

Introduction

That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. (Romans 9:2-3)

The Apostle Paul’s encounter with the Saviour on the road to Damascus forever changed his life. From that point forward, his efforts concerning the lost were directed toward one thing—the salvation of souls. This insatiable desire to see others saved even led him to wish that he could be cursed if this would bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. His fervency should drop every Christian to his knees in prayer for that type of zeal!

History of Mankind and the Passion¹

The Bible reveals that man was the direct creation of the all-powerful, all-knowing and benevolent God of the universe. Yet, after the Lord God created man and placed him in a perfect environment, He watched with broken heart as this wonderful creation—endowed with intellect, emotion and choice—consciously rebelled against his Creator. This rebellion caused mankind to surrender his state of sinless innocence and plummet into a sinful state of rebellion that continues to this day.

As a result of this loss of innocence, mankind was plunged into a hopeless and helpless state of despair and degradation, facing the inevitable outcome of disobedience—death and separation from God. So began the course of human history—a sorry novel of every kind of wickedness imaginable.

¹ Adapted from an article “The Cross Work of Christ,” by Jack D. Hoffman

Collectively, man became prisoner of a fallen nature incapable of reaching any higher heavenward than the tips of his outstretched fingers. The human race was in desperate need of a Saviour! The Almighty God knew this from the beginning, and from the beginning it was His plan to redeem (or buy back) mankind from its sinful state of existence. Since by one man (Adam) the human race plunged into sin, God resolved that a man must redeem mankind from the bondage of sin. Since one man's disobedience brought the curse upon all mankind, God determined that only the perfect obedience and sacrifice of one man could recapture this blessed state for humanity.

The problem, of course, was that everyone born naturally into the human race was cursed with a sin problem passed down from Adam. To solve this dilemma, God arranged for His only begotten Son—with Whom He had shared heaven's glory from eternity past—to be born on this earth. God supernaturally borrowed the womb of a godly young lady, circumventing the natural physical necessity of a man for the conception. This unique virgin birth was the vehicle that delivered a sinless and innocent man, the man Christ Jesus, into this world.

As He matured, God's Son faced a lifetime of decision making regarding right and wrong. His life prepared Him for the time when He would offer Himself as a sinless offering to appease God's displeasure toward the rest of mankind's disobedience. Death, the natural payment for disobedience and rebellion, was now present in the world.² In order for Jesus to resolve the sin problem, He would have to take the payment of sin—death—upon His righteous being.

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Since Jesus never committed even a single act of personal sin, He had no penalty to face and would never die.³ Yet, for the salvation of mankind, He had to willingly embrace death by taking the sins of every human being upon Himself.⁴ Thus, He

sacrificially shed His blood (by God's design from the very beginning) in order to pay for the sin of mankind.⁵ Fortunately, everything that Adam lost in the Garden of Eden, Jesus redeemed at the tremendous price of His precious blood at Calvary.

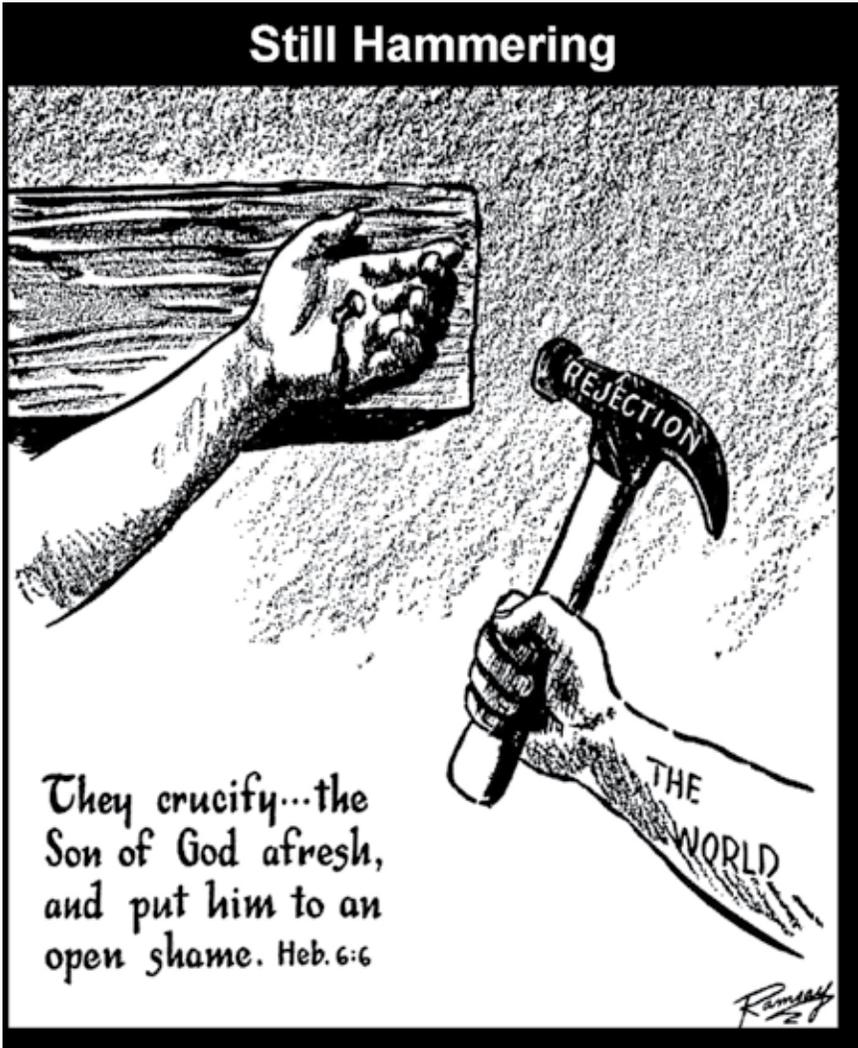
² Romans 6:23

³ Hebrews 4:15

⁴ II Corinthians 5:21

⁵ Revelation 13:8

Man was living in a prison of despair, hopelessly incarcerated by his sinful disobedience to God. Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God, willingly sacrificed His right to live, suffering the wrath of His Father so that undeserving man could be set free.⁶



This is the work of the cross. Jesus allowed His innocent soul to be tormented by the indecency of us all.⁷ We, as a part of the throng of sinful mankind, beheld Jesus Christ's unrivaled purity and goodness and rejected Him. Jew and Gentile alike conspired to remove from this planet the only Man that ever chose to live and do right 100% of the time. Using the most

⁶ John 1:29

⁷ Acts 2:27

barbaric and cruel methods of execution, we tortured Him and laughed at His shame. We scorned His offer of love, and we gambled and cursed as He suffered the most excruciatingly painful death imaginable. His indignity became a spectacle. Yet, in it all, Jesus never cursed us back, neither has He ever rejected anyone that will turn to Him in repentance and faith for salvation from sin.

We, condemned and sinful mankind, marveled that He died so soon on the cross. We made sure that the One who convicted us of our own depravity was truly dead. We dropped Him from that blood-soaked timber and buried Him in a borrowed tomb. Washing our hands of the entire situation, we thought that the ordeal was over. But it was not!

Death could not hold Him and sin could not keep Him. On the third day, His soul rejoined His body and Jesus triumphantly emerged from the tomb.⁸ Many of His followers witnessed His resurrection, giving hope to countless generations who would later trust in Him.

The Apostle Paul expresses the utter hopelessness of life without a future resurrection. *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”*⁹ What despair is ours if this life is the total of man’s existence and nothing more awaits us beyond the curtain of death! But, the Bible assures us that every person possesses an immortal soul which will live for all eternity—either in heaven with God or in a lake of fire eternally separated from His love forever. Each person’s individual eternal destiny hinges solely on his decision to either accept or reject Jesus’ redemptive work on the cross of Calvary.

Churches have Lost Their Biblical Focus

The work of the church is to glorify God and bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, churches over the past few decades have been losing much of their biblical focus. Christians have become increasingly enslaved to temporal, earthly pursuits and issues rather than remaining attentive to the eternal and spiritual. As a consequence of this unfortunate change in focus, the spiritual spotlight has shifted from fighting Satan—the common enemy—to fighting among the brethren. Many have forgotten that the battle of the Christian life is not against *flesh and blood* but against *spiritual wickedness in high places*,¹⁰ and can only be won by those who are not entangled *with the affairs of this life*.¹¹

⁸ Matthew 12:40

⁹ I Corinthians 15:19

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:12

¹¹ II Timothy 2:4

The Apostle Paul provides expressive terminology in describing the position of every Christian. He refers to Christians as soldiers in a battle,¹² runners in a race¹³ and as Christ's purchased possessions.¹⁴ Paul admonishes followers of Jesus Christ to yield everything to the One Who redeemed them through His precious blood.¹⁵ Man has spawned many new fangled ideas for bringing the masses into the church. The twenty-first century sermon has become a cleverly designed sales pitch to the lost and a means of entertaining the listeners, rather than a heart-felt message preached by the man of God to the children of God. According to biblical mandate, church services should function chiefly to *reprove, rebuke and exhort* the believers¹⁶—not primarily to recruit unbelievers to join the church. The church *gathers together* to be corrected, encouraged and conformed to the likeness of Christ; the church goes *out into the world* to evangelize the lost. Christians are not to wait for those without Christ to come into the church or to simply invite them to attend church meetings. Such an approach fails to recognize the individual Christian's personal responsibility to be a gospel witness.

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These problems are compounded when preachers emphasize numbers in attendance rather than concentrating on the purpose of preaching. Instead of unapologetically preaching the word with boldness, many preachers strive to ensure that the hearer (especially the unchurched and unsaved) feels comfortable during the sermon. The modern approach is to make the sermon more palatable to the lost. However, the gospel inherently makes mankind feel anything but comfortable. The truth, though infinitely profitable and therapeutic in the end, is never enjoyable or entertaining to hear as it strips away the protective barriers and causes man to see himself as God sees him—lost and undone. As sad as it is to see that the church has lost its focus, the lost are out of focus by nature.

The Lost Lack the Necessary Biblical Focus

Unfortunately, many people get “the cart before the horse” by attempting to live a morally upright, externally Christian life prior to experiencing

¹² II Timothy 2:3

¹³ I Corinthians 9:24

¹⁴ Ephesians 1:14

¹⁵ Titus 2:14

¹⁶ II Timothy 4:2

an internally life-changing encounter with the Saviour. Sadly, the average person equates salvation with giving up sin, quitting bad habits or heeding the "Golden Rule." While these acts and desires are truly commendable, they are utterly insufficient to save a single soul. God says that salvation is His gift offered freely to mankind, not earned through some man-made system.



The religiously lost crowd claims that the doctrine and teaching of salvation by grace through faith makes *works* of no value. Quite to the contrary! The works of a saved person emanate from the purer motive of a reciprocating love toward the Saviour Who has already unconditionally proven His love toward the sinner. Love originates from God toward His creation and not the other way around. The Bible says,

*We love him, because he first loved us.*¹⁷

Only when a lost person experiences the unconditional love of God can he have the natural inclination to love God back. This is the true essence of love and the proof that salvation by grace is supernaturally conceived. A salvation that is *by grace without personal merit* displays God's great love extended toward His fallen creation.

This indescribable love makes salvation easily attainable for anyone willing to take God at His word. God's love for the lost is similar to the love a man has for his wayward spouse. Because of the man's unwavering love, he will do anything within his power to reconcile with his estranged wife. Likewise, God works out everything (within His self-imposed limitations) to facilitate the reconciliation of His fallen creation back to Himself. However, God's will to justify cannot negate the fact that He must remain *just* as He justifies the undeserving sinner.

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*To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be **just**, and the **justifier** of him which believeth in Jesus.*¹⁸

God truly desires to justify everyone;¹⁹ however, His basis for forgiving the unworthy sinner must be consistent with His holy character.²⁰ There would be no possibility for salvation if it were not for Jesus Christ. The means of salvation was provided through Christ's own sacrifice on the cross. Now, it is up to each individual to accept God's offer of reconciliation.

*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, **be ye reconciled to God**. 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.*²¹

Reconciliation—How to Gain Biblical Focus

God desires that each person be reconciled back to Himself. It makes no sense to think that a God desiring reconciliation would place obstacles and hurdles within the sinner's path to deter the very thing God desires

¹⁷ I John 4:19

¹⁸ Romans 3:26

¹⁹ The Lord is...longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9)

²⁰ In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began (Titus 1:2)

²¹ II Corinthians 5:20-21

most. Any hurdle makes no more sense than to suggest that a husband would make things difficult for his estranged wife to return to him when his heart's desire is to have her back. Love makes the pathway straight and easy. Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary accomplished this for anyone willing to receive it.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.²²

God gave His Son to be the propitiation²³ for our sins. Only God could provide the way for His creation to maintain a free will and still have the capacity for redemption. There is only ONE way—it is by and through Jesus Christ.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.²⁴

Religion cannot save; obeying the law cannot redeem. Every man and woman is hopelessly lost without Christ. Consider the case of the Apostle Paul. Prior to his salvation experience, he was a zealously religious man. His testimony in Philippians gives us a glimpse into his life.

Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.²⁵

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Yet we also read in Paul's letter to the Philippians that after his encounter with the Saviour, he viewed his religion as *dung*.²⁶ Of course, a Christian should be spiritually minded. The

critical issue is whether a person undertakes "religious" activities as a natural result of his personal relationship with the Saviour, or in a futile attempt to somehow qualify himself for such a relationship.

God's favor and a saving relationship with His Son Jesus are His *gifts* to His fallen creation and are not earned through any work of man. Certainly,

²² John 3:16

²³ Propitiation—the act of appeasing wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person. See Romans 3:25, 1 John 2:2 and 4:10

²⁴ John 14:6

²⁵ Philippians 3:5-6

²⁶ Philippians 3:8

salvation is purchased through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and is completely undeserved on the part of mankind.²⁷

Christ came to save the lost! That is biblical. Man's sinful state established the need for a mediator between the Creator and His creation. God, the Son, became that mediator. A mediator considers the needs of both sides of a conflict or problem. In order for a mediator to successfully resolve a problem, there must exist a reconcilable difference that both parties are willing to remedy. The Bible says that the man Christ Jesus mediated the resolution to the broken fellowship between the Creator and His creation.

*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*²⁸

On the side of God, justice had to be satisfied; on the side of mankind, the sinner had to be justified. Through Christ's sacrifice, Jesus made the sinner's justification possible and satisfied God's holy demand for justice.

In order for a mediator to be successful, *both* parties must be willing to submit to the proposed resolution. The Bible tells us plainly that God "will have all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:3, above) and that He is "not willing that any should perish" (II Peter 3:9, below). Consequently, the only potential barrier to eliminating the obstacle of sin between the Creator and His creation is whether the individual man, woman or child is **willing** to submit to the plan of the divine mediator—Jesus Christ.

By resurrecting Jesus three days following the crucifixion, God the Father showed His satisfaction with the work of His Son on the cross.

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.*²⁹

God is clearly willing to extend salvation to everyone! The remaining factor in each case is the will of the individual. By resurrecting Jesus three days following the crucifixion, God the Father showed His satisfaction with

²⁷ Ephesians 2:8-9

²⁸ I Timothy 2:3-6

²⁹ II Peter 3:9

the work of His Son on the cross—the offer of a just Man in the place of the unjust. Christ's death on the cross provided mankind's remedy for sin.

Every lost person needs to know that Christ came to save him from the penalty of sin and to make him a new creature in Christ Jesus.³⁰ This is the message that must be emphasized in evangelism. Christ is not to be “advertised” as a mere cure for the emptiness a person feels apart from Him; neither is He to be presented as only an exemplary moral example to follow. Though the sinless Son of God is the only One Who can satisfy the human soul and the only perfect human being ever to inhabit our planet, His redemptive work at the cross must be preached above all else.

Understanding one's eternal destiny is important! However, it is also very important for the Christian to grasp the finality of death for the lost. William Booth of the Salvation Army is quoted as saying that if he could do it, he would have finalized the training of his soldiers with twenty-four hours hanging over hell, to see its eternal torment. Christianity needs this awe-striking vision again. The gusty, grandiloquent evangelist needs it most!

Charlie Peace was a criminal. Laws of God or man curbed him not. Finally the law caught up with him, and he was condemned to death. On the fatal morning in Armley Jail, Leeds, England, he was taken on the death-walk. Before him went the prison chaplain, routinely and sleepily reading some Bible verses. The criminal touched the preacher and asked what he was reading. “The Consolations of Religion,” was the reply. Charlie Peace was shocked at the way he professionally read about hell. Could a man be so unmoved under the very shadow of the scaffold as to lead a fellow-human there and yet, dry-eyed, read of a pit that has no bottom into which this fellow must fall? Could this preacher believe the words that there is an eternal fire that never consumes its victims, and yet slide over the phrase without a tremor? Is a man human at all who can say with no tears, “You will be eternally dying and yet never know the relief that death brings”? All this was too much for Charlie Peace. So he preached. Listen to his on-the-eve-of-hell sermon.

“Sir,” addressing the preacher, “if I believed what you and the church of God *say* that you believe, even if England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would walk over it, if need be, on hands and knees and think it worth while living, just to save one soul from an eternal hell like that!”³¹

³⁰ II Corinthians 5:17

³¹ Ravenhill, Leonard, *Why Revival Tarries*, (Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1959, 1996), p. 31-32

May every Christian learn from this admonition from a doubly condemned man—condemned by both man and God. This book is a biblical and doctrinal exposition of *why* man so desperately needs a Saviour, *how* redemption actually takes place in the believer's life and *what* a person must do to be saved from the penalty of sin. It explores the question "*What must I do to be saved?*"³² from a variety of perspectives and addresses the issue of eternal security in Christ Jesus. Included within the text are the most salient scriptures, with many other verses referenced or footnoted throughout. May the Lord use this work to bless and encourage the saints, to pierce the encroaching spiritual darkness and—above all—to uplift the most worthy Saviour.

Douglas D. Stauffer

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³² Acts 16:30

Review Questions (Introduction)

- I-1. Christians have allowed _____, earthly pursuits to take precedence over the _____ and spiritual issues.
- I-2. Christians are to be _____ in a battle and _____ in a race because we are Christ's purchased _____.
- I-3. Explain how the works of the saved person emanate from a purer motive than an individual working for his salvation. _____

- I-4. God's Will to justify the sinner cannot negate the fact that He must remain _____.
- I-5. In your own words, briefly describe the Apostle Paul's life prior to salvation. _____

- I-6. A _____ considers the needs of both sides of a conflict or problem which both sides wish to remedy.
- I-7. Concerning sin, what is the only potential barrier between the Creator and His creation? _____

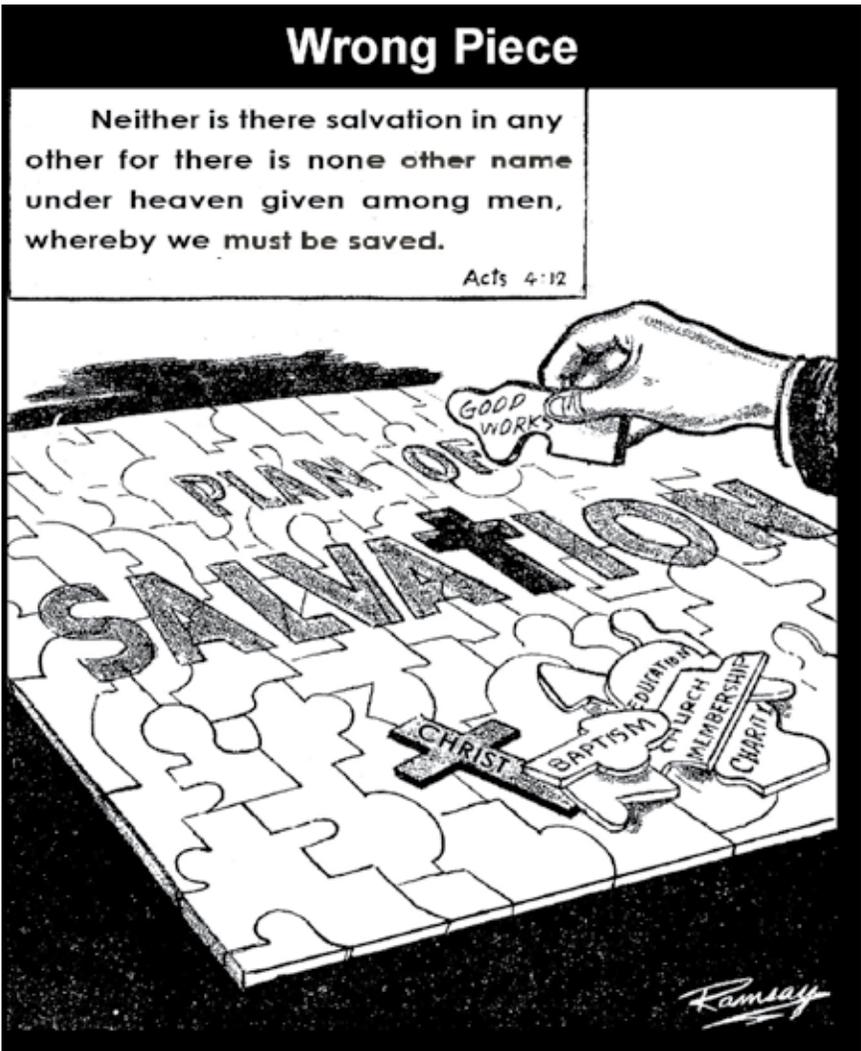
- I-8. _____ is the natural, physical payment for sin.
- I-9. Everything lost by Adam in the Garden of Eden was _____ by Jesus Christ at Calvary.

I-10. Each person's eternal destiny hinges on a single factor.

What is that? _____

I-11. What is to be the chief aim of the church service?

I-12. The modern approach is to make the sermon palatable to the _____.



*This generation of preachers is responsible for this generation of sinners. At the very doors of our churches are the masses—unwon because they are unreached, unreached because they are unloved. Thank God for all that is being done for missions overseas. Yet it is strangely true that we can get more “apparent” concern for people across the world than for our perishing neighbors across the street!*³³

³³ Ravenhill, p. 110