

LESSON 1

SALVATION—GOD'S PART PROVIDED

Scripture Texts: Zechariah 13:1; John 3:16-17; Colossians 1:14; Isaiah 53:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ezekiel 36:25-27



In the lessons studied in the last quarterly, we learned that the Church of God is separate from all other organizations because of its divine character. In this quarterly we will learn some of the teachings that cause it to be different from any other religious group.

Sin has plunged mankind into the darkness of death or separation from God. Sin brings death to both soul and body. Today we study of the provision God made to restore life to the soul.

MEMORY VERSE: *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. James 1:15*

A Fountain Opened

Zechariah 13:1 When Adam sinned, his soul died. Sin always brings soul death. Adam's death was the result of his own decision to disobey God. People today sin as a result of their own decision to disobey the law of God. Sin is pollution, corruption. God, speaking through the Prophet Zechariah (over 500 years before Christ came), promised **there shall be a fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness**. A fountain is a place to wash. This fountain, which flowed from Christ's side, was to wash sin from hearts and make them clean again.

John 3:16-17 God so loved—Such love we cannot understand, but we can accept it by faith. **Gave his only begotten Son**, the dearest treasure He had, part of Himself. No other sacrifice was sufficient to bring fallen man back to life. **Whosoever believeth**—This gift is for all, not for a price or for working, but by simply believing, trusting, receiving. It is of grace—undeserved favor from God. **Have everlasting life**—Life, that which was lost by man's disobedience to God's plan. Not limited, but eternal. The sin is our fault, but Jesus did not come to punish us. He came to save, to forgive us. He died in our place that we might have life instead of the death we had. If we have Jesus we have life in our souls.

Colossians 1:14 In whom—In Christ is the only place we can find this treasure of **redemption**. **Through his blood—The life is in the blood** (Leviticus 17:11), and any religion which denies that the blood of Christ saves from sin is false. By His blood we have the **forgiveness of sins**. Some think we are saved by the example of His life. No, it took His death, His shed blood (Hebrews 9:22). His blood is in the fountain God promised to open to cleanse us from sin. He opened it when Jesus died. It had to be sinless blood. In the type, each lamb had to be without spot or blemish to be accepted by God. Christ's blood had eternal life in it. One had to come from Heaven to give it.

**The Price of Life**

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised . . . the chastisement . . . was upon him; and with his stripes . . . It was our sin and guilt and should have been our punishment. But that punishment is death. God loved us too much to leave it so. So Jesus took our punishment on the Cross that we might go free. He suffered and died that we might have peace in our souls and healing in our bodies. Try to list the things Jesus took from us on to Himself. Think how highly He valued a soul to do this for it. Should not we put the same value on souls and do whatever we can for their salvation?

The Best of the Trade

2 Corinthians 5:21 A trade. He took our sins and gave us His righteousness. This is God's part in our salvation. The statement is strong—**He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.** It was in being made sin that Jesus was **made a curse for us** (Galatians 3:13), stooping so low that a serpent could be used as a fitting type of Him (John 3:14). This was all **for us**.

The trade is thoroughly unequal in our favor. The benefits of it are found only by those who are **in him**. The soul must be made alive here and now in this life. There is no time or place to be saved from the law of sin and death in the life to come. Sin separates man from God, but by the blood of Christ those **far off are made nigh** (Ephesians 2:13).

An Inside Work

Ezekiel 36:25-27 The sprinkling is figurative, signifying spiritual cleansing. This obviously refers back to the sprinkling of the water of separation (Numbers 19:11-22). **Ye shall be clean . . . a new spirit . . . my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.** These are "inside" gifts, where the seat of the trouble is. We cannot be rid of our **stony hearts** until God transforms them into **hearts of flesh**, soft, warm and living, and sprinkles our hearts and bodies with pure water in the miracle of salvation (Hebrews 10:22). When the inside is clean the outside will come clean also. Salvation is life from beginning to end, from the moment of being born again to Heaven.

Taking Christ at first seems hard, a sacrifice. Accepting Him requires repentance, confession, forsaking of self, and taking up of the cross on which we die daily. But it allows us to be joined with Christ and life, life more abundant here and life eternal hereafter. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12).

JUST A THOUGHT

**You don't have to paint a sign and hang it about
your neck saying, "I am a Christian."**