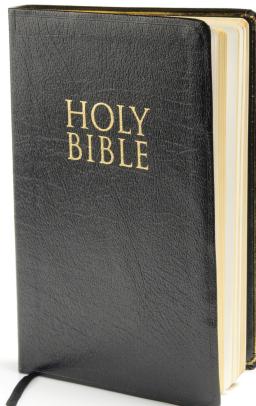


GOSPEL TRACT

HOW A SINNER CAN BE SAVED & HAVE ETERNAL LIFE



20/20
Scriptural Vision

How Can a Sinner Be Saved and Have Eternal Life?

This is a question of the greatest and most profound importance. No question in this life has a greater value put upon it. The answer to that question is found in God's Word by understanding the four points below: (1) Your Sinful Nature and Condition. (2) God's Just Judgment of You. (3) God's Just Remedy for Your Sinful Problem. (4) Your Required Response to God's Remedy.

My friend, your life is but a vapour. You have no promise of tomorrow. "*Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.*" (Psalm 144:4). Today is the day of salvation. You must never set it aside. "*(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*" (2 Cor. 6:2). Nowhere does the Bible promise us innumerable opportunities to be saved. Quite the contrary as we ready in Proverbs 1:20-31, a very fearful passage of Scripture.

Even the smallest measure of human compassion, to say nothing of Christian love, requires that I warn you of the inconceivably horrible, eternal, and unbearable wrath, which quickly and with absolute certainty will fall upon you, the judgment of the all-powerful God, whom you have as your enemy, from whose hand none can hope to escape? "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:22).

Since the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, that would be the King James Bible in the English language, it is rightly man's sole authority for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16), and the sole determiner of the nature of the gospel. Let us appeal to its truths alone.

1. Your Sinful Nature and Condition.

Scripture teaches us that the human race was created perfect, but when the first man, Adam, disobeyed God (Gen. 3), "*sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*" (Rom. 5:12). Likewise by "*the offence of [Adam] many be dead,*" and '*judgment was [upon all] by [Adam] to*

condemnation . . . by one man's offence death reigned by one . . . by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation . . . by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:13- 19). When the father of humanity sinned, we all sinned, we all enter the world with a sinful nature. We can say, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*" (Ps. 51:5). In fact, all people begin life "*dead in trespasses and sins*" (Eph. 2:1) because of the sin of Adam and their own sinful nature, and so are "*children of disobedience . . . by nature the children of wrath*" (Eph. 2:2-3). Jeremiah 17:9 declares that the human "*heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*"

This corruption of heart leads us to commit all kinds of sins and evil (Mk. 7:21-23), even from many ungodly addictions, that so that "*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23). Indeed, "*there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one*" (Rom. 3:10-12). When God looks on humanity, He sees "*that the wickedness of man [is] great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [is] only evil continually.*" (Gen. 6:5).

Until one is born again, he walks "*according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*" (Eph. 2:2-3). Man is naturally so depraved that he will habitually choose evil over good, unless God draws him and enables him to act differently: "*There is none that seeketh after God*" (Rom. 3:11).

Jesus Christ said, "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . . no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father*" (Jn. 6:44, 65). Jer. 13:23 reads, "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*" In fact, until one becomes God's child, "*not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*" (Jn. 1:13), he cannot truly please God in any way, for "*they that are in the flesh [the unsaved] cannot please God*" (Rom. 8:8, cf. Jn. 3:6).

For such "*is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled*" (Ti. 1:15). That applies to all of us before conversion. All men are born as sinners, are totally depraved by nature, and consequently commit innumerable sins and are unable to cease from sinning.

2. God's Just Judgment of You.

God, who is entitled the "*Holy One*" forty-eight times in Scripture (Isa. 1:4, etc), has commanded mankind to be as sinless, righteous, and holy as He is Himself: "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*" (Matt. 5:48). "*Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy*" (Lev. 19:2). He demands perfect conformity to His character in nature and action, and views sin—any and every failure to meet that perfect standard—as an infinitely loathsome and detestable evil.

God's Law, as seen in the Bible, is an expression of His holy character. It pronounces a curse upon all disobedience: "*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*" (Gal. 3:10). Nothing less than sinless perfection is acceptable: "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*" (Jam. 2:10). Every individual sin deserves death and hell, for "*the wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23), which includes "*the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death*" (Rev. 21:8). Since all have sinned, all deserve sin's wages, so that every man's "*damnation is just*" (Rom. 3:8-10).

All who are unsaved, which is by far majority, have the "*wrath of God abiding*" (Jn. 3:36) on them, which brings God's present cursing on your life and eternal judgement. Although they do not yet realize the awful consequences of it, they are "*condemned already*" (Jn. 3:18), with their every heartbeat in the hands of the same God whose holy and just character demands their damnation, and whose wrath could at any moment break forth on them and send them to "*unquenchable fire*" and "*everlasting punishment*" (Matt. 3:12, 25:46). "*Let death seize upon them, and let*

them go down quick into hell:" (Ps. 55:15a), where you will "be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction:" (De. 32:24a).

We are all indeed worthy to be "*cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*" (Mk. 9:45), for "*whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*" (Rev. 20:15), into the "*furnace of fire:*" where "*there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*" (Matt. 13:42), where you will have "*no rest day nor night*" (Rev. 14:11), and "*shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever:*" (Rev. 20:10b).

3. God's Just Remedy for Your Sinful Problem.

My friend, escape from destruction and damnation, and enter into the presence of God, who is of "*purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*" (Hab. 1:13), Who requires that man be both absolutely sinless and perfectly righteous. As noted, men are sinners by birth and choice, and "*are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*" (Isa. 64:6), we are ruined, depraved and utterly unable to please God, so hell would appear an absolute certainty for all.

However, God made a glorious provision for man's salvation! "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (Jn. 3:16). God's eternal Son, the second Person of the Triune God, equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 5:7, Matt. 28:19; Pr. 8:22-36), left His heavenly glory to become a Man, Jesus Christ. "*God was manifest in the flesh*" (1 Tim. 3:16), "*and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*" (Matt. 1:23).

The Lord Jesus lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death on the cross, and rose bodily from the grave the third day. On the cross, He "*once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*" (1 Pet. 3:18), and "*redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*" (Gal. 3:13). God the Father "*made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*" (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus Christ "*knew no sin;*" He had no sin in Adam or sin

nature, for He was virgin born (Matt. 1:23, Luke 1:35), and throughout His life He fully obeyed the demands of the Law of God.

When He died, God "*made him to be sin for us,*" for "*the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*" (Isa. 53:6; compare 1 Jn. 2:2). All the sins of the world were placed on Jesus Christ, who suffered and paid in full the legal penalty demanded. He endured this so that "*we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" Having died and shed His blood to fulfill the demands of the Law, the Son of God forgives all sins—past, present, and future—of those whom He "*washes ... from [their] sins in his own blood*" (Rev. 1:5). "*Christ died ... [so that we might be] justified by his blood*" (Rom. 5:8-9). God "*justifieth the ungodly*" (Rom. 4:5). To be *justified* means to be *declared righteous*. God not only forgives all the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, but He judicially reckons them just. Because Christ having suffered and died as their Substitute to pay for their sins, God accounts to the redeemed the righteousness of His Son. Their sin debt is paid in full, and the Father views them as if they had no sin nature, had lived a sinless life as did Christ, and were as spotless and holy as Jesus Himself, for "*Christ Jesus ... is made unto [them] wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*" (1 Cor. 1:30). They can say, "*the LORD [is] our righteousness*" (Jer. 33:16, 23:6), since they have been "*made the righteousness of God in him*" (2 Cor. 5:21).

The Lord Jesus Christ's work on the cross is sufficient to satisfy in full the demands of the Law and to perfectly and eternally save the worst sinner, yea the ungodly (Rom. 5:6), who receives pardon through it (Rom. 5:6-11).

4. Your Required Response to God's Remedy.

God decreed that the redemption Christ purchased on the cross would be received by "*repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Ac. 20:21).

One repents of his sin and places his faith in Christ for salvation at a particular moment of time (2 Cor. 6:2); repentance and faith expressing the two aspects of the one heart response to receive Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:12), so that those who truly repent will turn and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who truly believe in Christ

have repented. The Bible warns that “*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Lk. 13:3) and “*he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mk. 16:16). It also states, “*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*” (Ac. 3:19), and “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*” (Jn. 3:36). Repentance and faith is both required.

God “*now commandeth all men every where to repent*” (Ac. 17:30). What does it mean to repent? Saving repentance is granted by the goodness of God (Ac. 11:18; Rom. 2:4), where a sinner, having agreed with God that he is lost, is as wicked as the Bible declares (Lev. 26:40-41), and is headed to eternal hell fire of which he is worthy (cf. 1 Ki. 8:47-48; Lk. 5:32; 2 Tim. 2:25), with godly sorrow over his sins (2 Cor. 7:9-11) turns from them all (Ezk. 14:6; 1 Th. 1:9; Rev. 16:11) and from all other idols (self, stuff, people), denying himself by losing his life for Christ and the gospel sake (Mk. 8:34-37; Lk. 14:25–15:32; Jn. 12:25) and turns to God to submit and surrender to Him unconditionally as Lord (1 Th. 1:9-10; Ac. 9:4-6; Rom. 14:11) fully believing and trusting in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation (Ac. 3:19 & 4:4; 20:21). You cannot repent, that is, turn from your sins, yourself, your stuff and and your people (Is. 55:7; Ezek. 33:11; Lk. 14:25–15:22; Rev. 2:22; 9:20-21), without first genuinely seeking after God (Pr. 8:17, 35; Isa. 55:1-6), without believing and receiving God’s Word as truth (2 Th. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:23-25), without fearing God with trembling and sorrow (Pr. 14:27; 22:4; Ac. 13:26; 19:17; 2 Cor. 7:10) and a broken and contrite heart and spirit (Ps. 34:18; 51:17; Is. 61:1; Matt. 5:3-4; 21:44), without acknowledging your desperately wicked and ungodly and sinful state and life before God (Jer. 17:9; Ps. 32:5; Rom. 3:10-20); nor can you believe or trust in Christ to save you from sin’s penalty without wanting the Savior to free you from sin’s enslaving power (cf. Matt. 21:32; Ac. 19:17-19; Ti 2:11-14); nor can you believe in Christ as your new Master without turning from the old master (Matt. 6:24), from sin (Mk. 2:17; Lk. 15:4-22; 1 Th. 1:9; Rev. 9:20-21; 16:11; etc), from self and family (Lk 14:25-35; Matt 10:32-39) and from your love of money and material (Mk 10:21-31).

The Lord Jesus Christ declared, “*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life [wants to live his own way and will not turn to God’s way] shall lose it [in hell]; but*

whosoever shall lose his life [deny self and surrender to Jesus Christ] for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it [receive life, and eternal life]. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? [in hell] Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mk. 8:34-37).

When people turn from their sins and from themselves, and surrender to Jesus Christ, God immediately changes them so that those who “*repent and turn to God*” will “*do works meet for [i.e. befitting] repentance*” (Ac. 26:20) and “*bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*” (Matt. 3:8), which happens immediately (Col. 1:6), “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” (Eph. 2:10). While doing good works is not part of repentance and salvation but a result of it, all who truly repent and believe in Jesus Christ will immediately manifest their change of heart in a changed and fruitful life for God (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:17; Jam. 2:14-26; Col. 1:4-6; Mk. 4:20-19; Lk. 8:15-16; Matt. 3:8; 7:15-20; 21:41-44; 2 Cor. 9:10; Jam. 1:18; 3:17). “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” (2 Cor. 5:17). At the very moment of conversion, the sinner overcomes the world (I Jn. 5:1-5; 2:13-14; 5:4-5; Rev. 2-3), the devil (1 Jn. 2:13-14; 4:3-4) and the flesh (Rom 6:1-7:6) and is translated from darkness into light forever, from being in the flesh to being in the Spirit forever, from being on the wide path to destruction to the narrow path of life forever, from being an enemy of God to being a friend of God forever, etc. Many things occur at the very moment of conversion and continue on into eternity, so that you are in want of nothing (Psalm 23).

You exercise saving faith, when accepting the truths of the gospel in your repentant heart, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation. The Lord Jesus said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life*” (Jn. 6:47). The kind of faith that brings justification is not merely intellectual (head) knowledge of the gospel or of the Bible. Rather, to “*believe on him*” and be “*justified by faith*” is repentant faith (Acts 3:19; 4:4) and includes “*being fully persuaded that, what [God] had promised, he was able also to perform*” (Rom. 4:21-5:1), so to “*trust in the Lord*” (Phil. 2:24), to “*trust ... in God*” (2 Cor. 1:9) for the salvation of your desperately wicked and deceitful heart. One who has justifying

faith can say, “*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*” (2 Tim. 1:12).

Recognizing that he is totally unable to save or help save himself, a man is justified or declared righteous in the sight of God when he entrusts his soul to Christ alone to give him eternal salvation and the washing of all his sin.

It is impossible for a man to savingly believe on Jesus Christ while thinking that his works have anything to do with finding favour with God and obtaining the forgiveness of sin. The Bible says, “*For by grace [undeserved favour] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Eph. 2:8-9). If salvation is “*by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work*” (Rom. 11:6); grace and works are mutually exclusive in the matter of salvation, the forgiveness of a sinner’s sins. Anyone who believes that deeds, such as humility, “trying your best,” baptism, church attendance, partaking of the Lord’s supper, pursuing obedience to the Bible, daily prayer, confession of sin, conforming to the law of God, keeping the Lord’s day, or doing “good” and “your best,” confessing your sins before God, reforming or overcoming an addiction through repetitive chants or actions, or any other act has a particle to do with receiving justification before God does not believe in Jesus Christ at all; he merely has intellectual understanding of the facts of the gospel, a kind of “faith” that he shares with the devils (Jam. 2:19) and the damned. Rather, “*to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*” (Rom. 4:5).

As long as one is working for salvation or believes he has an ounce of righteousness in him (Rom 10:1-6), he does not believe in Jesus Christ for it, because salvation is for the one who “*worketh not, but believeth on him*.” (Rom. 4:5). Saving faith trusts and commits that Christ is actually Lord and Saviour, and so is One who saves men without the “filthy rags” of “all our righteousnesses” (Isa. 64:6) as blasphemous additions to the sufficiency of the death and shed blood (Rev. 7:14, 1:5) of Him who “*is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him*” (Heb. 7:25). God’s saints are “*found in him, not having [their] own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God*

by faith” (Phil. 3:9). Saving faith looks to the Lord Jesus and His work on the cross alone for salvation. If one truly believes that “*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (Jn. 3:16), he will not add conditions to salvation that God has not added. If God says “*whosoever believeth in him*” is certain of everlasting life, then, obviously, belief in Christ is sufficient to save. Since the Bible promises that “*he that believeth on him is not condemned*” (Jn. 3:18), the very moment one truly believes in Jesus Christ he “*hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life*” (Jn. 5:24). That means you can never lose that most wonderful “*gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” (Rom 6:23b). If you believe you can lose your salvation, then you do not believe in the gospel found in Scripture, nor in the Jesus of Scripture regardless of your flattery, but in “another gospel” and “another Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:4), and do make God out to be a liar by denying the record that He gave of His Son (1 Jn. 5:9-13).

The instant one repently believes, all of his past, present, and future sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and he receives the righteousness of Christ as his legal standing before God. Because the Lord Jesus paid for his sins in full when He died as his Substitute, God treats every believer as if he were as sinless and righteous as His own Son. The penalty of the Law entirely satisfied, both God’s justice and mercy demand the eternal salvation of the justified individual. God is “*just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*” (Rom. 3:26), so we conclude, with the Apostle Paul, that “*a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*” (Rom. 3:28).

Will you repent and believe for the salvation of your soul and receive eternal life, or will you resist and deny the conviction and reproof of God the Spirit on your heart that is “*deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*” (Jer. 17:9)?

You do not have innumerable opportunity to be saved. God eventually stops working in the lives of those He reprobates and convicts and grants repentance, which is all, when they heed not His call. Many are called, few are chosen, because few choose God. They will not repent because they “*loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh*

to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (Jn. 3:19-21). The time to be saved is when God is drawing you, convicting you, and reprobating you.

I urge you to reckon the warning of God here, to them, maybe you, who will heed not His call:

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

(Proverbs 1:20-33).

If you would like further information and/or speak to someone about the need of your soul, please contact Reuben at 2020scripturalvision@gmail.com