

April 5, 2005

Salvation – Man’s Greatest Need Isaiah 53:1-12

Introduction:

It is believed by some that hunger is the most acute problem facing modern society. It is difficult for most Americans to envision a person being hungry and yet world hunger is a serious problem.

Others believe the threat of nuclear war is the greatest problem facing mankind. The great fear is that some terrorist nation will get their hands on a nuclear bomb and do unbelievable harm.

However, man’s basic problem is not world hunger, threat of nuclear war, the federal deficit and the great tax burden we face in America, or the many other things that trouble the minds of men.

Man’s most basic problem is SIN! Isaiah the prophet in our text pointed to sin as the most fundamental problem of man. Where is the man who can adequately depict the vile, odious, and grotesque insanity of sin?

As one writer expressed it, *“If all the groans of humanity, from the beginning of time until now, could be gathered into one huge volume of sound, compared to that thunderous roar, the nuclear bomb would sound like a hand clap and all because of sin.”*

I. The Consequences of Sin Are Devastating

One can never appreciate man’s need for salvation until he or she understands the terrible and destructive force of sin. One must understand that the consequences of sin are truly devastating.

From the tragic day in Eden when Adam and Eve, the first of the human race, broke God’s law (Gen. chapter 3), **all accountable souls have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory.**

Rom 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Sin separates and alienates us from God.

Isa 59:1-2

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear.

Sin causes spiritual death and enslaves us.

Eph 2:1

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

John 8:34

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

Sin darkens one’s heart

Rom 1:21

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

In the end Jesus says that sin causes eternal punishment.

Matt 25:46

"And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

In view of the ravaging power of sin, how can man mock sin and laugh at it as though it were a subject for hilarity? Where is the humor in greed, lying, adultery, crime, murder, war, and death? Only fools mock sin as the wise man said in Prov. 14:9.

II. Sin Obviously Needs a Remedy

Paul clearly establishes that the remedy for sin is not in man, nor in anything man has.

Eph 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

1 Peter 1:18-19

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Man finds himself totally unable to extricate himself.

Good works on the sinner's part have no saving power as Paul discussed in Eph. 2:8-10.

Human wisdom cannot design a plan of salvation.

1 Cor 1:19-21

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.

Even animal sacrifices were unable to take away sins.

Heb 10:4

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Realizing that man would never be able to provide for his greatest need God ordained that man would be saved or redeemed with the precious blood of His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:19-21

But with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The Almighty God is the Divine Architect of this plan of salvation. He drafted the plan in the eternal councils of His mind as Paul teaches when he wrote:

Eph 3:10-12

In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Jesus Christ is the Heavenly Executor of the plan as He demonstrated over and over again.

John 6:38-39

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (Cf. Jno. 8:29; 12:49-50; Phil. 2:6-8)

The Holy Spirit is the Divine Revealer of the plan.

John 16:13

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-13; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

This wonderful and precious plan of salvation is presented in the most beautiful and exquisite way in what many call the golden text of the Bible:

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

The apostles Paul and Peter captured the beauty of this plan by stating:

1 Tim 2:3-4

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

III. From What Are We Saved?

The word saved is found 200 times in the KJV of the Bible, including 88 times in the New Testament. Examples are the following:

Acts 16:30-32

And after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."

Rom 10:9-11

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

When the Bible speaks of being saved or of salvation, what is meant? From what does man need to be saved?

The guilt and condemnation of our sins:

The original meaning of sin is "to miss the mark." The meaning throughout the Bible is "to do wrong, sin or offenses against the religious and moral law of God." (Arndt and Gingrich, **A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament**, 1957, p. 41). Sin is positive, a "transgression of the law" (I Jno. 3:4), and it is also negative, an omission of the law of God (James 4:17; I Jno. 5:17). Every accountable soul knows that terrible feeling of a guilty conscience and the lingering dread of punishment when confronted by their sins. When God saves us He frees us from the guilt and condemnation of any and all sins.

Heb 10:22

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (I Pet. 3:21)

The eternal consequences of our sins:

2 Thess 1:7-10

and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (Matt. 25:41, 46; Mk. 9:47, 48; Rom. 2:8)

It is obvious from these passages that the punishment is not merely dying but a conscious state of “tribulation and anguish” after death and for all eternity. However, when man is saved he or she is saved or freed from these consequences.

The power of Satan in our lives:

Paul likens sin to a tyrant that dominates the lives of his servants to their ruin.

Rom 6:12-14

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. (Jno. 8:34)

Although man is free to make his choices, none has ever escaped sin’s domination by an act of the will. But now Paul says:

Rom 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

It is only in Jesus Christ that one can experience the freedom from sin’s control.

This present evil world:

Gal 1:4-5

Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

The society in which we live has a corrupting, defiling influence and power. We feel its power through TV, radio, printed page, friends and neighbors. We see misery and pain, sin and death everywhere. The person whose treasure is laid up in heaven longs to be delivered to a better home.

Rom 8:23

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

The fear of death:

Heb 2:14-15

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

It is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ that we are assured that we can be raised from the grave to live forever in heaven with the saved and redeemed of all time.

Rom 8:11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

Conclusion:

This gracious and wonderful salvation is illustrated throughout the New Testament with other terms commonly used in first century society. These terms include justification, reconciliation, propitiation, adoption, and redemption. Time doesn't allow for a discussion of these terms. However, each term beautifully illustrates how God saves a person.

Salvation is based on both our heavenly Father and on ourselves. Salvation does not depend solely on God or solely on man's part. Both Deity and man play vital roles in the scheme of redemption. Notice Paul's statement again in Eph. 2:8: ***For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*** By "grace" is God's part and through "faith" is man's part.

God provides salvation by His grace and loving-kindness and man accepts this gift by believing that Jesus Christ is God's Son and by obedience to His commands.

Mark 16:15-16

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.