

BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

“Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude, verse 3.)

It is important that we take time regularly to review the basic doctrines of the Bible. They are the issues that have to do not only with time, but also with eternity. It is upon them that the Christian faith rests and if we compromise in the area of the basics, we will injure both our own spirituality and also that of generations to come. When we take for granted basic truth and neglect to teach it accurately we create a vacuum that has the potential for error. Error usually begins in small subtle ways and it always becomes progressively worse. (Psalm 19:7-11).

THE BIBLE (The Word of God)

The Bible is God’s revelation of Himself and His purposes for mankind. Here we have a book that covers the whole span of human history -- from eternity to eternity. Without it there is no record of creation, there is no way to know God or even know about Him, and without the Bible there is no hope after death for it tells of the only way of salvation from the human tragedy of sin.

Where did it Come from? (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21)

1. “ALL Scripture is God-breathed” or “inspired by God”. While God used human writers to record Scripture, He put into their minds what was to be written. Many of them wrote of things that would have been impossible for them to have written otherwise. God did not turn them all into robots to accomplish this task: He preserved their personalities and used their various literary styles.

It is noteworthy that “ALL Scripture is inspired by God”. We cannot pick and choose as to what parts we will believe and obey and what parts we will discard. ALL is important and has a part to play in God’s revelation of Himself and His will to us.

2. 2 Peter 1:20-21 reinforces the fact that Scripture did not originate in the minds of men. However, the people whom God used all had a personal relationship with God and thus were people God could use for this purpose.

There were about 40 different writers of diverse lifestyles who wrote over a period of some 1600 years. Despite this the whole of the Bible comes together as a cohesive whole without contradictions or incorrect statements. It needs neither anything added to it nor taken from it. In fact there are serious warnings for those who attempt to do so.

Some Proofs of Divine Inspiration of the Bible:

1. The Person of Christ. The account of the life of Christ, what He did and what He taught, could never have been fabricated by the human mind.

2. Divine Law. The same is true of the commandments and ordinances of the Bible. They could never have had their origin in the mind of man.

3. Portrayal of human sin. No other book exposes human nature so accurately. All human works seek to extol the virtues of mankind, but in contrast here is a book that “tells it as it is”. This alone points to its Divine origin.

4. Prophecy. The Bible is more up to date than our daily newspapers because it tells of events that are yet to happen. There is not one single event in all history that has proved the Bible incorrect in any of its prophetic statements.

5. Typology. Many of the events of the Old Testament are pictures of New Testament truths. One of the clearest examples of this is the account of the tabernacle in the Book of Exodus. It is an object lesson of the plan of salvation as revealed in the New Testament. This would not be possible unless the Author had either a knowledge of events that were yet to come or had control of the very unfolding of the events of history, or both. The only Person with such a capacity is God Himself.

6. Accuracy of Scientific Statements. The Bible is not written as a scientific textbook, but where scientific statements are made they are amazingly accurate, especially when compared with contemporary thinking. (See Gen. 22:17, Job 26:7).

7. Experience. When the Bible is believed and obeyed, the accompanying blessings and principles are found to be true. Conversely, when it is disobeyed, its principles are also found to be true.

How is the Bible Made Up?

There are two main parts which are divided into different books. First is the Old Testament which is based on God's Law and deals mainly with events concerning God's earthly people, the Jewish nation, before the time of Christ. Then there is the New Testament which is based on God's Grace and deals with the life of Christ and events thereafter, including the establishment of the Church, God's Heavenly people. The Old Testament has 39 books and the New Testament is made up of 27, making a total of 66.

What is the Main Theme of the Bible? (John 3:16).

There are many important things in the Bible, but running right through it is one main theme - "Redemption" or God's plan of Salvation. This well-known verse contains that central theme. It shows what God has done in order that we, sinful human beings, may be cleansed of our sin and brought into a right relationship with Himself.

The central Person of the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God the Son. It is only because of His sacrificial death, burial and resurrection that salvation is available. (John 5:39-40).

What is the Bible Like?

1. A Mirror (James 1:22-25). In it we see ourselves as God sees us.

2. A Light (Psalm 119:105). It guides and reveals. It can be our guide in life and it reveals sin.

3. Water (Ephesians 5:26). It cleanses our lives and keeps us clean as we read and apply it.

4. A Sword (Ephesians 6:17). "Logos" is the common Greek word used when speaking of the Word of God in general (Heb. 4:12 for example), but here, in Ephesians 6:17, the word is "Rhema". "The reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual Scripture which the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture" - (W. E. Vine).

This implies that "the Sword of the Spirit" is not just the Bible, but the correct use of Scripture in any given situation. As such it is a powerful, indispensable weapon in our Christian warfare. The greatest example of this is our Lord's use of Scripture against the devil in Matthew 4:1-11.

John Bunyan made the statement and we do well to heed it: "This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book."

GOD

PART ONE (THE TRINITY)

No greater subject can occupy our minds than that of "God". The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to mankind. Therefore the reverent study of God as He has revealed Himself in His Word is the highest form of study in which we can engage ourselves.

The fact of God's existence may be seen in Creation (Psalm 19:1-4, Rom. 1:20), and to a certain extent we can gain a vague concept of His might and power. But the mode of His existence can only be learned through the Bible.

It is not sufficient to have our own ideas of God, how ever sincere they may be, and then to believe we are worshipping and serving the true God, for to be worshipping anything other than God as He is revealed in His Word is to be worshipping a false god, and not all false gods are made of wood or stone. It becomes apparent, then, that we need a correct knowledge of God and in order to do so it is most important that we understand what God has revealed of Himself in the Bible.

In the Bible we see that -

There is only ONE TRUE GOD (Isaiah 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22).

GOD IS A TRINITY (three Persons composing a complete whole - a Tri-unity). While the word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible, it best describes the mode of His existence as revealed in the Bible: One God Who exists in Three Persons. The development of this aspect of the nature of God begins from the very first verse in Genesis.

Gen. 1:1: The word "God" is translated from the Hebrew "Elohim", the plural form of "Eloah", showing that within the nature of God there is a plurality of Persons - more than two. (See also Gen. 1:26).

Deut. 6:4: Refers to the unity or oneness of God. In Gen. 2:24, referring to man and wife, the same Hebrew word is translated "one". Therefore, while there are more than one persons involved in both cases, there is only one unit. The force of Deut. 6:4 is that the God who is so revealed in Scripture is the ONLY God.

The revealing of the truth of the Trinity in Scripture is progressive. It is implied throughout the Old Testament, particularly by the use of the Hebrew word "Elohim", but it is not until we come to the New Testament that the truth of the Trinity is clearly revealed. Dr Walter Martin gives the following definition:

"If the N.T. says there are three Persons and if these three Persons are each called God (Jehovah), and if there is only one God, then the three Persons are the one God." We need to bear in mind that Scripture does not teach that there are three Gods who act as one; but that "within the nature of God there are three Persons and these three Persons are the one God".

Let us therefore proceed to discover if there are three such Persons mentioned in the N.T. -

(1) 2 Peter 1:17: Here we see that -

1. There is a Person called THE FATHER who is stated to be God.
2. There is also a Person called THE SON and we need to discover from Scripture whether the Son is also referred to as God. (Most cults admit that the Father is God, but deny the deity of the Son).

(2) John 1:1: One of the Names given to the Lord Jesus Christ is "The Word" (see Revelation 19:13). Here we learn that He existed before the creation of the world and that He was with God in

that, as the Son He dwelt with the Father. But more than this, "He was God". Translated literally from the Greek the phrase says, "and God was the Word" which simply means that the Person referred to as "the Word" is by nature of being, God.

John 8:48-59 (v. 58): Here The Son Himself claims that He is God. He is quoting from the Septuagint version (which was the first Greek translation of the Old Testament and was in common use at the time) in Exodus 3:14 where the English "I AM" is translated from the Hebrew word which denotes God. One of the transliterations of this Hebrew word is "Jehovah". His reply to the hostile Jews was in effect, "Before Abraham came into existence I AM *ETERNAL GOD*." They understood precisely what He meant for they sought to stone Him for blasphemy (John 10:33), because they did not believe Him. However, His reply leaves us with four alternatives:

1. He was deluded
2. He was deceiving
3. He was insane, or
4. He was who He claimed to be.

Rev. 1:8: "Alpha and Omega" is here seen to be Jehovah God.

Rev. 22:12-13, 16, 20: The resurrected, glorified and exalted Christ states that He is the "Alpha and Omega". The Son, therefore, is also called God in the N.T. (Further references: Phil. 2:6 -"*in very nature, God*", Titus 2:13. Also a comparison of Rev. 1:17-18 with Isaiah 44:6 further establishes the deity of Christ).

(3) Acts 5:1-4: Here THE HOLY SPIRIT is identified as -

1. A Person (only a person can be lied to).
2. God.

Thus, the same man (Peter) who was used in 2 Peter 1:17 to identify the Father as God, also identifies the Holy Spirit as God.

Acts 13:1-2: The Holy Spirit is further identified as -

1. A Person ("He said" - only a person speaks).
2. God (because of the authority shown in commanding activity within the Church).

John 14:16: When referring to the Holy Spirit as "Another Comforter" (AV) or Counselor (NIV), the Greek shows that Christ meant "another of the same kind as Himself". Thus, just as He is God, so is the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, we conclude that in the N.T. -

1. There is a Person called God the Father, who sent the Son. (The Father did not die on the cross).
2. There is a Person called God the Son, who became Man in order to die for us.
3. There is a Person called God the Holy Spirit who indwells, teaches and empowers each believer.

THREE QUESTIONS FOR JW's

1. Rev. 1:8 -- Who is Alfa and Omega? ("Jehovah God").
2. Rev. 22:13 -- Who is the First and the Last? ("Jehovah God").
3. Rev. 1:17-18 -- When did Jehovah die? (Christ died and this shows His deity).

GOD

PART TWO (ATTRIBUTES)

(Isaiah 40:12-31)

Having seen from Scripture that God is a Tri-Unity (Three Persons forming the one God) we now come to a study of some of the essential characteristics or attributes of God. They apply equally to each of the Persons of the Godhead, and we should never think of God as separate from His attributes for they are what He essentially is.

Self-Existent and Eternal

This is implied in the title "Jehovah" or "Yahweh" (being transliterations of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton). He is the eternal, unchanging self-existing Supreme Being. As such He derives His existence from none and is dependent upon none.

Psalm 90: "From everlasting to everlasting". This reference takes the perspective of time, looks back before time and declares that God always was there. Then it looks forward beyond time and declares that God will continue to be always there. More than this, He will continue to be all that His Name implies - "from everlasting to everlasting, You are God". Thus we have brought before us another attribute -

Immutability (or the fact that God is Unchangeable)

Psalm 102:25-28, Mal. 3:6: God is unchangeable in His character, in His purpose and in His requirements. The world, its standards and we ourselves may change, but God never changes. There is no need for Him to change for He alone is perfect.

Spirit

John 4:24, 1st Tim. 1:17, 6:16: We must not think of God as possessing a bodily form like us, for He is not limited by such a body. However, there were occasions, particularly in the Old Testament when He appeared to various people in human form. (Such an appearance is called a Theophany).

When Christ, "the Word", became flesh or human, He did so in order to reveal God to us in a form we could understand (John 14:9), and to be able to pass through death for us, thus making it possible by his sacrifice of atonement, for us to be redeemed. Only through what Christ has done can we ever be brought into a right relationship with God.

As the reference in 1st Tim. 6:16 shows, it is not possible for frail, mortal human beings to see God in the fullness of His glory for He dwells in "unapproachable light". However, there is a time when all those who have trusted Christ as Saviour will be changed and transported to dwell forever in God's eternal presence.

Almightiness

This is implied in His title, "Elohim", which signifies both plurality and power. As our reading in Isaiah 40 has already shown us, there is none like God in His power. His power and majesty are far above every other being in the universe. He alone is Sovereign and is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. By His almighty power everything was created and is kept in existence.

Power vested in the hands of men is not always safe, but power in the hands of God means the safety of the universe. He will never misuse His power, for coupled with it is His supreme wisdom.

Holiness

Isaiah 6:3, Isaiah 57:15, Rev. 4:8: Perhaps this attribute more than any other is what sets God apart from His creatures and particularly from the false gods of the heathen. All of His other attributes are tempered by this. He is totally separate from all that is impure and sinful. He cannot tolerate evil in any form and therefore, ultimately, must punish all sin.

Mercy

Nehemiah 9:17, John 3:16, Rom. 6:23, Eph. 2:4: Mercy is described as “the outward manifestation of pity. It assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it” (W. E. Vine). It is more than just pity: It is pity that shows itself in action. It also conveys the thought of God not giving us what we do deserve, while grace is God giving us what we do not deserve.

Nowhere is this demonstrated more clearly than at the Cross of Calvary where the Lord Jesus Christ died to pay the great price of our sin so that God could forgive and cleanse us on a righteous basis.

Omniscient or All-Knowing

Psalm 139:7-12: God knows everything - the end from the beginning. There is nothing that He is not aware of. This means we cannot hide ourselves or anything in our lives from God. He knows even our secret thoughts (see Ecclesiastes 12:14). He knows, too, whether or not we really belong to Him through personally accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

- G. Batson

MAN

(Psalm 8)

Having looked at the nature of God, we now come to the nature and purpose of Mankind. We see from God's Word that we were created in the image of God to be a reflection of His Nature.

Perhaps the deadliest blow dealt by the various theories of evolution has been delivered in the area of the origin of Mankind. By far the majority of people have been educated almost from birth upwards to the effect that Man is no more than the highest form of animal life yet developed or "evolved" on this planet. Such doctrine has a devastating effect on moral behaviour, simply because Man sees himself as responsible to no-one, there is no accountability and therefore it does not matter ultimately what he does.

There is only one authoritative account of the origin of Mankind and that is the account found in the Bible, the Word of God. Not only does the Bible tell of our origin, it tells plainly what has gone wrong - why the human race is in the mess it is, and what God has done to put it right.

Where did we come from? (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7)

Here we find that Man came into being by a distinct act of creation by God. In the first part of Genesis 1 we see how the earth was created and prepared for the most important part of God's creative work - Mankind.

We are told that Man was created "in the image of God". This means that originally he was indwelt by the very nature and life of God and that as such his personality was a reflection of God.

God created Man to -

1. Have dominion (rule) over the earth;
2. Have fellowship with Himself;
3. Share His life and reflect His nature.

How are we made up? (1 Thes. 5:23)

Here we see that there are three parts to our being:

1. **Body** - (2 Cor. 5:1) the residence of our personality and that through which our personality is expressed.

2. **Soul** - (Gen. 1:30; 2:7) is translated from the Hebrew word, "Nephesh" (which is the original word used in these references, the Greek equivalent being "Psyche"). While it is common to all forms of animal life, it is of a far higher order in Mankind. The soul consists of Mind to reason, Will to decide, and Emotion to react.

(See also Hebrews 4:12.) While soul and spirit are inseparable, it is important to notice that they are distinct.

3. **Spirit** - (Zechariah 12:1, Proverbs 20:27 "the lamp of the Lord") is common only to Mankind. It is the capacity to know God and to experience fellowship with Him. It is that entity which links Man with God and was designed to be filled with the life and light of God. This is what sets us apart from the rest of Creation. Both soul and spirit constitute the spiritual part of our being.

In his perfection, then, Man's spirit was filled with the life and light of God. This overflowed into the area of his soul and controlled his personality, and in turn the divine nature was expressed through his body by what he did and said. This was the way God intended Man to function.

What went wrong? (Genesis 3:1-5, Romans 5:12)

Here we see how sin entered the human race. It is the greatest tragedy ever to afflict us and it was brought about by Man allowing himself to be deceived by Satan.

Essentially, sin is

1. Independence from God (rejection of God and His sovereignty).
2. Transgression (breaking God's laws).
3. Failing to measure up to God's perfect standard.

Sin has -

Created a barrier between us and God.
Robbed us of the blessing of fellowship with God.
Brought us under the same judgment as Satan.

(These points will be dealt with more fully under the subject "Sin, Our Greatest Tragedy").

What has God Done About our Sin?

John 3:16 is one of the most important verses in the whole Bible. It shows us God's response to our sin and what He has done to overcome this tragedy. We do not have to suffer the eternal consequences of our sin. There is provision for all our sin to be forgiven and cleansed away. We can be restored to fellowship with God once more.

- G. Batson

SIN - OUR GREATEST TRAGEDY

(Psalm 14:1-3, 51:1-7, 10; Romans 3:10-23)

In a previous study we learned that Mankind came into existence through a distinct act of creation by God, and that he did not evolve from some lower life-form as current evolutionary teaching would have us believe. Moreover, the Bible teaches that Man was created as the very pinnacle of God's earthly creation, and that when God had completed the work of creation, including that of Man, He "saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 2:31).

However, it is evident today, even to the most casual observer, that this is no longer the case. God cannot look upon humanity and still say that it is very good. Something has gone wrong and Mankind is no longer fulfilling the divine purpose for which he was created. We may well ask ourselves the question, "What is the reason for this?"

A doctor is someone who must face facts. Sometimes the facts he discovers concerning a certain patient may be very disturbing. But in order for him to effect a cure he cannot afford to ignore the facts and pretend that the symptoms of a serious disease do not exist. In order for him to combat the disease to the best of his ability he must be aware, not only of the symptoms in his patient, but also of the properties of the disease. The patient also must be prepared to face facts. On being told of the serious nature of his illness it would be tragic if he sought to ignore it, and just carry on hoping that finally the disease would leave him.

We too must face facts. If it is tragic to ignore a physical ailment that will affect us for time, it is infinitely worse to ignore a spiritual ailment that will affect us for eternity. So that we may understand the reason for the spiritual and moral sickness in our world and in our own selves, we must not ignore the symptoms. We must understand something of the nature and seriousness of the illness, and how to obtain an effective cure. The Bible not only reveals the reason for what has gone wrong with us, it also reveals the only cure. It shows us that sin is our greatest problem, the most serious "illness" of all, and that it is our greatest tragedy. What is sin? Let us look at it under four different headings.

1. IT'S NATURE: The underlying idea of the word "sin" is that it is everything in the lives of God's creatures which is contrary to His expressed will. It is important that we understand that all sin is against God. (See Psalm 51:4).

- (a) Independence from God. Leaving God out.
(Encouraged by Satan's lie - Gen. 3:4. The cause of sin).
- (b) Transgression. Breaking God's Laws.
- (c) Missing the mark (Romans 3:23):
Failing to attain to God's perfect, righteous standard.
Failing to be what God created us to be.

2. IT'S BOUNDS: "All have sinned ... " (Romans 3:23).

One of the proofs of the divine inspiration of the Bible is that it does not exalt nor exonerate Mankind. Rather, it presents the human race as universally and hopelessly ruined and lost in sin. The Bible presents the picture as it is.

We may not consider ourselves sinners until we see ourselves against a background of God's holiness and His holy requirements. It is then that we realise how far short we really fall, and that we have indeed ALL sinned.

Some examples to consider:-

Job. Known as a righteous man, after he came to understand something of the wisdom and greatness of God said, "I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).

Isaiah. A young prophet, after He had received a vision of God's holiness, cried, "Woe to me! I am ruined, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips ... " (Isaiah 6:5). (The fruit of the lips is a symptom of the heart's condition).

Nicodemus. Although a religious Pharisee, he needed to be born again. He was a religious sinner, and his sin needed to be dealt with.

3. IT'S EFFECT (Genesis 2:16-17, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:2-3, James 1:15).

The passage in Ephesians 2:2-3 shows the human condition without Christ. It clearly sets out the tragic effects of sin. Here we see that sin causes --

SPIRITUAL DEATH. Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul. Spiritual death is the separation of the human spirit from God. It means the absence of the highest quality of life for which man was created. To pass from time into eternity in this condition is to be lost eternally in hell. This is the ultimate stage in spiritual death.

SUBJECTION TO SATAN. He is a mighty spirit being who, with his subordinate demon accomplices, exercises deadly influence over human beings and their affairs. He was the one who brought about the fall of mankind in the first place. The main characteristics of his dominion are bondage and destruction.

SELFISH GRATIFICATION AND LUST. Motivation by that which appeals to the fallen sin-nature. Pre-occupation with the materialistic and no awareness of the spiritual.

This combined with Satanic subjection is the reason the world has so much instability, corruption and violence, and so little self-control, peace, true satisfaction, and real purpose.

DIVINE CONDEMNATION. (See also John 3:36). Sin puts us in a position of war with God and thus places us under His wrath (or anger). As such we are just awaiting the execution of the sentence against us.

4. IT'S REMEDY (John 1:29, Romans 5:6-8, 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 1 John 1:7, 1 Cor. 15:22, 2 Cor. 5:17).

From these Scriptures we learn that Christ Himself is the remedy for our sin.

In order for Him to become the remedy for sin He had to die for us and thereby become the atoning sacrifice so that sin could be paid for and removed, and we could be brought into a right relationship with God.

God has supplied the remedy, but we must receive it. A doctor may supply the medicine that is able to cure his patient, but the patient will only benefit if he takes the medicine. To benefit from the remedy God has supplied we must -

REALISE our sinfulness

REPENT or be willing to turn from our sinfulness

RECEIVE Christ Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. (See John 1:12).

SALVATION

In this series of studies we have seen that the Bible teaches that God created Man as a free-will agent in order to be a reflection of His glory and to have fellowship with Himself. We have also seen how that Man, because of disobedience, fell from the high position and privilege God gave him and became a hopelessly lost sinner. However, as we continue to study the Bible we find that God has not left Man alone to face the serious consequences of his sin, rather He has set in place a plan whereby sin can be dealt with on a righteous basis and Mankind once again restored to fellowship with God. In fact, no sooner had Mankind fallen into sin than God promised a Deliverer who would deal with sin (Genesis 3:15). This is God's Plan of Salvation and it shows, as nothing else could, the magnitude of God's grace, and that sin has not placed Mankind beyond the reach of God's love. Let us look first at -

ITS PURPOSE (2 Corinthians 5:17-19):

Three things are apparent in this passage. In Christ God was making it possible -

(a) For us to be made new or recreated - RESTORATION

God created Man to be filled with His light and life, and to be completely controlled by Himself so that he would be a reflection of God's glory. The entrance of sin destroyed this original purpose, but through God's Plan of Salvation in Christ we can be restored to what God originally intended.

(b) For us to be reconciled to Himself - FELLOWSHIP

Another of the reasons for which God created us was to have fellowship with Himself. When sin entered the human race God did not stop desiring fellowship with us, but because He is holy fellowship between God and Man became impossible, just as light and darkness cannot dwell together. Therefore, in order for this fellowship to be restored, sin had to be dealt with.

(c) For our sins to be taken off our account - FORGIVENESS

Because humanity was totally crippled through sin and by virtue of this was without power to rectify the situation, God Himself in the Person of Christ undertook the responsibility and became accountable for our sin.

ITS PRICE (Hebrews 9:22, John 1:29, 3:16):

Because God is intrinsically holy, He cannot just overlook sin. He would cease to be God and the absolute Moral Standard if He did. In order for sin to be dealt with and for us to be restored, sin's price had to be paid in full. This price could be met in either one of two ways -

1. We pay the price which would involve our eternal banishment from God in Hell, or
2. Someone without sin, and with the power to destroy sin and overcome its author (Satan himself), pays the price for us.

Throughout the Old Testament God has revealed by various types, or object lessons, and animal sacrifices, that His plan for dealing with sin was by the sacrifice of a substitute - some other life being forfeited (as signified by blood being shed) in place of the sinner. When we come to the New Testament we discover to whom those various types and sacrifices were pointing - the Lord Jesus Christ - God the Son Himself.

John the Baptist was ordained by God to prepare the way for the entrance into the world of the Son of God. One day John saw the Lord Jesus coming toward him, and he said to those who were with him, "Look, there is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" The Lord Jesus came into the world, in obedience to the will of God the Father, and He offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14) as the perfect, sinless Lamb of God on the Cross of Calvary to pay the price for our sin. The price of sin was so great that only God Himself could pay it in order that we might go free.

In the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ we see the vastness of God's love for us. The Bible tells us that "God so loved the world (us) that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

God gave His very best to pay the price of our sin. But to us salvation is free. All we have to do is receive it as a gift.

ITS POWER (Ephesians 1:19-23, 2:1-10).

Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). In Ephesians 2:1-10 we see why the Gospel is so powerful. Here it is speaking of those who have received God's salvation and, by His grace, have entered into its blessings. We find that they had -

NEW LIFE: Once they were dead in transgressions and sins, but now they had been made alive with Christ (verse 5).

NEW MASTER: Once they were in bondage to Satan, but now they were set free to serve God (verse 10).

NEW FUTURE: Once they were under the wrath of God and destined for an eternal hell, but now they looked forward to being with Christ in Heaven (verse 7).

God's Plan of Salvation is designed to save us from -

The PENALTY of sin - Christ paid its price.

The POWER of sin - Christ broke its bonds.

The PRESENCE of sin - Christ will take all His people to be with Himself.

OUR RESPONSE (John 1:12, 5:24):

It is made clear in Romans 6:23 and in Ephesians 2:8 that God's Salvation is a free gift. As with any gift we can respond to it in one of three ways -

REJECT IT. We are at liberty to do this with God's gift, but then we must pay the price for our own sin. (See Revelation 20:11-15).

IGNORE IT. There is probably nothing more insulting to the giver than to have his gift ignored. It is really just another way of rejecting it. (See Hebrews 2:3).

RECEIVE IT. This is the only way to make it our own. If we receive God's Gift He will never take it from us, and we will enter into its blessings in this present life and into its fullness in the life to come. (See 1 Corinthians 2:9-10).
