

From the time of Adam, all people have suffered the consequence of Adam's sin. Eventually, every person became separated from God because they chose to do wrong instead of right. Every person eventually followed in the path of their father Adam. And, like Adam, we all bear the consequence that God imposed upon him. God has not made a separate agreement with each of us. He let Adam be the representative for all mankind, and the consequence for sin imposed upon Adam has been passed down to all who followed him. Thus, we might consider Adam to be responsible for ushering in an age of sin and death. Does it seem fair to you to let one person's sin result in the same consequence for every person?

Well ... be careful how you answer, because it is this type of reasoning which also allows for your salvation from sin. Consider, if you will, in the midst of this world which is totally ruled by the law of sin and death, one person emerges who never sinned. He is totally righteous; that is, He always did what was right in the sight of God. In Hebrews 4:15 He is described as "one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." What kind of impact do you think this person's life would have upon Satan's accusations? No longer could he claim that all of mankind was undeserving of God's blessings and favor. Now there was one person in whom God totally delighted ... one person who actually deserved to be in fellowship with God and who did not deserve to die. What chain of events would be set in motion if that one righteous person did die, voluntarily, for the sake of others who were not righteous?

In Romans 5:19 the apostle Paul explained the result of the righteous life of Jesus. He said, "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous." Even as Adam was responsible for ushering in an age of sin and death; Christ is responsible for ushering in an age of righteousness and eternal reward. Just as God allowed the consequence of Adam's sin to be passed on to all who follow him, He also allows the reward of Christ's righteousness to be passed on to all who follow Christ. In essence, Paul described the "gospel" (or the good news of Christ) in Romans 3:24-26. He said that the sinless Christ took our place, represented us before God, and paid the penalty for our sins.

A story comes out of Scotland about a judge whose best and long time friend stood before his bench. This old friend was truly guilty of the charge against him, but was destitute to pay the fine. He begged and pleaded for mercy, dreading the prospect of prison. But he was guilty. If a penalty was not paid, then the judge himself would be guilty of being unjust and unfair. How could he ever pass condemnation upon future criminals if he showed leniency now? So ... his gavel fell as he pronounced the maximum fine allowed by law upon his dear old friend. Then, taking off his judges robe, he stepped down to the floor, stood beside his friend, and paid the fine that he himself had imposed. No one could deny that justice had been served. No one could say that he was unjust; and no one could fault him for condemning criminals in the future.

In all the world, there is only one place where sin is pardoned by God ... and that is "in Christ." God became flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. For one moment, He set aside His judge's robe, stepped down upon the earth, and paid the debt that He Himself had imposed. We were destitute to pay this debt. Only He could take our place. Only the sinless Savior could silence the accusations of Satan and provide for us a haven of safety. The apostle Peter said, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) It is not prejudice; it is not bigotry which excludes all other religions from God's salvation. It was Jesus who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). We either believe this or reject it, but we cannot ignore it. Jesus Christ provided the only possible means by which God could prove Himself to be just and still forgive our sins (Romans 3:25-26).

Please listen and understand the exclusiveness of Christ. A choice must be made. We either allow the righteousness of Christ to represent us before God, or else we stand before God alone. Jesus wants to represent us. In II Corinthians 5:21 Paul wrote, "(God) made Him who knew no sin

to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God **in Him.**” In Isaiah 53:5 we read, “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.” Dear friends, these claims can not be made of any other religious figure. We either stand with Christ, or we stand alone. Scripture after Scripture could be quoted which all agree: Salvation is through Him, Reconciliation is through Him, Spiritual Blessings are in Him (Romans 5:8-9; II Corinthians 5:18; Ephesians 1:3-7). Truly, we must realize that salvation is only “in Christ.” In the next Bible Talk, we shall explore what our response must be to the gift of God through Christ.



Bible Probe

SALVATION IS ONLY IN CHRIST

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1. Do you think it was fair for God to allow the consequences of Adam’s sin to be imposed upon all who followed in his example? (Romans 5:12)

2. Do you think it is fair for God to allow the reward of Christ’s righteousness to be extended to all who become His disciples? (Romans 5:19)

3. From Romans 3:24-26 (NASB), how would you define:
 - Justified
 - Grace
 - Redemption
 - Propitiation
 - Righteousness

4. Explain, as best you can, how the sacrifice of the sinless Savior silenced the accusations of Satan that God was unrighteous in His dealings with sinful man.

5. Having paid the debt for sin and provided a haven of salvation in Christ, would God now be seen as unfair and unrighteous if He saved some people while condemning others?

6. If the Bible message is true, can there be salvation in any other person or means than Christ? (Acts 4:12; John 14:6)

7. The scriptures are consistent, salvation is found only “**IN** _____”.
(II Corinthians 5:18, 21; Romans 5:8-9; Ephesians 1:3-7)