

END TIMES

Chicago Bible Students

THERE IS ONE PIVOTAL TRUTH

“God... is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.” — 1 Timothy 4:10

Dramatic events happening throughout the world are causing many Christians to be convinced that we are living in the *time of the end* spoken of by Daniel the Prophet. (Daniel 12:4) This conviction is indeed correct, but the *popular* interpretation of prophecy to follow this *time of the end* is a *rapture* to heaven for a few Christians and a *final* judgment of condemnation upon the rest of humanity — billions who, for no other reason than their lack of opportunity, have never accepted Jesus. This interpretation falls seriously short of the truth of God’s merciful provision of salvation for ALL.

NOT WHAT THE PROPHETS TAUGHT

This narrow view of salvation does not harmonize with the prophetic teaching of the Apostles and Prophets who all pointed to *one pivotal Bible truth* — that God is the savior of ALL — both those who believe in His Son now and those who will believe *in due time*. These ancient faithful pointed forward to the age of blessing when Jesus Christ, the world’s Messiah, would bring about the reconciliation of Adam and all of his posterity. (Genesis 22:17, 18) They taught that the present Gospel age — the time period between Jesus’ first and second advents — would be the time of gathering out from the world a faithful Church who will be his associates in his work of reconciliation. When this gathering of Christ’s Church is complete, together with him, they will *begin* the work of resurrection, restoration and regeneration secured for the rest of mankind through Christ’s sacrifice.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us [the Church] to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation...” (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19)

This *ministry of reconciliation* extends beyond the few who now make up the Church, but by God’s justice and mercy, it extends to a wider group — to all those who have never had a real opportunity before

their deaths to return to harmony with God.

The popular view, that *now* is the only time for salvation, puts limits on the merciful plan of God. But, God is not the author of an insufficient plan which leaves the vast majority of His creation condemned

under the curse of death. No, the real insufficiency lies in the *narrow interpretation* of God’s merciful will, which is clearly stated in 1 Timothy 2:3-6 — “*For this is good and*

acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

Note the Apostle Paul’s words in Romans 5:12. “*As by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by [as a result of] sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*” The Apostle then proceeds to show the work of atonement — at-one-ment — saying: “*... by one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience many were made sinners [all of his descendants], so by the obedience of one [Jesus] shall many be made righteous [all who shall ultimately avail themselves of the privileges and*



opportunities in God's Kingdom to come]" (Romans 5:18, 19) This hope which Paul points out here is the very essence of the Gospel of salvation. "*God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*" (Romans 5:8, 9) Here is the specific declaration that Adam and his children were **all** under divine condemnation and that the only saving power will be from the shed blood of Christ — provided on behalf of *every* sinner. So, with these Scriptures in mind, is *now* the *only* time to accept salvation through Christ?

THE DAY OF SALVATION

From the time when Jesus began to establish his Church, there have been only a faithful few who have received salvation through his redeeming merit. These have chosen to sacrifice earthly ambitions in order to reign with Christ in heaven. "...*if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him*" (2 Timothy 2:11, 12; Romans 8:17) But who will Christ and his Church be reigning over, and what will be the purpose of this reign? The prophet Isaiah spoke of a hope for those who have never had a real opportunity to learn of Christ in this life — a future *Day of Salvation* for all. "...*in a day of salvation have I helped thee [the Church]: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people... to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoner, Go forth...*" (Isaiah 49:8, 9) Here Isaiah informs us that this special salvation *now* of the *elect Church* has a very remarkable purpose. The members of the Church are helped in their *Day of Salvation* in order that they might release all who are still in the *prison-house of death* — bringing them forth to life again and the opportunity to learn of Christ and to grow in righteousness: "...*when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*" Isaiah 26:9

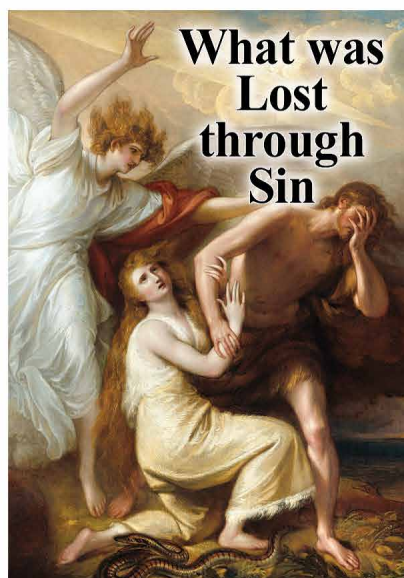
Yes, by God's bountiful grace this full and fair opportunity for salvation will be extended to *all*. Thus, as our theme text states, God "*is the saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*" (1 Timothy 4:10) That special salvation for Christ's Church has been in progress for over 2000 years. During this time, Jehovah has been selecting and saving a class of the meek and teachable from among Jews and Gentiles. This will be a heavenly class who will eventually use their education to bring instruction and blessing to the remainder of humanity on earth. "*Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit*

the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name [the elect]. ... After this I will return [the second coming of Christ], and will build again the tabernacle of David [Israel will be restored first] ...that the residue of men [the rest of mankind] might seek after the Lord..." (Acts 15:14-17) The remainder or "*residue*" of humanity are those who are resurrected to that time of trial and judgment in God's Kingdom. "...*the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, [Christ and his Church] unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil [those still in darkness], unto the resurrection of judgment [a thousand-year period of reform and trial].*" See John 5:28, 29 and 2 Peter 3:8, 9. With the inherited sin from Adam and the blinding influence of Satan removed, this will be *the first real opportunity* for the majority of humanity to learn, believe and obey. (Jeremiah 31:29-34; Revelation 20:1-4) The Apostle John confirms that the merit of Jesus' blood "...*is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins [believers now]; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world [in their future judgment day].*" 1 John 2:2

JESUS CAME TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST

The words reconciliation, refreshing and restoration imply that something is to be gained back or *saved* from that which was once lost. All that Adam possessed was lost through his disobedience — both for himself and his posterity — communion with God, freedom from fear, health, happiness, a perfect garden home and life itself. Jesus came to *save* and restore that which Adam *lost* — to restore the earth to perfection and to restore man to his original state of human perfection and communion with God. (Luke 19:10) All this is implied in the word **saved**. For this reason, the Apostle Peter stated to the early Church that "...*times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord... Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began.*" Acts 3:19-21

The *restitution of all things* lost begins when Jesus Christ returns to gather the Christian faithful and establish God's Kingdom *on earth as it is now in Heaven*. (Matthew 6:10) At that time, "...*they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*" (Jeremiah 31:34) At the end of the thousand-year Kingdom of God on earth, those who have remained obedient and have learned righteousness will gain everlasting life. Those who have willfully remained



What was Lost through Sin

Perfection of Life

Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:3;
Ezekiel 18:4

Dominion over the Earth

Genesis 1:26-28

Peace of Mind without Fear

Genesis 3:10; Luke 21:25, 26

Health & the Vitality of Youth

Genesis 3:19; Job 33:19-22; Psalms 90:8-10

Paradise Home

Genesis 2:8, 15; Genesis 3:23, 24

Communion with God

Genesis 3:24; Habakkuk 1:13

Happiness

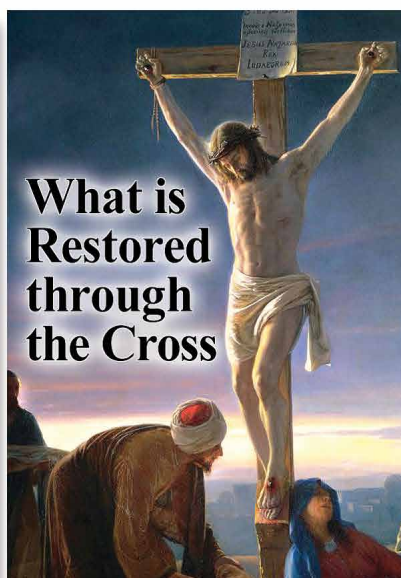
Ecclesiastes 2:22, 23; Proverbs 14:12, 13

Sustained Life from Every Tree of the Garden

Genesis 1:29; Genesis 2:9

Communion with the Animal Kingdom

Genesis 2:19



What is Restored through the Cross

Perfection of Life

Revelation 22:17;
Romans 6:23; I Corinthians 15:22

Dominion over the Earth

Psalms 8:5-8; Psalms 37:9, 11

Peace of Mind without Fear

Psalms 72:7; Isaiah 2:4; 14:3; 35:4

Health & the Vitality of Youth

Isaiah 35:5, 6, 10; Job 33:25

Paradise Home

Isaiah 35:1, 6; Ezekiel 36:35

Communion with God

Jeremiah 31:34; Ephesians 1:10

Happiness

Isaiah 35:10; Revelation 21:4

Sustained Life from Every Tree of the Garden

Psalms 85:12; Micah 4:4; Revelation 22:2

Communion with the Animal Kingdom

Isaiah 11:6-8; Job 5:22, 23

sacrifice the things of this world on his behalf. Indeed, it is a privilege granted to only a few **now**, *“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, **not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.**”* Philippians 1:29

Consider Jesus’ own words to the question of the rich young nobleman, who asked: *“Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”* Jesus replied: *“One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he [the nobleman] was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”* (Mark 10:17-22) Our Lord explained to the young nobleman that to gain the heavenly reward it was necessary for him to do more than just make a verbal statement of his belief — he must also *prove* his supreme love for God through a covenant of sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5) God does not ask us all to literally sell all that we possess and give to the poor, but to value less our worldly possessions and use them wisely in His service as we have the opportunity. The special, heavenly reward for those who accept God’s offer of salvation **now** will come as a result of a lifetime of faithfulness, as indicated in Revelation 2:10: *“Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.”*

SPECIAL PRIVILEGE FOR BELIEVERS NOW

Some may ask, but what advantage is there to be gained by seeking salvation now? The special privilege of those justified [saved] by faith during this Gospel Age has been their opportunity to become *joint-heirs* with him of all things. (Romans 8:16-18; Revelation 20:4) Once this door of opportunity to *“the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* has closed, there will be no further opportunity to gain a *crown of life* in the first resurrection as spirit beings — joint-heirs in the heavenly Kingdom. Philippians 3:14; Matthew 25:10

The completion of the Church, Christ’s glorified body, will result in the privilege of bringing to the remainder of mankind, *“the poor groaning creation,”* deliverance *“from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”* (See Romans 8:19-23) When God’s plan of salvation is complete, by ample education in a wonderful environment, all will appreciate the full wisdom, justice, loving mercy and power of God. What a magnificent plan of salvation! *“Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”* Luke 3:5, 6

disobedient will be destroyed. *“And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”* Acts 3:23

“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED” NOW?

Paul said, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”* (Acts 16:31) This Scripture is generally misinterpreted and over-simplified. We must bear in mind that the word *believe* is not just a simple recognition of Jesus, for we are reminded that *“the devils also believe.”* (James 2:19) The true meaning of *believe* must also contain a heart reliance on Jesus’ atoning sacrifice and a willingness to



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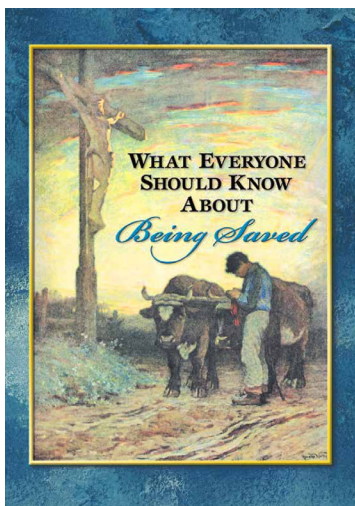
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What is the Bible?

The Bible may be compared to a magnificent edifice that took seventeen centuries to build:

- Its architect and builder is God
- Like this beautiful world, it bears everywhere the impress of a Divine hand
- This majestic temple contains 66 chambers of unequal size; 66 books of the Old and New Testaments
- Each of the 31,173 verses is a stone, a panel of the building which is a Temple more glorious by far than that of Solomon or Zerubbabel

VALUABLE ON-LINE BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES



"What Everyone Should Know About Being Saved"

— Free, 72 Page Study Guide —

This encouraging study guide is an excellent companion to this issue of *Highlights of the End Times*. It brings together all the essential Scriptures on the subject of God's plan of salvation, both now and in His future Kingdom. Learn how you can fulfill God's plan for you as you seek to develop in Christian character and carry out His will in your life.

Much peace of mind concerning our loved ones, and all of humanity, rests upon a clear understanding of just who will be saved and when. Find this greater peace in the Word of God, knowing that all who have ever lived will have the opportunity to come to a knowledge of the truth and find life! 1 Timothy 2:3-6

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