

## What is salvation?

What does it mean to be saved? Saved from what?

The words salvation and saved mean to be rescued, delivered or protected from something. If we want to be protected from God's wrath then we have to be saved from our sin as sin always separates us from God. Isa. 59:2 (NIV) tells us, *"your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."* Sin always has and always will separate us from God. At the beginning of Creation, Adam and Eve were removed from the Garden, and God's presence, because of sin and it is no different today. God hates sin, so if we want to enter into His holy presence in heaven then we must be saved from our sin and that is exactly why Jesus came. Jesus came not just to die FOR our sins so that we could be forgiven but also to give us power, through the Holy Spirit, to die TO our sins and rescue us from slavery to our sinful nature.

### Being saved from sin

Matt. 1:21 says, *"She [that is, Mary] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will SAVE his people from their sins."* The name Jesus means Saviour or Deliverer and this verse tells us that He came to save us FROM our sins; not IN our sins or WITH our sins but FROM our sins. The following verses speak about being saved from sin:

- 1) *"... sin shall not be your master ..."* (Rom. 6:14)
- 2) *"... everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family but a son belongs to it forever"* (John 8:34-35)
- 3) *"... those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."* (Rom. 8:14)
- 4) *"... live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."* (Gal. 5:16)
- 5) *"... through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."* (Rom. 8:2)
- 6) *"... To him [Jesus] who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood."* (Rev. 1:5)
- 7) *"... we die to sin ..."* (Rom. 6:2)
- 8) *"... [Jesus] gave himself for us to redeem us [that is, to free us] from all wickedness."* (Tit. 2:14)

From these verses we can see that through the Holy Spirit we can be saved from slavery to sin. Being saved from our sinful ways is not an easy thing because when we get saved the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and a spiritual battle then begins between our sinful nature and the Spirit of God. It is a very real and very fierce battle between good and evil.

### There is a battle raging within every believer

In Gal. 5:17 Paul tells us about this battle: *"the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that YOU DO NOT DO WHAT YOU WANT."* Our sinful nature has an extremely powerful hold on us but the Holy Spirit is far stronger. Paul said in Gal. 5:16, *"live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."* So, as we follow the Spirit's conviction and repent, the Spirit gives us the power to overcome our desire to sin and to win the battle.

In Romans 7:15 Paul said, *"I do not understand what I do. For WHAT I WANT TO DO I DO NOT DO, but what I hate I do."* Again, Paul said that he could not do what he wanted to do and it would seem that he was hopelessly trapped in sin but this is not true as a few verses later he said, *"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* (Rom. 7:24-25) Even though Paul said that in his own strength he couldn't do what he wanted to do, in both Galatians and Romans, he also said that through the Holy Spirit he was rescued from his sinful nature. In Rom. 8:4, he said that through the Spirit we can fully meet God's righteous requirements - winning the battle against sin.

### **If we live by the Spirit we will be saved from our sin**

This is not to say that we can be sinlessly perfect. In our daily walk with Jesus, even though we don't set out to sin, circumstances or weakness can cause us to slip up from time to time. This unintentional sinning cannot be compared with a deliberately sinful lifestyle of lying, stealing, hating, lusting or greed etc. which will result in judgment if not repented of.

Regarding living by the Spirit, in the KJV, John 1:12 says, *"But as many as received him, to them gave he POWER to become the sons of God ..."* The power spoken of in this verse is the power of the Holy Spirit working within us. 2 Pet. 1:3-4 tell us about this power saying, *"His divine power [the Holy Spirit] has given us everything we need for life and godliness ... [so that we can] escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."* Here we are clearly told that the divine power of the Holy Spirit empowers us to resist sin and live a godly life.

Tit. 2:11-14 also speak about godliness and tell us, *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us [that is, to set us free] from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."*

Without the Holy Spirit, there is no way that we can be saved from our sinful ways and live the holy life commanded of us in 1 Pet. 1:16 where God says, *"Be holy, because I am holy."* However, through the Spirit we have the power to live out that command. If we submit to the Spirit in repentance and *"say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions"* then we will win the battle and be saved from sin. But if we are unwilling to repent and simply continue to give in to our sinful nature then the devil will win the battle and we will remain hell-bound slaves to sin.

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Mick Alexander  
leeandmick@gmail.com  
<http://www.ChristianIssues.biz>