

FINDING GOD

by

D. L. Moody

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CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW TO BE BORN AGAIN

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15).

I WANT TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION to the little Word **“must”** in John 3. The Son of man must be lifted up. Let us see how God is able to save unto the uttermost. I want you to read verses 14 and 15 of that chapter:

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

Let me tell those who are unsaved what God has done for you. He has done everything that He could do toward your salvation. You need not wait for God to do anything more. In one place He asks the question what more could He do. He sent His prophets and they killed them; and then He sent his beloved Son, and they murdered Him. And at last He has sent the Holy Ghost to convince you of sin and tell how you are to be saved. We are all sinners; and every man and woman knows in their hearts that they are sinners.

Now I want to tell you the remedy for sin, and to tell you how you are to be saved from sin.

Jesus came into the world to save that which was lost; for you know there is no name given among men whereby you can be saved but through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. And again, **“He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.”**

No sinner need die if he but put his trust in Christ. There is no salvation in anything else or in any other name. All the word was that Christ died for our sakes. Read Acts 2 and on through all the chapters; and there is hardly one but speaks of Christ’s death; of Christ dying for us, or rising again for us, of ascending into Heaven for us, and of coming again for us. That is the Gospel of Paul and of Peter; that is the Gospel that Stephen preached when they condemned him to death. Paul preached that at Antioch, Corinth, and Ephesus.

Yes, Christ crucified—that is the remedy for sin. We hear a great many men murmur because God permitted sin to come into the world. They say it is the great mystery. Well, I say it is a great mystery. You may recollect how it also was a mystery to Horatius Bonar.

He said that, although it was a great mystery how sin came into the world, it was a greater mystery how God came here to bear the brunt of it Himself. We could speak all the time about the origin of sin; how it came into the world, but that is not going to help us.

If I see a man tumble into the river and going to drown, it would do no good for me to sit down and bow my head, and indulge in deep thought, reasoning how he came to be there. The great question would then be, how was he to get out.

Just look over your own life. You can prove that you are a sinner and have need of repentance; or if you cannot do it to your own satisfaction, there are some of your neighbors, no doubt, who can do it for you.

And right here comes the remedy for sin.

In John 3, we are told how men are to be saved— namely, by Him who was lifted up on the cross. Just as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever that believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And here some men complain, and say that it is very unreasonable that they should be held responsible for the sin of a man six thousand years ago.

It was not long ago that a man was talking to me about the injustice of being condemned on account of a man having sinned six thousand years ago. If there is a man who is going to answer in that way, I tell him it is not going to do him any good. If you are lost, it will not be on account of Adam's sin.

“Well,” some say, “that is a strange statement for you to make, Mr. Moody.”

I dare say you do think it strange. I wonder what some of the theologians think of it. What do some ministers think? I should like to know. Yet let me say it again: It will not be on the account of Adam's sin that you will be lost, if you are lost. “Why, Mr. Moody, that is a paradox; how do you explain that?”

Well, let me illustrate it, then, and perhaps you will be able to understand it. Suppose I am dying with consumption, which I inherited from my father or mother. I did not get it by any fault of my own, by any neglect of my health; I inherited it, let us suppose. Well, I go to my physician, and to the best physicians; and they all give me up. They say I am incurable; I must die; I have not thirty days to live.

Well, a friend happens to come along, and looks me and says, “Moody, you have got consumption!”

“I know it very well; I don't need anyone to tell me that.”

“But,” he says, “there is a remedy—a remedy I tell you. Let me have your attention. I want you to hear it. I tell you there is a remedy.”

“But, sir, don’t believe it; I have tried the leading physicians! in this country and in Europe, and they tell me there is no hope.”

“But you know me, Moody; you have known me for years.” “Yes, sir.”

“Do you think, then, I would tell you a falsehood?” “No.”

“Well, ten years ago I was as far gone. I was given up by the physicians to die, but I took this medicine and it cured me. I am perfectly well. Look at me.”

I say, “It is a very strange case.”

“Yes, it may be strange; but it is a fact. That medicine cured me. Take this medicine, and it will cure you. Although it has cost me a great deal, it shall not cost you anything.”

Although the salvation of Jesus Christ is as free as the air, it cost God the richest jewel of Heaven. He had to give His only Son; give all He had. He had only one Son, and He gave Him. Do not make light of it, then, I beg of you.

“Well,” I say, “I would like to believe you, but this is contrary to my reason.”

Hearing this, my friend goes away and brings another friend to me; and he testifies to the same thing. He again goes away when I do not yet believe, and brings in another friend, and another, and another; and they all testify to the same thing. They say they were as bad as myself; and that they took the same medicine that has been offered to me, and it cured them. He then hands me the medicine. I dash it to the ground; I do not believe in its saving power; I die. The reason is, then, that I spurned the remedy. So it will not be because Adam fell, but that you spurn the remedy offered to you to save you. You will have darkness rather than light. How, then, shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? There is no hope for you if you neglect the remedy.

It does no good to look at the wound. If we are in the camp and are bitten by the fiery serpents, it will do no good to look at the wound. Looking at a wound will never save anyone. What we must do is to look at the remedy, to look away to Him who hath power to save you from your sin.

Behold the camp of the Israelites; look at the scene that is pictured. Look at the world today. In that past age and right here in the present age, all, all are dying, because they neglect the remedy that is offered.

Fathers and mothers are laying away their children. In that arid desert is many a little grave; many a child has been bitten by the fiery serpents. Over yonder they are just burying a mother. All the family, weeping, gather round the beloved form. You hear the mournful cries, you see the bitter tears. The father is being borne away to his last resting place. There is wailing going up, all over the camp. Tears are being shed for thousands who have passed away, and thousands more are dying; and the plague is raging from one end of the camp to the other.

I see in one tent an Israelitish mother bending over the form of a beloved boy just coming into the bloom of life, just budding into manhood. She is wiping away the sweat of death that is gathering upon his brow. Yet a little while, and his eyes are glazed, and life is ebbing fast away. His eyes are closing in death, and her heart is crushed and bleeding. All at once she hears a shout in the camp. It is a great shout. What does it mean? She goes to the door of the tent. ‘What is the excitement in the camp?’ she asks those passing by; and someone says, ‘Why, my good woman, haven’t you heard the good news that has come into the camp?’

“No,” says the woman. “Good news? What is it?”

“Why, haven’t you heard that God has provided a remedy?”

“What, for the bitten Israelites? Quick, tell me what is the remedy?”

“God has instructed Moses to make a brazen serpent and put it on a pole in the middle of the camp, so that all who look upon it shall not die; and the shout that you hear is the shout of the people when they see the serpent lifted up.”

The mother goes back into the tent, and she says, “My boy, I have good news to tell you. You don’t have to die. My boy, my boy, I have come with good tidings: you can live.”

He is already becoming stupefied; he is so weak he cannot walk to the door of the tent. She puts her strong arms under him and lifts him up. “Look yonder; it is right there under the hill.”

But the boy doesn’t see it; he says: “I don’t see it. Where is it, Mother?”

And she says: “Keep looking, and you will see it.” At last he catches a glimpse of the glistening serpent, and he is well.

That is the young convert. Some men say, “Oh, we don’t believe in sudden conversions.”

How long did it take to cure that boy? How long did it take to cure those serpent-bitten Israelites? It was just a look, and they were well. That is a young convert. I see him now calling on all those who were with him to praise God.

He sees another young man bitten as he was, and he runs up to him and tells him, “You don’t have to die.”

“Oh, no?” the young man says. “How come? There is not a physician in Israel can cure me.” He doesn’t know that he does not have to die.

“Why, haven’t you heard the news? God has provided a remedy.”

“What remedy?”

“God has told Moses to lift up a brazen serpent, and all that look on that serpent shall not die.”

I can just see the young man. He is what you call an intellectual young man. He says to the young convert: “You don’t think I am going to believe anything like that? If the physicians in Israel can’t cure me, you don’t think that an old brass serpent on a pole is going to cure me?”

“Why, sir, I was as bad as you are.”

“You don’t say so?”

“Yes, I do.”

“That is the most astonishing thing I ever heard,” says the young man; “I wish you would explain the philosophy of it.”

“I can’t. I only know that I looked at that serpent, and I was cured; that did it. I just looked; that is all. My mother told me the reports that were being heard through the camp, and I just believed what my mother said, and I am perfectly well.”

“Well, I don’t believe you were bitten as badly as I have been.” The young man pulls up his sleeve. “Look there! There is where I was bitten, and I tell you I was worse than you are.”

“Well, if I understood the philosophy of it I would look and get well.”

“Let your philosophy go; look and live.”

“But, sir, you ask me to do an unreasonable thing. If God said just take the brass and rub it in the bite, there might be something in the brass that would cure the bite. Young man, explain the philosophy of it.”

I have heard just recently some people who have talked that way. But the young man calls in another and takes him into the tent and says: “Just tell him how the Lord saved you”; and he tells the same story, and he calls in others, and they all say just the same thing. And so it is with the religion of Jesus Christ. One and another tell the same story; and by and by all God’s people tell in one way how they are saved—by Jesus of Nazareth; no other name; no other way. If all nations could talk one language, they would tell only one story—name only one name, one remedy.

The young man says it is a very strange thing.

“If the Lord had told Moses to go and get some herbs and some plants and roots and boil them and take the medicine, there is something in that. It is so contrary to my nature to do such a thing as to look at the serpent, that I can’t do it.”

“You can do it.”

At last, the mother has been off out in the camp, and she says: “My boy, I have got just the best news in the world for you. I went out in the camp, and I saw hundreds very far gone; and they are all perfectly well now.”

The young man says: “I would like to get well; it is a very painful thought to die. I want to go into the Promised Land, and it is terrible to die here in this wilderness; but the fact is, I don’t understand it. It doesn’t appeal to my reason. I can’t believe that I can get well in a moment”; and the young man dies in his own unbelief.

Whose fault? Whose fault is the unbelief here? Whose fault is it? God provided a remedy for this bitten Israelite —“**look and live.**” And there is eternal life for every poor bitten Israelite here.

Look, and you can be saved. God has provided a remedy, and it is offered to all. The trouble is, a great many people are looking at the pole. Don’t look at the pole; that doesn’t do any good; that is the church. You need not look at the church. The church is all right, but the church can’t save you. Look beyond the pole. Look at the crucified One; look at Calvary. Bear in mind, sinner, that He died for all. Look in time, sinner, and be saved, since there is no other way.

Since Christ opened the way, it is the way. What other name is there given whereby we can be saved? We don’t want to look at Moses. Moses is all right in his place, but Moses can’t save you. You need not look to these ministers. They are just God’s chosen instruments to hold up the serpent, to hold up the remedy, to hold up Christ. And so take your eyes off men. Take your eyes off the church, but lift them up to Jesus, who took away the sins of the world; and there will be life from this hour.

Thank God, we don’t need an education to know how to look. That little girl who can’t read, that little boy four years old who can’t read, can look. That little boy, when the father is coming home, the mother says, “Look! Look! Look!” and the little child knows to look long before he is a year old; and that is the way to be saved.

It is, “**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**”; and there is life this moment for everyone who is willing to look—not at the church, not at yourselves—but look at Christ.

Some people say: “There is a man; what faith he has! I wish I had his faith.”

You might as well say, “I wish I had his eyes.” You don’t need his faith. What you need is his Christ. You need not be wishing for his eyes; you have eyes of your own.

Some men say, “I wish I knew just how to be saved.” Just take God at His Word, and trust His Son this very hour and this very moment. He will save you, if you will trust Him. I imagine I hear someone saying: “I don’t feel the bite as much as I wish I could. I know I’m a sinner and all that, but I don’t feel the bite enough.” How much do you want to feel it? How much does God want you to feel it?

When I was in Belfast I knew a doctor who had a friend, a leading surgeon there; and he told me that the surgeon's custom was, before performing an operation, to say to the patient, "Take a good look at the wound, and then fix your eyes on me, and don't take them off till I get through." I thought at the time that was a good illustration. Sinner, take a good look at the wound; and then fix your eyes on Christ, and don't take them off. It is better to look at the remedy than at the wound. See what a poor wretched sinner you are; and then look at the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. He died for the ungodly and the sinner. Say, "I'll take Him"; and may God help you to lift your eyes to the Man on Calvary; and as the Israelites looked upon the serpent and were healed, so you may look and live.

After the battles of Pittsburgh Landing and Murfreesboro, I was in a hospital at Murfreesboro. And one night, after midnight, I was awakened and told that there was a man in one of the wards who wanted to see me. I went to him and he called me "chaplain" (I wasn't a chaplain)—and he said he wanted me to help him die. And I said, "I'd take you right up in my arms and carry you into the kingdom of God, if I could; but I can't do it; I can't help you to die." And he said, "Who can?" I said, "The Lord Jesus Christ can. He came for that purpose." He shook his head and said, "He can't save me; I have sinned all my life." And I said, "But he came to save sinners."

I thought of his mother in the North; and I knew that she was anxious that he should die right, and I thought I'd stay with him. I prayed two or three times, and repeated all the promises I could; and I knew that in a few hours he would be gone. I said I wanted to read him a conversation that Christ had with a man who was anxious about his soul. I turned to John 3. His eyes were riveted on me; and when I came to verses 14 and 15, he caught up the words: "**As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.**" He stopped me and said, "Is that there?" I said "Yes," and he asked me to read it again, and I did so. He leaned his elbows on the cot and clasped his hands together and said, "That's good; won't you read it again?" I read it the third time, and then went on with the rest of the chapter. When I finished, his eyes were closed, his hands were folded, and there was a smile on his face. Oh, how it was lit up! What a change had come over it! I saw his lips quivering, and I leaned over him and heard in a faint whisper, "**As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**" He opened his eyes and said: "That's enough; don't read any more." He lingered a few hours, and then pillowed his head on those two verses, and then went up in one of Christ's chariots and took his seat in the kingdom of God.

You may spurn God's remedy and perish; but I tell you God doesn't want you to perish. He says: "**As I live . . . I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked . . . turn ye, turn ye . . . for why will ye die?**" May God help you all to look unto him and be saved!

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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