

...Set For the Defence of the Gospel. (Phil 1:17)

DEFENDER OF TRUTH

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T H E M E :

WHAT MUST I DO

TO BE
Saved?

DEFENDER OF TRUTH

HOLY
BIBLE

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EDITORIAL

You are welcome to the third edition of Defender of Truth Magazine (2021 relaunch). Please recall that the theme of the first edition was *the Bible* which showed clearly that the Bible is God's revelation to mankind for all times. The theme of the second edition was *Authority in Christianity* which impressed upon the reader the fact that authority is required for every practice in Christianity and that the authority for an act of worship to God or practice today must be sought from the New Testament. This edition deals with the most important question everyone should ask; *What Must I Do to Be Saved?*

Everyone has an appointment to keep with death after which comes the judgment. Hebrews. 9:27; Ecclesiastes 12:7. All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. 2 Cor. 5:10. Where will you spend eternity, heaven or hell? What can hinder men from inheriting eternal life? All these and more questions will be answered in this edition. Happy reading!

SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In this day and age, sin has been glamorized, disguised, and made respectable when in fact sin is the greatest challenge of man. From the beginning, Satan played down the effect of sin and man has been doing so ever since. Gen.3:1-4

The word sin is defined by Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary as "a missing of the mark"; "an act of disobedience to divine law".¹ The Bible is the standard that identifies sin. The New Testament describes sin in the following ways:

1. Lawlessness 1 John 3:4
2. Unrighteousness 1 John 5:17
3. Choosing to do what is wrong James 4:17

The Bible further makes us understand that all have sinned. Rom. 3:10-23. It is a **universal** problem. Sin is clearly identified in the Scriptures so there is no excuse for ignorance or denial. ⁹ "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God". 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" Galatians 5:19-21

Some Misconceptions About Sin

1. Inherited Sin – Many believe and teach that sin is inherent in the nature of man. The claim is made that all men inherit sin from Adam. This misconception has been used to justify many sinful behaviors like homosexuality. Rom. 1: 26-27

¹ Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary

The Bible makes us understand that homosexuality is a choice. Sexual desire is natural but fornication is not. 1 Corinthians 6: 13;18. Furthermore, the Bible makes us understand that sin is not inherited. "Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; **The soul who sins shall die**". Ezekiel 18:4

"**The soul who sins shall die.** The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself". Ezekiel 18:20

Sin is a result of choices that are made. A person can allow sin to become his nature if he chooses to do so. James 1:14-15

2. Sin Is Transferrable – Men have always attempted to blame others for their sins. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. Gen. 3:12-13. Aaron blamed the people for the golden calf. Exodus 32:12-14. Someone's sin may affect another but the sinner is still responsible for his sin. Sin is personal and each person is required to acknowledge his sin. Psalm 32:5

The Consequences of Sin

1. Sin separates man from God. "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear". Isaiah 59:1-2
2. Sin causes eternal death. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". Romans 6:23 It causes a separation from heaven and eternal life. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21
3. Sin can separate people. A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends. ²⁹ A violent man entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good. Proverbs 16:28-29. It can separate friends and even family.

How to Overcome Sin

The dire consequences of sin make it imperative that man finds a way of overcoming it. This can only be possible through Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. John 8:34-35. Man can have forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. "In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"⁸ Ephesians 1:7-8; 1 John 1:7. You can have this redemption through His blood by believing in the Lord Jesus, John 3:16 repenting of your sins, Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30 confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God Acts 8:36-37 and being baptized in water. Acts 22:16.

Conclusion

Sin is indeed the greatest challenge of man. Its consequences are grave. You can only overcome through Jesus Christ. He came into the world for this purpose. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. Obey Jesus now and He will save you.

JESUS CHRIST THE REDEEMER

by Kayode Adekunle

Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus has been acclaimed as the greatest religious leader and teacher who ever lived. Over the centuries, he has been considered as being the most influential person to have lived on our planet, and as being unique to the extent that that no one can be compared to Him.

However, Christ must be seen beyond the fact that He is a great teacher. He must be seen on the basis of the role He plays in the life of mankind. There is no doubt about the fact that the most prominent personality revealed by the Bible is Jesus Christ. As much as His personality has generated great controversies over the centuries, the fact still remains that there has never been any human being either living or dead that can be compared to Christ judging by the nature of His being, birth, lifestyle, works and death.

There is no doubt about the fact that the most prominent of the themes of the Scriptures is the person and the work of Jesus Christ. He is God. He became a human being, died by crucifixion, and was buried. He rose again from the dead. He is the only, all-sufficient Savior of the world. He will come again to this earth. Removing this from the Scriptures robs them of all important meaning and coherence.

His Being: Jesus Christ is God.

There is no doubt about the fact that the nature of Christ that has generated the most controversy is His dual nature of being both God and man. However, the Bible is very clear about this for anybody who is sincere and ready to believe. In the book of John chapter 1:1-3, John says this **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”**³ **All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”.** Christ has this to say about himself **“And now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was”.** John 17:5 Jesus Christ was with God from the beginning even before the creation. When God was about to create man, the Bible records Him saying “come let Us create man in our own image” Gen 1:26 Bible scholars agreed that 'Us' as used by God here is referring to God Himself, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Paul says this of Christ **“And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist”.** Col 1:17. He shares the same nature with God the Father as a result He is one of the personalities of the Godhead. Paul says this to the Colossians **“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and**

you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power” Col 2:9-10.

The Godlike nature of Christ is further confirmed by his life style and works. He is confirmed to be sinless as only God can. Jesus asks the Jews this question **“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?”** John 8:46. Paul stated: **“For He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”** 11 Cor 5:21 and Peter testified this of Him **“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”** 1 Peter 2:21-22.

Christ forgives sin as only God can. Jesus told the paralytic man **“son, your sins are forgiven”** Mark 2:5 and the Jews reacted by asking **“Who can forgive sins but God only?”** Mark 2:7. However, Jesus said in Matt 9:6 **“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins”**

Equally of strong conviction about Christ being God is His Sonship. The Bible confirms that Christ is the Son of God. Before His birth, the angel announced to Mary **“And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God”** Luke 1:35. Peter confessed: **“And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”** John 6:69. Jesus affirmed of Himself **“I and my Father are one”** Philip, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” And Christ answered him by saying **“Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?”** John 14:8-9

Christ the Man

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Gal 4:4-5. Christ coming into the world as a man is an essential part of the scheme of salvation. John has this to say **“By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God”**

1John 4:2. It is essential for him to come so He could deliver the word of salvation, the gospel, to mankind” **“For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”**. John 1:17. Paul says this in his letter to Titus **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men”** Titus 2: He confirmed that God gave Him the word in John 17:6-8.

He came as a man so as to be able to establish the Church. The Church plays a very important role in the scheme of salvation. Christ promised to build His Church in Matt16:18 Paul confirms the importance of the Church in God's plan to save mankind in his letter to the Ephesians **“and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; ¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”** Eph 3:9-11. It not surprising that after the gospel was preached on the day Pentecost in Jerusalem and people believed and were baptized, Luke says this in Acts 2:47 **“praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added ¹¹ to the church daily those who were being saved”**.

Christ came, suffered and died for man to be saved. His suffering, death, burial and resurrection form the nucleus of the gospel that saves **“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.**

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” 1Cor 15:1-4. If Christ had not died and resurrected, the whole essence of faith would have been jeopardized 1 Cor15:17-18

Prophecies About Him

His Birth

The hint about the coming of Christ and the whole essence of His coming was given in God's statement in Gen 3:15 in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve had disobeyed God **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”** Paul confirmed to us in Galatians 3:16 that the seed is Christ. Apart from so many other prophecies about the coming of Christ to the word given by so many prophets, prominent amongst

them are Moses Genesis 3:15; 9:27; 12:2-3; 49:8-12; Numbers



24:15-19; and Deuteronomy 18:15-18 and David Psl 69: 109; Psl 22: 16; Psl 2, 110 etc, one of the most direct prophecies about His coming and birth is the one given by Prophet Isaiah in chapter 7:14 **“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel”** Prophet Micah mentioned the city where He be born in his own prophesy in Micah 5:2. When the time of His birth was near the angel came to Joseph and gave this prophesy about Him **“and she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, "God with us."** Matt 1:21-23. And when the fullness of had come Christ was born Gal 4:4-5. His suffering and agony in the course of carrying out His mission were perfectly capture in Isaiah's prophesy in Isaiah chapter 53

His Death and Resurrection

The death and resurrection of Christ are the most significant events in human history. It is no surprise that there would be plenty of Old Testament prophecies pointing to this remarkable event.

The Old Testament prophesied that soldiers would pierce his hands and feet, cast lots for his clothing, and hurl insults at him. This prophecy was, indeed, fulfilled.

Mark 15:25-32 says, 'It was the third hour when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: 'the King of the Jews'. Those who passed by hurled insults at him in the same way the chief priests and teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. Those crucified with him also heaped insults

on him. (See also Ps. 22:16-18; John 19:23-24).

Another Old Testament prophecy predicted that none of Jesus' bones would be broken. This prophecy was carried out as well. John 19:33 says, 'But when they came to Jesus, and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. (See also Ps. 34:20; Zech. 12:10.)

Isaiah predicted that Jesus would be despised and rejected by men, and in addition would experience much sorrow and suffering. Jesus certainly did face sorrow and rejection. During his ministry Jesus was rejected by some of his followers (John 6:66), the Pharisees (John 7:47-53), Judas Iscariot (Matt. 26:14-16), Peter (Matt. 26:69-75). Jesus prophesied about his resurrection when He told the Jews "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19



Jesus Christ the Saviour of the World

Luke says in Acts 4:12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." John says in chapter 3:16 **'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.** When **Jesus** was describing His purpose in Luke 19:10 (NKJV), **he** chose words filled with great wealth and victory for our lives. **He** said: "For the Son of Man has come to **save** that which was lost." Note the choice of words, **save** that which was lost. That is the sole reason why God sent Him to earth and He designed to accomplish this mission through His gospel. No man can be saved without hearing and believing the gospel of Christ Maek15:15-16; Rom 10:13-14. The manifestation of this is seen in Acts 2: 36-42 In verse 47 of the same chapter we are told that those who obeyed the gospel and have been baptized are called "the saved"

And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 It is a name that the Holy Spirit explains to us, for He tells us the reason for the name of Jesus: "For He shall save His people

from their sins." "Savior" is the meaning of the name, but it has a fuller sense hidden within, for in its Hebrew form it means, "the salvation of the Lord," or, "the Lord of salvation," or "the Savior." The angel interprets it, "He shall save," and the word used for *He* is very emphatic.

Joshua of old was a savior. Gideon was a savior. David was a savior. But the title is given to our Lord above all others because He is a Savior in a sense that no one else can be—He saves His people from their sins! Indeed, He is the Savior because He is also Emmanuel, God with us. And as soon as He was born and so became Emmanuel, the Incarnate God, He became by that same fact Jesus, the Savior. By coming down from Heaven to this earth and taking upon Himself our nature, He bridged the otherwise bridgeless gulf between God and man. By suffering in that human nature and imparting through His divine nature an infinite power to those sufferings, He removed that which would have destroyed us and instead brought us everlasting life and salvation.

Conclusion

Jesus came out of God's infinite love for mankind. John expresses this in 1 John 4:9-10 **"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"** The least expected from show our appreciation to God is to obey His Son whom He Has given all the authority Matt28:18. It is in doing this that our salvation can be guaranteed.

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WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD

by Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba



In Hebrews 11:6, we read, *“But without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* Indeed, the topic of faith is such an important one that we must consider because our text says **it is impossible to please God without it**. But what exactly do we mean by faith?

What is Faith?

The Greek word used most often in the New Testament for faith is *pistis* and it indicates a belief or conviction grounded in evidence with the complementary idea of trust. In defining faith, the Bible says it is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1). For example, the fact that Jesus rose from the dead is **strong evidence** to believe (have faith) that the dead shall be raised one day (cf. Acts 17:31). And so, our faith or belief in the afterlife is based on the evidence presented. Therefore, Biblical faith is not based on how one feels but it is based on facts.

But how does faith come or how does one gain biblical faith? Romans 10:17 teaches that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. To corroborate this, let us turn our attention to the parable of the sower in Luke 8:4-8 where Jesus tells of the seed being planted and grew only in the proper soil. The seed, according to Jesus is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). And so, the Word of God is what is deposited and sown into the heart of man that brings about faith or believe in Him (cf. Acts 2:37; Romans 10:14). If we do not hear God's word, we cannot build a biblical faith.

One characteristic of biblical faith is the fact that it is not isolated from work or action nor is it a mere intellectual stance but it is a belief that leads to action. The Bible repeatedly affirms that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:14,17,20,24,26). Paul says in Galatians 5:6; *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, **but faith working through love.**”* The faith that avails is the one that brings the blessings of God and notice how that is done. In I John 5:3, John tells us just how that is, for he said, *“This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments”* That is the love of God, and faith working through love avails; faith working through love saves; faith keeping the commandments of God is the salvation that has been promised.

A demonstration of that fact is brought up in the falling of the walls of Jericho. The Israelites had to go around the walls for 6 days, and on the 7th day, they had to go around seven times, and then blow the trumpets and shout before the walls fell. Is there any man who would think that there was any virtue in their work, except as obedience to God? They did not get the land by their efforts but they had to do something (obey God's commandment) to get it. God had given the city to them (Joshua 6:2), but they had done what He commanded them to do (Joshua 6:3-27). In Hebrews 11:30, it says *“by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, **when they had been compassed about for seven days.**”* And so, being saved by faith or to act by faith means being obedient to what we have heard. Faith, most certainly, includes obedience.

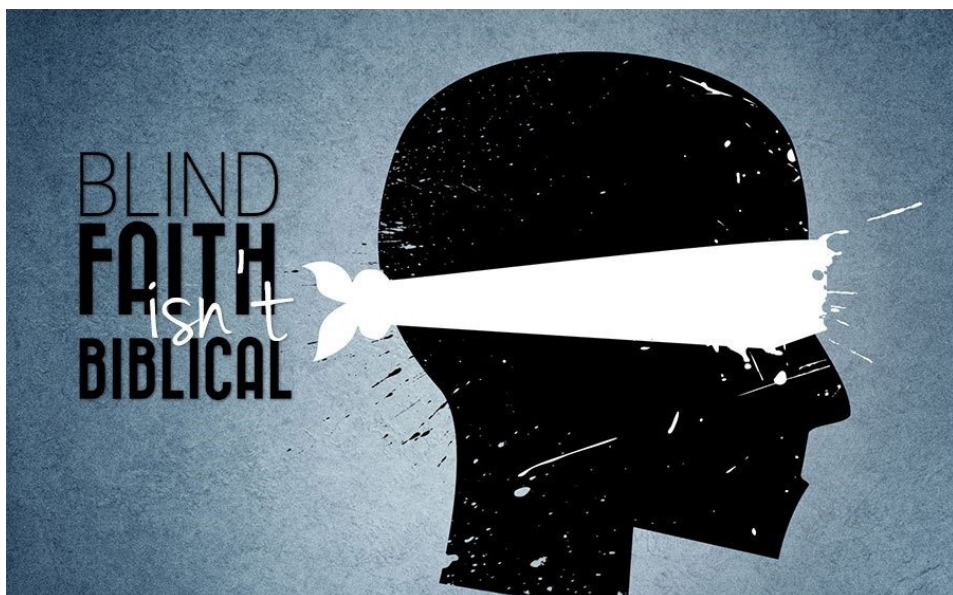
Galatians 3:26-27 teaches that the kind of faith that saves a man is the kind of faith that includes baptism, which is obedience to Christ's commandment. *“We are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* The word “for” in verse 27 is from the Greek word “gar” and it means to “introduce the reason” (of something previously mentioned). This word “gar” connects with what preceded and shows how they got into Christ by faith. How? By being baptized into Christ they put on Christ and were saved. Thus, it means that they were children of God by faith since they have been baptized. The essence of showing all of these is to emphasize that faith is not just shouting “I believe” without doing anything to demonstrate what one believes.

Relevance of Faith to Salvation

That faith is an integral part of becoming a Christian or to be saved is a fact that is too plain to be denied. Our text says one cannot please God without it. Yet, some folks jettison this idea thinking God has predestined some for condemnation. This is not true. Believing is essential before one has the right to become a child of God (John 1:12), it is a condition for the hope of eternal life (John 3:15-16), and those who refuse to believe are clearly in a state of condemnation (John 3:18; 8:24). We read in Ephesians 2:8-9: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”* This text teaches that we have been saved by grace through faith but notice that it is not of boastful works or works of man's righteousness. Faith is the work of God in the saving grace (John 6:29).

In Hebrews 11, we learn about faith from the Bible's Old Testament heroes. One crucial detail stands out in their lives: they

placed their whole confidence in God, entrusting themselves into His hands. The actions and accomplishments of these men and women proved that faith pleases God (vs. 13-16), and He rewards those who seek Him diligently. And so, we cannot be saved without faith in God.



Is faith blind? Silencing the skeptics

One common objection usually raised by skeptics is that Christians are guided by blind faith. By “blind faith”, we mean the idea that faith is based on mere belief in something without proof. In other words, there is no evidence or logical reason to believe something, it's just “faith.” And so, faith is simply a subjective feeling or emotional response to the idea that God exists. This is a gross misconception. Denominational pastors are guilty of this false accusation in that they tell their members' certain things that are not true and without scriptural evidence, compelling them to just “believe it by faith.” This is blind faith and indeed, is not the kind of faith spoken of in the Bible.

Faith is not accepting what one cannot prove. Nowhere does the Bible suggest that one makes a blind leap into belief without adequate evidence. The Christian faith is anchored in the credibility of the biblical record, which is substantiated by ample evidence itself. Faith is not wishful thinking, blind hope, or a surrender of reason. Biblical faith is a decision to believe something about God or Jesus based on evidence, the kind of evidence that would stand up in a court of law. One cannot possess biblical faith in God until he or she comes to the knowledge of God. Commenting on Abraham's faithfulness, Dave Miller noted that “Abraham was said to have had faith only after he came to the knowledge of God's promises and was **fully persuaded** (Romans 4:20-21). His faith, therefore, was seen in his trust and submission to what he **knew** to be the will of God. Biblical faith is attained only after an examination of the evidence, coupled with correct reasoning about the evidence.”

Indeed, the Christians' faith is not a blind one for we have abundant evidence from the inspired writing, history, nature, etc. to prove that the Almighty God which we serve and believe on is

real and He exists. And so, our faith in Him is not because we were merely told to believe in Him, rather, we are convinced that He is and that He rewards those who diligently seek him.



Conclusion

Faith is required if we must please God. And the faith that saves is the faith that obeys. One must hear the Word of God to have faith (Romans 10:17), repent of his sins (Acts 2:38), confess his faith in Christ (Acts 8:37), and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of his sin to be brought into a dynamic union with Christ (Acts 2:36-47). Repentance is **faith turning**, confession is **faith speaking**, baptism is **faith obeying the Lord** to be brought into a dynamic union with Jesus and it is a part of the process of salvation by faith and a part of the process by which we are made righteous. Thus, in the Christian age, those who are justified by faith are people who have been baptized. If you want the heavens to be open unto you (Matthew 3:16), if you want the Spirit of God to come upon you (Matthew 3:16), if you want God to call you His child (Matthew 3:17; I John 3:1) and if you want to have access to God in prayer, you have to be baptized (Luke 3:21-22).

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REPENTANCE

by Oladapo Olawale



Repentance is, perhaps, the most difficult command of God for man to obey. It is a subject most people would rather avoid in any discussion in order not to hurt or wound anyone's feelings.

Most people desire to be right with God, but few consider repentance from their sins as an essential requirement or condition to receiving forgiveness from God. The Bible says a lot about repentance, particularly concerning man's salvation from the tragic consequences of sin. Repentance is not optional, if we wish to please God and be right with Him, we must repent of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

The word repentance in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *Metanoia*: 'Meta' means 'after'; and 'noia' means 'thought'. The word literally means 'to think after'. Repentance is thus an afterthought, a change of thinking.

Repentance is used in at least two senses in the New Testament. Sometimes it is used to simply signify a feeling of remorse one has when one realizes he has sinned against God. This feeling of remorse is mere godly sorrow and no more. Repentance may also signify the transformation of life that results from the feeling of remorse or godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7: 10).

The words of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 21:28-31 clearly illustrate the meaning of repentance to us: “.....A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not', but afterward he regretted it and went.....” Properly defined, repentance is an afterthought that yields one to a new way of thinking (different from our former thoughts) leading to a change of life and behavior. The Parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24 (n. V. 17-20) is also very helpful to our understanding of repentance.

What repentance is not?

Today the meaning of repentance has been confused and misunderstood by many. To have an accurate understanding of what repentance means, it is instructive to clarify the distorted views and meanings given to the word.

- (i) To many, repentance is nothing more than fear. Whilst fear of judgment and punishment might be one of the things that prompt one to repent, repentance is not fear.
- (ii) So many people also see repentance as a conviction of sin.

To be convicted of sin means a person is convinced, persuaded, or has realized his sinful actions. It is however one thing to realize one's sin and it is another thing to repent upon such realization. Apostle Peter's sermon in Acts 2 is apt here, he was able to show the Jews that they were guilty of crucifying the Son of God with their own wicked hands. These words weighed heavily on their minds so much so that they believed what was said and asked what they could do to remedy it (Acts 2:37). Although convinced, convicted that they had killed Jesus, Peter told them to repent and be baptized. Repentance is not the conviction of sin.

- (iii) Repentance is also not the confession of guilt. The Jews in Acts 2 above admitted that they killed Jesus when they asked: What shall we do? (Acts 2:38). Despite their admission, Peter still commanded them to repent. Repentance is therefore not confession or admission of guilt.
- (iv) Also, to merely regret one's action is not repentance. Many people regret their sins but do not repent of them. Most time men have only regretted their sins because, they were exposed or caught in them.
- (v) Repentance has also been defined to be godly sorrow. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, Paul says that godly sorrow produces repentance. Repentance is the result of godly sorrow; if repentance is the result of godly sorrow; then godly sorrow is the cause. The cause and effect could not be the same in any instance. Godly sorrow is the cause of repentance and therefore it could not be the repentance itself.
- (vi) In the same vein, repentance is not a change of life. Whilst a change of life certainly follows repentance just as repentance follows godly sorrow, the change of life is not repentance. A mere outward show of a changed life does not constitute repentance where there is no change of the will or mind.

Repentance, in the light of bible usage, is thus fully defined as a change of will or mind followed by a transformation of life (Matthew 3: 8; 21: 28, 29; Luke 11:32; Jonah 3:10)

NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE – Repent or Perish

Jesus Christ summed up the necessity of repentance in Luke 13:3 when he said: '.....unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

Without repentance, one remains lost in sin and would certainly face eternal condemnation for his sinful actions. In Luke 13:1-5, Jesus, addressing the importance of the subject of repentance stated that neither the Galileans whose blood were shed and mixed in sacrifice by Pilate nor the eighteen people upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed had committed any extreme sin warranting such fate, however, unless the people repent, they would likewise perish. Christ was saying that while tragic physical death does not necessarily result from any sin one has committed, spiritual death is inextricably linked to one's sins; if one fails to repent of his sins, he will perish or die spiritually. In other words, while a person cannot determine how he dies physically (as such is not a measure of his righteousness), a person (if he repents of his sins) may determine whether he would live or die spiritually. It is either one repents or perishes – there is no other alternative.

In Luke 24:46 -47, Luke similarly gave an account of the giving of the great commission by our Lord "Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' Repentance in this passage is closely connected with remission of sins and the name of Christ which would start to be preached in Jerusalem. A few days later, Apostle Peter when discharging this commission, commanded the Jews on Pentecost to "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Repentance is therefore a requirement to be saved from the consequences of sin.

In Acts 17:30, Paul told the people of Athens that God has overlooked the times of ignorance and now commands all men, everywhere to repent to avoid eternal punishment for sin (see also 2 Peter 3:9 – 10).

IS MAN INHERENTLY SINFUL AS TO MAKE REPENTANCE IMPOSSIBLE?

It has been erroneously taught by some that sin is present in man and because he could do little or nothing to avoid sin, repentance is almost impossible for man. Adherents of this false belief teach what is called original or Adamic sin to wit: that every person is born in sin and because of Adam's sin, all men are corrupt and guilty of sin at birth. By implication, this religious error denies the capacity of man to change his will and harmonize the same with God. Also, this false teaching charges God with evil in that if God made man inherently evil, he could not in the same breath demand that man be good or change his will to God's righteous will. Since both the flesh and spirit of man are the creation of God (Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7), there can be nothing inherently sinful or wicked about either, because God made man good; it is man who seeks after evil

(Ecclesiastes 7:29; James 1:17 -18).

Man is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his lusts (Jas. 1: 13-15). The word translated lust (epithumia) means desire. A desire may be either good or bad depending on the context. Paul had a desire, epithumia, to depart and be with the Lord (Phil. 1:23). There was no evil in this wish of his. However, in James 1: 15 when desire or lust has conceived, it brings sin. Evidently, desire or lust in this passage refers to wanting to do what God prohibits. When such a desire is satisfied, sin is the result. Therefore, when anyone sins, it is because he has been enticed by his desire to do wrong and not by any inherent evil in him that makes it impossible for him to do right or turn away from a sinful course.

No scripture teaches that sin is inherited, neither does the bible talk about repentance and forgiveness from the sin inherited from Adam or any progenitor. The New Testament speaks only of repentance from 'your sins' (Acts 3:19; 22:16). One is forgiven of his sinful acts and disobedience. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Hebs 8:12). The death of Christ was never said to be to remove inherited sin. No passage of the scripture demands this. More so, the bible reveals to us that judgment will be based on individual works (Matthew 16:27; Gals 6:7-9; Revelations 3:23; 20:10-15). Nowhere do we read that we will be judged for the sins of Adam or anyone else. The soul that sins, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:30).

Since this doctrine of original sin is false and unscriptural, it cannot justify anyone continuously living in sin, thereby claiming that it is impossible to repent.



CONCLUSION

God has not commanded man to do that which is impossible for him to carry out. Repentance, albeit difficult for mankind is not impossible

to do. It is an absolute necessity for man's salvation. Because God hates sin and sin separates God from man, sin is then a real problem that man needs to tackle. Sin needs to be hated, repented, and rejected. This means man must change his will and substitute it for the will of God. Surrendering to God's will is why man considers repentance very difficult, but anyone who is determined to forsake sin and desires to obey every of God's commands will repent of his sins and be baptized to be saved from eternal consequences. God is still patiently waiting for all men to repent because he does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

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BAPTISM

by Opemipo Olushola

- A. The word “Baptism” comes from the Greek word “Baptisma”, (Noun form), consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion, and emergence (from bapto, “to dip”). It is used of John's "baptism", also used of Christian "baptism", etc.

The verb form to baptism in Greek is “baptizo” which means to "baptize", to dip, to submerge, to overwhelm. It was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, etc. (Vine's expository Dictionary)



B. THE SIX VARIOUS USAGES OF BAPTISM IN OUR BIBLE!

1. **Baptism of Moses:-** The Jewish fathers were baptized into Mosaic laws as they went through the Red sea with the pillar of cloud above them, (symbolizing submersion in water). 1Cor.10:1-2.
2. **Baptism of John:-** John the Baptist came as the forerunner of the world's Messiah preaching the baptism of Repentance. Matt.3:1-7.
3. **Baptism of Sufferings:-** Christ spoke of this to describe the overwhelming afflictions and judgments to which our Lord voluntarily submitted to on the cross. Lk.12:50. Jesus also used it as the sufferings His followers would experience, not of a vicarious character, but in fellowship with the sufferings of their master. Matt.20:22-23, Mk.10:38-39.
4. **Baptism of Holy Spirit:-** This is a baptism of promise received only by the chosen Apostles and the household of Cornelius (to show their divine acceptance) (Read Lk.24:49-53, Act.1:1-5, 11:13-18).
5. **Baptism of Christ's Commission:-** This is water immersion commanded by Christ for all nations,

Matt.28:19, Mk.16:15-16. It is the “One baptism” that saves men, Eph.4:5.

6. **Baptism of Fire:-** This is describing the submersion of unrepentant sinners in an everlasting fire; Matt.3:11-12, 13:41-42; 25,41,46.

- C. But here in this article, we are focusing on the water Baptism commanded by Christ in the Great commission Matt.28:19-20. From the definition of baptism, sprinkling; pouring, cross sign, and infant baptisms” are not baptism! Looking at the example of our Lord at River Jordan (i.e when He came out of the water, Matt.3:16) and the case of Eunuch of Ethiopia who was baptized by Philip in Act.8:36-39. Note verses.38,39 “And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him, Now when they came up out of the water,.....” The scriptural mode of water baptism is “burial”. “Therefore we were “buried” with Him through baptism into death,...” Rom.6:4. “Buried with Him in baptism in which you also were raised with Him.....” Col.2:12. Any other mode of baptism apart from water immersion is null and void: Matt.15:8-9.”..... in vain they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandment of men”.

II. THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE RECIPIENT

The Holy Scriptures reveal the appropriate candidate for baptism. In other words, the New Testament reveals the right qualities which must be possessed by anyone who desires to be baptized! We may learn these important qualities from the recipients of water baptism during the first century Apostolic days: (studying through the Book of Acts of the Apostles).



THE FOUR QUALITIES EXHIBITED BY THE BAPTISM RECIPIENT

1. **HEARING THE GOSPEL:-** Peter began his sermon which led to the baptism of three thousand people (3000 souls) this way; "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words" Acts.2:14. This is according to our Lord's Great commission that His Gospel must be preached across the whole world such that everyone may Hear: Mk.16:15, The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, Rom.1:16. Hearing the gospel of Christ produces faith in sinful men. Rom.10:17.

The Gospel of Christ contains facts to believe 1Cor.15:1-6; contains commands to obey (Matt.28:19-20) and promises to Enjoy (Mk.16:16, Act.2:38-39). Thus, anyone who desires baptism must have heard about the undiluted Gospel of salvation brought by Christ.

2. **BELIEVE THE GOSPEL:-** The audience of Peter was pricked in the heart by the powerful gospel preached! Acts.2:37. Anyone willing to be baptized must first open up his heart such that the word of God may convict him of his moral and religious errors! Without faith, it is impossible to please God! Heb.11:6.
3. **REPENTANCE FROM SINS:-** All candidates for water baptism are charged to turn away from all their lawless works which often manifest in two ways (i.e either in bad morals or in vain worships) Acts.2:38. Christ commanded that repentance should be preached all over the world, along with the remission of sins: Lk.24:47 Acts.17:30-31 Repentance means a change in heart that leads to a change in attitudes and character!.

This confession of sins, weeping, showing regrets about one's sin is not repentance! Sincere candidate for baptism must reflect "godly sorrow" over his moral and religious errors! 2Cor.7:10. Failure to repent of one's sins make such water baptism to be done in vain! Acts.3:19.

The recipients of baptism of the Pentecost day were guilty of murder, and at the same time, they were adherents of Mosaic laws (i.e Judaisers) but they repented of all these Acts.2:36,41. Have you truly repented of your sins now? (see Acts.15:1-28)

4. **CONFESSION OF CHRIST:-** There is no other way to gladly receive the gospel of Christ as those converts in Acts.2:41 than to publicly confess Christ as "the son of God"! The Eunuch of Ethiopia did this before his baptism Acts.8:36-37. Our Lord blessed Peter for making such confession as this! Matt.16:16.

Confessing Jesus Christ as "the son of the living God" is an acknowledgment of His Divinity and His sovereign rule over men towards their salvation. Rom.10:9-10, John.10:33-36. 1John.5:5. ".....But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven" Matt.10:32-33.

All the above four qualities or steps must be possessed before a person could be eligible for water baptism, check the following passages for examples:- Acts.8:12,10:34-48,16:13-15,39-41,18:8.etc. In all the New Testament examples, no person is declared saved without taking the above steps and being baptized in water! It should be worthy of note also that no infant possesses the qualities after Christ's ascension to heaven as stated above, hence there is no single record of infant baptism in our bible, Even as the Bible teaches the innocence of babies, (Read Deut.1:38-39, Ezek.18:20, Matt.19:14, Rom.9:11). To baptize infants amount to heresies and more traditions of men!

III. THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM FOR OUR SALVATION.

1. Water Baptism is a command from Christ! He remains the Author of salvation to those who obey Him! Matt.28:18-20, Heb.5:8-9.
2. Baptism grants remission of sins:- Acts.2:38-22:16
3. Baptism grants the seal of the Holy Spirit, Acts.2:38b, Eph.1:13-14
4. Baptism puts someone into Christ's body (His church) Acts.2:47, 1Cor.12:13. Gal.3:27. In other words, without water baptism, you can never be added to Christ's church.

5. Baptism brings us into fellowship with Christ's death and resurrection, Rom.6:4-5.

Unless a man is born of “the spirit” and of water, which is baptism, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, John.3:5,6:63.

Therefore, every sinful man must be convicted of his lawlessness, repent of those sins, confess Christ, and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of his sins as demonstrated on Pentecost day! Acts.2:36-43, 2:36-42,47. There is no such practice as confirmation, altar calls, sinner's prayers, baptismal class, saved by faith only, etc in the Bible. All these are human ideas!

NOTE:- YOUR BAPTISM IS WRONG IF:

- i. It is not water burial, Matt.3:16, Acts.8:37-39.
- ii. It is done with wrong motives, Peter.3:21.
- iii. It is done into a false doctrine, 2John.1:9-11.
- iv. It is done into a denominational church 1Cor.12:13, Acts.2:47.

(For there was no denominational church in existence during the first century! 1Cor.1:10-13,3:1-11;14:33

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Conclusion

Having learned the meaning of Baptism, the eligibility of its recipients, and the necessity of getting baptized for our salvation, How safe are you if the Lord returns today? Have you not being deceived by false Prophets who teach that baptism does not matter for your salvation?

Which of the early disciple got baptized into a denominational church? Our Lord is merciful and full of compassion to pardon you if you will submit to His Authority, Repent, and be immersed in water now! Acts.22:16.

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

Is Heaven Real? Is Hell Real?

by Jobalo Oshikanlu

Bible Gems: “*But now they desire a better, that is, a **heavenly** country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them ... For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come*” (Hebrews 11:16; 13:14). “*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in **hell***” (Matthew 10:28).¹

It is a fact that man is a dual being. He is physical (the “outward man”) and spiritual (the “inward man”). The Bible teaches that whilst the outward man is temporary, the inward man – the spirit or soul – is eternal. Whilst it is a self-evident fact that the outward man wears out day by day and will soon perish, the Bible is clear that the inward man has the potential to be renewed day by day and to be finally clothed with a heavenly body (1 Corinthians 15:35-40; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 5:1-5; Philippians 3:20-21).

The word “eternity” is the noun form of *eternal*, which means everlasting, timeless, having no end. Eternity is the permanent state of man which sets in or the new realm into which he transits, after death. The word “death” means separation. There is physical death and there is spiritual death. Physical death is the separation of the spirit of man from his body (James 2:26), while spiritual death is the separation of the spirit of man from God, which is caused by sin (Isaiah 59:1-2; Ephesians 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 5:6). The death under discussion in this write-up, after which *eternity* sets in, is physical death, which the Bible describes as sleep (1 Corinthians 15:6; John 11:11-14). On a certain day in the future appointed by God, there will be a resurrection of all dead, with each man clothed with a new body (John 5:28-29; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:35-40).

The information as to where man will be in *eternity* is fully provided in the same Bible that describes the dual nature of man. The Bible clearly shows that *Heaven* and *Hell* are two places of abode for men in eternity. But these two places are to each other as light is to darkness or as God is to Satan. *Heaven* is associated with transcendent light and God Almighty, but *Hell* is associated with outer darkness and Satan.

We now proceed to examine what God has revealed to us about these two *realms of eternity* to which all of mankind throughout the ages are headed, noting that the Bible warns that each one of us will end up in one or the other.

HEAVEN:

The most thrilling thought that has ever filled the heart of man is that of Heaven. The Lord told the seventy disciples “... *do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*” (Luke 10:20 – MEV). Everyone should believe in Heaven because God says there is such a place prepared. **What is Heaven like?**

- It is a prepared place. Jesus said, “... *I go to prepare a place for you*” (John 14:2-3). Therefore, Heaven, in this sense, is a place and not just the atmosphere or skies. It is a real place. Jesus described this place as God's house (dwelling place) where there are many mansions (John 14:2). Jesus Christ dwells there and faithful Christians will live with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- Our Bible gem above describes Heaven as a city (Hebrews 11:16; 13:14). It is an eternal city of complete perfection. The beauty and splendor of the city are described in figurative and human terms in Revelation 21.
- It is a place of eternal security and joy. The security of the Heavenly city is illustrated by the figurative description of being surrounded by great high walls, and twelve gates. Inside those walls, there will be complete and perfect safety. Material and human fortifications are used to impress on us the fact that the place is secure (Revelation 21:1-14). It is a city free of disease, sickness, pain, sorrow, suffering, dying, or tears. “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).
- The Bible teaches that the hope of faithful Christians is reserved in Heaven. “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you*” (1 Peter 1:3-4). Colossians 1:5 states that the hope of faithful Christians is laid up in Heaven. Philippians 3:20 also states that “... *our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*”.

Those who obey the gospel of Christ and are faithful even unto death will enjoy the blessings of Heaven (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:15-16; 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

HELL:

The word “hell” is the English translation of “Gehenna” used in the New Testament Greek original. Gehenna (or “Gei-Hinnom”) is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word “Hinnom”. Hinnom was a valley just outside Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8). This

was where the Jews, in their lowest spiritual moments, had practiced every form of idolatry possible (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 19:4-5), which included offering their children in sacrifice to the god, Molech. Albert Barnes' Bible Commentary has given an explanatory description of the valley of Hinnom in the following words: *“it was made the place where to throw all the dead carcasses and filth of the city, and was not infrequently the place of executions. It became, therefore, extremely offensive; the sight was terrific, the air was polluted and pestilential; and to preserve it in any manner pure, it was necessary to keep fire continually burning there. The extreme loathsomeness of the place; the filth and putrefaction; the corruption of the atmosphere, and the lurid fires blazing by day and by night, made it one of the most appalling and terrific objects with which a Jew was acquainted ... In the areas of the valley not on fire, scavenger dogs roamed, looking for food, and maggots were teeming, feeding on the abundance of rotting matter that such thrive on ... Hinnom is regarded as an appellative (“groaning” or “moaning”), bestowed on the spot because of the cries of the victims here offered to Molech, and of the drums with which those cries were drowned”.*

To impress upon their minds the nature of eternal punishment, Jesus spoke to the Jews in languages and figures they would have no difficulty understanding. He compared the punishment that lost sinners will experience to their being in that geographical location near Jerusalem that any Jew was very familiar with – Gehenna or the valley of Hinnom.

“Gehenna” is used twelve times in the Greek New Testament, eleven of which were by Jesus Himself, and is the one word which alone should be translated hell, for its derivation connotes every misery and unpleasantness usually associated with all that is “hellish”. Jesus stressed that those who die in their sins will suffer everlasting punishment in hell. The horribleness of this place is further shown in the warning of Jesus in our second Bible gem above (Matthew 10:28), stating that we should fear only *“... Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”*. The Greek New Testament word for “destroy” which Jesus used in this passage means “to destroy or give over to eternal misery”. In showing the judgment of the lost, Jesus said, *“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”* (Matthew 25:46). **What other features of Hell are revealed?**

- a) It is a prepared place. *“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels’*” (Matthew 25:41). In addition to the devil and his angels, it has also been prepared for all disobedient sinners (Revelation 20:10, 15; 21:8).
- b) Hell is a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus revealed in Matthew 13:49-50 that the pain in Hell would be so great that the inmates would be crying aloud and grinding

their teeth.

- c) Hell is a place of everlasting fire. Jesus said it is better to suffer for righteousness on earth than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season only to be cast into everlasting fire, the fire that shall never be quenched, neither do the worms in it die, just like Hinnom (Matthew 18:8-9; Mark 9:43-48). To burn with fire is horrible pain even when it lasts for only a moment. But Hell is described as everlasting fire! It is a place of outer darkness and blackness (Jude 13) and there is no rest there (Revelation 14:11; 20:10). Some would have us believe that Hell is annihilation or the grave; but as you can see, Hell is not so, Hell is eternal in torment!
- d) The Bible teaches that the following will be in Hell: the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41); the dogs (false teachers and deceivers), sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers (Revelation 22:15); the filthy and unrighteous (Revelation 22:11); indifferent Christians and hypocrites (Hebrews 2:1-3; Matthew 23:25-28); the hardened in the heart (Romans 2:5-8).

It is not the will of God that anyone goes to Hell. Hence, He demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Peter 3:9). Jesus made Himself a sacrifice for us so that we may not perish. By His suffering and death on the cross, He became the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Conclusion:

God sends no man to Hell. Rather, man by his rebellion, sin, and obstinacy, sends himself to eternal ruin. There will be no sedatives to relieve the anguish or drugs to relieve the pain in Hellfire. There will be no second chance or promise of a better day. Now is the time for action by those who want to escape the damnation of Hellfire. They are required to:

1. Believe Jesus Christ and His gospel (John 3:35-36; 8:24);
2. Repent of all sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30-31);
3. Confess faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10);
4. Be baptized (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16);
5. Regularly worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24) and in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 29:2; Romans 12:1-2); and
6. Be faithful even unto death (Revelation 2:10).

And for those who have been baptized into Christ but are lacking in steadfastness or have gone back into sinful lives, repentance and return to God for mercy is a matter of urgency. The privilege of choosing to go to Heaven or Hell is currently available and on offer to all and sundry. Do not delay in choosing Heaven.ⁱⁱ

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ⁱ Except where otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James' version (NKJV).

ⁱⁱ For the most part, this write-up has been culled from gospel lectures of Sept to Oct 1988 of the Late Ezekiel A. Akinyemi of Church of Christ, Challenge, Ibadan, as well as from *The Truth About Hell* in the Defender of Truth magazine of April-June, 1989.