



The Canadian *Lord's Day* Association

**Advanced Bible Correspondence Course
Lesson 7A: The Deliverance of Man**

LORD'S DAY 7

Q.20. ARE ALL MEN THEN, AS THEY PERISHED IN ADAM, SAVED BY CHRIST?

ANSWER: NO, (A); ONLY THOSE WHO ARE INGRAFTED INTO HIM, AND RECEIVE ALL HIS BENEFITS, BY A TRUE FAITH (B).

(A)MATTHEW 7:14, 22:14; (B)MARK 16:16; JOHN 1:12, 3:16,18,36;

ISAIAH 53:11; PSALM 2:12; ROMANS 11:20, 3:22; HEBREWS 4:3, 5:9, 10:39

Adam's sin imputed

The sin which Adam committed is imputed to all mankind. By his sin Adam has lost for himself *and* for all people who are born of him, his and their place in Paradise and the right to eternal life (Lord's Day 3). Adam and his descendants have become mortal: subject to spiritual, temporal, and eternal death.

Through Adam's sin the whole human race has become contaminated: man became sinful, in such a way that he can do nothing but sin. Thus all people are cursed, condemned: they deserve to suffer God's wrath in hell for ever and ever.

Christ's merits imputed

Now Christ has come as "the second Adam." He delivers sinners from spiritual and eternal death. They do yet have to die the temporal death, but for those sinners saved by Christ, this death is a passage unto eternal life.

Through His suffering and death Christ bore the punishment for sin. By this, Adam and his descendants can obtain the forgiveness of sins. And by Christ's obedience to God's law Adam and his descendants can again obtain the right to eternal life: that eternal bliss in the new Paradise, heaven.

So the merits of Christ's sufferings and death *and* His obedience are imputed to Adam: God looks upon Adam again as if he himself paid for his sins and was obedient to God's law, and therefore has a right to eternal life. Adam received out of grace what Christ has merited.

Christ gives all this to Adam through the Holy Spirit. To that end, He works faith and repentance in Adam's heart. Thus Adam may believe and trust that his sins have been forgiven, and that one day he will live in the new Paradise for ever. In and by this faith Adam comes to a new life, a spiritual life: conversion. Now he desires and begins again to live according to God's holy law.

Reconciliation for everyone?

An important question now arises: Will all people be again saved by Christ as they all were lost through Adam?

Christ endured the full wrath of God against sin and His obedience to all of God's commandments was perfect. Therefore for all those who hear the glad tidings of the gospel, salvation can be obtained. Isaiah was granted to proclaim the message: *"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else"* (Isaiah 45:22).

Now some have taught that therefore all people, and even the devils, will actually be saved one day. Is not God love? Yet this thought is unbiblical. Christ Himself has said: *"For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat"* (Matthew 7:13).

Therefore the answer to the question if all men will be saved is, "No!" Who then will be saved? It is only those who are ingrafted into Him and receive all His benefits by a true faith.

There are also those who teach that not all people will be saved, but that Christ did die for all people and did reconcile all people with God. They teach that it is now dependent upon the free will of man whether or not he accepts this reconciliation. That is the Arminian doctrine (named after Arminius, a Dutchman in the 17th century, who taught this, and opposed the biblical doctrine of election). This thought is also unbiblical, because it denies man's state of death and the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Man has fallen so deeply that he is unable to deliver himself with the help of God's grace. Christ said, *"I lay down My life for the sheep"* (John 10:15). The sheep are the elect, all those whom God has chosen from all eternity to be saved. Christ says in a prayer to His Father concerning them, *"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them, which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine"* (John 17:9). And in a sermon to the multitude, He says, *"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him"* (John 6:44). What is this drawing? It is that indispensable work of God by His Holy Spirit, who delivers man from his state of death, gives him spiritual life, and brings him unto Christ through the faith which He works in the heart.

There seems to be a contradiction here. Is not this last statement contrary to the invitation to all that hear the gospel to come to Christ? No, it is not. There is indeed a mystery here which cannot be fathomed by our limited, sin-affected understanding. God offers us His grace unfeignedly. Christ said, *"And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life"* (John 6:40).

All those who flee to Christ as lost sinners may know that they are welcome with Him. If anyone does not heed Jesus' voice which commands us in the gospel, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe"*

the gospel” (Mark 1:15), it is his own fault that he perishes. He will perish, not because he was not allowed to come, but because he was not willing.

Reverently speaking, let us leave the mystery of God’s unfeigned invitation and His election up to God, but let us pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, Who is willing to grant us the salvation merited by Christ.

The Holy Spirit and faith

The Heidelberg Catechism teaches us that only those will be saved who are ingrafted into Him and receive all His benefits by a true faith. Two things are mentioned here. In the first place there is the work of the Holy Spirit. He brings about communion between sinners and Christ, the Saviour. It is such a close communion that they form as it were one Body, so that they share everything: He their sins (for which He bore the punishment) and they His righteousness (which He merited by His holy life). The Holy Spirit accomplishes this by working faith in the hearts of men that Christ merited for them what they need.

Then they (of) themselves will also do something: then they will receive and accept by faith all His benefits, everything that He has merited for them through His suffering and death, as their property. Christ took their sins upon Himself, and they receive His righteousness and the right to eternal life. A blessed exchange!

It is received, not because of faith, but by faith. Faith is the instrument, the means by which they become partakers of Christ. It is the empty hand of the beggar, in which the gift is placed.

This faith is neither an intellectual decision of man, nor a power of the free will which he is said to have, as so many people suppose who have no knowledge of the glorious and mighty work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. When He convinced a man of sin and guilt, the lost sinner cannot but flee to Christ and he finds in Him life and salvation.

Question:

1. What two opinions regarding reconciliation are unbiblical?

2. What does the Bible teach about the extent of Christ’s work?

Evaluator: _____

Meditation: "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:14

So Jesus taught. But teachers in every age have taught a broad way and wide gate, and multitudes have readily received their doctrine. This is an awful truth. Therefore Jesus adds, "Beware of false prophets." It is the sole prerogative of the King of saints to open a gate and make a way to his own kingdom. Glory to our God, who in sovereign grace and everlasting love hath done this: and the Gospel proclaims, Welcome; come who will; enter freely, without money and without price.

Jesus is the one strait gate of God's love, the only way of righteousness. By Him we enter into access with God, stand perfectly justified and graciously accepted before Him. Jesus is the narrow way: by the blood of His cross He hath made peace, and atoned for the sins of transgressors by His one offering. Hence it is called straight and narrow, because the only way to life is by one Man, one righteousness, one atonement. Thus it is a gate of love, a way of grace. Too straight a gate for blind men to see; too narrow a way for proud, self-righteous, natural men to submit to walk in. Hence, "few there be that find it."

But, most awful to think of, whoever takes any other way, or seeks to enter by any other gate, goes in the broad road to everlasting destruction. That he is bold and confident is no proof that he is right; but a melancholy sign that he is blind and deceived. For "the way of a fool is right in his own eyes." Proverbs 12:15. "There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12. But whoever enters the kingdom by Jesus, feeds in the pastures of everlasting grace, truth, and love; drinks of the river of consolation, and shall be nourished up to eternal life. As a person who takes up his residence for life in a more delightful kingdom than that where he was born, and conforms to its laws and customs; so the believer is conformed to the laws, speaks the language of the New Jerusalem, and "hates the garment spotted with the flesh." Thus the Holy Spirit leads the blind by the way they know not, even by Christ, the right way to peace, love, holiness, happiness, eternal life, and salvation. Thus, to a "little flock it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom." By His word He directs them; by His Spirit He guides them; by the prospects of hope He animates them. All this is to make them walk steadily in Christ, Who is "the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:6

Taken from "A Spiritual Treasury for the Children of God" by William Mason