

# GOD'S ANSWER TO MAN'S SIN

by

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GOD'S ANSWER TO MAN'S SIN

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 6:23).

IN ONE tremendous sentence, Paul the Apostle sums up the Bible, the need of man, the provision of God. In one smashing declaration, Paul gathers up all we need to know of the plan of redemption.

There are many who say they should like to become Christians but they do not know enough of the Book. They want time to study the Word of God. Most of them never get to it. It is just one more trap of the devil. In this brilliantly, lucidly simple word, Paul strips every sinner of this alibi.

Romans 6:23 contains enough to save every believing and to damn every unbelieving soul on earth. Clearly, definitely, simply, unmistakably, the verse is divided into three thoughts: first, Sin is Death; second, Salvation is through Christ; third, This salvation is the free gift of God.

#### I. Sin is Death

The ages have proved the truth of Paul's contention that the consequences of sin is death.

- It was death when Adam and Eve were driven from Eden and the mark of mortality was placed on their foreheads.

- It was death when the flood waters of God's wrath deluged the earth, destroying every living, breathing thing outside of the ark. Every floating corpse of man and beast rocking on the terrible waves was an amen to Paul's assertion.

- It was death when fire fell from heaven, utterly obliterating Sodom and Gomorrah. Every smoldering pile, every charred heap was a **“Yea, verily”** to our text.

- It was death when the death angel stalked through the Land of Egypt on that evil night, claiming the firstborn in every Gentile home in; that fearful visitation of God's wrath. Every moaning, groaning shriek that rose from the overburdened hearts of fathers and mothers that God-cursed night was a positive demonstration of the eternal truth of this contention.

- It was death when the coming together of the Red Sea waters swallowed the chivalry of Egypt.

- It was death when the heavy-handed angel of God slew Sennacherib's 185,000 Assyrian warriors beleaguering Jerusalem.
- It was death when Christ Jesus bled out His life on Calvary's cross.
- It was death when Titus inundated Jerusalem with the blood bath of thousands of slain Jews.
- It was death when the maddened Serbian student shot the Austrian arch-duke and deluged the world in the blood of the last great war.

Every floating flood corpse, every smoldering heap of Sodom's cataclysm, every dead Egyptian firstborn, every waterlogged Egyptian warrior, every plague-stricken Assyrian warrior, every drop of Christ's blood, every cross-marked grave in Flander's field, every tomb of every unknown soldier that graces the capital of every civilized nation, is a shouting, eternal amen to Paul's dictum, "**The wages of sin is death.**"

It was death! It is death! It shall continue to be death until Christ, the Conqueror, vanishes that last dread enemy.

The wages of sin is death today here in our midst. It is physical death, mental death, moral death, spiritual death, the second death. It is death to character, to personality, to ambition, to reputation, to love, to influence, to life, to homes, to businesses, to schools, to churches.

*It is universal death.*

The Jew, the Gentile, the man, the woman, the child, "**the soul that sinneth, it shall die.**" There is no escape from it. There is no alibi for it. There is no denying it, no defying it, no hiding from it. We carry its germs in our own bodies. We breathe them in with the air. We draw them in with the water and food. The whole universe is under the curse, the condemnation, the consequences of sin, which is death. The rich man has not enough riches to overcome it. The poor man is not lowly enough to obviate it. The king in his throne room, the queen in her boudoir, the philosopher in his classic study, the harlot in her den, the peasant turning the clods; they all look alike and they are all alike to the Grim Reaper. Not all the schemes, not all the programs, not all the organizations, not all the proposals of man have in any way ameliorated this fearful fact.

*It is inescapable death.*

You will find it wherever men gather. Civilization is no barrier to it, and crudeness cannot stop it. Brilliancy is no obstacle, and barbarism cannot stem it. You will find funeral trains in the heathen heart of Africa as in the loftier life of America. There is no excuse; there is no escape; there is no exception. It cannot be bought off, reasoned off, pushed off. Its bony terror is as inescapable as the thoughts of our minds or the beats of our hearts. Surely, if men realized it, if women saw it, there would be an end to the mad chase after the physical and the temporal and a hastening to the pursuance of the eternal. Our whole system — social, political, economic, even religious, would be changed over night if by some act of God's grace the inevitability of death were pressed upon the souls of mankind.

*Not only is it universal death, not only is it inescapable death, but by the authority of God's Word, sin is eternal death, the second death, the bottomless pit of a burning, everlasting hell.*

That, too, is the true consequence of sin. Solve the problem of sin, smash the hold of Satan, stop the inroads of temptation, and hell has lost its terrors, while death has been banished from the scheme of eternity. There is an eternal, burning, tormenting hell, a banishment from the presence of God, a place of ceaseless, hopeless, helpless remorse waiting for all those who die with their sins unconfessed and unforgiven. That is the decree of God. That is the dictum of eternity. That is the declaration of the ages.

But there is a way of escape from the curse, from the condemnation, from the doom, from the damnation of sin. It is a God-promised, a Jesus-provided, a Holy-Spirit-proffered way. It is the Bible way, the gospel way, the way of the cross, the way of the blood, the way of Calvary. It cost God all that He was and all that He had, but He offers it freely to the children of men. That is my second word.

## **2. Salvation is through Jesus Christ.**

In Christ Jesus there is absolute, total, eternal, effective salvation for every soul to the ends of the earth.

You say, "Preacher, how can you say that? You don't know all the people in the world. Why, you do not even know all of us here to whom you are preaching. How can you be so dogmatically certain that there is salvation for all of us?"

Beloved, I may not know you. I may not know all the people in the world. But I know the Bible. I know the Lord. It is because I know the Book and the Book's God that I can so unhesitatingly offer salvation to every one of you on the terms of the gospel.

The Bible gives us three foundations, three certainties concerning that redemption. They are all based on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*First, Jesus came to save.*

He Himself said, "**The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.**" "**The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**"

God said about Him, "**Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins.**" That was His mission. That was His ministry.

- For that He left His home in heaven.
- For that He took upon Himself the circumscribed life of a man.
- For that He humbled Himself in the carpenter's shop of Nazareth.
- For that He limited Himself to the fare of the poor, denying Himself even the bare comforts of a home and an affectionate family.
- For that He preached the Word, healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead.
- For that He prayed through the lonely nights with the weight of the world's woes upon Him.

- For that He wept over Jerusalem.
- For that He sweated blood in dark Gethsemane.
- For that He died on the cross.

Yes, there is salvation for every one of you because Jesus Christ came to save.

He died to save. In His own precious body, on Calvary's bitter tree, He bore the sins of every soul among us.

- **“He was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”**
- **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone which hangeth on a tree.”**
- **“Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.”**
- **“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”**

These Scripture passages are clearly definite in their declaration that Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins, died to save us. That death is the seal of the covenant between the Father and the Son by virtue of which covenant we are redeemed when we come to God through faith in Christ.

The blood of Jesus poured out on Calvary's cross ties the hands of God in two ways. He cannot save any sinner outside of the blood; He must save every sinner who comes claiming that atonement. You may be as certain of the forgiveness of your sins as you are of the fact that Jesus died under their burden on Calvary's cross.

Jesus lives to save. Were the cross the end of the life of the Master, were Joseph's tomb still sealed with the grip of death and the grave, our salvation would be a matter of deep doubt, of bitter misgivings. We could not be sure of the immaculate conception of Jesus, of His sinless life, of His matchless teachings, of His mighty works, of His healing, saving, keeping power.

The foundations of our faith are laid in the verity of the resurrection and the eternal, heavenly life of the Redeemer. But we have the Word of God and the testimony of nineteen hundred years of Christian history that the crucified Son of God did rise from the dead, that He did go back to His Father in glory, that in and through the Holy Spirit He has been changing the destinies of men, of nations, of the world.

By faith we, each of us, may experience a personal, definite, dependable indwelling of the living Christ. It is not something to explain, something to reason or argue about. It is a heart-filling possession to be obtained by a glad surrender to the Lord. By that experiential knowledge we come to the conclusion that Jesus lives to save. He walks with us, talks with us, guides us, sustains us, empowers us, enlightens us, ennobles us, enables us, in short, saves us from the drag, the drain, the drought of the slavery of this world into the joy and the fulness of fellowship with and service in God.

It is what the sacred writer sings of when he writes, **“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”** Yes, there is salvation for you because Jesus lives to save.

### **3. Now, my last word: This Salvation is the Free Gift of God's Love.**

**“For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

**“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God, our Savior, towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”**

*It is free because it is priceless, beyond human value and computation.*

There is nothing man knows with which this salvation may be compared. Take all of the blessings God has showered down upon us, add to them all of the manifold material treasures, properties, possessions, accomplishments, achievements, precious things in all the earth, pile them into one glittering heap until they outshine the noonday sun in its splendor. Place by the side of the grand mountain one precious drop of the blood of Jesus. The treasured pile will cheapen by comparison into shoddy, into fool's gold. Compare the possession of salvation, of immortal life and bliss, with any earthly belongings, and you will understand what I mean by the pricelessness of this mightiest of all of God's benefits.

*It is free because it has been paid for.*

- It was paid for in the humbling of the Son of God, when He stripped Himself of His heavenly glory to come down upon the earth to live the life of a circumscribed Galilean peasant Jew.
- It was paid for in the blood sweat of Gethsemane.
- It was paid for in the scourging of the Roman injustice.
- It was paid for in the loneliness, in the shame, in the heartache, in the heartbreak, in the blood-letting, in the blood-shedding of Calvary's cross.

God cannot, God has not, God will not, God does not require any price from us poor sinners save the coin of repentance and faith.

*It is free because it is offered freely to whomsoever will come and take it.*

The Bible is very definite on that point. In many places, in many ways, in precept and in parable, the Holy-Spirit-indited Scriptures offer the blood of Christ, the bread and the water of life, very freely to all comers.

For nineteen hundred years this free salvation has been proffered to the children of men. Multiplied myriads of every clime, country, condition, race, have found their way to the Fountain, even blood-stained Calvary, and have drunk deeply and freely of the flowing blood and water to their own pardon and eternal joy.

The Holy Spirit invites you to that salvation. Every saving promise, every urgent appeal, every wonderful, tenderly wooing word that He can invent He urges upon you to come and be saved, to come fleeing from the wrath to come, to come to escape from the wages of sin.

You are standing at the cross-roads. On the one hand, the Lord is tugging at your heart, pulling at your soul, offering you the blood of Christ for the remission of your sins.

On the other hand, Satan is striving with all his hellish power to keep you from accepting the gospel invitation.

The decision is yours. It is either the wages of sin or the gift of God. It is either Christ or Satan, God or sin, salvation or damnation, life or death, heaven or hell. Your decision will make the difference. The devil will not let you go without a struggle. You must tear loose from him by an act of will. You must step over the line to the Savior. God, for Christ's sake, will do the rest.

Some years ago, the superb young English evangelist, Henry Moorehouse, was invited to a Welsh mining town to hold a revival. The few Christian people there built for him a humble tabernacle—earth floor, four walls, a roof. He started preaching twice each day. The crowds came. Souls were converted. A church was organized. The meeting began to stir the town, becoming the talk of the streets.

One night as Moorehouse started for the pulpit, two of the church-members, men, called him to one side.

“Brother Henry,” they said, “some of us believe you had better close the meeting tonight and leave town.”

“Why, brethren,” questioned the preacher, “what is the matter? What have I done?”

“It is nothing that you have done, Brother Henry; it is what is going to be done to you.”

“What's going to be done to me, and who is going to do it? You may as well tell me. I am not afraid. Besides, I cannot make up my mind properly until I know all the facts.”

“Brother Moorehouse,” said one of the men, “there is a wicked fellow in this town by the name of Ike Miller. He is the vilest, lowest, lewdest man we know anything about. He hates preachers, despises the church, abuses Christians, curses the Lord and the Bible. He told some of us to tell you that unless you close the meeting tonight he's coming tomorrow night to break it up and pistol whip you out of town.”

Henry bowed his head in silent thought. “Brethren,” he said, “I feel very definitely that the Lord has brought me to preach to you. He will take care of me and of this meeting. I am not running. What does this Ike look like?”

They told him. All the next day the preacher scouted and hunted all over the town to find Ike, to talk to him, but he could not locate him.

That night the tabernacle was packed and jammed. Henry gave out a hymn, then another. He called on someone to pray. The crowd sang again. The evangelist read his Scripture, announced his subject, led the congregation in another season of prayer, then began to preach.

He had just well started when the door opened with a bang to admit the bulky, burly form of Ike Miller. Moorehouse recognized him from the description he had received. Ike walked all the way to the front, sat down on the very first bench, and looked up at the preacher, as if to say, “Well, go ahead and do your stuff,” and settled down.

Henry closed his Bible. Once more he lifted his face to God to breathe a silent prayer. Then slowly, gently, clearly, he announced a new text, “**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.**”

He preached a sermon on the love of God that would have melted the heart of a statue. Finishing, he called the people to their feet and led out in the invitation hymn. No one moved. Some few sang. In the middle of the second verse, Ike Miller turned about and heavily stomped out of the room. The crowd broke up at once. The men crowded around the preacher.

“Henry, of all the idiotic things that any preacher ever did, you've done the worst tonight. What does a man like Ike Miller know about the love of God? Why did you not tell him about the wrath of God and the doom of sin?”

Moorehouse bowed his head as the hot tears scalded down his cheeks.

“Brethren,” he plead, “pray for me. Perhaps I have made a mistake, but I was trying to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.”

But the Holy Spirit had known what He was about. It was He who had spoken through the preacher to the sin-cursed heart of the wicked miner.

Ike Miller left the tabernacle blindly and staggered down the main street of the town. He passed saloons, gambling joints, places of infinitely worse repute. Men and women tried to stop him, but he shook them off and kept on walking. He came to the end of the street, turned to the right, walked about a half mile out on a narrow country road, came to a tumbled-down gate in a dilapidated fence enclosing a one-room, weatherboard shack, so old and decrepit that the light could be seen through the spaces between the boards. He made good money but drank and gambled and caroused it away.

He plodded toward the door and pushed it open. The room was bare. There was an old stove in one corner, a bed, a pallet, a table, and two rickety chairs. His wife was seated at the table working on some darning in a sewing- basket. His two children, a girl about ten and a boy about seven, were on each side of their mother, fussing over something in her lap.

They heard the door and looked up to see their father come in. Their little faces blanched with fear. The mother stood up, motioned the children behind her, and slowly backed up toward the bed. The boy and girl swiftly crawled under the bed. They thought the father was drunk, coming to beat up on them. The mother was willingly anxious to take all the abuse upon herself to spare the children. Ike knew what they were doing. He was a rotten sinner, but he had plenty of sense. His heart strained in his great body; his eyes began to smart with unshed tears. Walking into the room, he stretched out his arms and gathered his wife into them.

“Lassie,” he said, “you need not fear anymore. God has brought you a new husband tonight.” He pressed her to his heart while she sobbed. After a bit he released her. Kneeling by the side of the bed, he wheedled his children out. They crept up, saw their mother's tears, and began to cry also.

Ike embraced them, petted them, comforted them, kissed them, cried with them. After a while, he turned to his wife. “Lass, we ought to pray.” All four knelt at the old table. The woman began to pray but broke down. All the pain, the torment, the passion of the abused years came out in her loud weeping. The children sobbed with her.

Ike raised his voice. “Lord,” he said, and stopped. “Master,” and stopped. “Savior,” and stopped. “Father,” and stopped. He did so want to pray, but he did not know how. His sinful heart broke. The long restrained flood of tears swept him in a mighty emotion of penitence and longing. Somehow there came to his mind an old prayer verse he'd learned at the knees of his mother. Lifting his head, he wept out:

“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look upon a little child,  
Pity my simplicity,  
Suffer me to come to Thee.”

Beloved, Jesus reached down from heaven and with His own heart's blood washed away that man's sins. He made him a child of God, called him to preach the Word, used him to win thousands for Christ.

God, for Christ's sake, will do as much for you if you will come, accepting the free gift of His love, even eternal life through Jesus Christ.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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