

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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DEATH: THE WAGES OF SIN

by Jim Stauffer

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Romans 6:23)

When man separated himself from God by his own sin, he placed himself in a condition of his own making, but not one he has the power to overcome.

There is a demand of righteousness by God for those who are in relationship with Him (Mat. 5:6,20). Righteousness is part and parcel of man's redemption from His sin (**1 Cor. 1:30**). And it took the love of God to mercifully extend His grace (Jesus Christ) in order to overcome our own sin and be restored to righteousness. *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),"* (Ephesians 2:4-5). *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

We must then accept our need for redemption. There can be no negotiation about either the demand for redemption or the process through which it is obtained. Simply stated we face eternal death and punishment without it (**Mat. 25:46**).

The biblical examples we see of this shows the honest heart to respond with the general inquiry as to what needs to be done to be saved from this horrible plight (**See Acts 2:37; 16:30**). It is interesting to note that in both situations the need was to acknowledge their belief in the Christ Who died for them and to obey His commands to be made righteous. Further, this is the case of every conversion recorded in the Book of Acts. Nothing said to them about being saved by "faith only" or offering something called a "sinners prayer". Simply instruction to believe, repent and be baptized.

As we observe man's responses today, far too often we see him inventing ways to please God rather than inquiring of God's word how it should be done.

If we are to be saved from perdition, it will be due to a knowledge and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which Paul says is *the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes....* (**Romans 1:16**). He makes this even clearer speaking to the Thessalonians about the wrath of God, *"For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."* (2 Thessalonians 1:6-8)

As we consider our future life beyond physical death, we must choose between life in heaven with the Lord and eternal death and punishment in hell with Satan. Jesus is the One Who has the authority to save us from this eternal punishment and all He asks is our obedience to His commands (Hebrews 5:8,9).

Simple enough. Just use common sense, a rare commodity in matters religious.

HE MADE HIMSELF NOTHING

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross- -

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

This passage is so rich. But we shall examine only one jewel here. It's the phrase, He "**made himself nothing**" (v.7a). Notice, Jesus "**made Himself.**" He didn't get a memo. He wasn't pushed out of heaven. He was fully engaged in God's whole plan!

The phrase, "**made himself nothing,**" as the NIV translates it, is the basis for a lot of false teaching. Some translations rightly put it, "**He emptied Himself.**" The question that has been debated for centuries is: emptied Himself of what? Some say Jesus emptied Himself of Deity and He became merely a first-century Jewish man; no God, just Jesus, the man. But the Bible teaches the Incarnation of Jesus, 100 percent God; 100 percent man, undiminished Deity dwelling in humanity. This makes Him not "a 200 percent something," as one man scoffed, but a 100 percent Redeemer, Savior and Mediator.

You may ask: "Well, what did He empty Himself of then?" Answer, at least five things:

He emptied Himself of glory. In **John 17:5**, Jesus prayed, "**Glorify me...with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.**" He gave up the adoration of departed saints and angels when He came into this world.

He emptied Himself of independent authority. In **John 5:30**, Jesus said, "**I can do nothing on My own.**" He brought Himself into a different relationship with the Father where ALL of His activities and actions were uniquely submissive to Him.

He released the voluntary exercise of His divine attributes. There is evidence that Jesus was sometimes omniscient and sometimes not (**compare John 1:43–51 with Matthew 24:36.**)

He gave up His riches. **2 Corinthians 8:9** says, "**...though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.**"

He gave up His intimate relationship with the Father. Who can describe the fellowship that exists between the first and second Person of the Trinity? And to hear Jesus on the cross in **Matthew 27:46** shouting, "**My God, why have You forsaken Me?**"

He made Himself nothing—for you and me.

Ken Green

Does God require obedience? Must I keep the commandments?

Is it necessary to obey God to maintain a relationship with God? Do I have to keep His commandments in

order to be saved? The Gospel of John is often called the gospel of belief because of its clear emphasis on faith. Bible faith, however, does not nullify the necessity of obedience.

Consider the following statements, all made by Jesus, himself, in the Gospel of John.

- **John 14:15:** "If you love Me, keep My commandments."
- **John 14:21:** "He who has MY commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father."
- **John 14:23:** "Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and MY Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him."
- **John 14:24:** "He who does not love Me does not keep My words..."
- **John 15:10:** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."
- **John 15:14:** "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you."

Don't let anyone convince you that you don't have to *do* what God says.

Don Bunting

Making Our Calling And Election Sure

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (2 Peter 1:10).

One day our physical body will cease to exist and when that happens everything pertinent to us will change. All earthly ties will be severed. All of our hopes, dreams and ambitions will have ended. Our sojourn on earth, be it good, bad or indifferent, is over and our eternal destiny will be forever sealed. We will be in death exactly what we were in life. Death will not make any changes that we refuse to make while living. To expect forgiveness when standing before the great Judge without having believed (**Mark 16:16**), repented (**Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30-31**), confessed (**Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37**); been baptized for remission of

sins (**Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16**) and lived faithful to the Lord (**Rev. 2:10**) is to expect the impossible.

Tragically, there are a lot of people expecting the impossible. I have often wished that I had the ability to reach deep down into my soul and find the words to speak or even write that would be so powerful they would move all who heard or read them to do everything within their power to make their calling and election sure--I have never found nor do I now have that ability. I can only say to you, be happy, live and enjoy your life to the fullest but as you do so never forget that the eternal safety of your soul depends on whether or not you obey the Lord and include him in your life every day (**Hebrews 5:8-9**).

In seeking to make our calling and election sure it is essential that we give the Lord our best love (**Mark:12:29-30**), the best of our gifts which starts with ourselves (**2 Cor. 8:1-5; Rom. 12:1**) and the best of our labors (**Luke 10:7; Matthew 5:16; 1 Cor. 15:58**). How does our life stack up against **Matthew 6:33— ...seek first the kingdom of God...** or **Matthew 6:19-21— ...lay up for yourself treasures in heaven...** or **Colossians 3:1-2— ...seek things above, set your mind on things above...** or **2 Timothy 2:15— ...study to show yourself approved...** or **Matthew 5:16-- ...letting your light shine..** or **1 John 2:15-17— ...love not the world...** or **2 Peter 2:2-11— ...add to your faith...** and how about **James 2:18-20**? How does our life measure up to the standard of Christian conduct revealed in **1 Thessalonians 5:12-21** and **Ephesians 4:25-32**?

Do you want to be saved is a great question to give answer to but it has a companion question that must also be answered, namely, are we willing to do what must be done in order make our calling and election sure? To God be the glory forever and ever!

Charles Hicks; swabbie5256@gmail.com

Happiness: A State of Mind

The 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coifed and makeup perfectly applied, even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today. Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary.

After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready. As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her

window. "I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room...just wait." "That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied. "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged... it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do. Each day is a gift."

anon.

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We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Obedience

How we admire the obedience a dog shows to its master! Archibald Rutledge wrote that one day he met a man whose dog had just been killed in a forest fire. Heartbroken, the man explained to Rutledge how it happened. Because he worked out-of-doors, he often took his dog with him. That morning, he left the animal in a clearing and gave him a command to stay and watch his lunch bucket while he went into the forest. His faithful friend understood, for that's exactly what he did. Then a fire started in the woods, and soon the blaze spread to the spot where the dog had been left. But he didn't move. He stayed right where he was, in perfect obedience to his master's word. With tearful eyes, the dog's owner said, "I always had to be careful what I told him to do, because I knew he would do it."

Our Daily Bread

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

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Bible Classes:

Sunday Morning - Proverbs -
Bill Miller

Wednesday Evening -
Hebrews - Jim Stauffer

Sunday Sermon: Growing in
His Grace



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10