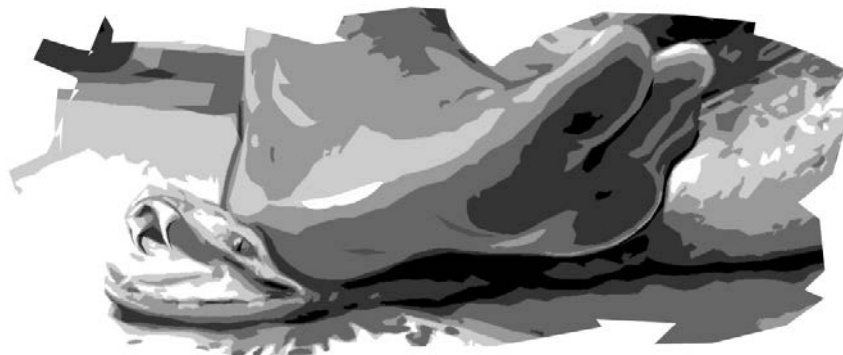


# Salvation: The Only Answer



## SABBATH—OCTOBER 20

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** John 2:25; Jeremiah 17:9; Titus 1:1, 2; Romans 3:19–24; Acts 2:37; Luke 7:47; Ephesians 2:1–5.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life’ ” (John 3:16, NlrV).

**KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT:** The sin problem is very big. But we should be thankful that God had a bigger plan to solve this problem.

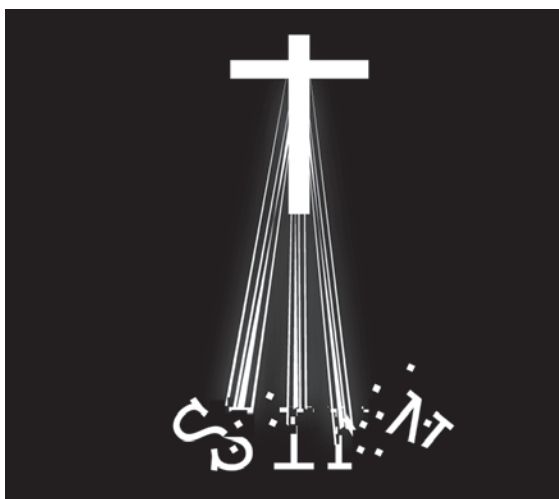
**THE “SIN PROBLEM” IS THE CRISIS CAUSED BY THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.** The Fall brought to the earth the great controversy (war) between good and evil. God's part in the controversy has been to stop, and totally remove, the terrible results of sin. They do not happen just on earth but to all of creation too. The doctrine (teaching) of salvation is God's way of rescuing His creation from the terrible results of sin. That battle for saving humans is being waged (fought) here on earth. But the theme of the great controversy has shown us that the issues (problems) involve all of the universe.

The doctrine of salvation is God's work to save us. But humans have an important part too. Yes, God has prepared a wonderful plan for saving humans. Our important part comes in the answering of the question, What will be our answer to God's plan? The eternal future of souls truly depends on that answer.

**SUNDAY—OCTOBER 21****THE SCOPE<sup>1</sup> OF THE PROBLEM****(John 2:25)**

Salvation is God's answer to the problem of sin. It would not be an answer if it could not solve the problem. The size of the sin problem does not matter.

**Read John 2:25; Psalm 59:2; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 5:12; James 5:1–7; Isaiah 5:23; and 2 Thessalonians 2:10. In what way do these verses show how serious the sin problem is? Have you experienced it yourself or seen it around you?**



**Salvation is God's answer to the problem of sin.**

How many of us know just how bad the sin problem is? We live every moment of our lives with sin around us and see its results. Every part of

human life on this planet has been damaged by sin. From politics to the most hidden places of the human heart, sin has infected all humans. It is so bad that there would have been no answer to the problem if God had not acted. How thankful we should be that the answer has been given by God. It is called "the plan of salvation." Its purpose is to solve the problem of sin.

**MONDAY—OCTOBER 22****GOD'S ANSWER: PART 1****(Titus 1:1, 2)**

The results of sin did not give us time to find an answer. The results of sin happened fast and needed quick attention. So it was necessary for some kind of answer to be ready when sin showed up. Ellen G. White explains it so clearly: "As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer. But He went ahead to become our substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God offered Himself as a ransom [payment for sin] for all humans."—Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 1, page 1084.

**What do Titus 1:1, 2; Ephesians 1:3–5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; and Revelation 13:8 tell us about the plan of salvation and when it was established? What great hope**

1. scope—how far and deep and widespread something is.

and promise can we receive from the verses?



The results of sin happened fast and needed quick attention.

Think deeply about what these verses tell us. What are they saying? From eternity, an answer was given by God for the problem of sin. God did not create sin. (If He had, He would be responsible for it. That would be a very terrible idea.) But God knew that it would happen. So back in eternity He prepared the answer to meet it.

Bible predestination<sup>2</sup> is very different from the way that most people understand it. It was God's plan, from eternity, that all humans would have salvation in Jesus. The fact that some people refuse to accept this salvation does not remove the value of His gift at all. It only adds to the sadness of the fact that many people have been

lost because they did not accept what Jesus did for them.

Think about the amazing truth that God's plan, from eternity, was for you to have salvation. Think about what that means. In what way should a truth like this influence your life?



"As soon as there was sin, there was a Savior."

**TUESDAY—OCTOBER 23**

**GOD'S ANSWER: PART 2  
(1 Corinthians 6:8–11)**

Let us go through salvation history, starting with the first gospel promise (Genesis 3:15), through the early system of sacrifice (Genesis 4:4), the covenant (promise) with Abram (Genesis 12:1–3), and then the Israelite sanctuary (house of God) service (Exodus 25:8). Everything

2. predestination—The Bible teaches that God has "pre-planned" all people to be saved if they choose to accept Christ as their Savior. But most people believe that God has already determined (decided) who is saved and who is not saved even before people are born. This popular belief is not what the Bible teaches us.

was to point to the life, death, return to life, and heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ, God's greatest gift and answer to solve the sin problem.

We can better understand the sin problem if we see what happened at the Cross to solve this problem. The Cross alone proves that it is useless for humans to try to solve the sin problem. A great problem required a great answer. And the death of Christ, which was God taking our sins upon Himself, is about the greatest price that could possibly be imagined.

**Christ's death, His greatest sacrifice for us, is pictured in the Bible as payment for sin. This is how the sin problem is taken care of. How does the death of Christ cover our need for salvation? Explore this question from the following points of view:**

**1. Forgiveness/Restoration (right standing before God):** Read Luke 18:9–14; Isaiah 53:4–7; Romans 3:19–24, 28; and Zechariah 3:1–4.

**2. Righteous (holy) Living/Rebirth (living right before God):** Read 1 Corinthians 6:8–11 and Romans 6:1–8.

**3. Glorification (promise of resurrection to eternal life):** Read John 5:24, 25; 1 John 5:9–13; and 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

**Think about the fact that sin is so bad that it took the Cross to save**

**us from the most terrible result, eternal death. How should keeping the Cross in our minds at all times prevent us from sinning more?**

### WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 24

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION: PART 1 (Acts 2:36–38)

The sinner is forgiven and restored (brought back) to God on the basis (foundation) of Christ's cleansing sacrifice for all (Romans 5:6–10). The gifts that God has made for our forgiveness and restoration to Himself through the death of Christ need to be included in the experience of the believer. It is not enough to just have knowledge of salvation and forgiveness. We need to experience for ourselves what it means.

**Acts 2:36–38 and Acts 3:19 bring up repentance<sup>3</sup> as the beginning of the sinner's experience of salvation. How does being sorry for past sins help us to connect the experience of justification (forgiveness and cleansing) with the death of Christ?**

Think about the following comment: "Nothing touches the soul so deeply as a sense of Christ's pardoning love. For example, sinners think about Christ's unlimited love on the cross. Then they receive the most powerful and best reason possible to repent [turn from sin]. This is God's goodness that leads us to repentance (Romans

3. repentance—being sorry for past sins and following up with a changed lifestyle.

2:4).”—Adapted from *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Idaho: Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 2005), pages 135, 136.

**Read Romans 3:23–25 and Ephesians 2:8. What is the role (duty) of faith in the experience of being justified (forgiven)?**

We are told in the Bible that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). We have also seen that thinking about the love of Christ gives us a very good reason for repentance. Repentance, then, is not the special right of a favored few. For these reasons, it is very important for a person to study deeply what God’s Word (the Bible) has to say about the experience of justification (forgiveness).

It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance and justification. So, if I should repent of sin and experience justification, God is the one to receive the credit. This is because it is by grace<sup>4</sup> through faith that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is truly a valuable gift from God.

**What are some good and positive ways in which you may flood your heart and mind with the goodness of God? How? What has He done for you, and what has He saved you from?**

#### **THURSDAY—OCTOBER 25**

#### **THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION: PART 2 (Romans 5:16, 18)**

When a person is justified (forgiven and cleansed), he or she is expected to change his or her lifestyle with the Holy Spirit’s leading. In justification (forgiveness and cleansing), the sinner is (1) forgiven (Luke 7:47; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 4:7), (2) cleared of the charges of sin, (3) accepted as righteous (Romans 5:16, 18; Romans 8:1), and (4) given the gift of a new life (Ephesians 2:1–5; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

This new experience means that we can stand forgiven and cleansed before God. It does not matter how wrong we have been.

Think through what this means. Christ’s death covers all sin, even the worst. It does not matter how much your own heart might make you feel guilty (1 John 3:20). You simply surrender yourself to Christ, in faith, and accept His perfect life instead of your own “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Then you are at that moment covered in Christ’s righteousness (holy life). His perfect life is given to you as if it were yours. How wonderful is this gift to a sinner!

The question is, How can something like this happen to a person without that person’s life being totally changed? But that change, often called the “new birth,” does occur. It is part of the experience of salvation.

**Read the verses in the above paragraphs and summarize their teachings about justification. Describe how we experience justification in our own lives.**

4. grace—God’s gift of forgiveness and mercy that He gives us to take away our sins.

The experience of forgiveness ends the sinner's downward path toward God's punishment. It also clears away anything that keeps God and humans from enjoying fellowship and restoration (being renewed). A new life opens up for the sinner. He has the honor and right to live in fellowship with Christ under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Repentance is required for entering into the experience of forgiveness and justification. And it comes with confession and baptism (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:9). This helps to explain why forgiveness is available to all, but not all will be forgiven.

**Where would you be if you could not hold on to the promise of mercy during every minute of your life? What if your acceptance with God was not based on what Jesus has done for you but on yourself or your own works and law-keeping?**



Christ gives us His perfect life in place of our own “filthy rags.”

### FRIDAY—OCTOBER 26

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Read Ellen G. White, “‘God With Us,’” pages 19–29, in *The Desire of Ages*; Ivan T. Blazen, “Salvation,” pages 271–313, in Raoul Dederen (editor), *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology [The Study of God]*.

“The plan for our salvation was not a last-minute plan. It was not developed after the fall of Adam. It was ‘in keeping with the mystery that was hidden for a very long time’ (Romans 16:25, NIV). It was an example of the principles [important rules] that have been the foundation of God’s throne from eternity. . . . God did not command that sin should appear. But God knew it was coming. So He developed a good plan to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world that He promised to give His one and only Son. ‘Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.’ ”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 23.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think about how bad sin must be that it took the death of Jesus Himself to solve it. What does the Cross show us about our lack of ability to save ourselves? What do we think we could add to what has already been done for us?
- ② Some believe in the idea that nothing about the Cross changed our

relationship with God. Rather, they think that the whole point of the Cross was to change our attitude (feeling) about God, nothing more. What is so bad about this religious idea? What does it say about the problem of sin if all we need to do to solve it is to make a small change in our attitude about God?

③ How possible is it to have a good deal of knowledge about salvation but not the experience of it? What do you think of Ellen G. White's com-

ment that "holy living for God must be a very important part of Christian experience"?—Adapted from *Our High Calling*, page 243. How do we live out the experience of salvation daily?

④ Think about how important salvation is in the great-controversy theme. Why does Satan want to keep as many people as possible from having salvation in Jesus? What are the tools he uses against us? And how can we defend ourselves against them?