

What do you *mean*...
SALVATION?



An Ambassador College Publication

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by Herbert W. Armstrong

This booklet is not to be sold.

It is a free educational service in the public interest, published by the Ambassador College Department of Theology.

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What do you mean by SALVATION?



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*Do you realize not one in
a hundred knows what
salvation is — how to
get it — when you receive it?
Don't be too sure you do!
Here, once for all, is the truth
made so plain you will really
understand it!*

COULD you, yourself, answer these questions? If someone asked you to open your Bible and show him exactly where the Bible says salvation means going to heaven — could you do it?

Is salvation a place, a destination, a condition, a reward — or what? . . . and where would you turn in your Bible to find it? Are you sure?

Could you open your Bible and show a questioner where it tells you *when* you receive salvation? Do you actually get it *now*, when you die, when Christ returns — or at some other time? This booklet will show you plainly.

Are you, at conversion, an inheritor, an heir to inherit, or what — and just what does one inherit?

Suppose you were asked what connection there is between salvation and that *whole third* of the Bible devoted to prophecy. Could you explain it? Another third or more of the Bible is taken up with history. Can you explain the connection of this vast amount of Scripture with *salvation*? Can you believe **MOST** of the Bible is totally unconcerned with the matter of salvation?

Let's Make it PLAIN!

Religious people talk about "getting saved." Yet even most religious people understand no more of what the Bible teaches about salvation — the real meaning of the word "salvation" — than a certain young man did about another religious expression.

He said to me, "I gave my heart to the Lord at the revival meeting last night."

"Well," I said, "Just what do you *mean* — you gave your heart to the Lord? Just how did you do that? Did you reach in your hand, take your heart out, and actually hand it to the Lord — and was He really right there, in Person?"

"Well, uh — uh —" he stammered, confused, "uh — well, no, I didn't do that."

"Then just what did you do? *How* did you give your heart to the Lord?" He stammered some more, then guessed he didn't know.

That's the way it is with a lot of people who say "I got saved." They don't really know what they mean by "getting saved."

Do you know what the Bible teaches about salvation? Millions of sincere people have *supposed* they knew — yet have been deceived into accepting a false salvation.

It's about time to get to the plain **WHYS, WHATS, HOWS, and WHENs**, so you can see it clearly, plainly, right in your own Bible! Why should the most important thing in life be a vague, mysterious, superstitious, ethereal, meaningless thing?

I'm going to make it plain — in your Bible! So prepare yourself for a shock! And don't believe me — believe the Bible!

What Salvation Is

While the real truth must come from the Bible, the dictionary definition may help a little. Webster defines "salvation" as: "1. The saving of man from the spiritual consequences of sin; especially deliverance from sin and eternal damnation. . . . 2. Preservation from destruction, failure, or other evil."

Now we need to learn the Bible definition of *sin*, and to see what the Bible reveals the spiritual consequences to be. Whatever the consequences, Webster says salvation is to save you *from* it — and in this the Bible shows Webster was right. Also salvation means *preservation* — and in this, we shall see the Bible affirms the definition.

But why would you need to be saved from the spiritual *consequences* of sin? And why, if you are an immortal soul, do you need *preservation from destruction*? What has this to do with you?

Suppose you say, "Look, I don't go to church. I don't pretend to be religious. Why should I be concerned with all these religious words like 'sin' and 'salvation' and 'spiritual consequences'?"

Does this concern only religious people?

WHY You Are Concerned

God Almighty, who designed, created, and sustains human life — including yours, says this: "ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

That involves you!

Right now you probably have no conception of what is meant by "the glory of God" you have come short of. You'll really open your eyes in astonishment when that is made plain to you.

But, whatever sin is, you have sinned. ALL humans have! Christ, only, is excepted. You are involved. And since salvation is saving man from the consequences of sin (and the Bible affirms this, as we shall see), let God's Word tell you what the consequences are.

It is plain and simple. Here it is: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

But why have you heard — and possibly believed — just the opposite? Look at that — read it in your own Bible! Notice! The wages you are going to be paid for having sinned is death! Then why do so many religious people teach exactly the opposite of the Bible — why do they teach that the wages of sin is eternal life in hell?

Look at that again, in your Bible! On the one hand, the penalty is death — on the other hand, the gift is eternal life. The two are contrasted — it is one or the other — death, or eternal life.

Right here let me make very plain one thing the Bible teaches. A few persecutors have accused us of teaching "a salvation by works" — that is, that our "works" *earn* sal-

vation. Let it be made clear and plain right here that your "works" — your *evil* works — do earn something — but it is not salvation — what they earn — the wages they earn — is death, and *not* salvation!

Further, let's get this point straight and plain right here — eternal life is *not* something you can *earn*, it is *God's gift* through Christ! That is the plain teaching of your Bible! You earn wages. The only wages you can earn is death. Your Bible says that. We say that. But our accusers actually teach the very thing they accuse us of teaching! — they teach that eternal life is the wages you earn by your works — even though it is eternal life in hell fire!

Again — your Bible says very plainly that "the *gift* of God is eternal life." Now this very verse (and all others in the Bible bearing on the subject agree) says plainly that what you *receive* by God's *grace* — as His *gift*, is eternal life. It says that eternal life is something you have to *obtain* as a *gift* from GOD! Therefore salvation actually is "eternal life" — a gift! But do you know the accusers who try to discredit this very work of God deny that? They actually deny that eternal life comes only as God's gift by grace and through Christ. They say you already have eternal life. They say you are an "immortal soul"!

Yes, this is amazing!

This is important! This is the crux of the whole question — of life — of the reason for existence! If you have an immortal soul — if you already have eternal life — then the Bible is not true when it says plainly eternal life is a gift from God. According to the Bible, what the "saved" receive as God's gift through Jesus Christ is eternal life. Salvation, then, actually is the receiving of something you don't now have — eternal life. And if that Bible statement is true, then our accusers are false!

They try to deceive people into believing they do not need to be saved *from death* by Christ's free grace — by His shed blood. They say you do not need saving from death at all. They say, as Satan deceived mother Eve, that you will not surely die — you are — or have — an immortal soul!

Notice this in your Bible!

It's time to quit believing and following men. Look in your own Bible. Believe God!

WHY You Are Helpless

Now does the Bible say anywhere that you are, or have, an "immortal soul"?

For years we offered \$1,000 to anyone who can show any place where the words "immortal soul" are found in the Bible. No one ever found it!

Why is it that religious people speak continually about "your immortal soul," about "going to heaven," about dead loved ones being now "with the Lord," and many other such things supposed to be the basic beliefs of Christianity — and yet never once showing you any such teaching in the Bible! They *trik* of these teachings as if they were true. They lead you to take these teachings for granted — to suppose they came from the Bible.

What does the Bible teach about the soul? Will you read it in your own Bible? Don't take my word for it — don't believe me — believe God!

Read it, in Ezekiel 18:4: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Yes, again the wages of sin is DEATH — that soul that sins shall DIE!

That truth about the soul is so important God caused it to be written twice. Turn now to Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Souls are not immortal. Your Bible says they can die!

But the deceiver may say: "That's in the Old Testament." Read in the NEW Testament that ALL Scripture — all that Timothy had known from youth, which was the Old Testament — is given by inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:15-16).

Again, in the New Testament: Jesus Christ Himself said you should "fear him which is able to *destroy* both *soul* and body in gehenna" — a fire that will burn them up — cause them to die — destroy what is burned! Oh, yes, the Bible does teach that kind of hell fire — but not the kind where one burns forever and yet never burns up (Matthew 10:28). Let's believe Jesus Christ when He says souls can be destroyed! They are not immortal!

This may come as a surprise: not only is it true that there is no such expression anywhere in the Bible as "immortal soul," but the word "immortal" occurs only once in all the Bible — in I Timothy 1:17, where it refers to GOD as being immortal.

Further, the word "immortality" can be found only five times in all the Bible. In Romans 2:7 you will read it is something for us to *seek for*. Of course! It is the gift of God, who has it to give! You don't need to seek for something you already have! In I Corinthians 15:53, and again in verse 54, immortality is something the "saved" shall put on, at the time of the resurrection. In I Timothy 6:16 it speaks of the resurrected and glorified Christ, who, only, of all who have been born human, has immortality. And finally, in II Timothy 1:10, immortality is something Jesus Christ brought to light — made possible for us to receive — through the Gospel.

So the Bible teaches that the soul is not immortal, but is mortal, subject to death as the penalty of sin!

Now where does this leave you? Let's get back to you!

All have sinned. That includes you. The penalty is death! You do not possess eternal life from natural birth. Christ said: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). So you are only mortal, material FLESH. You are "of the earth — earthy" (I Cor. 15:47). The life you were born with is merely temporary chemical existence! You live by breathing air in and out of your lungs — the breath of life.

You are only one breath away from death — the cessation of the existence we call "life." If you don't draw that next breath, you can't keep alive or conscious ten more minutes. There is no immortal soul that will keep you alive and conscious. You ARE a soul (Gen. 2:7) that has sinned, and so shall die, unless saved from it by Christ's grace.

If your heart does not make that next beat, there is nothing in you to keep you alive ten minutes. You exist by breathing of air and circulation of blood — fed by food and water. You have only temporary chemical existence. You are like a clock wound up, and running down. You don't know at what second it will stop!

You can't give yourself any life beyond this running-down chemical existence. There is no eternal life inherent in you. Nothing you can do will produce it, supply it, or earn it. You can't get it by your own works!

What your own works have done for you is earn for you the penalty of death. And it is eternal death — eternal punishment! You see, everyone has “works” — either good or bad.

GOD — and God only — has immortality! Instead of assuming carelessly the pagan teaching of “immortality of the soul,” turn again to I Timothy 6:16 and read it with your own eyes in your own Bible! The risen Christ, and He only, of all who were born human, has immortality. God has immortality — life inherent, in Himself (John 5:26). He has given to the Son, Jesus Christ, also to have life in Himself. And only GOD can impart eternal life to you! It comes through Christ.

But how are you going to go to God? Your past sins not only have condemned you under penalty of death — they also have put a total BARRIER between you and God. They have cut you off from all access to God!

Read it! See it in your own Bible: “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your *iniquities* have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

HOW Seek God?

So how, when this barrier stands between you, are you going to go to God to obtain eternal life?

Again Isaiah answers; “*Seek* ye the Eternal while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; *let the wicked forsake his way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. . . . For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Eternal” (Isa. 55:6-8).

So now you seek God, so you may obtain eternal life from Him. You repent! You forsake your way of life, and turn to God's way. But you find something is still lacking! You find you still are cut off! The barrier is still there! Do you know why?

At this point we need to stop and find out what is meant by that word "sin."

Haven't you honestly been a bit confused by this religious terminology? You hear people talk about "sin," "getting saved," "under law or under grace," "justification," "sanctified," "heaven," "hell," "predestination," and dozens of other terms. Haven't they been pretty vague to you — rather meaningless? Do you know that most religious people who use all these religious words usually don't know any more than you do what they really mean?

What Do You Mean — SIN?

We started by quoting the scripture "ALL have sinned." We said that included you!

But what is sin? Why, when men preach, don't you hear that explained, defined, made clear and understandable? Why are these religious terms used most of the time loosely, vaguely, meaninglessly?

Once, in Springfield, Oregon, a young man with a Bible in his hand accosted me on the street. An evangelist had come to town and pitched a tent. He brought with him a "gospel team" including some eight young men of college age, who roamed the streets carrying Bibles, stopping people and inviting them to attend the services. One stopped me.

"Well now," I said, "Does your evangelist teach that Christ saves us from *sin*?" He assured me he did.

"Well, what I want to know," I persisted, "is what I have to quit doing — or what I have done that you call 'sin.' Just what *is* 'sin'?"

"Well," he answered, "Christ died for our sins."

"But that doesn't tell me exactly *what* I've done that Christ had to die for," I insisted. "What is 'sin'?"

"Christ died for our sins," came the reply.

"Yes, I know — you said that before. But what is this thing, 'sin,' that He died for? What do I have to quit doing? Can you open that Bible you have, and show me the Bible definition of the word 'sin'? Is there a place in the Bible where it gives a plain definition — where it says 'sin is —' and then in plain words tells what it is?"

He called to a second of the young men — then a third, and a fourth. Finally, with a large crowd gathering, they called the evangelist himself. But even he could not — or would not — turn to the Bible answer! One by one, they all slunk away!

Then I took a Bible out of my briefcase, turned to I John 3:4, and read to the crowd:

“Sin is the transgression of the law.”

But *what* law? This is explained in Romans 7. So next I read:

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law” — or, in the plainer English of the Moffatt translation: “Why, had it not been for the Law, I would never have known what sin meant!” In other words, the Law *defines* sin. Sin is breaking the Law. But what Law? Continuing, same verse: “for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Rom. 7:7).

There we are told plainly what Law it is sin to transgress. It is the Law that says: “Thou shalt not covet.” That Law is the Ten Commandments. It is sin to break the Ten Commandments.

In verses 12 and 14 of this same 7th chapter of Romans you will read that the Law is holy, just and good, and that it is a *spiritual* Law — a Law of spiritual principles of living!

Of course the whole spiritual Law may be summed up in the word LOVE. This may be divided into the two Great Commandments, love toward GOD, and love toward neighbor. The first four of the Ten Commandments tell us how to love God; the last six how to love neighbor. The whole Bible elaborates, showing the principles involved, until it includes the entire right way of life!

Now notice Romans 3:20. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Of course! False accusers to the contrary notwithstanding, that is precisely what we teach. Keeping the Law will not justify anyone. We have all sinned. We cannot justify this guilt we have incurred — we cannot avoid the

wages we have earned — death — by obedience, goodness, works, or anything we can do.

Let's make that real plain! Most women carry a mirror in their purses. A woman takes out her mirror, steals a glance at her face, discovers dirt on it. Does she try to wash off the dirt with the mirror? Ridiculous? Yes, of course. Looking into the mirror won't cleanse the dirt already there. Why? Because by the mirror comes the *knowledge* that the dirt is there! Now God's Law is His spiritual mirror. Your Bible says so — plainly (James 1:22-25). You look into God's Law. It shows you the spiritual dirt on your heart. To *hear* God's Word, which corrects, reproves and rebukes (II Tim. 3:16) and then do nothing about the spiritual dirt it reveals is like a man beholding his face in a mirror, seeing the dirt — gaining knowledge of it — then forgetting how dirty he is — doing nothing about it.

God's Law is His spiritual mirror. But keeping yourself from becoming more dirty today does not wash off the dirt already there. So, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" — why? Because "by the law is the *knowledge* of sin." Of course!

Sin is "the transgression of the law." Paul would not have *known* it was sin to lust, except the law had said "Thou shalt not covet." The function of the Law is to tell us what sin is! Not to cleanse us of yesterday's sin or erase the penalty of last year's sin.

There can never be a law, unless there is a *penalty* for its violation. And, where "no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15) and could be no penalty — no punishment. If the wages — the punishment — of sin is death, and death is the penalty, then there is a law. And if there is no law being broken, there is no transgression and no penalty — and then we need no Saviour — no salvation *from* the punishment.

Now where did the Law come from? Again, through James, God says "There is one lawgiver" (James 4:12). That is God. God set in motion many laws — laws of physics and chemistry among them. The great Law of LOVE is a *spiritual* Law. It is the way of peace, of happiness — of

right relationship with God and with human neighbor. It is inexorable — a *living* Law as much fixed and in motion as laws of gravity and inertia. To break it is to turn in the opposite direction from peace, happiness, security, abundance, and toward strife, fear, worry, unhappiness, suffering, death. The final wages you earn travelling that way is death!

Yes, the wages of sin is death! But we have hope! The gift of God is eternal life.

So now, where are we? Eternal life can be had only from God. So, as stated above, you seek God. But you find a tremendous, impenetrable barrier — your sins you have committed. Until they are *justified* you have no access to God. Isaiah 55:6-8, already quoted, says that if you would seek God the sinner must forsake his way, and turn to God's way. God's Law is God's way — and sin, the transgression of His Law — rebellion and disobedience — is your way.

So now you forsake your way — you forsake sin or breaking His Law. You forsake breaking it by keeping it — obeying it. At least you try — you do it the very best you can.

LAW-KEEPING Won't Justify!

But what do you find? You are still cut off from God!

Actually, as we shall see in a moment, you can't keep a spiritual law with a carnal mind. But, even if you could, your obedience now is only what is required of you now! It does not make up for PAST law-breaking. That penalty still hangs over you. As we have seen, by being law-abiding *now*, no flesh shall be *justified* of past law-breaking! A man convicted of committing murder last month does not erase his sentence by being law-abiding this month.

That is what your Bible teaches! And that is what *The PLAIN TRUTH* teaches! That is what Herbert W. Armstrong and Garner Ted Armstrong and *The WORLD TOMORROW* television and radio programs proclaim to the whole world! Get that straight! All the good works in the world — all the law-keeping — cannot justify you of your past guilt.

Now where do you find yourself? You are now submissive — obedient to God's Law. Is this necessary? Most assuredly it is! Does it JUSTIFY you? A thousand times no! **NO!! NO!!!** Where are you now? You have forsaken your way — sin; you have turned to God's way — His Law.

And you are still cut off from God! Your works — your Law-keeping, while certainly required, still has not justified past guilt — has not reconciled you to GOD. You still have no access whatever to God.

And you have to gain access to Him in order to obtain His gift of eternal life! I am trying to make this plain. I want all to understand it, once for all!

After all this — after forsaking sin — turning to God's way, as He commands — keeping His Law — that DEATH penalty for *past* sins still hangs over you — the punishment is still death — and it is ETERNAL punishment — death for all ETERNITY! So your Bible teaches! Don't let anyone tell you we do not teach eternal punishment. The Bible teaches eternal punishment. We teach eternal punishment. That punishment, your Bible says, is not eternal LIFE in a hell fire of endless torture — not eternal PUNISHING — but eternal PUNISHMENT — it is death for eternity — and God's gift is life for eternity! I want to make it plain. Don't ever be confused about what we proclaim to the whole world. The Bible is the truth, and we make it plain — mighty plain!

The Bible says the punishment is the *second* death — for eternity. It is appointed to men once to die — but after that, the judgment (Heb. 9:27). How? As in Adam all die (sinners and saints alike), so in Christ shall all be made alive — the same all, sinners and saints both — who die the first death (I Cor. 15:22-23). How? By a resurrection (John 5:28-29) — there is to be a resurrection of the just and the unjust — they that have done good, and they that have done evil. Read it and believe what your Bible says! The unjust end up in a hell fire that shall burn them up (II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 20:14-15; Mal. 4:1, 3), until they become ashes under the feet of the saved! Read it. Believe what you read in your Bible!

So, where are you? Even with your Commandment

keeping which — make no mistake God requires of you — still you are pretty helpless. You can't give yourself eternal life. You are doomed to die — and you are still cut off by sins of the past from GOD, who, only, has eternal life to give.

You are pretty helpless, aren't you?

Well you have made a right start, even if you are still helpless.

HOW You Gain Contact

And now you have made this right start, there is a way you may gain contact with God who has eternal life to impart. God so loved this world of sinners, cut off from Him, that He *gave* His only begotten Son! Remember, God gives eternal life through Christ!

Notice Romans 5:6, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Jesus Christ never transgressed God's Law. He said, "I have kept my Father's Commandments" (John 15:10). He also said He set us an example that we should do as He did. He never incurred the death penalty. He never cut Himself off from God. When He voluntarily paid the death penalty, He did not pay it for any sins of His own — for there were none. He gave His life instead of yours! He paid your penalty for you!

The life He gave was that of the MAKER of us all! God created all things by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9). All things — including all humans — were made by Him (John 1:1-3). Therefore the life He gave on the cross was greater than the sum-total of *all* other human lives! That is the life that died for you — that paid your penalty for you!

Now, continue in Romans 5:8-10: "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, *being now justified* by His blood. . . ."

NOTICE! "Being *now* justified." How? By your works — by your required obedience to God's Law? No! By the blood of CHRIST! If you have repented, and accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour you are already now justified!

But right here is where so many go off into error.

They simply do not understand Biblical terms. "Justified" does not refer to the future — it has to do only with your guilty past! This term "justified" does not mean "saved" as we shall now see. It does not mean the *gift* of *life*. It means the gift of acquittal of past guilt! It means the penalty of *past* sins has been paid in full, by Christ, for you!

The law stood over you. It claimed your life — you were under it. It took Christ's life in payment instead of yours. The penalty stands paid! You are no longer *under* the Law. It no longer has claim over your life! You are now under grace — undeserved pardon. You are pardoned from paying the penalty, since Jesus Christ paid it for you! This is not your works. It is Christ's sacrifice. You are now acquitted — justified — the slate is wiped clean of a guilty past!

In other words — the barrier between you and God has now been removed! You are now, by Christ's sacrifice, given contact with GOD — reconciled to Him!

SAVED By His DEATH?

So, continue: "Much more then, *being now justified* by His blood, we *shall be saved* by Him."

Notice it! You are already justified. Not by works, but by Christ's blood! The past is squared up — the penalty paid — the contact with God made. But are you already saved?

Look at it! It says "we SHALL BE saved." *Not* that we already are saved. It says "being now justified" but it does not say "being now saved." It says "we shall be" — yes, in the future — saved. That is still future! See it with your own eyes. Don't believe me. Don't believe preachers who say you are already, now, saved! Just believe these plain words in your Bible!

It is real plain, isn't it?

Now here comes a surprise. Notice verse 10:

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. . . ." Here, again, we *were reconciled* — past tense. Not by your works — by Christ's death. When you have truly repented, forsaken your way, sought God, accepted Christ as Saviour and His death as

payment for your past sins, you have been, already, reconciled. So the wording here is we were reconciled — past tense — to God by the death of His Son.

What was accomplished by Jesus' death? It paid the *penalty* — it wiped out your guilty *past* — justified you of your guilt — reconciled you to GOD. But did it *save* you? Did it? Wait — don't just glibly say yes — see with your own eyes what your Bible says!

It says, continuing, same sentence: "much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Can you believe your own eyes? There it is, in your own Bible!

Already reconciled, by Christ's death; but — "*we shall be saved*" — that is future tense. Not yet saved — but we shall be — in the future — saved. Now are you going to be saved by Christ's death? Can death impart life?

There is no stronger law in science than the law of biogenesis which says life comes only from life. Death cannot impart life.

Now how shall we — in future — be saved? By Christ's death? No! Notice! Read it! "We shall be saved by *His life!*"

After Christ died, God raised Him back to life. We are saved by His resurrection — by His life — by a living Saviour! Read I Cor. 15:14-23.

What Do You MEAN — "Not Under the Law"?

Now where do you stand? You are now making progress. You now have real hope. You have repented — you have sought God, forsaken your way — turned to God's way, as defined in His Law and all through His Word. You have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, and His shed blood for remission of sins. You are now reconciled to God. You are justified of — forgiven — your guilty past. You are out from under the penalty of broken law.

Now, we read the question: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1). You are now under grace — undeserved pardon!

You *deserved* only death. You didn't earn forgiveness

— pardon from the death penalty. You received it by grace through Jesus Christ.

Now, shall you continue in sin — that is, continue transgressing the Law? The answer is “God forbid” (Rom. 6:2).

You were under the law, when the law stood over you, claiming its penalty. When Christ paid the penalty, and satisfied the claims of the law, you were no longer under the law, but under grace. Now does that mean you are not under obligation to *obey* the law — that you have license to sin — to break the law? Remember sin is the transgression of the law.

Now read this in your Bible!

“What then? shall we sin” — that is, according to the Bible definition, shall we break the Law — “because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to *obey*, his servants ye are to whom ye *obey*; whether of sin” — breaking the law — “unto *death*” — penalty for disobedience to God’s Law — “or of *obedience* unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:15-16.)

There it is! We must not return to rebellion against God’s inexorable Law of LOVE — His right way of life. If we do, we are *again* under the Law — again automatically sentenced to death! Jesus Christ did not die to give you license to continue in law-breaking. When you accept, by His grace, remission of sins, it is only for sins that are past! You cannot obtain in advance remission of all the lawlessness you might like to commit in the future.

Read that in your Bible: “*Being justified freely by His grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith in his blood*, to declare his righteousness *for the remission of sins that are past*, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:24-25).

We are justified only of sins that are past. We have remission only of sins that are past — not license to break the Law in the future.

Why do some religious people today teach that it is all

right for Christians to go right on breaking the Law? Why do they say that grace means license to disobey God's Law? No wonder God found it necessary, through Jude, to warn us to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints by Jesus Christ — for, as you'll read in Jude 3-4, there are certain men crept in unawares — deceiving people — turning grace into license! They are the ones who accuse us of teaching "salvation by works."

Would a governor pardon a man convicted of murder so he could continue murdering more and more people? God's merciful pardon — His grace — is bestowed on us because we have repented, with a sincere desire to turn from our wicked ways of lawlessness. If we are willing to live, from here on, righteously, happily as we should have from the beginning, the merciful and loving God has been willing to give His Son Jesus Christ, who, in turn, was willing to give His life, to square up our past law-breaking — to wipe the slate clean, and give us, by His merciful grace, a fresh, clean start.

So, from here on, we must obey — unto righteousness! (Rom. 6:16).

Yet you cannot, of your own strength, keep the spiritual Law spiritually.

Now let's really understand that!

HOW You Get Eternal LIFE

Many religious people — many ordained ministers — will tell you, "It is *impossible* to keep the Law." Are they telling the truth? What does your Bible say?

Notice! Of the parents of John the Baptist, you will read: "And they were both righteous before God, *walking in all the commandments* and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6).

Why, if it is impossible, did Christ command that *if* we would enter into *life*, "keep the commandments"? (Matt. 19:17.) Of those who claim to "know the Lord," often using such sentimental religious phrases as "Oh, how good it is to know the Lord," but who teach we should not keep the Commandments, your Bible says this: "He that saith, 'I

know Him,' and keepeth not His commandments, is a *liar*, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

Yet you cannot, alone of yourself, keep the Law spiritually! That is not a contradiction. You can keep the literal letter, but not the spirit. Let's make that plain.

At the same time, we shall explain how you receive Eternal life — that is, how you receive salvation!

Back again, now, to you! You have now gained contact with God. You are mortal, possessing only a temporary chemical existence. God only has eternal life. Life can come only from life — not from death. Christ's death paid the penalty of your guilty past — it reconciled you to God — gave you access direct to God. But it did not give you eternal life — did not, yet, save you! Now what?

Jesus Christ said it was necessary for us mortal humans that He go to the Father's throne in heaven (John 16:7) in order to send the Holy Spirit of God for us. This required the resurrected living Christ. So after His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the throne of God that rules the entire universe (Rev. 3:21). Then, some ten days later, on the annual day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to enter *into* the very minds of all who had sincerely repented of their rebellion against God and His way, and who had been reconciled to God — had gained access — by faith in Christ's shed blood for the remission of past sins (Acts 2:1-4).

These first disciples received God's Spirit through the work of the resurrected, glorified, *living* Christ. The Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit of Christ. Thus it actually was the living Christ, Himself, entering into them — not in Person, but *in spirit!* Christ is a *living* Saviour who does His saving work from *within!*

Now let's get the connection.

If the Holy Spirit of God actually *dwells* within you, then as God raised Christ from the dead, He shall also make immortal ("quicken" means energize — make eternally *alive*) your mortal body BY His Spirit dwelling in you (Romans 8:11). But (verse 9), unless His Spirit is actually *IN* you, you are not a Christian — no matter how many churches you join!

God's Holy Spirit is His LIFE. It imparts His life to you! It imparts more, as we shall now see!

God Doesn't "Kid Himself"

One thing more, the Holy Spirit is divine, spiritual love — the love of GOD flowing into you from God Almighty — through the living Christ! (Rom. 5:5.) Jesus explained how we should come to him, and drink in of His Spirit, like drinking in living water — and how this same Holy Spirit would *flow*, like a river of living water, on out from us (John 7:37-39). Now let's make all that plain and clear.

God's Law is a law of *love* — love to God in reverence, worship and obedience — love to neighbor in service, kindness, sharing. It takes love to fulfil — to *perform* — the Law. You will read that in Romans 13:10.

But, remember? — we saw, in Romans 7:14, that this Law is a *spiritual* Law. Science knows only about physical laws. Humans are mortals — physical. We were born with a capacity only for physical love. The love of a parent for a child, a husband or wife for a mate, or even relatives, friends, neighbors. We also are born with capacity for envy, jealousy, hate.

But this spiritual Law can be fulfilled — performed — spiritually kept and obeyed — only by spiritual love! You were not born with that kind of love. You do not have, naturally, the kind of love required to truly keep this great Spiritual Law!

You must go to God to obtain *that* kind of love. That is a love He gives you through the *living* Christ. That is His own love. It emanates directly from Him.

Now understand! True righteousness is keeping "all thy commandments" (Psalm 119:172). It is performing God's Spiritual law with the spiritual love which only God can supply.

You drink it in from Him — once the contact is established. It pours on out from you like rivers of living water. Water in a river flows in a certain direction, guided by the river bed or channel. GOD'S LAW is that river bed which guides the flow — the expression — the direction in which

the divine love flows! God's Law is the way of perfect spiritual character — the very character of God.

So — the very spirit by which God imparts to you His life — His salvation — is also His own love which imparts to you His righteousness! It is no longer just you, in your own power and strength "keeping the commandments" — it is, spiritually speaking, the living Christ IN you, keeping His Father's Commandments — even as He kept them by this same divine love even while He was human here on earth!

Can you brag, or boast, then, about your righteousness? No — it is not your righteousness — it is God's! If Christ, by His grace, erased your guilty past, gave you access to God, and now pours forth into and through you the spiritual love that keeps the Law, this is not your righteousness, but God's.

And this is not your "works"! It is nothing you earn!

God does not "kid Himself." Some religious teachers tell you Christ lived a righteous life FOR you over 1940 years ago, and since you "can't keep the Law," as they claim, God "imputes" Christ's righteousness of 19 centuries ago to you — by sort of "kidding Himself" that you are righteous, while you are given license to still be a spiritual criminal breaking His Law! God does not impute to you something you do not have.

Far from this — the *living* Christ by His power makes us righteous! He imparts to us power to actually become righteous. It is His doing!

WHY Not to Heaven NOW?

Once again, back to you! *Now* where are we?

There are, first, two things you must do. On that very day of Pentecost after Christ had ascended to heaven, many who had joined the mob crying out "crucify Him!" during Christ's trial before Pilate, were conscience-stricken and afraid, when they heard the inspired Peter's sermon. They cried out, "What shall we do?" They, too, were helpless.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall

receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" was the inspired answer (Acts 2:38).

Note it! Two things YOU do:

1) REPENT — turn from your way, by turning to God's way — His Law! You repent of sin. Sin is the transgression of the spiritual Law.

2) BE BAPTIZED. The Ethiopian eunuch, coming to a lake of water, asked Philip what hindered him to be baptized. "If thou believest with all thine heart" was Philip's condition (Acts 8:36-37). Repentance is toward God, for the Law comes from God, but faith is toward Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Faith in Christ's atonement for sin is *commanded* to be expressed by being baptized. (Write for our free booklet *All About Water Baptism*.)

This, then, gains contact with God. That is as far as you can go, on your own. You have reached your extremity! So now GOD does something!

3) YOU SHALL RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This is God's *gift*. It is the presence, conditionally, of Eternal Life.

And now if you faithfully follow God's way — the way the Holy Spirit leads — you are already a begotten son of God! "For as many as *are led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth *not yet* appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2).

Get it straight! You are now converted — a changed person — for God's Spirit (Eph. 4:23) produces a renewing of your mind. Your whole concept and direction of life is changed! God's Spirit is His very life imparted to you! You are now a *begotten* son of God.

But it does not yet appear what you shall be. This scripture does not say "*where* you shall go" — or "*where* you shall BE." It is talking about a condition, not a place: "*what* we shall be"! Salvation is a matter of what you become — not where you shall go! God's purpose is to change you — from your vile character to His glorious character — not to change the place where you are!

But — you are now already a begotten son of God — you may now call Him Father! — as long as you are led by His Spirit! — and no longer (Heb. 10:26-27). (Write for our free booklet *Just What Do You Mean — “the Unpardonable Sin”?*)

And there are still some “if’s.” You must *grow* spiritually (II Pet. 3:18). It is “To him that overcometh” that Christ will grant to sit with Him on His throne, when He returns to earth (Rev. 3:21). If you overcome — overcome your own carnal nature, the world and the devil — and keep Christ’s works (not your own works, but Christ’s — by His spirit in you) then you shall reign and rule all nations with Him, in the happy world tomorrow!

The real Christian life is, truly, a life of overcoming, spiritual growing — but it is the only happy life — the abundant life — here and now! Yet we must endure and remain steadfast — for it is he who endures to the end that *shall be saved!* Read this in your BIBLE — Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 4:17; John 6:27; I Cor. 9:24-27; Heb. 10:26-27.

So, finally, back again to you! Where are we, now? You have been converted — changed in mind, concept, attitude, direction of way of life — you are begotten as a child of God — you have now eternal life abiding in you — as long as you are LED by God’s Spirit in God’s way — as long as you continue in contact and fellowship with God (I John 1:3) — all by God’s grace as His gift, and not anything you have earned by your works; and now if you continue overcoming, growing spiritually — and all this actually through God’s power — you shall inherit the Kingdom of God, and be made immortal to live forever in happiness and joy!

Personal Counsel

If you are one who really wants to receive salvation — to repent and obey God — then here is GOOD NEWS! The Worldwide Church of God has dedicated, consecrated, converted, fully instructed and trained, ORDAINED MINISTERS in all parts of the United States and many other parts of the world — available to call on you, visit in your home, answer your questions, and explain the Bible to you. Of

course, none of them will ever call on you, *unless* you of your own free will request it.

But if you of your own volition want to know more about the Bible, salvation, and the Christian life — why not request a personal visit (see page 29 for details). We will have one of God's own ministers call on you. □

Counsel

ADDITIONAL READING

This booklet has covered the truth of how we may become a begotten son of God. Ambassador College has published a sequel booklet making plain *what* salvation is — *when* we receive it — *what* one inherits — *when* and *how* one is "born again."

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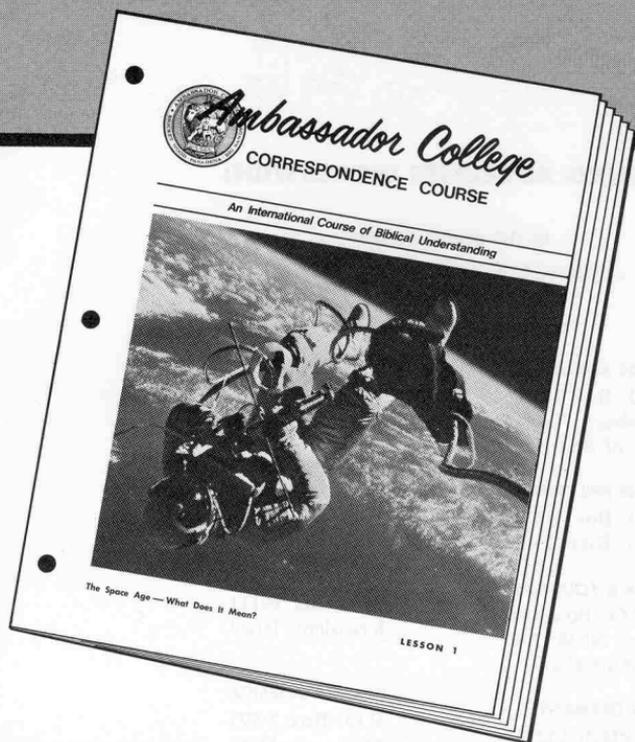
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