

THE ETERNAL QUESTION-

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

by Glendon Fox



This question has rung throughout the centuries. What must I do to be saved? There seems to be within man an inherent knowledge that something is missing in his heart. That there is a sovereign God somewhere that expects something from us. There is a restlessness within each one of us that tells us there must be a deeper meaning to life than what this world has to offer. Many of us have turned to religion. There are many different religions in the world today, but they all have two things in common. All false religion has something we must *do* to be saved; some type of work or action that will please our god. Also, they do not quench that emptiness inside. It is true, if we get real busy and throw ourselves wholeheartedly into our religion (or job or hobby), we may cover up that unrest for a short time, but when we are alone and everything is quiet, we feel that something is not quite right inside. My friend, if this describes

your heart, please don't ignore it. It does not matter if you are a pastor, missionary, or even the pope. God has promised that if you seek Him with all your heart you will find Him.

WHAT ARE WE SAVED FROM?

If there is a need to be saved, then it is assumed we are being saved *from* something, or that damage has already been done and there is a need for restoration. If you do not believe this you cannot be saved. The only ones that climbed from the luxury of the Titanic into a cold flimsy lifeboat were the ones who recognized the awful danger they were in. First of all, we need to be saved from sin and the power of Satan.

The Bible confirms that all have sinned. Satan knows that sin separates us from God even better than we do, and he is using this to chain his prisoners fast. He hates us with a passion and is doing everything in his power to destroy us. He is also much more powerful than we are. We cannot overpower him, not even with our most valiant efforts. And sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. Not just a falling asleep, never to wake up again, but a long, eternal, excruciating death. This death that never ends is endured in a place called hell. It is a place of total separation from God, a place of fire and torment, but not a drop of water with which to be refreshed. In fact, the word *refreshed* will not be known in hell. It is the feeling of falling but never hitting bottom. It is sitting in darkness with nothing to do but remember

and agonize over all the evil we have done in our lifetime, and all the spurned opportunities to repent. I have read stories of prisoners under communism who were forced into cramped, dark cells for years, where they would sit and think about the crimes that they had committed and how they had mistreated their loved ones until they finally went insane. But those in hell will not even be granted the release of insanity. Our plight is indeed frighteningly dreadful.

HOW CAN WE BE SAVED?

What can save us from this awful condition? Let us turn to our Bibles to see how God answers this question. In Acts 16:31 we are told to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” Romans 10 contains this glorious promise, “for whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”. It is followed with “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?”

Therefore the first step to being saved is to learn about and believe that God created this universe for His own pleasure. He placed us on earth to care for His creation and to bring honor to Him. But we rebelled against Him. We sinned by seeking our own enjoyment and honor apart from God. Oh, the trembling in every sinner’s being when he recognizes his sins in the face of the righteous and almighty God. A righteous judge cannot allow the wicked to be acquitted or the sins against the innocent to go unpunished. What shall we do? Praise be to God, He has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him. Since He could not overlook sin, He sent His Son Jesus to become a man and take the punishment of our sins. God poured out His fury over our sins on His own Son and allowed men to put Him to death. The penalty for all and any sin is death—but

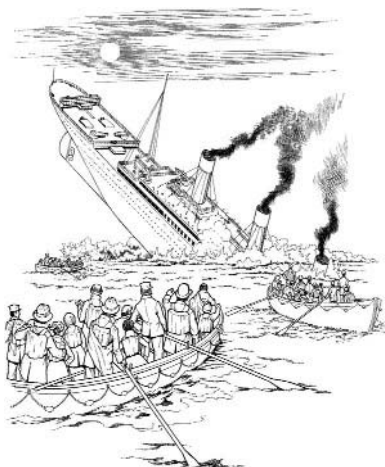
Jesus has already endured that penalty! If we will cry out to God, asking Him to save us, believing that Jesus has already taken our punishment, He *will* save us. He has promised it! He will save us from hell; He will save us from the power of Satan; He will save us from sin! Jesus can do this because He rose again from the grave. In the same way He will pick up the pieces of our sin-cursed life, and give us a new life and a new heart. And the most exciting part is that He is coming back again soon so that we can live with Him and see Him face to face for eternity!

HOW CAN I KNOW IF I AM SAVED?

Many then ask the question, “How do I know if I am saved?” That is a very wise question. The stakes are so high, we dare not take salvation lightly. Exodus 34 tells us that God is a merciful and loving God, but it also says that He will not just “clear the guilty”. One of the hardest things for us proud humans to do is see ourselves for who we really are. We like to justify ourselves and think that we are not as bad as others. If someone clearly finally sees himself as a condemned sinner worthy of death and hell; when he believes in his heart that Jesus has died in his place, then he will *know* that he has been saved! He will be overjoyed and filled with love and amazement towards his new Master.

How can you believe that Jesus paid that awful debt and not know if it has been settled at the same time? The peace and assurance in our heart and the relief from guilt is the result of a soul set free. I love the verse in Ezekiel 36; “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My

Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them.” The unconverted sinner can never overcome sin, especially ones like pride and anger. By great effort he might conquer bad habits and even all outward sins, but the thoughts and intents of his heart will be evil because he is selfish by nature. Jesus has given His believers power to love their enemies and to break the chains of all sin. He gives us a love towards our God that exceeds all other loves and obligations.



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WHAT SALVATION IS NOT

It is a shame to include this portion, but because of wicked men's abuses of the Word of God, I feel compelled to warn the innocent of the lies of those serving the devil in clergy's clothing. Anything that takes the place of a loving, obedient relationship with Jesus is idolatry! Salvation is not performing some ritual or sacrament or having someone perform the ritual over you. Salvation is not found in baptism, nor in the worship of saints or the virgin Mary, nor in being a faithful member of a Bible-teaching church. The heresy of believing that raising your hand at an evangelistic meeting or simply praying a sinner's prayer makes you saved forever is one of the most blasphemous works-based religions that I know of; because it makes a mockery of a holy and righteous God. It makes an outward action the basis and fulfillment of your redemption. God requires more than that!

If you believed on Jesus and raised your hand or got down and prayed, that is all good and right there is certainly nothing wrong with that. But God is seeking a truly repentant and submitted heart more than an outward form of worship. Some of these outward things such as prayer and baptism are necessary, but they are the *result* of a changed heart, not the essence of it. Salvation is not believing in Jesus as a historical person, similar to the way you believe that Christopher Columbus discovered America. You

must believe in Him as the one who snatched your soul from hell.

You cannot go on living in sin and be a child of God. 1 John 2:4 boldly proclaims "*He who says, 'I know Him', and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" Will a communist promote personal land ownership? Will a Hezbollah guerilla love the Jews? Of course not! If they do, we would have to conclude that they really don't believe in what they profess. So also those who do not live by the teachings of Jesus do not believe in Him. Rather, they are believing the devil's lie that sin is more rewarding than obeying Jesus. But those of you who have experienced the saving power of Jesus' blood know that the Christian life is but a tiny little taste of heaven here on earth.

CONCLUSION

I pray that we may never grow tired of hearing of the love of Jesus Christ. May our salvation never become a dead theology that we repeat with no feelings. May we weep when our Savior's suffering is mentioned and shout for joy when we hear of His resurrection! It is real! Jesus has and will change our lives, and even though I would give all my possessions and my very life for Him, it could not come close to repaying the debt I owe to my Redeemer. After all, my life and possessions are His already. □