

We Are Sinful

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1: 1 - 2). We read of God’s creative work in the first two chapters of Genesis. God took this creation, which was without form, and He molded and shaped it. It was void (empty) and He filled it. There was darkness and He brought light. It is evident from the Genesis record that God had a purpose in His creative work. His goal was to create everything necessary to sustain the life of mankind. God even made a special place for Adam and Eve to live, the Garden of Eden.

In Genesis Chapter 3, the Bible describes how Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. This disobedience resulted in the loss of man’s special home in this world and the loss of an intimate relationship with God. This separation between God and man occurred as the result of sinfulness. Paul declares in Romans 3: 23, *“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* James reminds us that sin is the result of our own choosing, *“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death”* (James 1: 14, 15).

There is a price, or penalty, to pay, which is required for everyone that sins. Paul states in Romans 6: 23, *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in*

Christ Jesus our Lord.” James agrees that sin causes death when he writes, *“Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death”* in James 1: 15. Sin, in the Garden of Eden, initially caused physical death to begin for human beings. Sin caused spiritual death, as well. This death involves separation from God now, as well as, for all eternity.

God’s Response

What was God’s response to the sinfulness of man? The Bible tells us that His nature requires Him to be righteous and just. Yet, at the same time He is loving and merciful. Therefore, God had already envisioned a plan which would allow for justice to be served and at the same time to allow Him to be merciful and forgiving (Romans 3: 21 – 26). One of the most startling facts revealed to us in the Bible is God’s foreknowledge of man sinning against Him (1 Peter 1: 17 – 21). In spite of knowing this, God was still willing to create us, even though it cost a tremendous price.

God’s plan required the sending of His Son to this world. Jesus experienced all of life, including its temptations and burdens (Hebrews 4: 15). He then willingly suffered crucifixion on the cross, so that He could become the sacrifice for the whole world. Jesus not only provided the sacrifice necessary to destroy our record of sinfulness, He also showed us the results of obedience to God. If we are willing to obey God, just as Jesus did, we will one day rise from the grave and live eternally in heaven, just as He now does.

The Day Of Pentecost

On the Day of Pentecost, following Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, Peter addressed a large group of people gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2: 14 – 41). He reminded them of God’s approval of Jesus and His message through the working of miracles, wonders and signs. Peter then declared they were guilty of having a part in crucifying Jesus, even though He had been sent by God. Would we have crucified Jesus today? Yes, we would have!

During His life here on earth, Jesus kept God’s law perfectly. In so doing, He made evident to everyone His belief that God’s law was true and right. We reject God’s law daily, whenever we sin. Our sin shows we are not convinced God’s law is the only way to live. Sin is the reason Jesus died on the cross. He shed his blood for our sins, as well as for their sins. Therefore, we are as guilty of putting Jesus on the cross as those who actually cried out for Him to be crucified.

Peter testified to them about God’s raising Jesus from the dead. Peter assured them that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. Upon hearing this message, those listening to Peter became aware of their sinful actions. They confessed their sinfulness and their belief in the truth of Peter’s message by asking, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2: 37). Peter commanded them to, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2: 38). As we continue to read, we discover, *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized;*

and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2: 41). They understood their need for cleansing and purification from what they had sinfully done.

What Shall We Do?

You have to agree that God has done far more than we would have ever done. Most of us would not be willing to allow our only son to die for someone else. We would especially be unlikely to show this type of love to people who had rejected and abused us. Yet, God did it for us! We are the ones who rebelled against Him and disobeyed Him. We are the ones who left His side and sold ourselves into slavery to sin. We are the ones who got ourselves into this horrible mess. Why should He come to our aid? Why should He provide a way of escape for us? We should He have to pay the debt we owed?

Each one of us must come to the realization that we are guilty of Christ’s suffering and death. Once our heart is convicted of this truth, it should cause us to ask the same question as they asked on the Day of Pentecost. What shall we do? Peter replied by commanding them to do two things. First, they had to repent. Repentance involves regretting past sinful actions, deciding to change in order to please God, and then making the necessary changes. Our sorrow for sinfulness leads to a decision to change, which then, leads to an outward expression of that decision.

Secondly, Peter tells them to be baptized. Baptism is not just a bath. Baptism now saves us by being the answer of a good

conscience toward God (1 Peter 3: 21). Baptism is a participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6: 2 – 4). It is also the way we are able to wash away our sins (Acts 22: 16). Many people argue about the need for baptism or its place in salvation. If we are truly trying to be like Jesus, would we not want to follow His example? Jesus convinced John the Baptist to baptize Him in order to “*fulfill all righteousness*” (Matthew 3: 15). Therefore, if we wish to walk in His footsteps, we will desire to be baptized. What are you going to do?

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That You May Know



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SHALL
WE DO?**

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