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Two Great Questions: What Did Christ Do To Save Sinners? and What Must I Do To Be Saved?

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and

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WHAT DID CHRIST DO TO SAVE SINNERS?

K. C. Moser

“What must I do to be saved?” has no answer until Christ has done something to save me. What the “patient” must do to be “well” depends upon the “remedy.” Christ crucified is the “remedy” for the “malady” of sin. Every sinner has the right to know (a) who Christ is, and (b) what he has done on behalf of sinners. Let us note briefly these significant facts about Christ.

Jesus is (a) the Son of God (Mt. 16:16), (b) the source of life (John 1:4), the master of life and death (Jno. 11:25), (c) the sinner’s sinoffering (Isa. 53rd chapter; 1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21), and (d) the sinner’s Saviour (Mt. 1:21; 1 Tim 1:15).

No one but Jesus was qualified to become man’s Saviour because no one else could do what was necessary to be done on the sinner’s behalf. (Acts 4:12).

What did Christ do to save sinners? But first note these facts about sin: (a) Sin is antagonism to God. Hence, sin is called “ungodliness” (Rom. 1:18), and sinners are said to be “ungodly.” (Rom. 4:5.) The prefix “un” is significant. (b) Sin renders one guilty before God. From the sin of Adam until now sinners are regarded as *guilty*. This is true

basically because sin is "ungodliness." (c) The guilty person is under divine disapproval. The "wrath of God" is said to be upon him. (Rom. 1:18.) Hence, sinners are under condemnation.

Now, it is such a sinner who is the subject of salvation. And what Jesus did for him was logically necessary. God's sentence against sinners must be changed to divine approval. In other words, it was the work of the Saviour to furnish the ground of divine mercy. What was it, then, that Jesus did to save sinners?

(a) **Jesus became man.** Before Jesus came he "was God." (John 1:1.) He was "on an equality with God." (Phil 2:6.) But man's Saviour must be human as well as divine; otherwise he could not bear man's sins. Hence he "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:7.) "The Word became flesh." (John 1:14.) For other reasons for the incarnation of Jesus see Heb. 2:14-18; Heb. 4:15, 16; Heb. 5; 8.

(b) **Christ became our sinbearer.** "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:5, 6.) "He who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf." (2 Cor. 5:21.) "Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) No beast, no man, or no angel could be man's sinbearer.

(c) **Christ became our sinoffering.** Sinbearer and sinoffering are really the same, but logical-

ly Christ is our sin offering because he is our sin bearer. Every sinner should know well the following scriptures: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him (trust in him) should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16.) "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood." (Rom. 3:25.) "Christ died for our sins." (1 Cor. 15:3.) "Who gave himself for our sins." (Gal. 1:4.) "He offered up himself," (Heb. 7:27.)

(d) **He was raised for us.** "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. For since by man came death by man (Christ in the flesh) came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:20-22.) He was "raised for our justification." (Rom. 4:25.)

(e) **He is at the right hand of God interceding for us.** "Who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:34.) "When he had made purification of sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3.) "We have an advocate with the Father." (1 John 2:1.) "For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands . . . but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us." (Heb. 9:24.) Only the Son is qualified to sit at the Father's right hand and to make

intercession for us. This intercession is based upon his blood shed for us. (Heb. 9:12,24.)

Christ did many other things for the benefit of man, but it was by means of his death that he redeemed us. "In whom we have redemption through his blood." (Eph. 1:7.) See also 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. For example, he left us the incomparable Sermon on the Mount, but this teaching is not redemptive. The gospel that saves is the good news of Christ's death for our sins. (1 Cor. 15:3,4.) We can pinpoint the source of our salvation in the blood of Christ.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

We have noted that this question cannot be answered apart from the redemptive work of Christ which has just been considered. What a lost person must do to be saved obviously relates to what Jesus did to save him. The conditions of salvation are not merely acts commanded by one in authority that become the ground of our redemption. Jesus crucified is *himself* the Saviour. "He offered himself." (Heb. 7:27.) "He gave himself." (Gal. 1:4.) The idea that conditions have been arbitrarily chosen ignores the cross. *Nothing is more unreasonable—nothing more certainly nulifies the cross than to preach the conditions of salvation without relating them to the atoning work of the Saviour.*

What Jesus did to save us determines, therefore, what we must do to be saved. The conditions of salvation are reasonable responses to Christ crucified. Nothing that is required of sinners can possibly be "for the remission of sins" unless it relates to the blood of Christ. Faith, for example, possesses no redemptive power; but the blood of Christ is redemptive. Hence, faith is a condition of salvation because it means trust in or reliance upon the blood of Christ (John 3:16; Rom. 3:25.) Now, let us answer the question, "what must I do to be saved?"

(1) **It is required that one believe in the crucified Son of God.** John 3:16 teaches this. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him" shall be saved. It was his *Son* that God gave. But the Son must be "lifted up" on the cross. The Son "died for our sins." Hence, it is not enough merely to believe *that* Jesus is the Son of God. The sinner must also believe *in* the Son crucified for his sins. Certainly, the faith that saves must be in the Son who died to save. "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood." (Rom. 3:25.) Christ is our "propitiation" because he shed his blood for us; and we respond to him "through faith." We must have faith in his blood (trust in his blood) or faith in him who shed his blood. *Unless faith has as its object the crucified Son*

of God, it is not a condition of salvation. For other scriptures naming faith as a condition of salvation see Acts 16:31; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 5:1; Acts 10:43.

But what is it to believe in Christ crucified? Faith in Christ crucified means (a) the belief *that* he died for our sins, and (b) *trust in or reliance upon him as sinoffering*. "For so greatly did God love the world that he gave his only Son, that everyone who trust in him may . . . have eternal life." (John 3:16—Weymouth's translation.) Faith in Christ means the acceptance of him as preached by the apostles. Peter's climax on Pentecost was: "God hath made him *both Lord and Christ*." (Acts 2:36.) As "Lord" Jesus is our divine king. As "Christ" or "Messiah" Jesus is our sinoffering. Isaiah 53 pictures him as Christ or Messiah. The reader should read the whole 53rd chapter of Isaiah, noting carefully that Christ is man's sinbearer or sinoffering. "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Faith, then, has two functions: (a) It is a principle of action that leads one to submit to Christ as king, and (b) *faith is reliance upon what Jesus has already done for sinners*. He died to redeem man. Hence, one must depend upon or trust in his death for salvation. *This dependence on Christ crucified is faith*. This faith is more than confidence in the integrity of Jesus to fulfill his promise to save upon certain conditions. The conditions themselves

mean trust in his death for salvation. Faith looks to the cross, to the blood. Jesus did not die merely to induce one to recognize him as king, that is, as one having the right to rule over man. He died to save sinners. Hence, faith that saves must mean dependence upon his blood. Without trust in the blood as an element of faith there is no satisfactory response to Christ as a sin-offering. "What must I do to be saved?" is the same as "what must I do with Jesus as the Christ or the Messiah?" The question might also be stated thus: "What must I do with the blood of Christ?" The answer comes: "Believe on the Lord Jesus." (Acts 16:31.) But it is the crucified Lord Jesus on whom one must believe. Paul knew no Saviour but "Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2.) Hence, faith that saves must have "Jesus Christ and him crucified" as its object. This faith most naturally signified trust in the blood. Else what use can be made of the cross? Salvation was achieved by Jesus, not by sinners. It is the privilege of sinners to accept the salvation purchased or achieved by the Saviour. Any other conception of faith removes Jesus from the cross, so to speak, and makes him no more than a teacher or lawgiver. Jesus is *Saviour*, not merely a teacher and king. He is "both Lord and Christ." One does not rely, therefore, on the conditions, but upon Christ. A public confession of faith will gladly be made by

one who truly trusts in Christ. (Rom. 10:9, 10.)

(2) It is required that one repent "in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38.) Since salvation means freedom from the power and practice of sin, as well as the remission of sins, repentance is naturally required. But there is this that characterizes repentance under Christ: Repentance must be "in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38.) Jesus as the Christ is man's sinoffering. Hence, repentance must be "in the name of" the crucified Christ. Now, the phrase "in the name of Jesus Christ" signifies not only the authority of Jesus, but reliance upon him as sinoffering. Hence, repentance is not merely turning away from sin, but it is related to turning to Jesus as sinoffering. Such repentance is inseparable from faith that means trust in Jesus Christ. Peter spent much time on Pentecost, leading his hearers to repentance. But it was not a mere turning from sin that he sought, but such a turning from sin as would lead to a full acceptance of the Saviour. The rejection of Christ through unbelief was also a sin that called for repentance. When one repents of the rejection of Jesus as Saviour he accepts him as the Saviour. This acceptance is faith in the sense of trust in or reliance upon the blood of Jesus. To be sure, faith in the sense of belief of the truth must precede repentance; but belief of the truth is possible

though one is still in rebellion against Jesus. Such a faith is destitute of love, submission, and trust. The unrepentant person is saying *no* to the invitation of Jesus. Faith, therefore, must be associated with trust before one has responded to Christ as his *sinoffering*. Hence, on Pentecost Peter commanded his hearers to “repent . . . and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ,” their *sinoffering* and king. (Acts 2:36,38.) Since the conditions are logical responses to Jesus as a *sinoffering*, repentance “in the name of Jesus Christ” is impossible apart from trust in him.

(3) It is required that penitent believers be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Acts 2:38.) The relation of baptism to faith in the scriptures is easily revealed as the expression or the embodiment of faith. What is signified by trust in Christ crucified is outwardly expressed or embodied by baptism which is a burial in and a resurrection from the water “in the name of Jesus Christ.” Baptism, therefore, signifies trust in Christ. It is not something different from faith added to faith and repentance, but an expression of both. Hence, Peter commanded his hearers to “repent . . . and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38.) Baptism, like faith, looks to calvary, to Christ as *sinoffering*. It has, therefore, the meaning of faith. God has joined baptism to faith and repentance, and he

expects "every one of you" to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:48.)

The scope and purpose of this tract does not permit a full discussion of any point considered. But from what has been studied we learn that the question "What must I do to be saved?" must be answered in relation to what Jesus did to save. The conditions of salvation, let it be distinctly noted, are responses to Christ as sinoffering. They are meaningless, therefore, apart from the cross. *It is senseless and pointless to preach the conditions without first having preached Jesus as a sinoffering.* The conditions are not a few commands arbitrarily given by one in authority to test man's willingness to obey, but natural responses to one who is man's sinoffering. The sinner must be drawn to God by means of the "lifted up" Son. (John 12:32.) He must make Christ crucified his plea before God and expect salvation because of his death on man's behalf. The sinner is being called, not merely to render obedience, but through obedience that means trust in Christ crucified he is being called to accept his Saviour.

The foregoing study is purely informative. Now I ask the reader to consider a few words of exhortation: All that Jesus has done for sinners can save no one unless he does his part. Many will not be saved because "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." A

Saviour has been provided, and everyone is exhorted to accept his mercy. What has been done for the whole world has been done for everyone individually. It is true that "God so loved the world," and that Jesus died for the whole world. But it is also true that Christ loved everyone and died for everyone. "Who loved me and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2: 20.) One can say, "Jesus loved me as much as he loved all the world, and he died for me as certainly as he died for the whole world." One is bound to accept him or to reject him. "He that is not with me is against me." Everyone will be personally judged. "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10.) Nothing the world can offer is permanently satisfying. The gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ is freely offered to all who will accept it. (Rom. 6.)

THE SINNER'S PREDICAMENT

Rom. 11:32

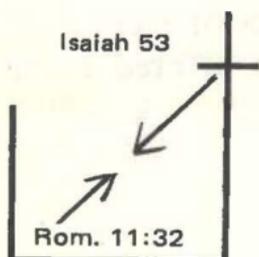
Sinners are "shut up on all sides, so that they cannot escape." Vincent and Denny on Romans 11:32.

Law is unsuited to the needs of those thus "shut up." Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:10; 2:21.

Only mercy meets the needs of sinners. Romans 11:32.

Hence everything sinners can do that is relevant must signify a cry for mercy. Romans 7:24; Luke 18:13; Acts 2:21.

JESUS IS THE HELPER OF THE HELPLESS



1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 1:18,19.
ALL CONDITIONS ARE "IN
THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST."
Acts 2:38.

Jesus is the Helper of the helpless. Romans 11:26; Romans 7:24,25.

Jesus helps, saves, by becoming the sinner's sinbearer. Isaiah 53:5,6; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:26, 28.

Jesus as the sinner's sinbearer is the gospel.
1 Corinthians 1:17,23; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3.

Failure to preach Jesus as sinbearer leaves the sinner helpless in his predicament. See above.

Any condition of salvation must relate directly to Jesus as sinbearer. John 3:16; Romans 3:24,25 (RSV).

Conditions of salvation are responses to Jesus as sinbearer.

The predicament of sinners demands the Saviour. Romans 7:24.

The predicament of sinners demands grace, mercy. Luke 18:13.

The response of sinners to the Saviour, grace and mercy logically and scripturally demands trust in, reliance on Jesus as sinoffering. Ephesians 2:8,9; John 3:16; Romans 3:24,25.

Jesus as sinoffering is God's "plan of Salvation." Romans 1:16; Acts 3:24,26; 1 Timothy 2:5,6.

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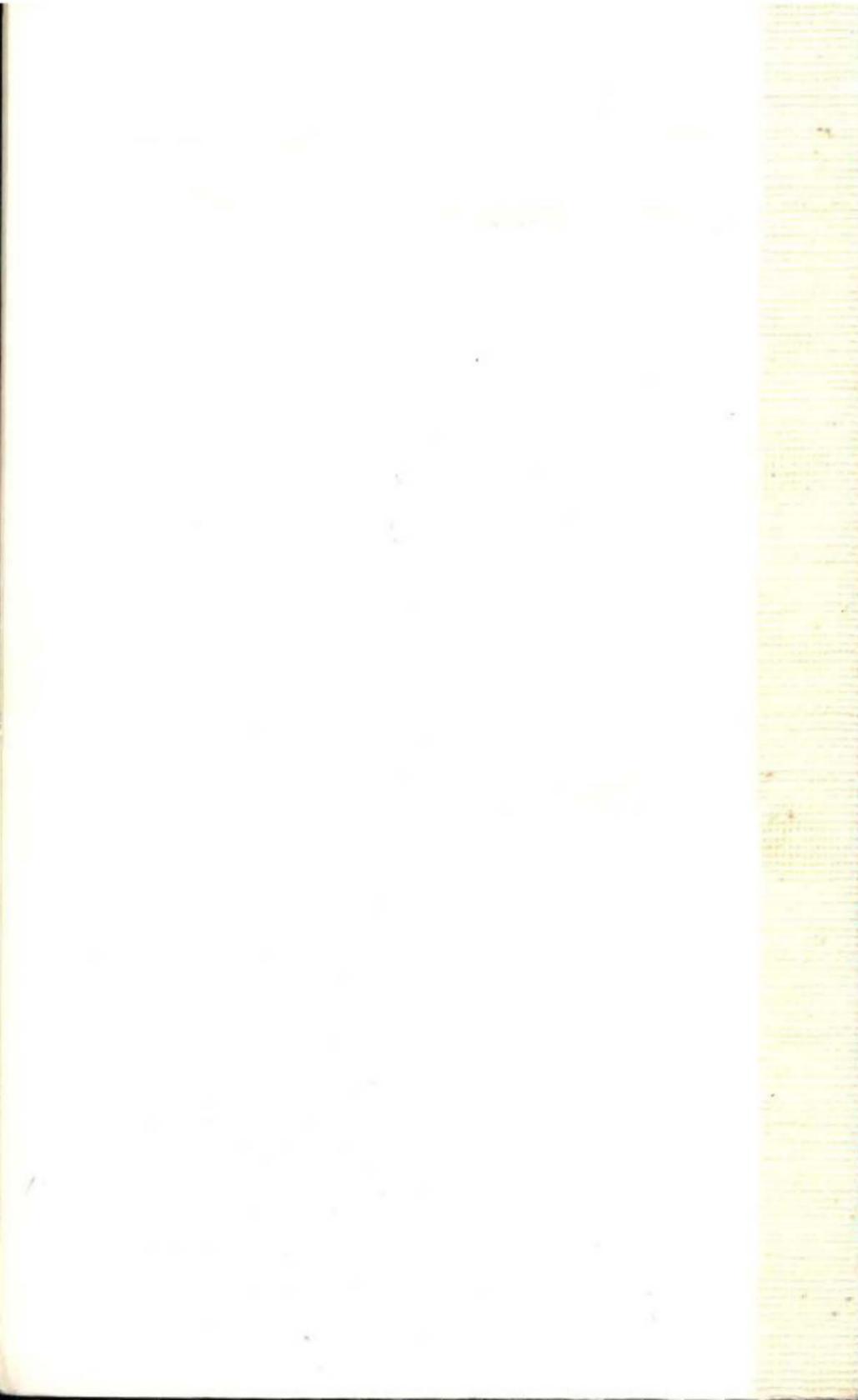
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