

What Is *Real* Salvation?

The Bible's absolute testimony on the doctrine of salvation is rarely heard today

The Bible has definite, absolute teachings on the doctrine of salvation – referred to sometimes as soteriology. There is no issue more pressing, more in need of immediate attention to every person alive at this very moment, than that of salvation. The question must be asked: *Am I Truly Saved?* Directly complicating this most crucial issue of understanding what God's Word actually declares about the issue of salvation is the horrifying reality that we are, in our day, witnessing a most gross perversion of the Gospel, and that by those who *ought* to know The Truth.

Thus the average, self-professed Christian, more than likely, is literally drenched in man's polluted ideas - those which are "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18) - regarding salvation. This is that which the bible refers to as "another gospel," i.e., creative inventions of a *lying heart*:

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a **lying tongue**, and hands that shed innocent blood, **An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations**, feet that be swift in running to mischief, **A false witness that speaketh lies**, and he that soweth discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16-19).

What, does the bible declare, are the instruments, yea, weapons, of those who desire to "pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6, 7)? They are, to "speak villany," to "utter error against the LORD," even "lying words" (Is. 32:6, 7). Upon such who bare false witness regarding the "name of God and his doctrine" (1 Tim. 6:1) in this manner, God, through Paul, declares the ultimate death sentence:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Gal. 1:8, 9)

From the usage of the same word "accursed" in Rom. 9:3, God makes it crystal clear that in the context of Galatians 1 above, He has the "second death," or eternal damnation in hell (Rev. 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8), in mind for those who dare to teach that there is *more* needed than the "faith of Jesus Christ" alone (Gal. 2:16 – not "faith IN Christ"), the heart of the Gospel preached through Paul, for man's justification:

...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. (Rom. 9:2, 3)

Truly, to speak "**lying words** in [God's] name, which [God] has **not** commanded" (Jer. 29:23), to "decree **unrighteous decrees**, and...write grievousness which **they** have prescribed" (Is. 10:1), is to come under the fiery wrath of God, to be "accursed from Christ." Note the grave warning in the following Psalm:

For the **sin of their mouth** and the **words of their lips** let them even be taken in their pride: and for **cursing** and **lying which they speak**. Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be. (Ps. 59:12, 13a)

**We must examine our doctrine
and our own salvation TODAY**

Yes, there is a strong likelihood of that which we consider to be the truth regarding the issue of salvation actually being a *blatant lie*. It is thus of the utmost importance that we examine and reexamine the real condition of our souls, as well as the locale of our eternal dwelling place. This must be done according to the piercing truths of the Word of God, rather than with “fleshly wisdom” (2 Co. 1:12); and we must do this, the Bible declares, *right now*. Please, I beseech you – carefully heed with urgency the word of the Lord in the following verses:

A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth...Therefore shall his **calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.** (Pro. 6:12, 15)

He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, **shall suddenly be destroyed**, and that **without remedy.** (Pro. 29:1)

Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. **Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.** For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. **And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.** I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. **Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.** (Is. 13:6-13)

Seek ye the LORD **while he may be found**, call ye upon him **while he is near.** (Is. 55:6)

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, **Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.** (Mt. 5:25, 26).

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and **lose his own soul?** or what shall a man **give in exchange for his soul?** (Mt. 16:26)

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood **they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage**, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, **And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;** so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Mt. 24:37-39)

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: **Fear him,**

which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.
(Lk. 12:4, 5)

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, **Lord, let it alone this year also**, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: **And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.** (Lk. 13:6-9)

Wherefore **we labour**, that, whether present or absent, **we may be accepted of him.** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;** but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. (2 Co. 5:9-11)

(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: **behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**). (2 Co. 6:2)

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; **prove your own selves.** Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Co. 13:5)

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; **How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;** which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. (Heb. 2:1-3)

Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give diligence to make your calling and election sure:** for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. (2 Pt. 1:10)

REGENERATION

Commonly, when people think of the term “regeneration,” they are thinking of being “born again.” Found twice in the 3rd chapter of the Gospel of John, being “born again” is the main theme of the Lord’s lesson for Nicodemus (vs. 3, 7). Nicodemus, we are told, was of the sect of the “Pharisees” and a “ruler of the Jews” (vs. 1). He was a “master of Israel” (vs. 10) - that is, a teacher of the law. It is unclear whether or not Nicodemus is a saved man as we find him talking with Jesus in John 3. It is clear, however, that Nicodemus’ appeal for caution against hasty and emotional condemnation of the Lord in John 7 reveals, at the very least, that he was not about to rashly stone Christ to death with the rest: “Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?” (vs. 50, 51) – a sure contrast to the “chief priests and Pharisees,” and “rulers” (vs. 45, 48).

Joseph of Arimathea, a child of God

The value of the above John 7 account is that Nicodemus' action aligns with the stance of another man, one who was *clearly* saved: Joseph of Arimathea. We can be assured of Joseph's salvation simply because God describes him using language which could only apply to one of His children. Among several things, we read that Joseph "waited for the kingdom of God" (Mk. 15:43). Comparing this with 2 Timothy 4:8 teaches us that longing for the coming of the Lord Jesus is the characteristic of every child of God: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto **all** them also **that love his appearing.**" Further, Luke 23:50 describes him as a "good man, and a just" (vs. 50). Since "there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mt. 19:17), and, "There is none righteous [or "just"], no, not one" (Rom. 3:10), we can be certain that Joseph was indeed a child of God. It is this Joseph of whom a parallel description to that of Nicodemus in John 7 is given: "The same [Joseph] had **not** consented to the counsel and deed of them [those who wished to kill Jesus]" (Lk. 23:51). Then, wonderfully, alongside Joseph of Arimathea who had "boldly" asked Pilate for the body of the Lord (Mk. 15:43), we find Nicodemus, having brought "a mixture of myrrh and aloes" (Jn. 19:39). Together, the two men bury the body of the Lord (Jn. 19:38-42). Whatever his spiritual state when he comes to "Jesus by night" in John 3, the evidence seems to be that by this point in time, Nicodemus had also become a true child of God.

Being born from God

So Christ twice tells Nicodemus the all-surpassing importance of being "born again." The word "again" actually means "top" or "from above," as we find it used of God in the following verses:

And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the **top** to the bottom.

He that cometh **from above** is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is **from above**, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
(Mk. 15:38; Jn. 3:31; Jas. 1:17)

As we can see, "from above" in John 3:31 is equated to "heaven," and in James 1:17, it identifies with the very "Father of lights." After all, "heaven" is whence "the Spirit of God" descended "like a dove" (Mt. 3:16); and it was a "voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). To be "born again," or, *born from above*, thus, means to be born of God – to be one of His eternal children, even His bride (Is. 62:5; Rev. 21:2).

Being born again

Since the phrase "born again" more accurately refers to the birth "from above," we wonder, Is there an expression in the Bible which refers to being born *again*? Actually, there is another Greek word in the Bible which is translated "regeneration." This is the word *paligenesia*, made up of two Greek words: the word meaning "again" (as in, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and **again** I say, Rejoice" - Phil. 4:4), and the word with which we may be quite familiar – "genesis." Literally, thus, the word means, *genesis again*. This word, like the phrase "born from above," directly points to the miracle of salvation:

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of **regeneration** [*paliggenesia*], and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (Tit. 3:5)

Whereas the phrase of John 3, “born from above,” refers to the incomprehensible fact that the saved individual is *born of God*, having experienced a birth the nature of which is completely, qualitatively different from his physical birth, the word “regeneration” makes irrefutable the fact that the saved individual has experienced a *new birth*.

Man’s spirit is born of God’s Spirit

What part, then, of the saved person has been regenerated? God refers to the part of the child of God that is regenerated as the “inner,” or the “inward,” man:

For I delight in the law of God after the **inward** [*eso*] man: (Rom. 7:22)

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the **inner** [*eso*] man; (Eph. 3:16)

Interestingly, in the context of Romans 7, God gives us a synonym for the “inner man” – the “mind”: “...So then with the **mind** I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (vs. 25b). Clearly, it is the “inward” part, or, according to Romans 7, the “mind” of those whom God saves, which, in this present world, is born from above. A brief look into the word “mind” also confirms this truth:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your **mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom. 12:2)

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your **mind**; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. 4:22-24)

Sure Transformation

In Romans 12:2 as well as in Ephesians 4, it is the “mind” that is *renewed*. In Romans 12, this is also referred to as being “transformed.” The English word “transformed” is very close to the literal meaning of the Greek, *metamorphoo*, the *after form*. In other words, the word refers to the form of a being *after* a change has taken place. We see this truth wonderfully displayed as the Lord Jesus is on the mount with His disciples:

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was **transfigured** [*metamorphoo*] before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. (Mk. 9:2, 3)

The Lord here gives a glimpse of the glorified form that all believers are to enjoy with Him in eternity. Note 1 John 3:2’s words of assurance: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it

doth not yet appear **what we shall be**: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is.” This glorious truth is also sounded in 1 Cor. 15:49, 51, 52:

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the **image of the heavenly**...Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be **changed**, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised **incorruptible**, and we shall be **changed**.

This change is not subtle. It is not barely noticeable. It is as dramatic and radical as the sound of the “last trump” announcing the end of the world, and the return of the Lord Jesus as the Judge of all sinners - when His angels are sent forth to “gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another” (Mt. 24:31). The dead are raised “incorruptible”! This change, this transformation, is that which the Bible irrefutably states takes place in the “inner man” of the one who becomes “born from above.”

Just as the inner change, the transformation the saved individual experienced is as dramatic as the Lord’s transfiguration on the mount, the Bible also teaches that the Savior’s bodily resurrection on that Sunday morning directly illustrates the resurrection of the once-dead soul of the child of God:

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that **like as Christ was raised up from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **newness of life**.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord**. (Rom. 6:4, 11)

Inner man, Outer man

The very fact that man’s “inner” part is regenerated, born from above, would mean that there exists another facet to his being. Above in Romans 7 (vs. 25), we saw in the contrast between the regenerate “mind” and the still sinful “flesh” that these referred to the two aspects of man’s being. Other passages also affirm that man was created multi-faceted:

But I see another law in my **members**, warring against the law of my **mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom. 7:23)

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the **flesh** and of the **mind** [*dianoia*]; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. 2:3)

Understandably thus, we read that the saved person’s born again “inner man” co-exists with his still sinful “outward man”:

For which cause we faint not; but though our **outward man** perish, yet the **inward** [*esothern*] **man** is renewed day by day. (2 Cor. 4:16)

The Unsaved person’s inner man is dead

Of course, not having been regenerated, the unsaved man's "inner man," his "mind," would be utterly corrupt ("within" in the following verses is the Greek *esothēn*, seen in 2 Cor. 4:16 above; it comes from *eso*, the word rendered "inner" or "inward"):

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but **within** they are full of extortion and excess.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are **within** full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but **within** ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. (Matt. 23:25, 27, 28)

For from **within**, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from **within**, and defile the man. (Mk. 7:21-23)

In these verses, God again puts forth the truth that man is both "outside" as well as "within." It just so happens that for the unsaved, his inward part is full of "extortion and excess," "dead man's bones...of all uncleanness," "hypocrisy and iniquity." (Please note that God has given us yet another synonym for the inward part: the "heart" - Mk. 7:21).

How, then, does God describe the "mind" of the unsaved? In just as stark a manner as His description of their "within," or, the "inner man":

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the **vanity of their mind**, Having the **understanding** [*dianoia*] **darkened**, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance [*agnoia*] that is in them, because of the **blindness of their heart**: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Eph. 4:17-19

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his **fleshly mind** Col. 2:18

Perverse disputings of men of **corrupt minds**, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. 1 Tim. 6:5

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of **corrupt minds**, reprobate concerning the faith. 2 Tim. 3:8

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their **mind and conscience is defiled**. (Tit. 1:15)

Not a very flattering picture, to be sure. Nevertheless, this is the sure testimony of the One of Whom we read, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). Indeed, God, Who is exclusively true (Rom. 3:4), Who "cannot lie" (Tit. 1:2), Who "searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (1 Chr. 28:9), Who "searcheth the reins and hearts" (Rev. 2:23), is declaring absolutely that the above is the accurate description of unsaved

man's "inward" part – his un-resurrected, unregenerate soul. Notice, in fact, that according to Colossians 2:18, the unsaved man's "mind" is itself "fleshly"! In other words, both his "inward" and "outward" parts are of *one* accord – vain, darkened, ignorant, blinded, corrupt, destitute of the truth, reprobate (not tested), defiled. It thus does not surprise us that the Bible refers to the unsaved man as "dead":

And you...who were **dead** [*nekros*] in trespasses and sins;
Even when we were **dead** [*nekros*] in sins.... (Eph. 2:1, 5)

And you, being **dead** [*nekros*] in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh....
(Col. 2:13)

The Dead cannot bring forth life

This "dead-ness" specifically refers to the utter inability of man in creating spiritual life - that is, either his giving himself a new "inner man," or doing that which contributes toward his receiving a new "inner man" from the Lord. Of course, all possibility of any good works, those which please God, are also absolutely precluded (Is. 64:6; Rom. 8:7, 8; Heb. 11:6). We can know this through the illustration God gives through Abraham. After Ishmael had been born to Abraham by Hagar, God indicated that Abraham and Sarai would have a son, Isaac (Gen. 17:16, 19). This was when Abraham was "ninety years old and nine," and Sarai, "ninety" (Gen. 17:1, 17). The Bible clearly teaches that both Abraham and Sarai were fully convinced that of themselves their bodies could not bring forth seed (Gen. 16:2, 17:17, 18:12). God Himself also confirms the fact that "Abraham and Sarah were **old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women**" (Gen. 18:11). The "manner of women" having "ceased to be with Sarah," it was in a word impossible for her to bear children. This condition of being *unable to reproduce, to bring about life*, is spiritually that which God calls "**dead**":

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now **dead** [*nekroo*], when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the **deadness** [*nekrosis*] of Sara's womb:
(Rom. 4:19)

You see, because procreation of life - eternal life - is such a factual impossibility with man, God declares the following in the face of Sarah's unbelief:

Is any thing **too hard** for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and **Sarah shall have a son**. (Gen. 18:14 - see also Jer. 32:17, 27)

Only God quickens the dead

With the disciples of the Lord Jesus realizing this crucial biblical truth - that man cannot bring about his own regeneration - the Lord's response in the New Testament is very much that which echoes the above:

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, **Who then can be saved?** But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible**. (Mt. 19:25, 26 -)

Remember the word “dead” in the above New Testament passages of Ephesians 2 and Colossians 2? It is from this hopeless condition of being thoroughly without spiritual life, utterly without the ability to bring about spiritual life, that anyone is “quickened,” or, resurrected unto eternal life:

And you hath **he quickened**, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Even when we were dead in sins, hath **quickened us** together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Eph. 2:1, 5, 6)

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath **he quickened** together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (Col. 2:13)

Note this glorious truth being declared also in the Psalms:

The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: **give me understanding**, and **I shall live**. (Ps. 119:144)

Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name’s sake: for thy righteousness’ sake **bring my soul out of trouble**. (Ps. 143:11)

Indeed, how we all “must be born again” (Jn. 3:7), and that by His sovereign, quickening power. Does your cup, dear friend, overflow with life - with life ETERNAL? May the Lord have mercy on us all.