

LESSON 8

MAN'S RETURN TO GOD

Introduction

Paul points out in Romans 8:29f. that man's salvation is the accomplishment of God, not man. God predestinates, calls, justifies, and glorifies. The same idea is set forth in Ephesians 2:1-10. Man who has brought death upon himself because of trespasses and sins is made alive by God. His salvation is by grace when he submits to God through faith; it is God's gift and not through man's works. The first three lessons of this study guide present man's need of God and of deliverance from sin. The next four lessons present God's work in Christ to provide for man's salvation. This lesson is concerned with God's immediate work in bringing man to salvation and man's response to God's grace.

The God of both Jewish and Christian faith is a God of salvation. He has saved His people, He is saving them, and He will save them. Salvation is both a historical and an eschatological reality. Jesus stated that His mission was "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus' very name means 'Saviour'.

There are several words which describe what God does for His people. Sinful man must be delivered from his enemy, cleansed of his sin, and renewed to an attitude of fellowship and relationship with God. Man must desire the friendship and presence of God. Fellowship is based on right attitudes. There is no question of God's attitude towards sinful man since Christ died for his sins as an expression of God's love. Because of the various aspects of the salvation event, a discussion of the subject must consider the various terms which give emphasis to the different aspects.

The Meaning of Salvation

The Old Testament emphasis

Several Old Testament Hebrew words are translated 'salvation'. One means basically 'to deliver' in the sense of 'to enlarge' and 'to become spacious'. A person who is confined and constrained is liberated through deliverance. Another word means 'to redeem'. The emphasis is on recovering property which has fallen

Man's salvation is accomplished by _____,
God's gift, and not through man's _____.

(grace, works)

Man's deliverance from sin involves three aspects:

1. Liberation from his _____.
2. Cleansing from his _____.
3. Renewal of relationship with _____.

(enemy, sin, God)

List two meanings of the Hebrew words which are translated 'salvation'.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

into alien hands, usually by purchase (for example, from slavery). The concept of payment of money falls out of sight and the word comes to mean 'to deliver' or 'to save'.

Salvation in the Old Testament usually refers to deliverance from physical oppression or misfortune. The foremost example is Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage at the Red Sea. On the basis of God's mighty act of deliverance, Israel renewed the Covenant at Mount Sinai to make Yahweh her only God. The deliverance from Egypt and the establishment in the land of Canaan were the fundamental acts upon which Biblical faith was based (cf. Ps. 68:19-20). Since the relationship between Yahweh and Israel was based on the Covenant in which Yahweh promised to provide for and to protect His people, it is not surprising that deliverance from enemies and famine is primary in salvation.

Because of Israel's doctrine of creation and her covenant relationship to Yahweh, little distinction was made between physical and spiritual salvation. God created the world and man's body; therefore, the material is not excluded from God's concern and work. The covenant relationship provided for a land which was politically organized into a nation. As a social entity, the nation was promised protection and deliverance from her enemies. During the time of the Judges, Israel's sins brought Yahweh's punishment in the form of oppression by surrounding nations (cf. Judges 3:7ff.). Upon the repentance of the children of Israel, Yahweh would spiritually endow a leader who would deliver Israel. Since the leader succeeded through the power of the Spirit, Israel recognized that it was God who wrought the deliverance. This deliverance was not considered to be secular because life was not divided into the physical and spiritual. It was God's Spirit who brought about deliverance upon Israel's repentance or "crying unto the Lord." Physical deliverance was part of the agreement in the covenant relationship. The covenant God was known as a God of salvation (cf. Ps. 3:8; 79:9; 95:1). Israel's sin of worshipping other gods caused Yahweh to withhold His protective grace and to permit Israel to be oppressed by other nations.

During the eighth century, the prophets continued to emphasize that Israel's sin would bring bondage and oppression. Sin was no longer primarily unfaithfulness to Yahweh but included unrighteousness in relation to man. Yahweh's punishment of Israel for her sins continued to be by foreign nations. When Israel repented, her restoration brought a renewal of the Covenant in which there was deliverance and protection from Israel's oppressors.

In the exilic period, Israel's salvation, promised by Second Isaiah, focused on deliverance from the

The meaning of salvation in the Old Testament is deliverance from physical

_____ or _____.

(oppression, misfortune)

The Israelites made little distinction between _____ and _____ salvation.

The covenant relationship between God and His people provided for physical protection and deliverance from their _____.

(physical, spiritual, enemies)

The prophets emphasized that Israel's sin would bring _____ and _____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Babylonians and restoration to the Land of Promise. During the post-exilic period, emphasis changed from punishment by bondage under foreign powers to bondage under a spiritual power who caused men to sin. Salvation continued to mean deliverance from physical distress, but it also took the new dimension of deliverance from a spiritual power.

The New Testament emphasis

At the time of Jesus, salvation referred to two realms of reality: the spiritual and the physical. Control by a spiritual power resulted in sin and its physical punishment under a foreign government. Naturally, there were people who emphasized each aspect of bondage—under Satan who caused the sin and under Rome which was God's instrument of punishment. The Pharisees went to the extreme of seeing in every physical defect and disease divine punishment for personal sin.

Jesus disagreed with the Pharisees that prosperity and health indicated righteousness and disease and oppression indicated sinfulness. He shifted the emphasis of sin and punishment from the material to the realm of the spiritual. He did not deny that sickness was connected with sin, but He seemed to imply that sickness as punishment was no more a direct affliction from God than prosperity was the reward for personal righteousness. The power of evil brought disharmony and suffering to God's good creation. A certain woman had a "spirit of infirmity eighteen years" (Luke 13:11). Jesus "loosed" her from her infirmity. When His actions on the Sabbath were questioned by the Pharisees, He answered that "Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years," and it was fitting that she should be loosed from this bondage on the Sabbath day (Luke 13:16). Jesus did not view her ailment as a punishment from God but as a result of her unity with a society which was dominated by Satan. On another occasion, Jesus pronounced one who was sick of the palsy forgiven of his sins (Matt. 9:2ff.). The scribes interpreted his sickness as an affliction caused by his sins; therefore, they questioned whether Jesus had the power to forgive sin since the man remained in his afflicted condition. In order that the scribes might know that the Son of Man had power to forgive sins, Jesus commanded him to take up his bed. Matthew does not include an explanation as to whether the man's sickness was punishment for sins or not. Jesus saw the man's greatest need to be forgiveness. For those who connected sickness with sin, his physical healing served as proof that he had been forgiven.

The emphasis of the New Testament is on the One who saves, the Saviour, rather than the moral condition of the person. The Pharisees believed that

Write Jesus or Pharisees by the statement which characterizes their view of sickness and affliction.

- _____ 1. *Disease and affliction are divine punishment for sin.*
- _____ 2. *Sickness and affliction are results of the power of evil which brings disharmony and suffering.*

(Compare your answer with the text.)

*Is this statement true or false?
Jesus taught that prosperity and health indicated righteousness and disease, and oppression indicated sinfulness. _____*

(false)

Underline the correct words.

The New Testament emphasizes the (moral condition of the person, One who saves).

(Compare your answer with the text.)

salvation depended on the moral and social standing of man. Jesus emphasized that it depended on the Saviour who forgave sinners and healed the afflicted. Healing was often connected with the exorcism of the evil power whose control of the person's life led to sin and physical affliction. In the New Testament, salvation is deliverance from the power of evil which controls one's life, from the guilt of sin which separates man from God, and from the physical consequences of sin. Since salvation has a future consummation, not every person is given immediate deliverance from disease and sickness. Mankind is eventually to be delivered from death, but final deliverance from death will not come until the return of Christ.

The New Testament teaches salvation delivers from the power of _____, from the guilt of _____, and from physical _____ of sin.

(evil, sin, consequences)

Three stages of salvation

The New Testament presents salvation as an act, a process, and a consummation. It is an experience which has happened to the believer, but the effects of it are a continuing and developing process which will come to completion and fullness in the future. The Bible presents salvation as a real historical event. At a particular time and place, the saved must experience a definite deliverance from sin resulting in a new relationship to God.

Match the following terms and meanings with reference to salvation.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ___ past event | 1. completion in the future |
| ___ continuing process | 2. experience which has happened to the believer |
| ___ future consummation | 3. effects are a developing process |

(2, 3, 1)

Salvation as a historical act or experience. — A woman of sin approached Jesus while He was dining in the house of a Pharisee. She began to weep, to wash His feet with tears, and to anoint them. Based on a belief that a righteous person would not associate with sinners, the Pharisees were appalled by Jesus' allowing the woman to touch Him. Jesus recognized the magnitude of her sinfulness and responded by forgiving her sins. The forgiveness of her sins is described as a salvation event (Luke 7:50). It happened at a definite place and time; therefore, it could be spoken of in past tense: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50). The Greek verb for saved is in the perfect tense which indicates that the salvation transaction was completed. The Greek perfect also emphasizes the continuing results of the action. A similar statement is made concerning Zaccheus: "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9).

Two New Testament examples of salvation as an event are:

(the woman of sin, Zaccheus)

Paul also expressed the concept that salvation is a definite historical event. He stated to the Ephesians, "By grace you have been saved through faith"(2:8-RSV). Again, the perfect tense is used to signify a completed action with lasting results. As a definite past act, Paul mentioned to Titus that, according to His mercy, God saves us through the washing of regeneration (3:5).

Paul taught in Ephesians 2:8 that salvation is a historical _____.

(event)

Salvation as a continuing experience. — Salvation is not limited to the forgiveness of past sin. It is a continuing relationship based on God's saving activity.

A period of time elapses from the initial believing in Christ until the return of Christ when complete deliverance from sin and death will be accomplished. The question of the security of the believer arises because the final act of salvation does not occur at the moment of initial belief. A person is definitely saved as an initial act, but his salvation is not completed at that time. Paul mentioned to the Corinthians that the preaching (message) of the cross is the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18-RSV). The blood of Christ continues to cleanse from sin during the time between the initial act and the final consummation of salvation (1 John 1:7, 9). The writer of Hebrews stated that Christ saves to the uttermost because He is at the right hand of God to make intercession for those who have experienced salvation (Heb. 7:25). In a subsequent lesson, Scriptures will be examined which give assurance that man who has been saved will continue in salvation.

It is God who provides for the initial experience of salvation, and it is God who sustains faith by grace. Paul states in Romans 5:2 that in Christ we have access by faith to God's grace by which we stand. The believer is not left to maintain his salvation by his own strength. Those who have been justified by faith continue to live in faith.

The perfect tense used to describe salvation as a past event denotes also that the effect of that salvation continues to the present. To be saved by grace through faith means that what happened in the past is a continuing present reality. As a present reality, salvation is not static. It is to be a developing and growing experience for every Christian. This stage of salvation is usually described as sanctification.

Salvation as an eschatological conception.—That salvation is a future event is expressed in the words: "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). Salvation as an eschatological event means more than a future event or reality. It means that what is now real, present, and active, but not realized in fullness or made visible, will come to a future consummation.¹ Salvation is God's accomplishment in Christ; it is God's work. Christ's coming to die on the cross and to defeat death was essential for man's deliverance; however, man will not be completely delivered from sin and Satan until Christ returns and raises the dead. In His death and resurrection, Jesus has already provided for man's complete redemption. However, that redemption will not come fully until the end of the world order and the overthrow of Satan and his followers. The

¹Alan Richardson, "Salvation," Vol. IV of The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 172.

Is this statement true or false?

A person's salvation is completed at the time of the initial act. _____

(false)

The continuing process in salvation is usually described as _____.

(sanctification)

Salvation as a future event means that what is now real, present, and active, but not realized in fullness or made visible, will come to a future _____.

Man's redemption by Jesus will be completed with the overthrow of _____.

(consummation, Satan)

final defeat of Satan has been delayed until the Gospel has been preached in all the world in order that God's chosen from all nations will enter the Kingdom.

Death is a consequence of sin (cf. Rom. 5:12ff.). Complete deliverance from sin means release from death in the resurrection. That final deliverance will come when Christ returns. It has already been assured by His resurrection. The person who has been saved through faith lives by hope and looks for that day (Rom. 13:11-14). In fact, Paul speaks of the whole creation longing to share in the glorious consummation which God has in store for His children (Rom. 8:19ff.).

Peter states that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:5). The Christian has a living hope because of Christ's conquest of death through the resurrection.

Salvation involves complete spiritual and physical deliverance. The initial experience of salvation is the renewing or making alive of the spirit. The final aspect of salvation will be the deliverance of the body from the power of death and from the limitations of flesh and blood.

The Meaning of Conversion

Salvation emphasizes deliverance, an act of God on behalf of man. Conversion means a turning or returning. The Biblical usage applies the term to both God and man. The most characteristic Old Testament use is to describe God's turning in respect of man to a favourable attitude (Deut. 13:17) or to an unfavourable attitude (Josh. 24:20). Likewise, man is described as turning to God (Jer. 3:14) or from Him (Jer. 8:4-6; Ezek. 33:18). Man's turning from God is his rebelling in sin (Josh. 22:16), and his turning to God is his submitting to the work of God's grace (Ps. 85:4).

Conversion is a change of attitude and mind, but it involves more than that. It includes changing from an old to a new way of life. The life of sin lived in rebellion against God is forsaken and the new life in fellowship with God is followed. The New Testament does not speak of God's turning to man, but it does speak of God's coming to man in the Incarnation. It is the mighty act of God which makes possible man's turning from sin to Him. The emphasis in the doctrine of conversion is on man's action rather than God's activity. Since God's activity makes possible man's action, a discussion of conversion will include God's work in turning man to Himself. Salvation is God's accomplishment and is

Identify each of the following Scriptures with one of the stages of salvation:

past event
 continuing process
 future consummation

_____ "...the cross is...
 to us who are being
 saved...the power
 of God." (RSV—
 1 Cor. 1:18)

_____ "Now is our salva-
 tion nearer than
 when we believed."
 (Rom. 13:11)

_____ "Thy faith hath
 saved thee."
 (Luke 7:50)

(continuing process, future consummation,
 past event)

Does salvation involve complete spiritual
 and physical deliverance? _____

(yes)

Conversion is more than a change of
 _____ and _____; it
 includes changing from an old to a _____
 way of _____.

(attitude, mind, new, life)

offered to man as a gift. Conversion describes man's responsibility (response—according to his—ability) in being saved. It is man's renunciation of himself as sinful and his submission to God.

Preparation for conversion

Although conversion is man's turning from sin to God, it is not solely a human activity. The New Testament teaches that no man can come unto the Father except through Jesus and no man can come unto Jesus except the Father draw him (John 14:6; 6:44). In the lesson on predestination, it was emphasized that God takes the initiative in man's salvation. Election is God's predetermined plan to save sinful man through faith. Those whom He predestinates, He also calls (Rom. 8:30). Man does not choose to come to Christ unless he is called through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

John points out that even though the Son of God came as the Light of the world, men chose darkness because their deeds are evil (John 3:19). Everyone who does evil hates the Light which would expose his evil deeds. Satan is a liar and deceiver who convinces man that the life of sin is more satisfying than the life submitted to God. Man is satisfied to continue in his sin unless his eyes are opened by the power of God's Spirit who brings about conviction. Jesus stated that when He departed from the world, He would send the Comforter or Holy Spirit who would convince (convict) the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement (John 16:7f.). In convicting the world of sin, the Holy Spirit makes man aware of his guilt for having refused to submit (believe) his life to Jesus Christ who is his Creator and Redeemer (John 16:9). Satan attempts to convince man that he can live on the bread of this world alone without submitting to God and His word (cf. Jesus' temptation—Matt. 4:3ff.). Man is satisfied to follow Satan's lie until he is disturbed through the convicting and enlightening work of the Spirit of God. Although man is content to compare his life to his fellow-man and judges himself more righteous, the Spirit of God leads him to see the unrighteousness of his life in comparison to Christ (John 16:10). The convicting work of the Spirit causes man to see that Christ is right and the prince of this world is wrong and condemned (John 16:11).

God's call to salvation is not mechanical nor is it forced upon man. Through the work of the Spirit, God opens man's eyes to the reality of his spiritual condition. When man sees his sins, he experiences a feeling of guilt and unworthiness. The feeling results from man's original moral nature. Man has been given pride to cause him to desire to succeed. When his eyes are opened to his real condition in sin, he experiences a sense of failure and wrong. Satan

Who takes the initiative in man's salvation, God or man? _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Is this statement true or false?

Unless man feels convicted of sin through the power of God's Spirit, he is satisfied to continue in sin. _____

(true)

Man understands the reality of his sinful condition through the work of the _____

_____.

(Holy Spirit)

attempts to lead him to deny his wrong and to shift the blame to someone else. God's love encourages him to confess his wrong in order to be forgiven.

In addition to the convicting work of the Spirit, the Gospel of God's love is important as an instrument in God's call. When the person is made to feel unworthy and ashamed because of his sins, he needs to know of God's love and invitation to turn to Him for forgiveness. The Christian as a witness has been called to share the Gospel of love through which the sinner is invited to return to God.

The question is often asked whether God's call is universal or not. Jesus stated, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Jesus said that it is not the will of God that any of the little ones should perish (Matt. 18:14). Peter pointed out that God "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). In drawing men to repentance, the Holy Spirit uses the witness and preaching of Christians: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:13-15). God's plan is for Christians who know His will, judgement, and mercy to make that message known in all the world. Jesus instructed His disciples, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7). The Spirit of God can convict men and draw them to salvation by other means than preaching, but His normal means is to use the sharing of His Word by Christians.

Repentance

The meaning of repentance.—The word 'repentance' is the translation of two Greek words in the New Testament. One emphasizes the emotional element of regret in repentance. This regret may lead to genuine repentance or it may produce no moral change (cf. Matt. 27:3; Luke 18:23; 2 Cor. 7:9, 10). Judas experienced deep regret for betraying Jesus, but he did not turn from his sin. Genuine repentance involves regret which leads to a changing of the mind and way of life. The other New Testament word translated repentance emphasizes a change of the mind or thought. This change involves more than mere intellect. It includes the will (Luke 17:3; Acts 2:38; Rom. 2:4).

Other expressions for repentance.—Jesus stated that "If any man will come after me, let him deny

Besides the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, an important instrument in God's call is the G _____ of God's _____.

(Gospel, love)

What is the normal means of bringing men to the conversion experience? _____

(the sharing of God's Word by Christians)

Genuine repentance involves _____ for sin which leads to a changing of the _____ and way of _____.

(regret, mind, life)

himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). To deny one's self means to renounce sinful desires and to turn from the way of life controlled by self. To take up a cross is to die to the old self in order that one's life might become controlled by a new master. Jesus said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (Matt. 16:25). Man's sinful thinking causes him to live a life of self-seeking. He thinks that to save his life means to gain all that he can for himself. Jesus stated that this way of thinking and living is the way to lose life. Man needs to change his mind concerning the way of life to the new view that giving of self is the way of truth.

Paul described the experience of repentance as being dead to sin: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:2). This is another way of saying that a person must cease living his old life according to his own desires.

Repentance as a discovery of truth.—Repentance as a change of mind means that a person discovers that his previous way of living and thinking is in error. He comes to understand that his way of life is sinful and unworthy. In the previous section, it was pointed out that an awareness and guilt of sin are the results of the work of the Holy Spirit in God's call to salvation. Some theologians refer to this element as the intellectual aspect of repentance. A recognition of one's sinfulness comes as a result of hearing the Gospel. A person cannot repent until he becomes aware of his own sinfulness.

Repentance as a renunciation of sin.—Paul emphasized that a person must die to sin in order to come to Christ. In returning to God, a person must turn from his life of separation from God in sin. The difference in the two ways of life is described as being dead in trespasses and sins in contrast to being made alive through grace (Eph. 2:1ff.). Repentance is more than an intellectual recognition of the life of sin. It involves a renouncing of the old life.

Renunciation of the sinful life includes a change of desire and an act of the will. Remorse and shame cause the penitent man to regret his sins and to desire a new life. To be sorry for wrong is not the same as renouncing sin, but sorrow motivates the will to action. The renunciation of sin by an act of the will is the equivalent of dying to sin or turning from sin.

Faith

The meaning of faith.—Faith is man's response to God's saving grace. It should not be separated strictly from repentance, yet it emphasizes a

Paul described repentance as dying to _____.
(sin)

Read the three paragraphs on repentance as a discovery of truth and a renunciation of sin. Now identify the following statements as an act of the intellect, the emotion, or the will, as related to repentance.

- _____ 1. Recognition of one's sinfulness.
- _____ 2. Regret for sin.
- _____ 3. Renouncing sin and the old life.

(1. the intellect, 2. the emotion, 3. the will)

different aspect of conversion. Repentance stresses the negative part of the conversion experience of turning from sin. Faith stresses the positive aspect of turning to God. Man cannot turn to God without turning from sin. His life in sin is a life controlled by the power of evil. He can renounce that life only by coming under the power of God. He turns to God in faith when the Spirit convinces him that his life in sin is wrong. In this sense, faith is created by God. Nevertheless, the emphasis is placed on man's response to God; hence, saving faith is man's responsibility. A man who does not believe is justly condemned (cf. John 3:18f.).

Faith and believing are translations of the same Greek word, *pistis*. Since the English language does not have a verb form for faith, the Greek verb *pisteuō* is translated "I believe." It means a trustful surrender to Christ.

Faith as trust in God.—Faith is a continuing attitude of personal trust in God who has revealed Himself to man. God takes the initiative in making His love known to man and causing man to realize his need of God's mercy. Faith is the corresponding movement on the human side. It is man's response to God's offer of Himself. God gave His Son on the cross to die for man's sins. Faith is man's confidence in God's promise that whoever trusts in Christ will never perish.

Faith is a confidence in the trustworthiness of God. It is belief in God as Almighty, as self-revealing, and as beneficent in His attitude towards sinful man (cf. Matt. 8:13; Mark 5:36; 9:23; etc.).

For Jesus Himself, faith was essentially trust in God. Jesus was confident that His loving Father would provide for the needs of His children. Those of little faith live in anxiety, but those who trust in God have the assurance that God will provide for their lives (Matt. 6:25-34).

Paul stressed the impossibility of man's achieving goodness. What man is unable to do through keeping the Law, God has accomplished in Christ (Gal. 2:16). The weakness of human flesh makes it impossible to achieve a righteousness which is acceptable to God. Through Christ, God made a promise which is given to them that believe (Gal. 3:22). God's promise is that He has provided for man's redemption through the death of Jesus Christ. God took upon Himself responsibility for sinful man's plight. He offers His own righteousness to fill the gap. Man does not deserve God's gift and cannot earn it. He must depend solely on the mercy and love of God. Faith is man's expression of confidence in a loving, merciful Father who has promised redemption in Christ.

The negative part of conversion, the turning from sin, is _____.

The positive aspect of conversion, the turning to God, is _____.

(repentance, faith)

Faith is confidence in God as _____,
as self-_____, and as _____
in His attitude towards sinful man.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Faith as believing in the Gospel.—The Gospel is the 'good news' that the Kingdom of God arrived in Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 3:2 and Mark 1:1). The arrival of the Kingdom meant deliverance from the power of evil. The sick are healed, the blind are given sight, the lame are enabled to walk and the dumb to hear, and man is cleansed of his sins to permit fellowship with God. Believing in Jesus as the Messiah is the requirement for being born into the Kingdom (cf. John 3:3-17). The fact that Jesus was the Suffering Messiah instead of a victorious political messiah was a hindrance to faith for some: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). The Gospel is that the Messiah has defeated the power of sin and death through His death and resurrection. Those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah share in His victory over the evil powers and are born into the Eternal Kingdom.

Another aspect of faith is believing in _____ as the Messiah who has brought the Kingdom of _____.

(Jesus, God)

Faith as surrender to Christ.— Sinful man cannot accomplish his own righteousness. His problem is his sinful nature which expresses desires that are in rebellion against the will of God. As long as man controls his own life, he lives in opposition to God. He may determine to reform his life, but he discovers that his feelings (desires) are stronger than his knowledge of what he should do. It is not uncommon for a man in his serious moments to make resolutions to live differently. However, when he is again confronted by the old temptations, he yields to his fleshly desires. Man's only hope is to trust in a power outside of and greater than himself to bring about a change. Christ has promised that power is available in the Holy Spirit who will guide men into all truth. What man must do is denounce self-reliance and surrender his life to the control of Christ.

The third aspect of faith relates to man's renunciation of self-reliance and his _____ of life to the control of _____.

(surrender, Christ)

The objection is made frequently that such submission to Christ robs man of his freedom. The Scripture, however, teaches that man has only limited freedom. His life is ruled either by mammon or by God (Matt. 6:24). He who is a creature has no right to reserve his life for himself and to ignore God. The man who thinks he is controlling his own life is actually being controlled by the power of sin (cf. Rom. 7:7f.). He who commits sin is the servant of sin (John 8:34). Man's limited freedom does give him the choice of yielding his life either to sin or to God (Rom. 6:13). Only if he yields to God's control will he be freed from the dominion of sin. By surrendering one's life to God, a person discovers a power which enables him to become what he was created to be: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The liberty of doing what one desires is false freedom because sinful man desires that which entangles and enslaves his life. True freedom is discovering and

CONTINUE READING THROUGH THE TOP OF THE NEXT PAGE.

True freedom comes from surrender to _____ by which one experiences real meaning and purpose of _____.

(Christ, life)

experiencing the real meaning and purpose of life. True freedom is experienced only by those who live in Christ.

The relation of faith and knowledge.—John's Gospel identifies believing with knowing (cf. John 4:42; 6:69; 16:30; 17:3, 8, 20-25). The Prologue to John presents Christ as God in His self-communication to mankind. Jesus is the Word which enables man to know God. Those who believe in Christ (believe that the Father is in Christ—John 10:38) know the Father. Those who do not believe in Christ know neither Him nor the Father (John 8:12-19). Whoever denies that Jesus is the Messiah does not have the Father (knows not the Father—1 John 2:23f.). Jesus as the Word is the presentation of the knowledge of God. To receive the knowledge of God through the Word, one must believe that He is the Christ and has been sent from God.

Why salvation is by faith.—Objection has been made that salvation by faith is too easy and leaves man irresponsible. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that salvation is a combination of God's grace and man's efforts. The objection is made that salvation by grace through faith leaves man without motivation for maturing and developing as a Christian.

A proper understanding of man's sinful condition and the nature of God's grace explains why salvation is conditioned upon faith. Man's pride tends to cause him to point to his meager deeds of righteousness while overlooking or neglecting his wrong attitudes and unrighteousness. The serious, sensitive Christian who desires to do right may either agree with Paul who acknowledged that what he knew and desired to do was not performed because he found no power within himself to do it (Rom. 7:15ff.), or with the hypocritical Pharisees who claimed to do right but whose lives were filled with sin (cf. Matt. 23). Man has a law which tells him what is right, but he does not have the strength within himself to do what he knows (cf. Rom. 2). He cannot look to himself for any merit in obtaining salvation. His only hope is in Christ (cf. Rom. 7:25).

Since God did not cause man to sin, He is not responsible to man for providing a sacrifice. Nevertheless, while he was a sinner and the enemy of God, Christ died for his sins (cf. Rom. 5:8ff.). Since sinful man earns the wages of death and has no claim to God's forgiveness, salvation must be presented as a gift (Rom. 6:23). It is God's gift of grace because man does not deserve it. Faith is the essential attitude for receiving God's gift. Man without faith does not recognize his need of God but depends on his own performance. Faith includes recognition of one's sinfulness, acknowledgement that he does not deserve forgiveness, and trust and submission to God who offers to him salvation by grace. Without faith,

Some claim salvation by faith leaves man without motivation for _____ and _____ as a Christian.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Man cannot attain salvation by works because of his _____ nature.

His hope is in Christ who provides salvation through _____.

(sinful, faith)

What is the essential attitude for receiving God's gift of grace? _____

(faith)

man depends on himself instead of God for salvation. His sinful nature prevents him from attaining salvation by works. His only hope is in trusting God to do for him what he cannot accomplish for himself.

Faith and service.—James points out that faith without works is dead (2:17). He states that even the devils have faith (believe there is one God who has ultimate power). His teaching, however, is not inconsistent with Paul's doctrine that salvation is by faith alone. Faith as surrender to Christ results in a life of obedience and works.

There is a difference in saying that one believes in Christ and in inviting Christ to control one's life. Only the man of faith who is controlled by Christ produces spiritual fruit. Satan uses the life of the unbeliever to perform his works. More will be said on this subject when sanctification is dealt with in this study guide.

Repentance and Faith as Continuing

An error in Christian thinking often appears at the point of believing that repentance is an isolated incident at the moment of the initial salvation experience. Actually, repentance becomes a daily experience and a permanent attitude of the Christian: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:2). The sinful self is to be crucified daily. The Christian is to deny himself and to take up his cross daily (Luke 9:23). The fleshly nature is not annihilated when one is converted. It is only dethroned and continues to strive to regain control of one's life.

Faith is also a continuing experience. A person is not saved through faith and then left to his own resources for living the Christian life. He has access by faith to God's grace, which establishes him in his new life (Rom. 5:2). Faith makes it possible for him to overcome tribulations and afflictions. "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

Surrender to Christ and willingness to let Him control one's life result in

_____ and _____.

(obedience, works)

Repentance is not an isolated incident in the initial salvation experience. It is a daily _____ and a permanent _____ of the Christian.

(experience, attitude)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Name three aspects of God's deliverance of sinful man. _____

2. State the Old Testament emphases of salvation. _____

3. Why did salvation in the Old Testament include the physical realm? _____

4. How did Jesus' view differ from the Pharisees' concerning sickness and affliction? _____

5. According to the New Testament, from what does salvation deliver? _____

6. How can salvation be a past event, a continuing process, and a future consummation? _____

7. Write out two scriptural statements for each stage of salvation as a past event, a continuing process, and a future consummation.
 1. _____

 2. _____

 3. _____

8. What is conversion? _____

9. How does God prepare man for conversion? _____

10. What is repentance? _____
11. Describe repentance as an act of the intellect, the emotion, and the will. _____

12. How do faith and repentance differ? _____

13. What are three aspects of faith? _____

14. How does surrender to Christ give freedom? _____

15. Why must salvation be by faith? _____

16. What kind of faith produces obedience and works? _____

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

1. Read pages 312-327 in Christian Doctrine by Shirley C. Guthrie.
2. Why does the truth of justification by faith not bring the joy to men today that it brought to Luther?
3. What is the meaning of justification by grace as a gift?
4. If God is a just Judge, how can He forgive or declare righteous those who are guilty?
5. Explain the statement, "Faith is not a work that saves us," and define faith.
6. How does one have the kind of faith or confidence which saves?

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Do the supplementary activity.
2. Read pages 139-150 and 195-211 in The Gospel of Redemption by W. T. Conner.
3. Explain the three stages of salvation.
4. What is repentance?
5. How does Conner's definition of faith differ from Guthrie's?
6. Why is salvation conditioned upon faith?

Seminar Discussion

1. Why does the Old Testament make little distinction between physical and spiritual salvation?
2. How did Jesus' emphasis on salvation differ from that of the Old Testament?
3. Distinguish between salvation as a continuing process and an eschatological concept.
4. Explain the steps involved in conversion.
5. What is the meaning of repentance and faith and how do they differ?