

The Substitute

There was one who died a most cruel and torturous death, but he had not done anything wrong; in fact he was declared innocent, but he had to die just the same. There were those who hated him even though he had done them no wrong. In fact, everywhere he went, he showed and proved how much he loved and cared for people. Yet, in spite of everything, he was arrested, and so severely beaten that he was almost beyond physical recognition; this and much more. In the end, he was made to carry his own instrument of death, the instrument upon which he would die. As he suffered and bled, he prayed that those who were killing him would be forgiven. Talk about a love for people! Who was this man? It was none other than Jesus Christ Himself! And why would He go through all of this? Please give me a couple of minutes to explain.

It all started in the Garden of Eden when Adam sinned against God and, by that act, the sin nature came into the realm of humanity. As a result, **ALL** of us have inherited the sin nature. The sin that Adam committed was disobedience; he disobeyed God by eating the fruit of a forbidden tree. God had declared that the result of doing this would be death - both spiritual and physical death. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." {Genesis 2:17} It was through the temptation of Satan that Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." {Genesis 3:6} At that moment, Adam and Eve immediately died spiritually and eventually they died physically, and it has been that way ever since. To this very day all of humanity is born with a sin nature out of which the various acts of sin are committed; all of humanity is spiritually dead. Now the question is, "What happens to spiritually dead people?" According to the Bible, when they die they immediately go to the place called hell; there is no place in-between called purgatory and, once in hell, there are no second chances, no opportunity for getting out. Guess what? It does not have to end that way!

I am so happy to be able to tell you that our sin debt has been paid in full! That is why Jesus Christ died and shed His blood on the Cross of Calvary. God has never intended that any of us should have to die in our sins; that none of us has to go to the place the Bible calls hell. Hell and the lake of fire were not created for us, but for the devil. ". . . , into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:" {Matthew 25:41} Please, consider these very basic Bible verses.

1. Jesus Christ is God the Son who left Heaven's glory and came to earth for one purpose and one purpose only, to pay our sin debt on the Cross of Calvary. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." {Luke 19:10} Jesus Christ is THE Messiah promised by God. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (the word "Christ" is Messiah in Greek){Luke 2:11}
2. Jesus Christ had/has no earthly father; Mary was conceived of by the Holy Spirit so the sin nature could not and was not passed on to Him. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." {Matthew 1:18}
3. By one man, sin came into the world. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" {Romans 5:12}
4. By one Man, the sin debt was paid. PERIOD! "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." {Romans 5:8}"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Hebrews 9:14}
5. Death is the payment for being a sinner, but God offers the gift of life. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." {Romans 6:23}
6. God is not willing that any should perish. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." {2 Peter 3:9}

7. ALL of this is based on God's great love for us. "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." {John 3:16}
8. He invites all of mankind to call upon Him. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." {Romans 10:13}
9. He promises NOT to turn anyone away. ". . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." {John 6:37}
10. Those who believe on Him are forgiven but, those who do not believe are condemned now. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." {John 3:36}
11. In God's Word, He has given us assurance of salvation. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." {1 John 5:13}

There are so many Bible verses that could be shared, but these should be enough to show you that forgiveness for sin and salvation is possible in Jesus Christ. Friend, will **YOU** repent and trust Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? If you do, you will never regret it! After you trust Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, it is so important that you read God's Word daily, pray, and attend a good fundamental, Bible believing and Bible preaching church.

--Richard A. Ciarrocca©2015