

**WHAT DID GOD SAY ABOUT SIN?**

Matthew 1:18-25

**Intro:** As most of you know, I am currently bringing a series of messages that have to do with Christmas, and I am basing this series on the first three verses of Hebrews, chapter 1. This is what those three verses tell us:

- 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
- 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
- 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:1-3).

I know that the thought continues through verse 4 of the chapter, but that verse introduces what the writer went on to point out about the superiority of the Son of God incarnate over angels.

These verses tell us, and the Bible confirms it, that from the beginning of time God has been speaking to people on earth, speaking at different times, and in different ways. He has spoken by men called prophets, and He has spoken particularly to the fathers of the nation Israel. By “fathers” I don’t believe that we are limited to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the writer used that word to refer to those who were the forefathers, the ancestors, of the Hebrew nation. For example David is called a “father” of the kingdom in Mark. 11:10. And in Matt. 23:30 and 32 the Lord spoke the Pharisees as the children of those who had killed the prophets who were sent to them. So it was as though the writer of Hebrews had said that *God spake in time past unto their ancestors by the prophets.*

And remember that there were prophets who spoke, but did not write, like Elijah and Elisha, and there were other prophets who both spoke and wrote, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. To the Jews a prophet was primarily a preacher, a forthteller, not a foreteller. Many of the prophets were foretellers, but their primary role was that of preachers to their generation, preachers who preached the message of God which God had revealed to them.

So Hebrews 1:1 is a description of the Old Testament. God had spoken at

many different times and in many different ways. And he led certain prophets to record in writing what God had said.

Then in verse 2 of Hebrews 1 the writer went on to say that when Jesus Christ came into the world, God was also speaking. Jesus Christ Himself, in His Person, by His teaching, and through the works that He did, was a message. God has now spoken to us “by His Son.” So the Lord Jesus Christ, in all that He was, all that He said, and all that He did, was God speaking “unto us,” meaning those of us who are His people today, or those, who through the work of the Spirit will become the people of God. We are to preach the Gospel to the whole world, but we know that not everyone is going to be interested in the message, and not everyone will understand the message. People may know that Christmas is the time when we remember the birth of Jesus Christ. They may be interested in it as a historical matter, but they do not realize that God was speaking in the birth of Christ, and they are not really interested in finding out what significance that message might have for them.

Most of you know that I am presently teaching the book of the Revelation in our Tuesday Bible Class. The book was written originally for *seven churches*, but it was never intended to be a book to satisfy the curiosity of unbelievers about what is going to happen in the future. Some people will be interested, and it may be the means of their salvation, but not everyone has ears to hear. And this is the reason that most people never understand the real meaning of Christmas. People will even sing the Christmas carols, many of which clearly present the Gospel, but they don't get the message.

I think that one of the most amazing things that has happened in our day is the popularity in the world of John Newton's hymn, *Amazing Grace*. You and I have heard people who make no profession of being Christians sing,

Amazing grace – how sweet the sound –  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found –  
Was blind, but now I see.

Before John Newton became a Christian, he had tasted the depths of sin and degradation. But that is when God opened his eyes to the terrible nature of his sin, and drew him to Christ, enabling him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. John Newton, in answer to the prayers of godly parents, finally heard what God had to say in His Word, and he was

gloriously saved. This is what the birth of Christ was all about! When Jesus Christ was born, a Savior was born. This is what God was saying when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, born the son of Mary, but as the Son of God Who came to earth in human flesh. He came, as we have seen, as the final and complete revelation of God. He came as a Man on behalf of human beings. He came as a Savior.

You can see if you will look at those three verses carefully, that the one thing that the writer mentioned as taking place on the earth when the Lord came was this: “When He had by Himself purged our sins.”

Today I have chosen a very familiar text. I have spoken on it many times. It is one of the two most familiar passages dealing with the birth of Christ from a historical viewpoint that we have in the New Testament. It is Matthew 1:18-25. The other is Luke 2:8-14.

(Read Matthew 1:18-25.)

The verse that I want to call your attention to, is verse 21. (Read.)

In the account I mentioned a moment ago in Luke 2, we find this statement in verse 11. The angel of the Lord was speaking to the shepherds, and this is what he said,

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11).

In John 4 where the Lord ministered to a Samaritan woman, we are told how she went back into her city and told the men,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is this not the Christ? (John 4:29)

They went out of the city and came to the Lord. We are told that many of the Samaritans believed on him. Some believed because of what the woman had told them; others, probably both men and women, who heard the Lord for themselves, said, “This is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (John 4:42b).

I could give you many more references which express the same truth, but let me give you just two more: one from the Apostle Paul, the other from the Apostle John. In writing to Timothy, the Apostle Paul wrote:

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am

chief (1 Tim. 1:15).

The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 4:14:

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

All of these verses support the statement which the angel of the Lord made to Joseph,

And she shall bring for a son, and thou shalt call His Name

JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt.1:21).

The message that the birth of Christ proclaimed is that God was providing

## **I. A SAVIOR FROM SIN.**

The Old Testament writers predicted that God would provide such a Savior, and it ought to be a message which is of the keenest interest to all of us because we are all sinners. Probably the most familiar is Isaiah 53:6 which says:

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).

In the book of Ecclesiastes in the OT we read these words in chapter 7, and verse 20:

20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

The Apostle Paul was quoting from Psalms 14 and 53 when he wrote, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). And in the twenty-third verse of that same chapter, Romans 3, he added, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

So it is apparent the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to be the Savior of sinners.

Although the Lord Jesus was born of a Jewish virgin, and was a descendant of King David, as well as of Abraham, yet those people in Samaria learned that He had come to be their Savior too. And many of them were saved. But from the verse I read to you from 1 John, the Apostle John said that "the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." By this he did not mean that the whole world would eventually be saved, but that God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, was the only Savior that there ever

would be for sinners regardless of their national origin. Jesus Christ is the only Savior for men; He is the only Savior for women. Jesus Christ is the only Savior for young people; He is the only Savior for children. Jesus Christ is the only Savior for Americans; He is the only Savior for Moslems. He is the only Savior for Africans; He is the only Savior for Japanese. Mention any language group, or any nation, or any religion, Jesus Christ is the only Savior. There is only one God, the God of heaven and earth, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And He is the God Who sent His Son into the world to save sinners.

But this leads to a question.

## **II. FROM WHAT DOES JESUS CHRIST SAVE US?**

Or to state it another way, Why do we need to be saved?

Salvation is the grand and glorious theme of all of Scripture. Because we are sinners, born in sin, we are under the judgment of God. We are not only sinners, but we are condemned sinners, facing the eternal judgment of a holy God. Jesus Christ did not become a Savior just because He was born as a Man into this world, but it was by His death on the Cross where He took the penalty for all who would ever be saved. A righteous God cannot overlook our sin. The penalty must be paid in some way. And, as Isaiah 53:6 tells us, “the Lord,” that is, the Father, “laid upon Him, the iniquity of us all.” The salvation of every person who would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ was secured when Jesus Christ died on the Cross. He died as a Substitute for His people. His death was the price of our salvation. Nothing but a perfect sacrifice could be sufficient for our salvation. If Jesus Christ had not been the Son of God, He would have been a sinner like we are, and He would have needed a Savior. But because He was the Son of God, completely without sin, therefore, He qualified to be our Savior.

You see, God is the Judge. And He is the One Whose righteousness must be satisfied. And so He sent His Son to do for us who are sinners what we could never do for ourselves. As John 3:16 tells us, God “gave His only begotten Son,” meaning that He gave Him to die for sinners, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Jesus Christ’s died to save us from going to hell, and to assure that we would go to heaven. Romans 3:26 tells us that God is the justifier of those who believe in Jesus, those who trust Him to save them.

But there is a second wonderful truth in salvation. When Jesus Christ saves any sinner, that sinner is not only saved from eternal judgment, but he is saved from the power and dominion of sin. Before a person is saved, he or she is a slave of sin. We are not able to deliver ourselves from sin's power, but that is a part of what the Lord did when He died for us on the Cross. He died to satisfy God concerning the penalty we were under, but He died also that we might be freed from the power of sin. We will never be sinless until we are in heaven, but when the Lord saves us He becomes our Lord. The power of the Devil and of sin has been broken in the life of the person who has been saved by Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 6:6 that the Lord died, and we were crucified with Him in God's sight, "that henceforth we should not serve sin." And there is no other way for us to get out from under the bondage of sin.

But, as wonderful as both of these aspects of salvation are, there is still one more blessing that God gives to us in salvation. The Apostle John stated it this way:

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).

The Lord Jesus "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). And although He was tempted like as we are, yet He was "without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "In Him was no sin" (1 John 3:5). He "did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22).

And someday we are going to be "like Him." That means that in heaven it will no longer be possible for us to sin at all!

So, to sum it all up, Jesus Christ saves us from the penalty of our sin, which is eternal hell. He saves us from the power of sin. And someday there will be no more sin in us at all. That is what the angel meant when he told Joseph about the baby Who would be born of Mary, "For He shall save His people from their sins."

So when the baby Jesus was born, the angel told Joseph that the promised Savior, Who had been conceived by the Holy Spirit, was the long-awaited Savior, the only Savior of sinners.

Therefore, we can truthfully say that

### **III. JESUS CHRIST IS THE PERFECT SAVIOR.**

What do I mean by this statement, that He is the perfect Savior. I mean that when He died on the Cross, He did everything that was necessary for the salvation of every sinner who would come to Him for salvation. He did not do just a certain percentage of what God required, and what was necessary for our complete salvation, *but He did it all!* And what is most amazing is that it comes to us as a gift. “It is the gift of God,” Paul said in Eph. 2:8. We don’t work to get it, and we don’t work to keep it. He saves us, and He keeps us saved. He does the work of salvation from Start to Finish. He is the One and only Savior; He is the Perfect Savior.

The angel was absolutely right: “He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21) – no question about it! And he did it once for all time! Cf. Heb. 7:26-27:

26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

**Concl:** So when the Son of God came to earth, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, a part, a major part, of the message that God was giving, was that the long-awaited Savior had come, and that in Him, and only in Him, could anyone be saved.

This was the message that John the Baptist preached when he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God,” speaking of Jesus Christ, “which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). And one of his last recorded words was this, found in John 3:36:

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

It cannot be said too often: *Jesus Christ is the only Savior. There is no other.* Make sure today that your faith is in Him, and in Him alone.