

Doctrine of Salvation

John 3:16

*“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.”*

It has been noted that the three most *difficult* words in the English language are, “*I was wrong.*” The two most *delightful* words are, “*check enclosed.*” However, the most *dynamic* single word is *salvation*. Salvation means to effect successfully the delivery of someone or something from impending danger. It means to rescue or to save from destruction. The very word salvation carries with it the idea that someone or something is in need of being rescued or saved. As a religious term, it is the testimony of Scripture that every man, woman, and child needs help for the plight of the soul is desperate as various illustrations make plain.

- The Bible says that souls are sick with sin and need a Great Physician to deliver them from sin’s fatal disease, which is death. *Isaiah 1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.* (Study Matthew 9:12) Every person needs a Saviour.
- The Bible says that everyone is guilty of breaking the Law of God and stands condemned in a court of Law. Individuals need an Advocate. *Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*
- The Bible says that the waters of a sinful life flood hearts. *Psalms 69:1 Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. 2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*

There is a reason why individuals are in such a terrible plight. There are several reasons why souls are sick, guilty, and laden with guilt: they have lost their way from God. There are several contributing factors to this state.

- Souls are lost because biblical revelation has been rejected. The Bible has not been read nor the church consulted. The problem is not that God cannot be known for He can be known. *Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Acts 14:17 declares that God has not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*

The problem is that men do not want to hear God's word. *Romans 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

- Souls are lost because the conscience is violated. *Romans 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*
- Souls are lost because of their relationship to the world. There is something very appealing about the flash and glamour, the laughter and the sensuality that the world has to offer. It is all very luring—at first.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

- Souls are lost because of their relationship to Satan.

To some, Satan offers the kingdom of this world provided they will sell their soul to him for power and fame. Those who believe that the end justifies the means will bow down and worship the god of this world. Even Jesus was tempted to do this very thing. *Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* What Christ was not willing to do, others are.

To others, Satan offers not political authority but religious authority. In the name of God, men can do terrible things to other people, and it all legitimized. The Pharisees and the Sadducees of Christ's day were very religious. They had great authority over people and respect from them.

Nevertheless, they were really the sons of Satan. In John 8:42-44 Jesus said unto them, *If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* There are many ways to have a relationship with the devil without being “evil” according to conventional terms. Religion itself can be a form of evil when miss-used.

- Souls are lost because of their relationship to sin.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

A person may not be as bad a sinner as possible outwardly; nevertheless, they are always as bad off as they can possibly be.

- Souls are lost because of their relationship to God. Those who do not believe in Christ are under the wrath of God. John 3:36 *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.*

Souls are not coming under the wrath of God; they are already under divine displeasure until they repent of sins and find the Savior. Being without Christ, such souls have no hope. Ephesians 2:12 *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

If the plight of man is ever to be resolved, he needs a Divine savior for he cannot save himself. If he could, he would. In fact, he has tried—and many are still trying to save themselves and make themselves acceptable to God. The end results are false hopes of salvation. The Bible says that *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12).* The following are among the false ways of salvation.

- Education. The apostle Paul warned Timothy about depending upon education as a means of salvation. 1 Timothy 6:20 *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:* 2 Timothy 3:7 *Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* While educators have a vital role in society, as a class they have not been able to enlighten anyone with regard to true truth.
- Church membership does not save. Christianity is based upon a relationship with the living Lord, not membership in a religious denomination—as important as church membership is.

- Good works do not save. *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
- Baptism does not save. *1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*
- Keeping the Law does not save. *Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*
- Living by the Golden Rule does not save.
- Sincerity does not save.
- Being a member of a Lodge that does good deeds does not save.
- Secular organizations such as the Peace Corps, the UN etc. will not save.

If good deeds, good thoughts, and good organizations do not save, than what does? The gospel answer is this. Since the beginning of time salvation has come to souls by blood, by a person, and by grace through faith alone.

The blood is that of the person of Jesus Christ. *Hebrews 9:22 without shedding of blood is no remission.* When faith is placed in Christ by grace, there is a divine peace that comes to the soul.

Romans 1:7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

To amplify the Doctrine of Salvation, the language of salvation should be understood. There are fifteen key words in the vocabulary of this topic:

Conversion	Redemption	Justification
Substitution	Regeneration	Sanctification
Reconciliation	Imputation	Glorification
Propitiation	Adoption	Preservation
Remission	Supplication	Origination

Conversion

The Bible has much to say about the subject of conversion.

- *Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*
- *Psalms 51:13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*
- *Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*
- *Acts 15:3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.*
- *James 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

Repentance

A soul is said to be converted when there is true *evangelical repentance*. *Evangelical repentance* is not moral reformation, nor is it remorse by itself. Esau changed his mind about giving away his birthright and repented with tears but he was not converted. (Gen. 27; Heb. 12:17) Judas also repented and returned the coins of betrayal, but he was not converted. (Matt. 27:3,5 cf. Acts 1).

Evangelical Repentance

Evangelical repentance is a sincere regret that the Law of God has been violated. It includes a horrible sight of self for what one is: a violator of the holiness of the Lord. In recent years, true gospel repentance has been minimized as if there is something too humbling about being truthful or too demanding. Repentance has been reduced in meaning to simply changing one's mind about *sin* without any emotional conviction about *sins*. However, the Bible remains firm on this point.

- *Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
- *Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*
- *Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

- *Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*
- *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*
- *Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*

“Repentance to be sure must be entire. Many will say, Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other, but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep. O sirs, in God’s name let me entreat you: it is not the giving up of any one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbor one of these accursed vipers in thy heart, thy repentance is but a sham; if thou dost indulge in but one lust and dost give up every other, that one lust, like one leak in a ship, will sink thy soul. Think it not sufficient to give up thy outward vices, fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of thy life: it is all or none which God demands. ‘Repent,’ says He, and when He bids you repent, He means repent of all thy sins, otherwise He can never accept thy repentance as being real.” (C.H. Spurgeon)

How does a Person Repent?

Ultimately, the ability to repent is a divine gift of grace. Such a gift is needed for the heart grows gospel hardened. However, there are some things that the soul in search of salvation can do.

- A soul can consider the law of the Lord, examine itself in light of the Ten Commandments, and render an honest verdict.
- A soul can consider whether or not it is ready to forsake sin. Consideration is not ability but, as a prisoner can long for freedom, so a sinner can long for divine deliverance from sin. But this point must be understood. The Bible teaches that there must be a forsaking of sin before God will pardon offenders. *Psalm 130:4 There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.* God’s mercy is never expressed at the expense of His holiness. Thomas Goodwin wrote, *“Resolve either to leave every known sin and to submit to every known duty, or else never look to find mercy and favor with God.”*

Deuteronomy 29:19 warns careless converts: And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: 20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

A Word of Warning

There is such a thing as false repentance. A.W. Pink notes several features of a non-saving repentance.

- Trembling beneath the preaching of God's Word is not repentance. Felix "trembled" when Paul preached, but was not converted. Acts 24:25 *And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*
- Being almost persuaded is not repentance reflected in the case of Agrippa. Acts 26:28 *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* A person may go so far as to give full assent to the message of God's servants, admire the Gospel, and even "receive the word with joy," and afterwards prove to have but a stony heart. (Matt. 13:20,21) Such a person might even acknowledge they have sinned as Pharaoh said, *"I have sinned against the Lord."* (Ex. 10:16)
- Humbling ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God is not repentance.
- Confessing sins is not repentance.
- A person may even do works meet for repentance and yet remain impenitent.

True Signs of Repentance

- True repentance consists of a deep consciousness of what one is in the sight of God. Isaiah caught such a sight of himself and cried out. *Isaiah 6:5 Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*
- True repentance is characterized by a bitter sorrow for sin, a holy horror and hatred for sin, a turning away from or forsaking of sin.
- Evangelical repentance is a heart-apprehension of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Luke 18:13 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* (cp. Psa. 51:1, 2,4,9)
- Evangelical repentance is a longing to please God.
- Evangelical repentance is the sinner seeking to make peace with God by honest confession and absolute surrender. Luke 14:32-33 *Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

What Evangelical Repentance Involves

- Evangelical repentance recognizes God's claim upon our lives as Creator, Governor, Provider and Protector.
- Evangelical repentance approves the claims of God upon the heart. It admits that the law of God is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12) and should be obeyed.
- Evangelical repentance involves a running to Christ for divine pardon.
- Evangelical repentance involves the following.

Special Note.

Evangelical repentance involves a change of mind (Gk. *metanoeo*).

Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

- Evangelical repentance involves a change of heart. (Gk. *metamelomai*)

Matthew 21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

Matthew 21:32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Hebrews 7:21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

- Evangelical repentance involves A change of course of life (Greek *metanio*).

Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.