

very great sinner, like the people bitten by the snakes, that you have sinned against God Himself and you justly deserve His wrath against you, and that you need a cure.

On your own you are helpless to do anything except to cry out for mercy and say, “O Lord, I am a great sinner and I need Jesus Christ to take away my sins!” You are like a criminal on death row that needs mercy!

You might consider yourself an atheist or you are a member of a cult or other non-Christian religion. But if God is showing you your sinfulness, then He will also be directing you to look to Jesus Christ for salvation. “Behold the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) that takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29).

Then to believe in Jesus Christ means that you believe that He died in your place for your sins, that He is able to save you from the wrath of God (I Thessalonians 1:10), that He is able to make you right with God. You believe that “He is the way and the truth and the life, that nobody comes to God but by Him” (John 14:6). The people looked to the snake lifted on the pole and were cured. Look to Jesus Christ, put your trust in Him and be saved by God’s grace.

Go to Him trusting that “all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13), and that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, *of whom you are the greatest*” (I Timothy 1:15—words italicized for emphasis).

You might think, “I am a very great sinner. If I go to Him, how do I know He will accept me?” Jesus said, “All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me, **and the one who comes to Me I will not cast away**” (John 6:37). He is a very great Savior!! Did He not say that “whosoever believes in Him will have everlasting life”? Did you not see your name there? Go to Jesus believing that He died for you!

You may say, “I have tried Jesus” or “I asked forgiveness but did not feel forgiven.” Did you come to Jesus for a “quick fix” or did you see yourself as a sinner and call upon Jesus Christ for salvation because you saw Him as the mighty Savior that He is? Did you come to Him with the desire to forsake your sins and trust in Him and Him alone for salvation? Did you see that you had sinned so greatly against God, and that repenting from your sins and believing in Jesus Christ was God’s only way to be saved?

Why will you perish when God has provided such a great means of saving hell-bound sinners? Why would you read of such a gracious and merciful God and say, “I want nothing to do with your free gift of salvation.” Romans 6:23 says “The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Do you not hear the loud sound of His love, in that He

willingly gave Himself to purchase sinners for God with His own blood (Acts 20:28; Revelation 5:9). God promises to all who turn to His Son for salvation that they will be forgiven of their sins and receive the gift of eternal life. It’s all of God’s grace, born out of His great love for sinners! God sent His Son Jesus Christ who lived a perfectly righteous life that we could never live, and to die on the cross to satisfy God’s wrath against sinners, so that all who turn to Jesus Christ for forgiveness of their sins will be forgiven by the grace of God shown in Jesus Christ.

- John 3:36— “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
- I John 2:25— “This is the promise which He Himself made to us, even eternal life.”

Jesus Christ told Nicodemus in John 3:3,5,7 that unless you are born again, you cannot be saved. The evidence that you are born again is that you repent from your sins and turn to Jesus Christ in saving faith. When the Holy Spirit does this miracle in you, He makes you a brand new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). He applies all of the saving work of Jesus Christ to your soul. He then lives in you and strengthens you to live faithfully for Jesus Christ.

Turn to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith and find that the death that Jesus Christ died on the cross was out of love for you, to save you and bring you to God. Or you will die in your sins and meet Jesus Christ for Judgment and His wrath will be poured out on you for all eternity.

The answer to the questions, “How will you escape the sentence of hell” and “What must I do to be saved” are both answered in John 3:16—“that whosoever believes in Jesus Christ would not perish (in hell under God’s wrath) but have everlasting life (be saved)!

God will freely forgive your sins, give you eternal life, remove His wrath from you and bring you to Himself if you truly repent from your sins and turn to Jesus Christ. There will be no sins to judge so you will not be **sentenced to hell**. You will be **saved** from God’s wrath.

What is keeping you from turning to Jesus Christ right now? Call upon Him to forgive your sins and to save you from the wrath to come. God is ready to save you by His grace and mercy which are found in Jesus Christ alone!! Don’t be like those in John 5:40 to whom Jesus said, “You are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” God loves to save sinners, forgiving their sins by His grace and giving them eternal life! Turn to Jesus Christ now!

Tom Rayborn

Have you considered these Biblical questions...

How Will You Escape The Sentence of Hell? and What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Two questions in the Bible are considered to be the two most important questions ever asked:

- How will you escape the sentence of hell? (Matthew 23:33)
- What must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30)

The first question was asked by Jesus Christ to some religious people who thought that they were good enough to make it to heaven on their own “goodness”.

The second question was asked by a jailer who had heard the gospel message and knew that he was not good, that he was a sinner and deserved hell, and that he wanted salvation, he wanted to be “saved”.

I wrote this simple message for you to read and give careful consideration to where you stand with God. There is nothing more important than your relationship with God and where you will spend eternity.

One day you will die and you will face God for your Judgment. That day will come all too soon. Friend, if you are still in your sins on that day, the sentence of hell will be carried out on you. It will be too late to ask for forgiveness, your fate will be sealed for all eternity.

The best-known verse in the Bible is **John 3:16**. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This verse answers the two questions that we asked earlier.

Are you concerned about your relationship with God and where you will spend eternity? Then read on. Let’s look at John 3:16 more closely.

THE PROBLEM - PEOPLE ARE PERISHING

To understand John 3:16, you need to see that Jesus is speaking to a very religious man in John chapter 3 named Nicodemus. As “religious” as Nicodemus was, he was on the road to perishing. His religion nor his status could not make him right with God. That’s why Jesus was telling him about how God has provided a Savior.

But why will people perish? To explain, in John 3:14 Jesus tells of an event in the Old Testament, Numbers 21:4-10. In the Numbers account, people sinned against God and God, in His anger sent poisonous snakes to bite and kill many of the people. Some of the people who were bitten realized that they had sinned against the Lord (Numbers 21:7) and asked for a cure, lest they perish. God’s cure was a brass likeness of a snake that would be lifted up on a pole so that anyone who would just look at the brass snake would be cured of the deadly venom that raced through them.

We are all just like those people, we have sinned against God. Sin, like the venom of a deadly serpent, has spread through the whole human race. In our rebellion and sin against God, we are perishing under the wrath of God.

Why is sin so serious against God that He will cause people to perish? First, God is **holy** (Isaiah 57:15). That means that He is perfectly pure and separate from sin. We are not holy, for we have all sinned (Romans 3:23).

God is **righteous** and loves righteousness (Psalm 11:7). God is not able to do anything that is not “right”. We are not able to do anything that is right. “There is none righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10). Even our righteous deeds are like filthy garments (Isaiah 64:6).

God is **good** (Psalm 106:1; Mark 10:18). All that God does is good and right and pure. The Bible says about man that “there is none good, not even one” (Romans 3:12).

We have angered a holy, righteous and good God by our unbelief, rebellion and sin. We cannot fix the problem. Only God can provide a cure that will satisfy His justice.

Do you see how serious your sin is? When a person thinks little about the glorious nature of God and thinks that God is just like a good old grandpa that will overlook sin, they have made up a god in their mind that is nothing like the God of the Bible.

Jesus is telling us that we will perish because of our rebellion and sin. But just as God provided a “cure” for the people in Numbers, He has provided a cure for us! He cannot just sweep sin under the rug and pretend that it

never happened, , but must provide away to forgive sins while paying the penalty for those sins and satisfying His justice.

These verses describe the severity of your sinful condition. Romans 3:23— “For **all have sinned** and **fall short** of the glory of God.”

Romans 6:23—”The wages of sin **is death...**”

John 8:34— “Everyone who sins **is a slave to sin.**”

I John 3:8— “He who practices sin **is of the devil**”

Do you see that your only real problem is sin. Not just something you do or fail to do. Sin is like corrupt fruit hanging on a corrupt tree. The fruit is corrupt because the tree is corrupt. Your loving of sin and living in sin proves that you have never cried out to God to forgive you of your sin and to be given new life in Jesus Christ. When God forgives a person, He also changes that person so that they want to live a holy, righteous and good life to His glory.

You can’t change your corrupt nature and break this power of sin on your own. You are a slave to sin. Sin is like an awful master and you are its slave,. You sin because you love your sin. You might feel bad about a sin and try to quit, only to return to it later. Sin promises much enjoyment, fulfillment and pleasure, but delivers pain and death.

You may think you are a good person. To think that, you think little of the holy nature of God and view sin as nothing serious. But the Biblical standard of good is perfection (Matthew 5:48). God gave the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament to show you that you cannot even keep one command from God! You are not perfect. In the New Testament God gave this commandment: “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.” (I John 3:23)

Your sins against God are great; your lies, thefts, lusting after the opposite sex, dishonoring your parents, cursing God’s name and Jesus’ name, etc. But your greatest sin against God is that you have not turned from your sins and turned to Jesus Christ to be saved and forgiven. He is the cure that God has provided so that you would not perish.

“Just as the serpent was lifted up, so must the Son of Man (Jesus) be lifted up (on the cross) so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15). We have seen that:

- All people are on the road to perishing
- We will perish because we have rebelled and sinned against a holy, righteous and good God
- We cannot fix our problem on our own
- The offended One must provide the cure
- You must believe in Jesus Christ for salvation

THE CURE—GOD GAVE HIS SON JESUS CHRIST

God so loved the world that He gave His Son Jesus Christ to rescue sinners who will otherwise perish in their sins. God the Son came into a world that would hate Him and would call for His death on a cross. But all the while it was God the Father putting His Son on the cross to give His life for sinners. He crushed His Son under His wrath for our sins (Isaiah 53:5,6,10; II Corinthians 5:21).

Listen to what Jesus said about why He came:

- Luke 9:56 - “For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.”
- Matt 18:11 - “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
- John 10:10— “I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.”
- Mark 2:17— “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”
- Mark 10:45— “I came to give My life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh (John 1:1,14; Matthew 1:23), the perfect, sinless substitute to bear the punishment for guilty sinners and take away their sins. Only a perfectly holy God could come down and put Himself on the cross to die in your place. Only One who has never sinned could satisfy the justice of a Holy God.

“But God demonstrates **His own love** for us, in that while we were sinners, **Christ died for us.**” Romans 5:8

My friend, religion will not save you, a man will not save you, a particular belief system will not save you, and your good works will not save you. God the Father sent God the Son into the world to give Himself as a sacrifice for sins because that is the only way for God to both satisfy His holy justice and at the same time to be able to forgive guilty sinners of their crimes against Him by His grace. An innocent substitute had to bear the penalty of eternal justice so that the guilty person could receive forgiveness, eternal life, and be reconciled to God.

But how? Remember the story Jesus referred to with the snakes? God provided that cure and He has a cure for guilty sinners today! “As Moses lifted up the serpent (on the pole) in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) must be lifted up (on the cross) so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life” (John 3:14,15).

But what does it mean to “believe” in Jesus Christ? On the one hand, to believe in Jesus Christ means that you quit believing in your own goodness and trying to be “OK” with God. You must first believe that you are a