

## HOW COULD ONE MAN SAVE THE WORLD?

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. — 1 Timothy 2:5-6*

If there is one theme that weaves its way through the entire Bible, it is that Jesus Christ, *the lamb of God*, died to bring life to the dying world of mankind. But how could the death of one man bring about salvation for everyone who has ever lived — *a ransom for all*? The answer to this question becomes the very foundation to understanding every other feature of Bible truth.

### SIN — THE GREAT BARRIER BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Our theme text reveals that there must be a mediator that stands between God and the world of mankind. But, why? This is

because there has been a great barrier between God and man, and that barrier is *sin*. Alienation from God first occurred when Adam disobeyed God's instruction and came under the sentence of death. (Genesis 3:1-23) Because God is perfect, He cannot look upon sin, nor can He recognize as part of His family imperfect children. (Habakkuk 1:13) And yet, the very purpose for which God created man was so that He might love and be loved as a Father. Ultimately, God's desire has been to create a family in heaven and a family upon the earth who love Him and reflect His loving and righteous character.

To this intent, God's children must learn to love him from pure hearts, because they want to please Him — not because they are forced to do so by fear. True, God could have prevented sin from entering the world by making his creation blindly obedient, but man would be no better than a robot, without true happiness and incapable of sincere love. In fact, the contrary is true — man was created in God's image with the ability and liberty to love and obey by choice. Thus, God has permitted man to choose his own course, even at the expense of losing his life. "...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17) Hence, we see of mankind's need for salvation.

Because of the vivid lessons resulting from the cruel consequences of disobedience, man is learning why the most beneficial option for happiness is obedience to God. In time,



man will choose to love and respect his fellow man and environment. More importantly, he will render to God the love, respect and obedience He desires and deserves.

### ONE LIFE FOR ONE LIFE

Since man, through the fall, had not only come under a sentence of death, but additionally, had defiled himself from the Divine likeness, therefore the only hope for everlasting life and happiness would lie in some method through which two objectives could be accomplished: 1. the release of mankind from the death sentence required by justice, and 2. lifting mankind up out of the sin and

depravity to which he fell, to a condition of absolute holiness. These two prospects are the hope of salvation — bringing mankind back into full and lasting harmony with a loving Creator. But, how will this seemingly insurmountable task be accomplished? How will God provide the opportunity for all who have ever lived to profit from their experience with evil, and, turning from sin, ultimately gain everlasting life?

From the moment Adam transgressed against God's covenant with him, he began to die, and all have inherited the death sentence from Adam, for only a perfect man can beget perfect children. The Apostle Paul confirms that all of Adam's descendants came under the death sentence: "...as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men [all of Adam's children]... Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Romans 5:12,18) Thus, *all* of mankind was included in *one* man's penalty, and, therefore, the penalty of sin was paid by the *one* sacrifice of the perfect man — Jesus.

Note that in our theme text the word translated *ransom* is the Greek word *antilutron*, meaning *a corresponding price*. We learn from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*" Here we see the *beauty* and *economy* of God's plan of salvation.

One perfect man — Jesus — is the *ransom* for one perfect man who sinned — Adam. Since all have come under condemnation because of father Adam's disobedience, all will be released from this sentence of death by the ransom paid by Jesus.

Jesus, the "*only begotten of the Father*," had a position as a trusted Son in heaven. He "*humbled himself*" and willingly offered to become a man, as Adam was, to provide this *corresponding price*. (John 1:14; Philippians 2:8) To provide this *ransom*, the *man* Christ Jesus had to remain perfect and obedient to the righteous laws of God. And this we find. Jesus was "*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*." Hebrews 7:26

Jesus' sacrifice is also referred to as the "*propitiation*" for sin. We read in 1 John 4:10, "*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*." This word *propitiation* refers to the satisfaction for justice accomplished when Jesus sacrificed his perfect life to pay the penalty for Adam's sin — *death*. Yes, Jesus actually *died as a man* in order that mankind might be saved.

It is important here to note that Jesus had to truly be a man — to be that exact corresponding price for father Adam. As Adam was not part spirit and part man, neither was our Lord Jesus. The scripture states, "*The man Christ Jesus... gave himself a ransom for all...*" Some suppose that Jesus had to have been God to have been powerful enough to save all of the billions of mankind. But the Scriptures state that "*God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*." (1 John 4:9) It was God's *only begotten Son* who humbled himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross. Because of Jesus' faithfulness, God raised him from the dead to a highly exalted position — sitting at the right hand of his Father in heaven. Philippians 2:8-11; Luke 22:69

#### THE SCALES OF JUSTICE ARE BALANCED

Using the illustration of the scales of justice, picture the perfect man Adam on one side and the perfect man Jesus on the other — an exactly balanced weight. Again, stated simply, it is *a life for a life*. (Deuteronomy 19:21) Just as Adam *willfully* forfeited his right to live in perfection, Jesus *willingly* gave up his perfect life to pay the penalty for Adam's sin. This corresponding price guarantees every descendant of Adam a resurrection and a fresh opportunity to live his life in righteousness. This is the real definition of the word *ransom*. The Weymouth Translation of 1 Corinthians 15:22 reads, "*For just as through Adam all die, so also through Christ all will be made alive again*." When, therefore, Jesus "*died, the just for the unjust*" he gave a price sufficient to balance the scales and redeem Adam and his race. 1 Peter 3:18

Another important point in regard to balancing the scales of justice is clarifying just what the penalty for disobedience was. Many believe that God placed our race on trial for life with the cruel alternative of eternal torture, whereas nothing of the kind is even hinted at in the original penalty. Adam was not told that he

would go to a burning hell. No, God said to Adam: "*...return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*." (Genesis 3:19) *Death*, not eternal torment, was the penalty for sin: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*." (Ezekiel 18:4) Therefore, it is the death penalty, and all that accompanies this curse, from which mankind is being saved.

#### IS NOW THE ONLY TIME OF SALVATION?

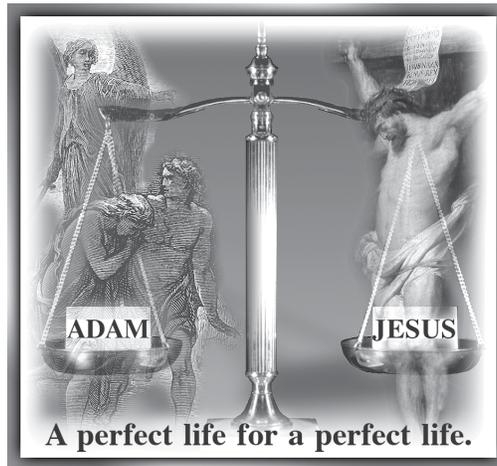
Many are taught that now is the only time for salvation. However, ever since Adam disobeyed, his children have been plagued by sin and sorrow, and billions have never heard the *good news* of salvation through Christ. Some live in countries where preaching Christ is forbidden. Furthermore, the great majority of mankind, plagued by inherited weakness and greatly influenced and deceived by Satan, are not capable of responding to God's counsels now. But the fact is that Jesus Christ "*tasted death for every man*." (Hebrews 2:9) It would simply not be fair for God to withhold salvation from the billions who have never had a favorable opportunity to receive it. But, how can we harmonize this with the clear statement that Jesus is the only means of salvation?

The reality is that now is the time for the selection of a few with *ears to hear* the message of salvation — the Church. But there will be an opportunity, *in due time*, for all others "*to be saved and to*

*come to a knowledge of the truth*." (1 Timothy 2:3-4) Paul confirms these *two opportunities* for salvation in 1 Timothy 4:10 where he says "*...we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe*." Note the *two different salvations*: 1. for "*all men*," and 2. "*specially for those that believe*."

Jesus himself stated that this present age is not the *due time* for the majority when he spoke to the people in *parables and symbols* so that the majority would not be converted at that time. "*Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them*." (Mark 4:11-12) If now is the only time for all to be converted, we would ask, why did Jesus not give a clear message so that *all* could have an *equal* opportunity to understand his words of salvation?

Again, to clarify, God's merciful plan of salvation is in progressive stages. The *first stage* offers salvation now to Christians who will make up the Church. The *second stage* offers salvation through Christ and his Church to the *remainder* of mankind — *all the families of the earth*. "*After this [after selecting the faithful of the Christian Age] I will return and build again the tabernacle of David [set up the kingdom of God]... that the remainder of men might seek after the Lord...*" Acts 15:14-17; Genesis 22:18



### THE FUTURE DAY OF SALVATION — ONE THOUSAND YEARS

In the *future day of salvation*, billions will be brought forth from their graves ready to learn of the only name whereby they might be saved. (Acts 4:12; Isaiah 26:9) Those who were faithful now will be their teachers. The Apostle Peter clarified in 2 Peter 3:7,8 that this *day* will be a day of judgment, one thousand years in length. Satan will be restrained during this thousand-year day, and righteousness will become the rule rather than the exception. Every stone of stumbling will be removed, and every individual will then have a fresh start in life — a new life. Isaiah 32:17; 35:8; 62:10; Revelation 20:2

With Satan bound during this thousand-year day, mankind will have, *for the first time*, a reasonable and favorable opportunity to exercise obedience, and to gain everlasting life. Jeremiah 31:34 says of that time, “...they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest.” Verse 29 also shows that they will no longer die for the inherited sins of their fathers but, if they refuse God’s generous mercy during this reign of righteousness, they will then *die for their own iniquity*. Anyone who is not willing to learn righteousness during that educational and restorative period, after having been given the perfect environment in which to learn, will receive the *verdict of second death*, and will be denied everlasting life. Yes, and by the end of this time of opportunity, every *reformed* sinner will have the law of God written in his heart and will be granted life everlasting. Jeremiah 31:29-33; Acts 3:23; Ezekiel 11:19

### THE JUDGMENT DAY — A DAY OF BLESSING

The Apostle Peter states that Jesus’ second advent brings about judgment, but it also brings about “*the times of restitution [restoration] of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*” (Acts 3:19-21) In contrast to what Adam lost by sin, note what will be *restored* by salvation. Adam was given an earthly home to exercise his dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, etc. (Genesis 1:26,28) He had food, shelter, health, happiness, perfect life and communion with God. But, being barred from his perfect home, he began to lack the nourishment needed to sustain perfect life, and this, along with distress of mind, initiated the long dying process. Adam lost health, happiness, life, dominion over his home and fellowship with his Creator. As a result of being cast out of the perfect environment in Eden, Adam, and all of his children since then have had to endure the dying process in an unfriendly earth — all in consequence of the penalty for disobedience. But, by means of salvation, mankind will one day be restored to life, health, happiness, freedom from fear, dominion over the earth, and communion with God. Luke 19:10; Revelation 22:17; Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 72:7; Isaiah 2:4; Job 5:22,23; Jeremiah 31:29-34; Ephesians 1:10

It will take the entire thousand-year kingdom to restore everything that was lost by disobedience in the Garden of Eden. And this is the very purpose of Christ’s reign. Together, he and his Church will bless, educate and “*judge the world in righteousness.*” (Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:6) Having lived faithfully through this difficult life, they will be compassionate and sympathetic teachers. Under their benevolent reign, “*the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*” Isaiah 11:9

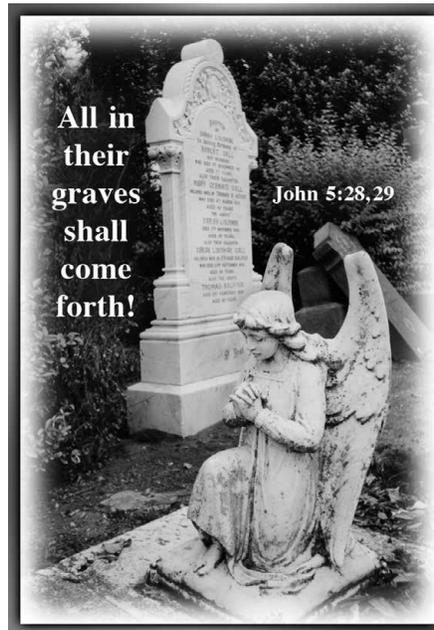
### ALL TEARS SHALL BE WIPED AWAY FROM ALL FACES

Because “*God is love,*” He will not always permit sin and death to reign over mankind. God anticipated that Adam would disobey, and, in His wisdom, designed this beautiful plan of salvation. “*He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth...*” (Isaiah 25:8) Yes, this was His plan from the beginning — providing for mankind’s salvation through His beloved Son — “*the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” (Revelation 13:8) This wonderful plan of salvation was not only the greatest gift ever given, but it was also the greatest demonstration of fatherly suffering in history — watching His only begotten Son suffer the agony of being vilified and crucified. Is there any doubt what great love God has for the human race? “*God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” Romans 5:8

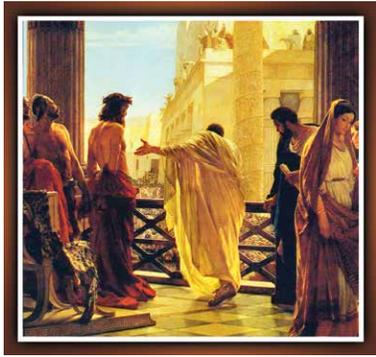
In summary, by permitting the privilege of free-will, God has taught Adam and all

of his children the severe consequences of disobedience. This experience with sin and selfishness will so thoroughly teach *the wages of sin*, that all mankind will never again want to take the wrong course, nor will they desire sin. “*This sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*” (Ecclesiastes 1:13) God’s *just* arrangement, then, has been to teach this broad principle— “*...the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” Romans 6:23; Galatians 1:4

The prophecy of Isaiah 35:10 will soon be completely fulfilled: “*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*” God’s kingdom will come on earth, with Christ as His honored representative ruling from heaven, and it will bring to mankind a time of restoration and renewal. When the thousand years has ended, all things will once again be in perfect harmony with the Creator. “*And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him... we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*” (Isaiah 25:9) This is the grand fulfillment of salvation — when all will learn to love the God who *is love*. 1 John 4:8



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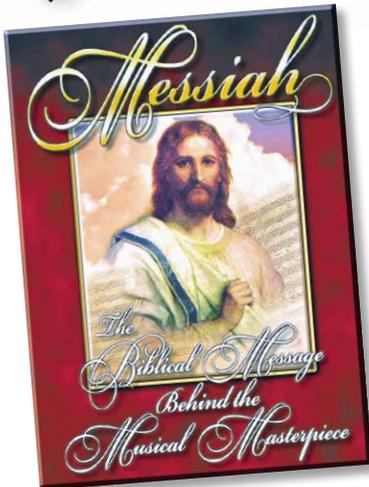
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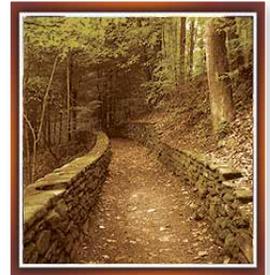
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