

“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”

By C.W. Wood

September/October 2012

In Acts 16:30, the Philippian Jailer asks the question that every living person must honestly ask before he can be brought into favor and fellowship with God, **“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”** God’s first step in returning the lost unto Himself is to produce in them a deep sin-consciousness. We call it *conviction*. Man has no ground and no merits by which he may approach God no matter how educated he may be in the scriptures or in what we call the MESSAGE. If God receives a man, it must be because he confesses himself to be a hopeless, helpless, hell-bound SINNER. The unregenerate man is not able to love God. Though he may put up a religious front, his so-called Christian walk will always be a burden to him. It will lack that joy of service that comes to the Born-Again person.

It is the grace of God that puts the knowledge of his need into the unconverted man. As the Philippian jailer, we must all be made to cry out, **“What must I do to be saved?”** and one of the first things we must learn is that **“MUCH LEARNING”** is not the initial evidence of the New Birth. There are those who are ever learning more about the Bible and the Message, but who have not come into the **“Knowledge of the Truth”** about the New Birth. (II Tim. 3:7) It is quite possible to be much informed in the Prophet’s Message, and still be **“DEAD”** in our attitude and faith toward God.

How can a person who has been dead in their attitude toward God be made alive? We are up against the same kind of a problem that we see in Pentecost where they accept tongues as evidence of the Holy

Ghost. In far too many cases, it is feared that Message Believers have accepted **“Knowledge of the Mysteries”** as evidence. Our only hope is to become convinced that we need a **RADICAL CHANGE** in our inner nature. And, this conviction can come when we, with complete honesty, examine the fruit hanging from our tree. When the Holy Ghost comes in, the things of this world will begin to drop off of us.

We will have no more problems about the hair styles, or the dress code. The world’s way of amusement will leave us cold. We will be grieved in our spirits by the very things we use to love. Our attitude toward the Holy God will undergo a mighty change. No longer will we see how much of the world we can retain and still stay in a Message Church. But, there will, no doubt, always be those who will not confess any need of change, and continue to trust in their own estimation of the natural man, and in the knowledge they have gained from a Prophet and his Message. Rather than believe that human nature is in utter ruin, and that the whole man is depraved by reason of the sin of Adam and in need of a supernatural miracle, they believe they are in the process of being **REFORMED** through their **KNOWLEDGE**. By far, the largest part of the religious world believes that given proper environment, liberal education, and the chance to **“Make the best of what he already has”** that man may,

by his own natural development, come to the place of being received by God. To make this wrong teaching plainer, they are believing that Salvation is not by **GRACE**, which bestows the New Birth, but by man setting out to improve himself through education. Even though we may be well educated in the Prophet’s Message, we still must have the New Birth to make it live, and to save the Soul. Rather than teaching that natural man is **“Dead in trespasses and sin,”** (Eph. 2:1) many are teaching that he is only diseased. Rather than believing that he is totally wicked, they teach he is only weak. Rather than teaching man is completely fallen, they say he only faints occasionally. Therefore, they attempt to bring man to Salvation through culture, through education, and yes, the most deceiving of all ways, through **RELIGION**. In such teaching, man becomes his own Savior, and Salvation is nothing but some improvement in conduct and some changes in Doctrine, on which God is expected to place His stamp of approval.

When the eyes of Adam and Eve had been opened to evil and their own sin, rather than seeking God and confessing, they made for themselves aprons of fig leaves. That same spirit that motivated Adam and Eve still has the majority of man-kind trying to cover their sins with some garment of their own making. They trust that their

way will somehow be pleasing to God. But, even though the covering be the "Message of the Hour," no garment of Salvation except the one He, Himself provides, will be acceptable to our Holy, Righteous God.

By the slaying of an innocent animal, God agreed that they did certainly need a covering, but at the same time showed that the one they had made was rejected. They did not understand the terrible nature of the sin they had committed, nor the fact that it would take the Blood of an innocent one to pay the debt. By God's gracious act of shedding animal's blood, the death of Christ was shadowed forth. Now, all men are to understand that, **"Without the shedding of His Blood, there is no remission of sin."** (Heb. 9:22) The absolute righteousness of God demands the same absolute righteousness in all who are acceptable in His sight. This demand is one that no human can, of himself, ever meet. Some day when self-righteous people stand before God, there will come a terrible disappointment when they are told that **"All their righteousness is as filthy rags."** (Isa. 64:6) They will be condemned for refusing the **"Gift of righteousness"** that was offered in Rom. 5:17. God looks at our righteousness, that may have been ever so carefully cultivated, and says through the mouth of His Prophet Isaiah, **"But we are all as an unclean thing....and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."** (Isa. 64:6)

QUOTE: YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN, PAGE 14, "First we reckon ourselves SINNERS, and worthy of condemnation. (And knowledge of the Message alone does not change this fact.) We are all born in sin and shaped in iniquity. There is not a sound parcel of us (in us). Our minds are bad, our

soul is corrupted, our constant thinking is evil, a SINNER. And also, that our body is weak, our spirit is no good, and we're just full of corruption." (End of quote)

No one, whose spiritual eyes have been opened to see the Great King of Righteousness, will have any hope of making Heaven through his own righteousness. The person who still depends upon any righteousness within himself only proves that his mind is still blinded by the "God of this evil age," and that he needs the Gospel preached to him. **"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted unto the righteousness of God."** (Rom. 10:3) **"Then said I, woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."** (Isa. 6:5) The Apostle Paul testified and said, **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."** (I Tim. 1:15)

Through self-cultivation, self-discipline, and self-education, some have been able to bring about certain reforms within themselves. They have been able to conform to most of the outward rules of Message Churches, and have been accepted by those around them. But, no living person has ever been able to make himself righteous, and without righteousness, no man is acceptable to God. This was Cain's grave mistake, and more than a mistake, it was a sin. He brought an offering that showed he had no right sense of his sins, but came with complete confidence in himself. Friends, we may come to God with complete confidence in our knowledge of the Message, but un-

til we come as Able did, showing forth our need to be changed in our soul, we cannot be accepted. We must be Born-Again!

Some have believed in Brother William Branham and have intellectually accepted him as the Prophet that was to come! It is very commendable of any person to have investigated the life of Brother Branham and placed him in the Word as Mal. 4:5 Prophet. Without a doubt, this shows a good mind and some interest in the things of God. But, the same rule applies to us that we have pressed upon the denominational world; we must be Born-Again. What a sad thing if some of these good people are left to think that because of their belief in the Message, they have been granted Eternal Life. The Pharisees considered themselves to be "THE" teachers of religion. They fasted, they prayed, they paid tithes, yet the Apostle Paul prayed that "They might be saved." They had a zeal for God, but they were going about to establish their own righteousness through intellectual knowledge of the scriptures. They did not have the Holy Ghost (New Birth). We have seen how that in the nominal church world "RELIGION" has become the rule. Do we not also see that some of our own people have not escaped the temptation to make for themselves, **"Aprons of fig leaves"?**

I read of a woman in China who was ardent Buddhist. At age 76 she still rose every morning at 4 o'clock and spent the hours until noon without food, while she performed the rites of her heathen worship. She walked long distances to the temple. She burned her bundles of incense, and lighted her candles. She gave of her time and her money, and her days were spent in religious works. But, at age 76, she was still an idolatrous, unsaved

woman, as we Christians well know. But friends, she was not one bit more unsaved than the person in our Message who, without the Holy Ghost, offers to God their belief in a Prophet as ground for being taken in the Rapture!

Belief in our Prophet, as important as it is, cannot lift the sin-load from our shoulders, sanctify us, and fill us with the Holy Ghost. This is the work of our supernatural God. Our Prophet was only the MEANS by which we are to be led to Jesus Christ. We must invite our people, many of whom have now grown up in the Message Churches, to **“Come to Christ, and beseech them to be reconciled to God.”** (II Cor. 5:20) It is not wrong to recognize the Lord’s saved people by their fruits, and neither is it wrong to recognize the unsaved by their lack of them. Knowing them by their fruits is not ‘judging’ unless we are of a spirit that would call the fire down. With love in our hearts, we can be truly concerned about their welfare, and be burdened to save them from their cloak of religion.

It is a known fact that the Lord allows Satan to preach “RELIGION” as a way of Salvation. These man-made, Satan-inspired religions have different names, and various ways of soothing the conscience of those who know not the Lord. There are religious programs suited to catch and hold a man in the way he is leaning. There is one kind for the unlearned, another for the educated, and one for the simple and superstitious. There is one kind for the rich and cultured, and a kind for the poor. Perhaps this is not something we did not already know, but do we know that there is also a religion for those who believe in a Prophet, but who have not been born-again?

We have in the Message today some brilliant minds, and thank God for them. They have under-

standing on top of understanding concerning the deep mysteries of God. But, we must never forsake the number one doctrine of the Bible and the Prophet, which doctrine is, **“Ye must be born again.”** When we forsake this foundation stone, we are changed into a group that is only “RELIGIOUS” and we have no more to recommend us to God than the systems around us. There is nothing in this world any more deceiving than when Satan turns himself into an Angel of Light and begins to preach “The Message of the Hour.” We have been forewarned that this is exactly what he would do. In his disguise, he does not ridicule our glorious Message, but rather promotes it with great skill and shrewdness. His motive is to direct attention away from the Christ Who SENT the Message, and center it on the messenger who brought it.

Disguised as a true believer, Satan’s message is not, *Come to Jesus for the New Birth*, but rather, *believe every word the Prophet said*. He does not teach, *Three steps to full Salvation*, but instead he reasons that knowing who the Prophet was and understanding his Message is the passport into the Kingdom. Satan will teach the deep mysteries correctly. He will show the great types in the Old Testament, and tie them into the Message for us. Then he will use our super knowledge and say to us, “That is your proof of the New Birth.” No friends, that could only mean that we have been EDUCATED to believe certain doctrines.

You may ask, “Do you mean to say that we can understand and BELIEVE all these things and still not be Born Again? How is that possible?” It can happen on this wise; we can hear certain things so often and so long that the mind is trained to *believe* them and yet not

have the Holy Ghost to enable us to LIVE what we say we believe. The Holy Ghost is our LIFE.

QUOTE: IT IS THE RISING OF THE SUN, PAGE 6, “Satan doesn’t care how religious you are, or HOW RIGHT YOU ARE IN YOUR DOCTRINE. IF YOU MISS THAT LIFE YOU WON’T COME UP ANYWAY. No matter how religious, how good. How many churches you’ve belonged to. IT DOESN’T MATTER ONE THING (doesn’t help) UNLESS YOU HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN.” (End of quote)

And so, we must be duly warned that there is a SYSTEM OF RELIGION even in our Message Churches that is geared to suit those who have seen a Prophet, but who have not submitted to His Christ and received the Holy Ghost. As I listen to God-called ministers in our Message, I hear a great concern in their sermons and sense an anxiousness in them for their congregations. They know that a man is either “DEAD OR ALIVE” as far as the Rapture is concerned. There are no “white black birds” and no “drunk sober men.” They fear lest any of their people die unchanged in their soul (nature) or that the Rapture catch them so.

The spiritual change from death to life is the greatest of all changes and nothing short of this will avail to get us in the Rapture. To entice people to change their doctrine and come into the Message is not enough. To believe the Serpent’s Seed, One God instead of three, baptism in the Jesus Name, to see the sin of denominationalism, and to accept Brother Branham as the Prophet of Mal 4:5 is well and good, but that is not proof that we are Born Again.

QUOTE: IT IS THE RISING OF THE SUN, PAGE 12, “I’m afraid today that too many of us are

not getting people to Christ. We're getting them to a church, to a theory (getting them to change their doctrine) but we must get them to Christ. He is the ONLY ONE, and the only One who has LIFE." (End of quote)

It is not just a change of doctrine that we need. Not just a little patching up and turning over a new leaf, not just a new set of church rules to abide by, but the planting of a NEW NATURE within us. It is the creation of a NEW BEING inside of us. The natural birth is no more necessary to the life of the body than is the spiritual birth to the life of the soul. Many will not like this message. They would make the door wider, or climb up some other way, but the Lord Jesus who gives the New Birth, is the only way.

We may take up new doctrine and a set of Holiness Church rules, and lay aside some of our most obvious sin, but we cannot change our own hearts. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, neither can we put life into our old wine skins (soul). But, the Holy Ghost can take one of the bitterest enemies Christianity ever had and make out of him a preacher of the very faith he once destroyed. He did so with the Apostle Paul. The Holy Ghost can take a Roman Catholic Monk and make of him

the great preacher of Justification by Faith that Martin Luther was. He can take the uneducated son of a bootlegger who was raised under the rule of "a life for a life" and who would have lived by that rule more than once had God not stopped him, and changed him into one of the greatest examples of the Love of Jesus this modern world has ever seen.

How much more then will this same Holy Ghost come and fill the precious people who already believe God's End-Time Message! This sermon is not to condemn one single Message Believer, but to let us check ourselves to be sure we have the LIFE along with the correct DOCTRINE. If there is one who is in doubt concerning this Holy Ghost baptism, let him at once flee to the "Fountain of Living Waters," the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall receive. Do not suppose that you are shut off from mercy, but ask Him. (Luke 11:15), "**Do not rest from your prayers until God has satisfied you, he will give you to drink. Cry mightily unto Him and He will quicken you and make you alive.**" Remember, there are only two classes of people, as far as the Rapture is concerned: those who are DEAD in their old nature, and those who have been made alive by the New Birth.

A PERSONAL WORD TO OUR READERS: *What can I say to such a faithful group of people, who have not failed to send me your whole-hearted support, not only with your money, but also with letters and phone calls of encouragement. I can say "Thank You" and tell you how much I appreciate you, but that still does not seem to portray to you how I feel toward you. So, I have prayed and asked the Lord what to do in response to your continued help. I believe He gave me the answer. It has to do with keeping you before Him in my daily prayers and believing with all my heart that He hears and will bless our combined efforts to get His Gospel out! For the last 31/2 years, I have been required to walk more by faith than ever before. With my help-mate gone to Heaven and a trial of sickness that lingers, I have done my best to maintain my work schedule in spite of the handicaps. There have been times when I could not keep up the pace, but I am very glad to report that the Lord is returning me to strength one day at a time. God be with you, and please pray for me also.*

*In Christian love,
Br. C.W Wood*

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