

# Jesus Christ – The Saviour

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**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God but through the death and risen power of Christ, all who believe can be saved from the penalty and power of sin.**

## Man and Sin

The Scripture testifies to something which we all really know from experience - the fact that man is in a fallen state, separated from God and a servant of sin. Our experience of human nature confirms this for we never have to teach our children to do wrong; that is a tendency which they already possess. Rather, it is necessary to teach them the good.

God created man perfect, in the image and after the likeness of God (**Genesis 1 v 26; Eccl. 7 v 29**). What more evidence of this could one desire than the testimony of God when He saw everything He had created and "behold, it was very good" (**Genesis 1 v 31**)? Man, for his part, enjoyed communion with God and, in the image of God, was pure, rational and free. Unlike the animals, but like God, he was, and is, self-conscious, could reason and had a spiritual nature. He was righteous, but not in himself. He was righteous because God told him His will and, until the Fall, man obeyed. That blissful state did not last, however, because disobedience came in. Man's righteousness and his relationship with God depended on trust and obedience. Adam disobeyed and thus, in his freedom to choose, despised God's way and followed his own. Eve was deceived and was thus instrumental in leading Adam into disobedience (**Genesis 3**). Note carefully that Adam's sin was not a mere slip, as it were, by accident. It was deliberate and considered rebellion against God. Paul explained quite clearly that Adam was NOT deceived (**1 Timothy 2 v 14**). God had said that in the day they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die (**Genesis 2 v 17**). Nevertheless, they ate, yet they continued to live - or so it seemed. But it was not long before they realised that things had changed: they became aware of a separation from God (**Genesis 3 vv 7 -10**). Indeed, they HAD died. They were dead spiritually and, moreover, were barred from access to the Tree of Life, from which they should - and by free choice could - have lived (**Genesis 3 vv 22 -24**). In due course they died physically too, returning to the dust from which their bodies were formed.

Now what is the importance of this truth, the account of the Fall of man? Before the Fall Adam called his wife *Isha* (Heb = Woman) because she was taken out of man (**Genesis 2 v 23**). After the Fall, he called her name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. (**Genesis 3 v 20**), indicating that all have descended from Adam and Eve and have thus inherited that same sinful, fallen nature (**Genesis 5 v 3; 8 v 21**). The testimony of Scripture reinforces this when it pronounces that "*none is righteous, no, not one.*" (**Psalms 14 vv 1-3; 53 vv 1-3; Romans 3 vv 9-19; Isaiah 53 v 6**).

David, meditating upon gross, personal sin said, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*" (**Psalms 51 v 5**), and that is the experience of us all. In our so-called 'civilised' society, one might be tempted to say that there are so many 'good' people about, not necessarily Christian or in any way religious, but who would not hurt a fly, who are always scrupulously honest, who give to charity and so on. Do we really mean that every human being is born tainted by sin, corrupt and separated from the Divine life? Yes, assuredly so, for one must remember that those things which we as human beings might find commendable and nice, are not acceptable to God, because any work outside of God's work is essentially self-righteous, self-elevating and therefore abominable in His sight. Isaiah laments, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" (**Isaiah 64 v 6**).

In the New Testament, the Greek word for sin is **ἁμαρτία** (*hamartia*), but its root sense is one of missing the mark, missing the target. If one misses by an inch with one's good works, one is still as much separated from God as the person who misses by a mile. And so the Scripture has concluded all under sin (**Galatians 3 v 22**) If we deny that we have sinned, then we deceive ourselves and are calling God a liar (**I John 1 vv 8 & 10**), for **"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."** (**Romans 3 v 23**) Since all have sinned and are in the same state, then all are dead spiritually (**Eph. 2 v 1; Col. 2 v 13**). That this contamination by sin and consequent death have stemmed from the Fall is readily apparent (**Romans 5 vv 12 - 14**). Furthermore, because human nature is tainted by sin, then sinful actions and deeds abound. Here it may be useful to note that other words are used to describe sin. Transgression (lawlessness), deliberately going beyond or against what God has said, is sin (**I John 3 v 4**). Sin is unrighteousness. (**I John 5 v 17**). Trampling justice underfoot is sin (**James 2 v 9**). Evil deeds, violence, crime, war and suffering seem to be our incurable lot. Even those who manage to control their outward actions in a 'socially acceptable way', realise that their thought-lives are corrupt. That is why Jesus stressed this aspect, when referring to the Law, in the Sermon on the Mount. (Read and study **Matt. chapter 5**) That is why Paul, outwardly righteous as he was in the eyes of the Law, (**Phil. 3 v 6**), was utterly condemned when the Lord applied the 10th commandment to his heart: **"Thou shalt not covet!"**, for this condemned his very thought-life (**Romans 7 v 7**).

The world is in a mess. Human nature is deprived of that original righteousness which sprang from a continual communion with God, and it is utterly depraved in that it is motivated towards wickedness. This was Paul's problem in **Romans 7 vv 14 - 23**. Every part of man's nature is affected: his body is a body of humiliation (A.V.' vile body'), subject to death (**Phil. 3 v 21; Romans 6 v 23**); his mind is corrupt, at enmity and in rebellion against God (**Romans 8 v 7**); his heart is evil, deceitful and desperately wicked (**Gen. 6 v 5; Jeremiah 17 v 9; Matt. 15 vv 18,19; Luke 6 v 45**). Apart from the intervention of God, all would be lost. Nevertheless, He has provided the disciplinary measures of toil (**Gen. 3 vv 16 -19**), the Law to guide us, the accusations of conscience and sense of shame (**Rom. 2 v 15**) to restrain us in this downward gravitation. There is, however, no righteousness that can spring from our good works, or trying to keep the Law or obedience to conscience. We are in a fallen state and everything we do must come from that fallen, sinful source.

So the plight of humanity is dire. Man is separated from God (and the real life that is in God) by his sin and there appears to be no way that man can get back to God. That separation is spiritual death. That spiritual death, if not remedied in this life, will lead to eternal separation from God in the next (eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord - **II Thess. 1 v 9**), the second death - hell. (Read **Matt 25 v 46; Rev 20 vv 14,15**.) We are all guilty before God (**Rom. 3 v 19**) and without the power to live righteously in ourselves (**Romans 8 v 8**). Sin not only separates us from God, without whom our puny, earthly lives are pointless, but sin makes us its slaves. Because sin is a basic, inward corruption of nature which elevates self to the position that God once had in Adam's life, actual sins will be the end product. Treating the symptoms, whether the outward actions or the thoughts of our minds, will avail nothing, for the disease will remain. (**Mark 7 vv 21 – 23 and Gal. 5 vv 19-21** list the works that the sin disease produces). That is where the bondage to sin is. It is not simply a matter of what one does but of what one IS in very nature - sinful, selfish, self-seeking, self-centred (**Phil 2 v 21**).

Separated from God, non-believers cannot help sinning; they are slaves to sin (**Romans 6 v 16; John 8 v 34; Titus 3 v 3**), constantly asserting themselves with little concern for others, even less for God. Thus, even the Law is powerless to deliver for it guides outward actions but cannot change the inner nature. No matter how much we try, we shall never keep it, no more than I could jump nine feet even to save my life. I might manage five feet but that falls far short and fails, just as would the best in the world if he could manage eight and a half feet. The law of gravity prevents us just as the law of sin working in our members prevents us fulfilling the Law of God. (**Rom. 7 v 23**). The Law, by revealing God's standard, can only show us how far short we fall and so it condemns us; yet it also teaches us our need of a Physician to heal the disease, a Deliverer, a Saviour. (**Gal. 3 v 24**). Is there a remedy? Is there a Saviour who will deliver us from the body of this death? (**Rom. 7 v 24**)

## A Saviour Who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2 v 11)

Paul himself gives the answer: **"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."** (Rom. 7 v 25) God has come into this world for **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** (II Cor. 5 v 19).

**"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us..."** (John 1 v 14). Jesus, God the Son, was born of a woman. He had come on a mission of salvation, rescuing fallen humanity from sin and its consequences. He had come to bring men and women back to God. Matthew explains that even His name has a special significance - **"Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."** (Matt. 1 v 21). Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (I Tim. 1 v 15), to rescue them from the degradation, penalty and power of sin. Jesus Himself has become our salvation (Luke 2 v 30).

Why?

Why did Jesus come? He is the revelation of God's mercy and grace. In spite of our vileness, God loved us and does love us. **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."** (John 3 v 16). **"Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."** (I John 4 v 10). **"But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** (Romans 5 v 8). No wonder John Newton could write:

**"Amazing Grace; How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost but now I'm found,  
Was blind but now I see."**

It is all because of God's vast, immeasurable love. Indeed, He is love. (I John 4 v 8). From the moment Adam fell, God's great heart of love has been reaching out to this lost human race. **"Adam, where art thou?"** called God when Adam was hiding from Him. And that call echoes down through the centuries as God seeks you, for He came to seek and to save the lost; yes, even though you may ignore Him or turn away from Him, He is seeking you. To our first parents God promised deliverance, that the tempter's head and power should be crushed. (Gen. 3 v 15). And it does NOT matter how sinful you are or have been; God's love is greater. His grace, or undeserved favour, abounds (Romans 5 v 20).

How?

Let us just examine the work of Christ and how it has been accomplished. He, the sinless One, took our sin upon Himself. He bore the penalty for that sin; He suffered what we should have suffered. He paid the ultimate price for sin - death. He knew that awful moment of separation that sin causes as He quoted in agony, **"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"** (Mark 15 v 34) Our Saviour bore the wrath of a righteous God against our sin, thus removing the barrier that separated us from God. He is the propitiation for our sin (Rom. 3 vv 25, 26; I John 2 v 2; 2 v 10). That is to say, His death was what appeased the righteous wrath of God. Therefore, God can freely pardon us without doing violence to His just nature. Jesus was not simply killed; He gave His life of His own volition for us. And it was no ordinary death - it was the death of the cross. It was the painful death of Roman crucifixion, far more agonising than any other person had known, for on Him was laid the **"iniquity of us all"** (Isaiah 53 v 6). **"His visage was marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men."** (Isaiah 52 v 14). To be sure, the Scriptures spell it out that that mode of death, on a tree, was accursed. (Gal. 3 v 13; I Pet. 2 v 24). Can you see Jesus, the sinbearer, taking the curse of the law to redeem you? (I Cor. 15 v 3). Jesus **"made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."** (Phil. 2 vv 7,8).

Although Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, and in its intent Redemption is thus universal (Heb. 2 v 9; I John 2 v 2, I Tim. 2 vv 4 - 6), salvation is received only by those who repent and believe in the Lord Jesus, who trust in Christ's redeeming work on the cross, who claim the cleansing of His blood (Acts 20 v 21; Eph. 1 v 7; Col. 1 v 14 of Isaiah 44 v 22). The shedding of His life-blood for the cleansing of

our sin was prefigured in the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament which provided partial, temporary cleansing from sin. Read and meditate upon **Hebrews 9 vv 11 - 14; 26 - 28; 10 vv 1- 5; 12 - 22**. Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God, slain for us (**John 1 v 29; I Cor. 5 v 7; I Pet. 1 v 19; Rev. 5 vv 9-12; Isaiah 53**). John's word is quite clear: **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (I John 1 v 9) and **"...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.** (I John 1 v 7) **Romans 3 v 25**, mentioned above, shows that we have propitiation **"through faith in His blood."**

## Repentance

Full atonement has been made. If sinful man will repent, fully turn away in his heart from his sin, even though powerless to forsake it, and if he will believe, trusting fully in the completed, perfect work of Christ, then God will forgive his sin. He will experience that perfect cleansing and will enter freely into that life of communion with God from which Adam fell. He will be reconciled. Now repentance in the Greek is **μετανοια (metanoia)** which literally, signifies a change of mind or attitude. Again, it is the grace of God that even brings us to repentance. **"...the goodness of God leads you to repentance."** (**Romans 2 v 4 cf. Act 11 v 18; II Tim. 2 v 25**).

Certainly, **"God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."** (**II Peter 3 v 9**). Nevertheless, when God brings us to the place of repentance, the human response is still required. The solemn declaration of Paul was that **"God now commands all men everywhere to repent."** (**Acts 17 v 30**). In preparing the way for the Messiah, John the Baptist had preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (**Mark 1 v 4; Luke 3 v30**). Jesus came announcing the message of salvation, **"Repent and believe the gospel."** (**Mark 1 v 24**). In fact, so important is the need for repentance that He warned. **"Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish."** (**Luke 13 vv 3,5**) The early Church proclaimed the same message: **"Repent and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."** (**Acts 2 v 38**); **"Repent therefore, and be converted (literally - turned around) that your sins may be blotted out..."** (**Acts 3 v 19**). And that is the continuing message of the Church. **"...that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations..."** (**Luke 24 v 47**). Further, this repentance is not self-pity, stirred up by a fear of having to face the consequences of sin. It is a genuine sorrow for personal sin which has caused grief to the heart of God and a genuine desire to be right with Him. (Read **II Cor. 7 vv 9, 10**) It will, therefore, involve denying self-will and being submitted to God's will (**Matt. 16 v 24**). There must be repentance; it is an integral part of the gospel message. If you do not repent, you have not really acknowledged your fallen, vile, sinful state before God. If you do not repent, you have not really seen your need of a Saviour. How can you put your trust in Him for salvation from sin, if in your heart you are still clinging to that sin? Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. (**Matt 9 v 13; Mark 2 v 17; Luke 5 v 32**).

## Justification

The Bible calls our being made right with God through the blood of Jesus, justification. We are justified by faith. That is the human response to God's gift of grace and mercy. **"By grace are you saved, through faith...not of works lest any man should boast."** (**Eph. 2 v 8 cf. Romans 3 v 28**). **"Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand..."** (**Rom. 5 vv 1,2**) The record of our sin and the condemnation of the law has been blotted out and removed - nailed to His cross (**Col. 2 v 14**). As someone has observed, being justified is to be in God's sight 'just if I'd' never sinned. And the positive side of that truth is that not only are our sins removed, but righteousness is imputed to us by faith. (**Romans 4 vv 20 - 25; Phil. 3 v 9**).

## Regeneration

Being reconciled to God, we are made alive spiritually. Jesus, having paid the price for our sin, did not remain dead. He conquered not only sin, but death itself. He rose triumphantly, defeating death.

Hebrews puts it this way: **"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."** (Heb. 2 vv 14, 15). Jesus crushed the serpent's head and destroyed his weapons of death, sin and fear - Hallelujah! **"Death is swallowed up in victory. 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. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."** (I Cor. 15 vv 54 - 57). Because He lives, we live also if we believe on Him (John 14 v 19; Romans 5 vv 8-10). God makes us alive by His Spirit. We were dead in trespasses and sins, but He has quickened us - or made us alive (Eph. 2 v 1; Col. 2 v 13) The Bible speaks of this as being 'born again'. As the blood is applied to our lives, to cleanse and fit us for God's holy presence, God works in the believer that miracle of new birth or 'regeneration'. Speaking to Nicodemus on this subject, Jesus was quite plain: **"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"** and again, **"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."**(John 3 vv 3,5) In Adam we were possessors of a sinful human nature; in Christ we became partakers of His righteousness, of the Divine nature. (II Cor. 5 v 21; II Peter 1 v 4). Christ, therefore, is to us another Adam, a second, perfect man, who fulfilled all obedience and restores in us the Divine nature and life:

**"For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgement was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."** (Romans 5 vv 15 -19).

**"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."** (I Cor. 15 vv 20 - 22. See also v 45).

Being born again of incorruptible seed (I Peter 1 v 23), we have eternal life and are in very fact sons of God. (John 1 vv 12,13; I John 3 vv 1,2).

## Sanctification

As we live in that new nature, we have victory over sin. Sin no longer has dominion over us and being made free from sin we become the servants of righteousness. (Rom. 6 vv 14,18). Just as once we could not help sinning, so now it is our nature to be righteous, for a real change has been effected in us. We are sons of God and he that is born of God cannot sin, no more than Christ could sin. (I John 3 v 9). In fact, it is Christ who is living in us, as Paul confessed. **"I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me."** (Gal. 2 v 20). To those that are in Christ there is no condemnation (Rom. 8 v 10) As we walk according to this new nature, as we walk in the Spirit, we no longer fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5 v 16). Praise God, the promise of Jesus is true: **"If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."** (John 8 v 36) How sad it is to hear Christians moan as if to excuse their responsibility for sin and failure, "Oh, but I'm only human and I am bound to sin." That is a lie of the enemy. The Bible declares that whilst there is bondage to sin as far as the unbeliever is concerned, for the believer, born again of God's Spirit, there is no necessity or excuse for sin. We have been called to live a life of holiness and victory over sin. Jesus said that we should be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. (Matt. 5 v 48). If we do sin (but there is no excuse for it) we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (I John 2 v1) who restores us and maintains our cause before the Father's face. But note that John's purpose in that passage from his epistle was not to say, "Well you're bound to sin..." No. On the contrary, his instruction was, **"My little children, these things write I unto you that you sin not."** We are NOT only human; humans are mortal. We are sons of God, partakers of His nature, possessors of eternal life, those whose mortal bodies have been quickened, made alive by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8 vv 11ff). Thus our statement of basic truth at the beginning of this study proclaims that Jesus saves from the

penalty AND the power of sin. Of the sceptic we may demand, "What sort of salvation leaves the rescued prisoner in chains?" What says the Scripture? **"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."** (II Cor. 5 v 17). If you testify to old things being present still, then do not deceive yourself into thinking you are being humble. You are refusing to live a life which is crucified to the flesh and the world but which is alive unto God. Look at the Scripture! (I John 1vv 5,6) Glorify God in word and deed. All the old things have gone; all things have become new after the character of the new life in Christ. Let us walk in the Spirit, for it is the work of the Spirit to set us apart unto God and to separate us from sin - that work of sanctification (Which perhaps we can examine more fully in another study). (II Thess. 2 v 13; I Peter 1 v 2).

Let us have no doubts on the matter. It is the will of God that we should be sanctified, that we should know how to possess our vessels, bodies in sanctification, and that we should be sanctified wholly (I Thess. 4 v 3,4: 5 v 23). That is not glorifying in self but glorying in the cross of Jesus Christ, **"giving thanks unto the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints (or sanctified ones) in light."** (Col. 1 v 12) We are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption: that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (I Cor. 1 vv 30,31)

## The Person of Christ

What is it that qualified Christ to effect this work of salvation for mankind? One must appreciate that Christ's atoning death was not just an example of God's great love, or of self-sacrifice, but it was a substitutionary death. Anyone could have died as an inspiring example; yet that would have left us in the same helpless state - admiring a heroic act but wallowing in our sin, unable to follow. Of what benefit would a demonstration of how to swim be to a drowning non-swimmer. The fellow needs to be rescued. So Jesus was our substitute who bore the sins of the whole world (I John 2 v 2) so that all who believe might be saved.

First, such a Saviour must be perfectly sinless himself otherwise he could have died only for his own sins. **Hebrews 7 vv 26,27)**

Second, he must be fully man. Apart from becoming man and entering into man's situation, there was no way of God's being able to atone for human sin - a man must set the record straight; a man fell and so a man must bring in restoration. By living as a man, Jesus, through His obedience, was able to win back for us what Adam lost. (Hebrews 5 vv 1-9; Rom. 5 vv 12ff) And so, as a man, He was tired, hungry, tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin (Heb. 4 v 15). He could have called more than twelve legions of angels but He endured the suffering of the cross as a man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Third, He must also be God - the infinite, eternal one - else how could He die for all mankind? Doubtless, a created angelic being would have been perfect and could have become man but the work of such would not have been infinitely complete. Hence, **Hebrews ch.2** shows that Jesus was no created angelic being (v 5) but God Himself (vv 6,8). Only Jesus, God the Son, could effect our eternal salvation. Again, in **Hebrews 7 vv 22 -25: "But this man, because He continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them."**

There are certain doctrines, attacked even by so-called churchmen of late, which are connected with these points and which are essential for us to hold. Satan would try to undermine them, as he always has, as they are essential to a full faith in the perfect, finished work of Christ. These will form the basis of further studies but let it be affirmed now that we believe in the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, His sinless life as a Man, His substitutionary, atoning death on the cross, His bodily resurrection, His triumphant Ascension - as a man - into the Glory, His Session at the right hand of the Majesty on High

where He intercedes for us, and His personal, visible Second Coming to earth to establish His millennial reign.

In conclusion, it may be said that man has been separated from God by his sin. God, in Christ Jesus, has provided a way back to Himself so that we can be reconciled. Jesus paid the price to redeem a sinful world through the shedding of His own blood, so that all who repent and believe might be saved from the penalty and power of sin and might receive God's gift of eternal life. Because of the unique requirements for a Saviour, as we have shown, there can be and is only one way of salvation as the following Scriptures verify:

Jesus said, "***I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes unto the Father but by me.***"  
(John 14 v 6)

***"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."***  
(Acts 4 v 12)

***"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."***  
(I Timothy. 2 v 5)