

The Joy of Salvation!

Why We Need Salvation

There is one and only one God, and that God created the universe and everything in it. God created mankind in two people named Adam and Eve. He blessed them and gave them only one rule that they must not break or they would die. He told them not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. (Genesis 1-2)

God is a loving God, and he allowed Adam and Eve to demonstrate their faith in him in this way - by leaving it up to him to declare what was good and what was evil. But Adam and Eve desired to be wise like God and to decide for themselves what was good and what was evil, and they ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-19).

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned¹

You, too, are guilty and condemned to die because of our sin. The Bible says we are all without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

God is a holy God and no sin can enter into his presence. And we have all sinned! If our sin is not taken away from us, we are doomed to an eternity of horrible torment in hell, a lake of fire. (Psalm 92:7; Revelation 20:15) Our sin is an infinite offense against God. God's justice is perfect - our infinite offense demands an infinite punishment.

¹ All Bible quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001).

Nothing we can do will get the sin off of us, either. The best things we can do are still worthless. (Isaiah 64:6)

The Way of Salvation

There is hope, thank God!

Our one God is a God made up of three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is a great mystery, and we cannot understand it perfectly with our puny minds. But the Son came down to earth and was born as a real man named Jesus - he was fully God, and fully man (Philippians 2:5-11). And he never sinned, not even once, even though he was tempted just like we are (Hebrews 4:15). He was perfect.

Jesus was born a Jew. He preached to the Jews that the time had come for God to set up his kingdom on Earth - something they had been waiting for ever since God promised it to the Jewish King David.²

But Jesus also preached to the Jews that they needed to humble themselves and submit to God. He accused the Jewish leaders of being hypocrites, and this angered them enough that they convinced their Roman rulers to execute Jesus.

It all happened just like God had said it would long ago, through the prophets. (Acts 2:22-23; Acts 3:18)

² What do the Jews have to do with all of this? Early in the history of the world, God had promised a man named Abraham that he would father a nation that God loved in a special way - the Jews. And God also promised that the Gentiles (all the other nations) would be blessed one day through the Jews. Jesus Christ, by his sacrifice and resurrection, is fulfilling this promise.

And when Jesus died on the cross, he took upon himself the guilt of the world. When Jesus did this, something happened even more painful than the very nails that held him up on the cross! The sinless Jesus became sin itself in the eyes of the Father.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Father turned his back on Jesus at that moment, and Jesus endured the torment of the Father's wrath so that you would not have to. (Matthew 27:45-54)

Finally, Jesus did not just die on the cross - he rose again from the grave! When Jesus did this, he conquered death. He will come again one day, and those who are in Jesus will be with him forever. (Matthew 28:6; Acts 1:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

How to Know the Joy of Salvation

Jesus paid the penalty for your sins as a free gift to you, if you will only accept it. He loves you that much!

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you have not turned to the Lord, turn to him *right now*. Why do you delay?

Maybe you have heard that you have to *do* something just right to be saved from hell. But no! You do not have to walk down an aisle. You do not have to pray a prayer. You do not have to do *anything*. In fact, if you try to *do* anything to get to heaven, you are already trusting in somebody other than Christ: yourself! Those who

trust in Christ are told:³

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Faith alone is necessary. Place your faith in Jesus Christ's righteousness to save you from hell, and you will be saved.

Are you still unsure of how you can have this wonderful salvation that Jesus has worked for you?

There is a story in the Bible of one dear man

3 If you are a Roman Catholic, do you know Roman Catholicism teaches that you can never know for sure if you have been made righteous before God? Roman Catholicism teaches that you become righteous at the moment of baptism, but then lose some of your righteousness when you sin - you get it back little by little as you participate in the "sacraments" like the Eucharist. The Bible does not teach this. When we put our faith in Christ, his righteousness is applied to us completely, perfectly, and finally. The Bible teaches that nothing *we* do can make us righteous (Ephesians 2:8-9). And the Bible teaches that Jesus died *once for all*, never to be sacrificed again - the Mass is *not* a sacrifice, as Roman Catholicism teaches. The Old Testament priests sacrificed day after day, but when Jesus was sacrificed, his sacrifice was perfect and cannot be repeated in any way. (Hebrews 10:11-14) Finally, Roman Catholicism teaches that there is a place called "Purgatory" where we can be made righteous after death. This is not found anywhere in the Bible, and it detracts from the perfection of Christ's sacrifice, since it suggests that Christ's sacrifice is not good enough to make righteous the very ones for whom he died.

who wanted to know how to have salvation. He was a Roman jailer and was in charge of keeping two of Christ's messengers in jail. The two messengers were named Paul and Silas. Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns while the other prisoners listened. A great earthquake came and opened the doors of the jail, and all the prisoners were able to escape. The jailer was dismayed, and was going to kill himself. Paul and Silas called out to him that they were still there. The jailer rushed in to them and cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they answered:

Acts 16:31a "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

Simply *believe*. Turn to God and accept this wonderful gift prepared for you!

You see, if you turn to God, and cling to him as he lifts you from the filth of your sin, it is God who is doing all the work for you. Once you see that, and accept it, and love it, and embrace it, the joy of salvation will flood over you and you will be changed forever. This is what it means to be "born again." Your love for earthly things will be replaced by a love for heavenly things.

And *that* is true joy!

The joy of salvation!

If after reading this you have placed your faith in Christ, we would like to celebrate with you! You are welcome to contact:

Todd Mitchell, Pastor
First Baptist Church
1620 10th Ave
Granite Falls, MN 56241-1024
320-564-3748

Visit us on the World Wide Web at
<http://www.firstbaptistgranitefalls.org>

The Joy of Salvation!

Do you know it?

Inside:

Why We Need Salvation

The Way of Salvation

How to Know the Joy of Salvation