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SALVATION

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"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name," John 20:31.

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God," I John 5:13.

The following are practical questions-questions many people are interested in:

HOW TO BE SAVED.

It is the uniform teaching of the New Testament that we are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or by believing in Him. And the New Testament tells us why it is by faith:

1. That it might be by grace. *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," Romans 1:16.*

2. That there might be no boasting. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Ephesians 2:8-10.*

3. Because Jesus Christ did all the saving work. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:*

for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Galatians 3:13. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation," Hebrews 9:27, 28. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed," I Peter 2:24.

CAN ONE BE SAVED AND NOT KNOW IT?

A better way to put this question would be: Can one be saved and not have the assurance he is saved? I think so. Otherwise, why was I John 5:13 written: *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

1. On the other hand, there are some who know they are saved, that is, in their own mind--who are not saved. I have seen people with the least evidence of being saved who were sure they were saved. *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," Matthew 7:22, 23.*

2. John wrote his first epistle to people who were saved so that they might know they were saved. *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God," I John 5:13.*

HOW CAN ONE KNOW HE IS SAVED?

He can know it only by faith. This is the only possible way to know. You cannot know by feelings. Feelings are variable and deceptive, and confusing.

It is the blood that secures our salvation and the word gives assurance. The blood secures and the word assures. John says he has been describing a saved person, and we can know we are saved by finding ourselves pictured in the word. We know by the evidences. What are the evidences?

Faith - *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him," I John 5:1; "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," John 6:37; "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36.*

Love - *"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," I John 4:7; "We know that we have*

passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death," I John 3:14. Do I love the Lord or not? Am I his or am I not?

Good Works - "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Ephesians 2:10.

Conflict - "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I," Romans 7:15.

Beatitudes - "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matthew 5:3-12.

THE STING OF DEATH

BY: C. D. COLE

*"O death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?
The sting of death is sin; and the
strength of sin is the law," I Co-
rinthians 15:56, 57.*

The Bible is a solemn book. It deals with serious matters. It faces the sternest facts. It gives information upon eternal issues. It tells the truth about God and man. It describes God as Creator, Ruler, Preserver and Saviour. It presents God as holy and almighty. It sets him forth as the supreme and solitary Sovereign of this vast universe. It describes man as a sinner and rebel before God and in terrible danger of eternal punishment.

The Bible is also a happy book. It tells of glorious things. It contains the grandest news ever to fall on human ears. It tells of salvation from all the dangerous effects of sin. It tells of One who is mighty to save. It traces the believer from nature to grace and from the grave to glory.

My text has several words of solemn importance: law, sin, and death; and yet it concludes with a note of victory. Law, sin and death seem to spell defeat and doom, and they would were it not for a certain person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our text ends with a paean of victory. It is a shout of triumph as Paul with the eye of faith sees redeemed sinners rising from their graves in bodies fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. And in holy ecstasy he exclaims: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" He then faces the facts of sin and death and gives thanks to God for victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE STING OF DEATH.

Death is spoken of as venomous creatures inflicting fatal wounds. Now what is the sting of death? What makes death so terrible to some people?

1. The sting of death is not physical suffering. If physical pain were the sting of death, the nurse or physician

would be able to pull it with a hypodermic needle. Medical science has done wonders in alleviating bodily pain. But medical men can't pull the sting of death. Beasts die physically, but there is no sting of death to them. They have no moral responsibility before God.

2. Nor is the sting of death mental agony. Some of the most wicked men have died in peace of mind. Sir William Osler, a great physician, studied five hundred deaths. Only eleven showed any mental apprehension, and only two, any signs of terror. Dr. Alfred Worcester of Harvard said that "Death is almost always preceded by a perfect willingness to die. I have never seen it otherwise. It is always easy at the last; however great the previous pain."

3. The sting of death is sin--unforgiven sin that has to be accounted for after death. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law," I Corinthians 15:57. The sinner is not through with his sins when he dies. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," Hebrews 9:27. Irvin Cobb used to plead with the public to let a man's sins die with him. Well, we may, but God will not. When a lost man dies, the voice of justice cries, "Seal up the fountain of blood, stop the stream of forgiveness; let him that is unrighteous be unrighteous still and let him that is filthy be filthy still," Revelation 22:11. The sinner who dies without a Saviour--without Christ--is sure to experience the words of Dante, All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

THE STRENGTH OF SIN.

What is it that makes sin such a dangerous thing? What is it that gives sin its damning power? Our text gives answer: "The strength of sin is the law." God is a Lawgiver and sin is violation of His holy law. The violation of God's law is the only real source of danger for any person. Human laws can only inflict temporary punishment of the lawbreaker. But God's law inflicts eternal punishment on the sinner. The law gives sin its damning power because nobody has kept the law of God. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23.

1. The spirituality of the law

makes one hopeless under the law. The law of God not only forbids outward acts, it also forbids sinful thoughts, imaginations and desires. The law of God forbids hatred in the heart as well as murder by the hand. It considers a lustful look as adultery. It forbids covetousness as well as theft.

2. The inflexibility of the law makes the sinner hopeless. The law of God can't be bent or lowered to meet human imperfection. The law will not abate one tittle of its stern demands. There is no provision for pardon in the Ten Commandments. He who hopes to live before God under the law must live as good as Jesus Christ. Law represents justice. The law says "obey and live; sin and die." The law says, "the wages of sin is death." The law links sin and punishment; not sin and mercy. Law exacts punishment for every sin. It never remits a farthing of the sin debt. First, the sinner comes to the house of God's justice to be weighed. Justice holds a pair of scales and puts a certain sin into the balances. The sinner cries, "Can't you forget that sin?" "No," thunders justice, "I must enforce the law." Justice puts another sin into the balances, and the sinner cries again, "Can't you overlook that?" "No," replies justice, "my business is to see that the law is enforced." Then the sinner pleads that there are many sins he has never committed. Justice says, "I will be fair with you, I will not punish you for what you haven't done. I punish only for the sins you have committed. Justice puts another sin in the balances and the sinner cries out for mercy. But justice replies: "I must enforce the law; you are at the wrong place if you wish mercy. Mercy has her own place; mercy is at the house of Jesus Christ. Go to Christ if you expect mercy." Justice goes on to say that he must exact penalty for sin, and that if the sinner can find a substitute to take his place under the law, he will exact the penalty from that substitute. *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Galatians 3:10.* Under the law every sinner is hopeless because he has not and cannot keep the holy law of God. The only hope for any sinner is in a

Surety and Substitute, and Jesus Christ is both of these. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Galatians 3:13. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," II Corinthians 5:21.*

If any man thinks he can keep the law of God and stand on his own record in the day of judgment--if he thinks he can be saved by his own character and conduct, then let him build his pyramid of air, let him build his house of bubbles, and he will find himself in Hell in spite of all his efforts.

VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST.

The more we talk about law and sin, the more hopeless our situation becomes. But thanks be to God who giveth us victory through Jesus Christ. If I want victory over law and sin and death, I must look to Jesus Christ. If I want peace with God, I must look to Jesus Christ who made peace by the blood of His cross. If I want forgiveness, I must look to Jesus Christ *"in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace."* The sting of death is unforgiven sin, but sin can be forgiven on the ground of the redemptive death of Christ.

Now if the sinner is in danger from violated law--the law all have violated; then salvation is through satisfied law. The law of God cannot be pushed aside and ignored. The law has to be reckoned with in salvation. Divine justice will see to it that the law of God is enforced and the penalty of sin paid. Now the question is: "How can the law be satisfied? And who is able to satisfy the law and live?" There are two ways and two places the law is satisfied: one is at Calvary, the other is in Hell.

The sinner can satisfy the law by suffering eternal punishment in Hell. This will be the second death in the lake of fire. And this will be defeat and not victory.

The other way to satisfy the law is for the sinner's Surety and Saviour to satisfy it. This is what Christ has done for His people. Christ satisfied the law by His obedience unto death, even the

death of the cross. In Hebrews 7:22, Jesus is called the Surety of the better covenant. Everybody knows that a surety pays the debts of another person--pays the debts the surety did not incur. Jesus incurred not debt to the law of God, for He kept it perfectly. He could pay our sin debt because He had no sin of His own. And on the cross, He was bearing our sin debt in His own body. *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32.* Christ died as our substitute--he suffered what we would suffer eternally in Hell. He saved us by satisfying the law, and he satisfied the law by keeping it for himself and by suffering its penalty for us. Christ obeyed the law for our salvation; we obey the gospel to be saved. The gospel is about what Christ has done and we obey it when we trust what He did at Calvary.

CONCLUSION.

The lost man's sinful condition is greatly aggravated by his refusal to trust Jesus Christ and Him alone for salvation. *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36.*

LIVING GIVING

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store," I Corinthians 16:2.

Many people who didn't leave a will would "roll over in their graves" if they knew how poorly their wishes were carried out. No doubt that's why someone has given this advice: "Do your giving while you're living; then you're knowing where it's going." Now, I realize it's not all that simple. No one knows for sure how long he is going to live or how much is needed to provide for the future in these inflationary times. We should be diligent, however, in giving to the Lord on a regular basis as He prospers us.

I found a humorous story in a Mobile, Alabama, church paper that makes the point well. It goes like this: "A pig was lamenting his lack of popularity. He complained to the cow that people were always talking about her gentleness and her kind eyes, while his name was used as an insult. He admitted that cows give milk and cream, but he maintained that pigs give more. 'Why, we give bacon and ham and bristles, and people even pickle our feet,' he grumbled, 'I don't see why you cows are so highly esteemed.' The cow thought awhile and then said gently, 'Maybe it's because we cows are giving while we're living.'"

We as believers are right in desiring the approval of the Lord in our stewardship. And to receive His "well done," we should support His work on a regular and consistent basis as taught in I Corinthians 16:2. If we attend a church that is true to the Word of God, we should faithfully undergird its ministry with our offerings. And let's keep current. That's living giving!

*Help us, Lord, while we are living
To be faithful, kind, and true;
Jesus, bless our humble giving
So that others may find You.*

--Copied
