the law to the Israelites he gave this pronouncement from God:

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live."

The Creator God revealed the way for the Israelites to have eternal life and asked them to chose the way to life over the way of death.

Paul explains that because of Adam's violation of God's instructions, the death sentence through the law was imposed upon all humanity. Notice what he says in Romans chapter 5, verses 12 through 14 Para.:

"Because of this, even as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, inasmuch as all sinned; for sin was in the world until the law, but sin is not charged where there is no law. And death reigned from Adam to Moses, even on those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression. . ."

God the Father and Jesus Christ consider the violation of God's law **an extremely serious matter**. The Violation of God's law at the time of Noah caused the destruction of the earth along with

all of humanity except for eight individuals, Notice what is said in Genesis chapter 6, verses 5 through 7 Para.:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him in his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy whom I have created from off the face of the earth;. . . for I am sorry that I made them".

The Sovereign Father and Jesus Christ are righteous beings who inhabit a dimension of existence that they have designed as a perfect environment that provides conditions for perfect peace, perfect harmony, and perfect happiness. Because these are the conditions of their existence they **will not** tolerate, for very long, any evil that brings the opposite of peace, harmony, and happiness **anywhere** in their vast kingdom. Herein lies the seriousness of evil behavior; Because evil, **it is repugnant** to God the Father and Jesus Christ and it is in opposition to their very existence.

Their solution to maintaining the purity of their dominion and their lifestyle in order that they may accomplish their goals is the removal of all who exhibit evil behavior and will not conform to their righteous way of life. Because humans are not immortal beings, they have only two options. These options are that they can conform to God's perfect law and lifestyle and live eternally as happy productive individuals, or continue to violate the law of God and be terminated as a life form through death by fire.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians this:

"Do you not know that the unjust ones will not inherit the kingdom of God? **Do not be led astray**, idolaters, nor fornicators, nor adulteress, nor abusers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous ones, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor plunderers shall inherit the Kingdom of God".

All who violate God's righteous law will eventually be but to eternal death for this violation. The problem is as the apostle Paul states: ". . . **all** have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" and

according to Paul's understanding of God's law the wages of sin is death.

Unless there is a way to escape the righteous judgment of the law there is no hope of life after death.

The apostle John recorded this warning by Jesus to those whom the Father calls to salvation during this age:

"He that overcomes shall inherit **all things**; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death".

Yes, there is another death after one's physical death, and that death is **final and forever** unless one comes into obedience and conformity to God's law.

There is a way to escape the second death, but very few today truly understand this way of escape.

Because God the Father and Jesus Christ knew that humanity would eventually come under the penalty of the law, their plan for the salvation of humanity included a method by which people may escape the death penalty.

Humans were created with the ability to reason and to weigh alternate courses of physical and mental action. In other words, humans were created with the ability to **choose** to do as they please, whether good or evil. Before God created humanity, he knew that they might choose evil over good, and that after choosing evil and seeing the results of such behavior, some would want to change and establish a positive relationship with him. Therefore, long before creating human beings, God formulated a sacrificial system in order to give humanity a way to be placed back into a harmonious relationship with him.

The beginnings of this sacrificial system are mentioned in the Book of Genesis, after Adam and Eve had been forced out of the garden, and God's sacrificial system had been given to them. Notice what is said in Genesis chapter 4, beginning in verse

4:

"Then Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offering, but he rejected Cain and his offering. Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger. Then the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling, but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it. Then Cain said to his brother Abel, Let's go out in the fields. And when they were out in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him"

God told Cain that if he had done the right thing, he would be smiling. But what was it that Cain should have done? The answer is obvious when we see what the apostle John says to Christians about Cain's behavior, notice what he says in 1.John chapter 3, beginning in verse 11:

"The message you heard from the very beginning is this: we must love one another. We must not be like Cain; he belonged to the Evil One and murdered his own brother Abel. Why did Cain murder him? Because the things he himself did were wrong, and the things his brother did were right"

The writer to the Hebrews says that Abel did the right thing and Cain did the wrong thing. Notice this in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 4:

"It was by faith that Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain. Through his faith he won God's approval as a righteous man, because God himself approved of his gifts. Because of this act of faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead."

It was through a more excellent sacrifice that Abel obtained the witness that showed he was a righteous individual (that is, that he was in right-standing with God).

But why was Abel's sacrifice more excellent than Cain's? And how did the act of offering the correct sacrifice cause Abel to continue to speak to us today?

Able's sacrifice continues to speak to us today, because without the shedding of blood there can be no atonement for sin; unless a life is sacrificed to

pay the penalty for the violation God's law, sin (Which is the violation of God's law) **cannot** be set aside nor forgiven. Notice what is said in Leviticus chapter 17, verse 11:

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it for you upon the altar to make an atonement for your life: for **it is** the blood that makes an atonement for one's life".

The writer to the Hebrews said:

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood there is no remission"

Able's brother Cain was not willing to follow God's instructions and was a sinner before God. However, Abel was willing to obey God and was righteous in God's eyes. Cain would have been smiling if he had given the proper sacrifice (Gen.4:7).

Abel's sacrifice was more excellent than Cain's because Abel offered a firstling of his flock. Abel knew that someday the Creator God would come to earth and offer himself as a perfect sacrifice, and through this perfect sacrifice he would have his sins forgiven, and taken away, **never** to be remembered again. Abel offered the proper sacrifice, which was symbolic of Christ's sacrifice. Able's sins were then covered and he was put back into a harmonious relationship with God. Through his faith in this sacrifice (Which was a type of Christ), Abel still speaks to us today.

Prior to the advent of the Messiah, when someone violated God's law, their fellowship with him was interrupted and their access to him was barred. In order to deal with this situation, God designed the priesthood and the sacrificial system. The priest functioned as a mediator and bridge-builder between people and God by means of the sacrificial system. By offering a correct sacrifice, the breach of the law was repaired and fellowship with God was restored.

In the agreement that God made with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, he promised that, if they would keep his law, they would be righteous and sinless before him. However, as they have already shown, it was impossible to maintain a perfect relationship with God before the death and

resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It's important to understand how those who lived prior to Christ maintained a good relationship with their Creator, because it is a good relationship with God the Father that ensures a person salvation under the terms and conditions of the new agreement.

A major part of the good news message that Jesus Christ brought concerning salvation has to do with the **new** method by which a person can establish and maintain a harmonious relationship with God the Father, the Sovereign God of all that exist.

There are many scriptures that speak of the necessity to be justified before God in order to obtain salvation. But just what does it mean to be justified? Because being justified is necessary in order to obtain salvation, it is vital to understand exactly what justification is and how to obtain it.

The English word 'justified', as used in the Old Testament, is translated from a Hebrew word that means 'to render just or innocent', 'free', 'justify', or 'to be righteous'. The words 'justification' and 'righteousness' connote being made free from sin and being placed in right-standing before God.

Both the Hebrew and the Greek words for 'justification' and 'righteousness' are used to convey the same basic meaning of being made right with God and being sinless before him.

God tells us in the Book of Isaiah chapter 45, verse 22 that the only way of escape from eternal death is through him: God Says:

"Look to me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else".

The Psalmist said:

"Lead me in your truth, and teach me: for you are the God of my salvation"

In order to obtain salvation, **we must** have our sins forgiven and our death sentence removed. Because it is impossible for us to forgive our own sins or remove our own death sentence, it must be done for us. The only being who can remove sins and remove the death sentence is God the Father because he is the Sovereign of all that exists. Therefore, he must declare us sinless and worthy of saving. The

question is not, will he save us; rather it is, how does he save us?

Isaiah says in a prophecy about Jesus Christ:

"So says the Lord, Keep justice and do righteousness: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed".

Jesus was the only truly righteous man who has ever lived. He perfectly kept all of the commandments, precepts, and principles of God for his entire life without ever sinning. He did not deserve to die, he chose to die in our place so that we might have our sins forgiven and live forever.

Is it because of a person's efforts to obey God's law that they are declared righteous before God? **Absolutely not!** All that is required to become righteous is that a person truly believe the things concerning Jesus and the message that he brought from the Father, because Jesus met all the righteous demands of the law for us.

When a person has their sins forgiven, their death penalty is removed, and they are declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. However does the law cease to apply to that person? Does the sacrifice of Christ eliminate that person's requirement to practice the law of God? The answer is **absolute not!** A person still must obey God's law. After one is declared righteous before the Father and guiltless under the law, the law still exists in its totality. The law does not disappear. What has happened is that the penalty for the violation of the law has been satisfied by the death of Jesus Christ for the one who has faith in Him.

The law has been shown to be valid through the death of Christ. After one is justified, the law is made a part of one's very being and must be obeyed. The law is still valid, violation of the law will still bring eternal death if repentance is not forthcoming and the blood of Christ is not applied to wipe away the sin and its penalty. Those who remain righteous before God establish the law. A righteous individual establishes the law in that, that person shows the laws validity through their acceptance of and faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as their salvation from the penalty for their violation of God's law.

A careful study of the Bible reveals how to become righteous and be saved from eternal death. The righteousness that the prophet Isaiah foretold that was to come was the righteousness of the life and sacrifice of Christ. It is through belief in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his righteousness that a person may obtain righteousness and salvation.

Righteousness is defined as the obedience to God's law. Notice what Paul says about righteousness:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For in it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Paul says these things to the Romans:

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;".

Paul said that a person cannot be justified by their efforts to keep the law, because God has revealed a method to become righteous apart from the deeds of the law.

Notice what Paul continues to say:

"Even the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ to all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Under the New Covenant, the way to become innocent of any wrongdoing and to be justified is through faith in the redemptive power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Notice what Paul says in reference to Jesus Christ:

"Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus."

It is through the righteousness of Jesus Christ that a person may be declared righteous before God the Father. It is because Jesus Christ sacrificed his **own** blood that we may have our sins forgiven, our death sentence removed, and be made innocent before God the Father.

The Bible tells us that the **only** way to obtain salvation is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Savior. Without belief in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice, **no one** can be saved from eternal death.

Notice what the Creator God had Isaiah record about Him:

"This says the Lord, your redeemer, and he that formed you from the womb, . . . **I am** the Lord your Savior and Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob" (Para.).

Jesus said:

"For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. . ."

"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned".

The apostle Peter said:

"Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12 KJV).

The Messiah holds the key to our salvation because **he is** our Savior. It is through **his** sacrifice and intercessory authority with the Father that we can have our sins forgiven. It is through his sacrifice that all humanity past, present, and future may obtain salvation.

Notice what the apostle Paul says to the Thessalonians.:

"For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ".

Jesus Christ was not only sent to pay the penalty for our sins but also to save us from eternal death and to show us how to obtain eternal life:

"Jesus says to those who will listen to his message, **"I am** the way, the truth, and the life: **no** man comes to the Father, but by me".

In a parable Jesus said:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep".

Jesus said:

"I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And who so ever lives and believes in Me **will never** die."

Paul said to the Romans:

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

The truth of the gospel message is that God the Father is expanding his family and it is his intent to share all he has throughout eternity with beings just like himself. To accomplish this, he has set in motion a plan through which he will give eternal life within his Family and Kingdom to all those who accept his way of life.

Salvation cannot be earned, purchased, or otherwise obtained by our own power or efforts. The power to save a person from eternal death and impart eternal life and immortality is God the Father's alone, and this he will freely do through Jesus Christ for those who meet his terms and conditions.

Notice what Paul says to the Ephesians.:

"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast".

Jesus is the giver of all life, Jesus said:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give to them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand".

He also said:

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day".

Notice what the apostle Paul said to the Romans about eternal life:

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom.6:22-23 KJV).

The apostle Paul understood that the physical things of this life are worth **nothing** and that the real prize to be sought in life is the knowledge of how to obtain eternal life and immortality, Paul said:

". . . I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead" (Phil.3:8-11 KJV).

Jesus Christ **is** the hope of the dead. Many read the third chapter of John verses 16 to 17, without **truly** understanding what they mean:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved".

After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the apostles taught the hope of the dead through the

sacrifice of Jesus and a resurrection from the dead. The apostle Paul said:

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1.Cor.15:20-22 KJV).

Jesus said the following about the process of salvation:

"He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that does not believe shall be damned".

The problem today is that most people who profess to believe in what the Bible says do not truly believe Jesus Christ, nor the apostles, nor the ones that are sent today to teach the good news message that Jesus taught.

Most people believe a false gospel that will not bring salvation but will bring eternal death.

There is **only one** method of salvation and that method is clearly shown in the scriptures. Those who do not believe this message will be condemned, and they will die the second death in the Lake of Fire.

Prior to the coming of Jesus, all of mankind was awaiting the death sentence to be carried out as punishment for the violation of God's law. But now we may have our sins forgiven and be made totally innocent before God the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus Christ offered his life as the final and supreme sacrifice for the sins of mankind, there is no longer a need for animal sacrifices to be performed for justification; however, there is still a need for the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul said the elect who were in Rome:

"But God commends his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his 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, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life".

In order to escape the death sentence all people need the Father's intervention in order to live again after physical death, because all of us will eventually die a physical death. Furthermore, unless there is forgiveness of one's violation of the Father's physical and spiritual law, one must die the eternal death as the penalty for breaking his law. Therefore, there **is no** hope of eternal life unless it comes from the One who has the authority and the power to remove the death penalty.

The good news from God the Father is that he has both the authority and the power to remove one's death sentence. He has the authority because **he is Sovereign**, and he has the power (that is, the means) through which forgiveness may be accomplished in order to satisfy the righteous demands of the law.

But what is the means of forgiveness? The extremely good news is that forgiveness of sin can be accomplished by going directly to God the Father through the authority of Jesus Christ. All we have to do is ask to be forgiven. The Father will then forgive and forget the sin because of the supreme sacrifice of his Son. This is the way God has chosen to give us salvation from eternal death. For those who accept the call of God during the gospel age of salvation and follow his way of life, the reward is eternal life, immortality, and tremendous joy and happiness forever in the Father's family and kingdom.

God the Father wants everyone to repent and obtain salvation. He has set before humanity the choice of life and death, and each person must eventually choose which they desire.

I see that my time is up, if you want to know how to escape the second death. Or if you want to know more about the subjects I have briefly touched on in this broadcast, write to me at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org

File CB6 2/08