

The Fourfold Process of Salvation

Step 1 – Finding Faith

Step 2 – Recognizing Sin

Step 3 – Confessing and Accepting

Step 4 – Forgiving and Receiving

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by Carl Graham

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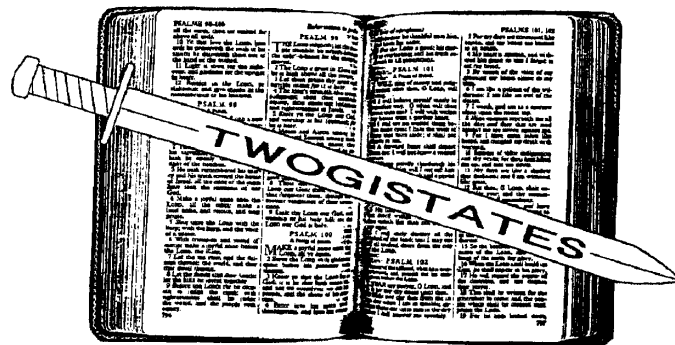
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For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12



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THE FOURFOLD PROCESS OF SALVATION

By Carl Graham

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:17-18

The Fourfold Process of Salvation – Introduction

In today's Christian world there are so many thoughts about how one may be saved that it confuses the most ardent seeker. This is brought about because so many of the accepted national Christian religious leaders have declared that Christianity is not the only way to God and people can be saved in all kinds of religions such as Islamism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This issue is confused even further by dedicated servants who claim to follow Jesus Christ and have endorsed the concept of "easy believism," which basically means all one has to do is recite a simple prayer and that's it. The evangelicals in general are all preaching and teaching this principal of salvation. They with one voice cry out, "Take my literature, say the sinners prayer, and you are saved for eternity!"

Those who advocate this simplistic approach to salvation claim to have Biblical proof of its veracity, and admittedly the Bible does seem to cite a simple way to be saved as Jesus Himself personified it in John 3:16.

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This concept does sound simple on the surface; God gave, Jesus died, and one only has to believe this and he is saved. However this overly simplistic approach to John 3:16 leaves out the hand of God in the believing process and presents a message where the sinner totally controls his own time and place of salvation. This is a human approach to salvation, and since it does sound so easy its adherents advocate it would be foolish to turn it down. Just say, "I believe in Jesus" and one is saved. In fact many buy into this one-dimensional approach to salvation, say the so-called sinner's prayer, think they are saved, and continue on in the ways of the world as if they have never heard of the Commandments of God or the teachings of Jesus. After all, they say, "The Bible teaches eternal security, and I have been saved, so I don't have to be concerned about it anymore."

Certainly accepting Jesus, and all His sacrifice implies, is God's requisite for salvation, and there is no other way to be saved according to the Bible. However salvation is not so simplistic that people can be saved and still live like the devil. It is not that God has a code of laws for man to follow after he is saved, but He does have a code of living by the Word which He expects to be manifested in how each person demonstrates his salvation. It is clear that genuine salvation produces a spiritual transformation and a new way of living which is bound up in one word, "lifestyle."

Paul wrote the Ephesians concerning this very issue in Ephesians 4:22-24.

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This new man is manifested by a renewed spirit and mind which brings about Godly behavior. This and this alone is the real evidence of salvation. It is not necessarily proof to an unbelieving world, but is proof positive to the one who is saved. If a person claims to be saved, but still is more interested in the things of the world than he is in the things of God, he has not put on the new man; neither his mind nor spirit have been renewed. He is still the same old man who tried to clean up his own house, but is worse off than before because he has been deceived by Satan into believing a lie and is comfortable living this lie. It is a rarity indeed for one who has been so deceived to reevaluate his position in Christ, realize he is lost, and again seek the Biblical way of salvation.

Jesus gave us a prime example of this very issue in Matthew 12:43-45.

Matthew 12:43-45

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

This Scripture is speaking of self righteousness and describes the condition of a person who fools himself into thinking he is saved by his own ideas of salvation. He does not lose his state of lostness, but instead sets himself up to be fooled even more because he creates a life filled with much more deception. He originally had only one unclean spirit (demon) to contend with, but he now has eight.

The last state of this person is worse off than before because he is now happy in this state of deception, and if he has any thoughts of seeking God, the demons will feed him the lie that he is OK. He most likely will never be convinced that he is lost.

While salvation is available for all people, it is certainly free, it is surely easy for the serious seeker, but it is not handed out like some social government program. It requires several things of the individual and a definite response from God. Without the satisfactory conclusion all of these things there is no salvation, but the process only produces a deceived sinner carrying a ticket to hell and he won't even know it.

Salvation is truly free but a person must do something to obtain it. Look at this from an earthly standpoint and you'll see that even free stuff requires one to do something to obtain it. The person who provides the free item must agree to give it away, and the person receiving the item must agree to accept it. In addition the receiver must either go get it or have someone bring it, but he has to do something to have it in his possession before it is his.

Salvation is no different for God must agree to give it to the specific sinner and the sinner must accept God's free gift of salvation. However there is one major difference in regards to salvation, God will bring it to the sinner; all he has to do is accept it.

In this light many teach God is always pleading with sinners trying to get them to accept His free gift of salvation. This is far from the truth for God is not a powerless begging monarch who has to stoop to anyone, but He is a benevolent giving monarch who offers salvation freely to those who genuinely seek Him and bring the right mindset to the salvation table.

I know much of this is difficult to understand for it appears I am advocating a salvation of works, but the whole salvation process takes place at the spiritual level. The exchange that takes place at this level only involves the will; the brawn is not involved. The Spirit does not work but influences, and each step has to be understood in an influential sense.

Man may be influenced in several ways, both internal and external, but to comprehend this one needs to have an understanding of the make-up of man as God created him.

Every person is born with a body, spirit, and soul, and all three of these are natural to the human race.

The body is external and it is what we observe in terms of the five senses we possess. We can see what a person looks like, hear his language, smell his odors, feel his touch, and even talk to him to elicit certain responses.

The spirit of man is not quite so easy to know for it is what a person is inside, and is much more difficult to observe, but it is the controlling agent for all of his actions. In other words the spirit controls the thinking and actions of the human being.

The soul is the very part of man that is of God. When God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living soul, he possessed a part of God. Because it is of God it is immortal and like God the soul of man can never die.

I think the hardest thing for people to understand about salvation is God is not addressing saving the body or the spirit, but only the soul and this only involves its final destination. Man is led through the process of salvation by the spirit, evidence of his salvation is manifested in the body, but it is only the soul that is saved from eternal damnation.

Man goes through life in a human body and in general most of his actions and decisions are at this level of existence for we easily comprehend the material things of life. His spirit easily becomes materialistically oriented and reflects such in his daily discourse of life. Basically one's spirit is what he is and it is structured by the input from stimuli provided by the five senses, but primarily by seeing and hearing.

Knowing this we then understand man must be exposed to righteous things to enable his spirit so it may be directed towards Godly things. This is where religion comes into play, for all religions appeal to man's spiritual desire to know and experience God's presence, and many are led astray at this point in life and will never find their way to the narrow road of salvation.

This is why the Gospel message is so important because it gives the spirit of man the right information, and at least an opportunity to get to know God's provision for salvation through His only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ. Not all will accept this message, but for some it will awaken their dormant spirits and they will "Have ears to hear and eyes to see." Jesus often used this expression to indicate that the salvation process must start with a spiritual awakening within each person before he can even start to search for God.

With this thought in mind let's look at the process that leads to salvation.

The Fourfold Process of Salvation

There are basically four major steps in the salvation process, and this process is sequential and cumulative. That is the requisites of each step must be satisfied before a person can proceed to the next one, and all of them must be completed before one is truly saved. These events may occur simultaneously or take a period of time, but they all must be completed in sequence for salvation to occur. There are no shortcuts and there is no bypassing a step for God requires full compliance of all of His Word before He bestows eternal life upon anyone.

Step one – A person must genuinely seek God with unwavering faith.

Step two – A person must fully realize he is a sinner before God, comprehend all sin is against God, and recognize that Jesus was God's sin sacrifice to the world.

Step three – A person must come to God with a contrite heart genuinely feeling sorry for his sins, accepting God's sacrifice of His only begotten son for his sins, and ask God for forgiveness for all his sins.

Step four – God must grant forgiveness and the person must accept God's forgiveness to conclude the salvation process. It is only then when God bestows the Holy Spirit upon His children to guide them through life. A person is not saved until he receives the Holy Spirit and then, and only then, is salvation confirmed in his heart. When this happens he knows for sure that he is made secure for all eternity.

The Fourfold Process of Salvation – Step One

A person must genuinely seek God with unwavering faith. This is the first step in the salvation process.

“One who is genuinely seeking God with unwavering faith will find Him.”

This is the theme throughout the Bible. One must have faith in God before he has even the slightest idea of where to start looking. This is the fundamental message in the statement in Hebrews 11:6.

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God appears to all who believe He is (faith) and diligently seek Him with a contrite heart. This simply means a person must have an element of faith in God, for faith is the gateway for the entrance of the Holy Spirit into one's heart and the right kind of faith assures citizenship in God's kingdom.

Faith has one major requirement; one must believe that God is. There can be no deviation, or doubt in this matter. One must accept that God exists, is all knowing, all powerful, and all seeing. Along with this one must also accept all of God's hand in creation, His plan of salvation, and have full faith in the Bible as His holy inspired and inerrant Word. The least bit of doubt in any of these will prevent one from having saving faith.

So the salvation process must start with faith.

What is faith? The Bible gives the right answers to all spiritual questions and especially to faith because it is such a necessary part of salvation. There should be no question about what saving faith is if one will read and understand Hebrews 11:1.

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

This Scripture is simply saying for one to be saved, faith in God must be so real that it in effect has substance. God must be more real to the person seeking Him than material things, science, or anything else one can imagine. Faith and faith alone provides the solid connection between God and man. Martin Luther rediscovered this truth hundreds of years ago and it remains the norm for salvation even today. This is recorded in Romans 1:16-17.

Romans 1:16-17

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

The importance of faith in both salvation and righteousness living is substantiated in our previous reference to Hebrews 11:6.

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Notice how “faith” and “diligently seeking God” are tied together. Notice also how believing “He is” is the link between faith and actually finding God. All of these are involved in saving faith and accepting them brings with it a conviction that all of God’s Words are true. This validates the Bible as being God’s Word and further confirms it is necessary to believe all of its content is true in order to be saved. It is not outdated and God does not change His mind as the message God gave mankind thousands of years ago is still current and just as true today. The Bible has always been God’s true messenger to mankind and it brings the only words of hope for the human race.

Substantive faith is just the starting point, but it is an absolute necessity to start here because if one does not believe in God with faith that has substance, he cannot get God’s attention and consequently cannot have communications with Him. In Hebrews 11:6 this is presented as an indisputable fact.

The problem of salvation to many is they claim to have faith in God, but don't have substantive faith. That is they have a human kind of faith that demands proof and many can never get beyond this barrier. They spend their lives seeking a sign instead of the sign giver. Jesus addressed this group in Matthew 12:38-39

Matthew 12:38-39

38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Then there are also those who seek God through wisdom as addressed in 1 Corinthians 1:22:

1 Corinthians 1:22

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

Faith to seek God cannot be found in signs nor wisdom but only through the methods God has provided. This is believing "He is," believing He alone is the creator, believing in all the truths of His word (every Jot and Tittle), and accepting His way of salvation through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.

What is seeking faith? That is to say what triggers the desire in some to seek to know God and to desire His presence?

It all has to do with the natural aspects of man. Every person is made with a dual nature of human and spirit. In general the human side dominates the desires, actions, and destinies of natural man. We say this is natural because man is made up of human flesh and bones, and being so he thinks only human, or only sees the material things in his existence. However, this is not the whole picture for man is also made up of a soul and a spirit, and these are just as natural as the physical, but often times he fails to exercise this part of his psyche and they lie dormant.

The mind is the key to seeking faith but only to the extent it focuses on the spiritual aspects of man's world for one must be truly seeking God in order to find Him, and this is done by seeing the hand God in all of his created environment.

Take for example a tree. Observe it and what do you see? Some see fire wood, others see lumber, but a few see the hand of God because every tree has life and life comes only for God.

Look at the heavens and what do you see? Some see the result of the "Big Bang", others merely see lights in the sky, but others see the very hand of God as He hung the heavenly bodies upon nothing and there they hang as witnesses of His creative powers.

Look at the animals and what do you see? Some see evolution of the species, others see food, or pets, while others see God's hand in making all life for a purpose.

Look at the birds and what do you see? Some see further proof of evolution, others see the process of flying, while others see another one of God's signatures in making His creation is such a way that man could see His process.

Look at the human beings and what do you see? Some see the pinnacle of evolution, others see people who are all different, but some see the intricacies of the human species as the ultimate expression of God's creation.

Look at air and what do you see? Some see nothing, others see a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen, but some see the miracle it is because God created it this way to sustain human life.

Seeking faith then is seeing God in all of creation and is the beginning of the salvation process, for if one truly sees God in all of creation and then seeks to find Him in his own way, he is at the beginning of the process of acquiring salvation. It is natural to man and it is just the beginning of the faith journey for many. However, this is not saving faith for this requires much more because for one to be saved he must fully accept the God of the Bible and His way of saving mankind. This not only entails seeing God in all of His creation but also believing the God of the Bible.

Saving faith demands one to accept all of the Bible as God's Word because it is only the Bible that speaks of salvation and a method for finding the path to God. This simply means one must accept as a fact that every word is true; the creation is true, the establishment of the Law is true, the sacrifice of Jesus is true, His resurrection is true, His ascension is true, and His promise to come again is true.

Only when a person has the faith issue taken care of can he reasonably progress to the next step in obtaining salvation.

The Fourfold Process of Salvation – Step Two

A person must fully realize he is a sinner before God is the second step in the salvation process

Many get hung up on this step even though they understand the faith issue. They just simply don't want to admit they are sinners. This is tantamount to calling God a liar for He says in Romans 3:23 and 5:12 that all have sinned.

Romans 3:23

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 5:12

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

The Bible is true, all have sinned. Man is born in sin and he will die in his sin unless he accepts God's way of salvation and comes to realize he is a sinner.

This does not leave man open to categorize sin as large and small, little and big, or black and gray; it is all encompassing. All men stand before God as sinners and must recognize this as a fact before God will even consider hearing their petitions. This issue of acknowledgment of sin is just as important as having faith in God for man must understand that sin not acknowledged cannot be forgiven, and unforgiven sin always separates man from God.

The first sin one must confront is the sin of rejecting Jesus as God's sacrifice. This is sin at its worse for failure to recognize this stagnates one in an unfulfilled spiritual journey. A person must fully understand that Jesus is God's sin offering to the world and this is the only way to salvation.

Hebrews 9:24-26

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

John 3:14-18

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Look at Paul the Apostle before he was saved. He had perfect faith in God as he understood it. He was actively seeking to do the will of God as he understood it. He was totally convinced he was right and made no apologies about it, but all the while he was full of sin and refused to accept the evidence. He had heard of the risen Christ, he

had heard the Christian message, and he had probably talked with many who were saved, but he refused to acknowledge he was a sinner before God.

Then one day while he was on the journey to Damascus to persecute the Christians he was confronted with his own sins. He could have denied he was wrong and continued persecuting the Christians, but when confronted with the truth about his own sin in denying the true Messiah and the necessity of His sacrifice he responded positively and acknowledged he was sinner. We all know the result of this acknowledgement for he went on to become one of the greatest champions for Christ in the entire history of the church.

Here is the Biblical account of Paul's brief spiritual encounter with the risen Lord which changed his way of thinking in Acts 9:3-6.

Acts 9:3-6

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

There is another event recorded in Matthew 19 where a good man came to Jesus seeking eternal life. Jesus, knowing the heart of all men, queried him about his keeping of the last six Commandments and we can tell by the young man's response he had kept them well. However Jesus knew he was slack in keeping the first four Commandments because he was letting his love for money keep him away from God and trapping him in the bondage of sin. The young man failed to recognize his sin, and went away lost. Here is the story in Matthew 19:16-22.

Matthew 19:16-22

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

This Scripture is not about the love of money as being the only sin that causes Jesus to reject good people, but encompasses anything that keeps a person from being totally committed to God. This may be such things as intellectual pride, not believing the Bible, choosing entertainment over worship, not being fair in business deals, not controlling one's tongue (gossip and profanity), and anything else that a person may give a higher priority in his life than he gives to God.

I'm afraid many in the Christian world have never come to grips with this truth of God's Word. They want to hang on to their favorite sins and bring to God only a few of them. They try to walk a thin line between what they want and what God requires and in doing so condemn themselves to hell. This is particularly sad for heaven is within their reach.

They need to look carefully at Romans 5:12 and fully understand its message.

Romans 5:12

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

This includes all men. There is no way to escape the curse of Adam except the way God has provided, and high among the salvation process and immediately following faith is realizing one is a sinner.

Unfortunately the unsaved man always tries to deal with God about the size of his sins he is guilty of and always wants to discount the small ones. Salvation is not about how big or little one's sins are; with God all sins are equal and acknowledgment of all of them is necessary in the process of salvation.

The Fourfold Process of Salvation – Step Three

A person must bring his sins before God with a repentant heart, confessing his sins, and accepting Jesus' sacrificial death as the only way of atonement for his sins. All sins are involved in the third step in the salvation process

Faith in God and acknowledgment of one's sins goes a long way towards obtaining salvation, but this is not salvation within itself; these steps merely prepare a person for the third step which is being sorry for his sins, having a contrite heart, and coming before God to ask for forgiveness of those sins. This is where many fall short for they will not fully accept the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus as the only remedy for sin because to do so will greatly change their lives.

They want to create a different Jesus who makes no demands of them about keeping their pet sins. They want to reject God's way of salvation, bring before Him a few token sins, and keep the ones they enjoy for themselves. God will not accept this kind of reformation any more than Jesus accepted the sin of the rich young ruler. Those who come to God with any false ideas about who Jesus is, what He died for, or any other kinds of hidden sins will not be forgiven and are condemned to eternal punishment.

God does not have to ask what sins one is keeping back for He is all-knowing and cannot be fooled. It is sad but true that because of man's own reluctance to bring all of his sins to God many will be turned away at this point in the salvation process.

Most will not realize they have been rejected because they are fully convinced they have gotten away with lying to God because He didn't zap them. They will join a church, enjoy the fellowship, sing the great salvation hymns with gusto, and even tell others about God's saving grace. They know the truth, they know the way, but are too full of deception and self-righteousness to fully surrender to God and be saved.

The third step of asking God for forgiveness is where one must confess to God a belief that Jesus is His only begotten Son. This is extremely important because it is at the heart of salvation and is the only acceptable way to become a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Not accepting Jesus as the Sacrificial Lamb of God is the one sin God will not forgive and is a sure ticket to hell.

Salvation is not about accepting some mythical Jesus who assures everybody will get to heaven. It is about the real Jesus who condemns sin, and condemns people who do not listen to and accept His message to a burning hell. The real Jesus is the Son of God, born of a virgin, walked on this earth for three and one half years preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, died a sacrificial death on the cross, ascended to heaven, and is there now as the mediator between God and man. The same Jesus will come again in all of His majesty and glory to obtain His own, and will stand as the supreme judge of all of mankind.

This is difficult for the human mind to comprehend, but it is easily understood in the spiritual realm. All it takes is faith and a firm conviction that the Bible is God's holy undefiled word, for the Bible, and the Bible alone, affords a satisfactory explanation of God's way of dealing with mankind, and it is all based on life as God created it.

In Genesis we read the story of God's creation and how man became a living soul when God breathed into him the breath of life. The soul that was created on that sixth day was immortal and every person who has been born ever since has an immortal soul. It is this soul of man that cannot be destroyed and will spend its eternity in heaven or hell depending on man's spiritual state at death.

Man was created in perfection, both human and spiritual, and God placed him the Garden of Eden with only one commandment, "Don't eat of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." The consequence of disobedience was death, and because the human man failed in his quest for righteousness God limited man's life here on earth and condemned the soul to judgment.

This was a universal failure on Adam's part for his sin was passed on to all his descendants; because of this all men are born in sin and deserve to be judged and doomed for eternal separation from God. But God in His love for mankind instituted a way for man to atone for his sins. First it was through the way taught by the descendants of Adam which was the way of faith. We see this in the pre-flood civilization, and we know from the Bible many accepted this way of God's forgiveness. Enoch was one such as recorded in Hebrews 11:5.

Hebrews 11:5

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Noah was another one who fully understood God's way of redemption as recorded in Hebrews 11:7.

Hebrews 11:7

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Abraham continued the process of salvation by faith after the flood and became the progenitor of the true faith for future generations as recorded in Hebrews 11:8.

Hebrews 11:8

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Moses took God at face value and by faith was given the Law which pointed to the Messiah and the Sacrificial Lamb of God. This is recorded in Hebrews 11:24-28.

Hebrews 11:24-28

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

While there are glimpses throughout the Bible of the coming Son of God to set all people free and offer a way of restoration of mankind with God, the Passover and subsequent practices of sacrificing a lamb without spot or blemish was the real picture of the coming of the Messiah. The sacrifice of the lambs, while required of God, was not satisfactory to satisfy God's demand for a perfect sacrifice. In fact, only God Himself could possibly provide such a perfect specimen and this was manifested in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. This record is plainly presented in the New Testament.

Accepting God's way of redemption is the only way provided for us to bring our sins before Him to ask for forgiveness, and full acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins is required before God will even consider such a pardon.

This means we know we have sinned, we are sorry for our sins, and we have accepted Jesus as the only mediator between us and God. This must be our state of mind when we come before God and ask for His forgiveness.

The Fourfold Process of Salvation – Step Four

God granting forgiveness is the fourth and final step in the salvation process.

This is when God sends the Holy Spirit to guide his children through life. A person is not saved until this part of the process is completed and then and only then when his salvation is confirmed in his heart that he is secure for all eternity.

Most do not understand that God must grant a pardon for our sins against Him before we are truly saved. Salvation cannot occur before this transpires and when it does the person who is saved will know it beyond a shadow of a doubt. This is called conversion, and it occurs at the exact moment God says, "I forgive you."

Here is when the seeker gains eternal life and all the benefits that salvation brings.

1. He is endowed with the Holy Spirit as God gives Him in full measure to all who are saved.

Ephesians 1:12-13

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,...

2. He automatically becomes a child of God and a citizen of God's Kingdom.

Romans 8:14-16

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

John 3:3

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

3. His eternal destination will be changed from hell and eternal punishment to heaven and all the privileges it has to offer.

Matthew 25:31-34

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

4. He will experience a new direction in life on earth as the Holy Spirit guides him to portray the holiness of God in his daily living and in his dealings with others.

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

What will cause God to reject the petition and not grant forgiveness at this point? On the surface it seems all who have the right kind of faith, acknowledge their sins, bring their sins before God, ask for forgiveness, and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior would certainly be forgiven by God. They would then be endowed with the Holy Spirit, and granted citizenship into the Kingdom of Heaven. However it is possible that a person can complete all these steps with flying colors and God will still withhold salvation because one has not totally accepted the challenge of making Jesus the Lord of his life.

Understand God does not expect us to be perfect as Jesus is perfect, but He is speaking here of a conviction of our wanting to be like Him. God knows if we have this persuasion and this is His one requirement above all else for granting salvation to

anyone. We can expect no less than for Him to demand us to accept the sacrifice of His Son and to have the right kind of understanding and conviction about how Jesus fits into our overall petition. Neither would we expect Him to allow the Holy Spirit to become part of our spiritual make-up unless we were totally willing to commit ourselves to Him.

God's requirement for salvation doesn't sound much like the "easy believism" we hear so much about today, but wholeheartedly accepting the Jesus of the Bible is the most important point in salvation. After all God gave us Jesus to set an example of how He wants us to live. He made it clear that for anyone to be saved he must buy the whole program and not pick and choose. God cannot be fooled about this issue for He knows the depths of our hearts, and knows exactly how far we go in totally accepting Jesus. We must make Jesus the Lord of our lives or He is not Lord at all.

This does not mean we will be perfect after we are saved, but it does mean we have the potential to be perfect in our glorified bodies. You see it is in the spiritual sense we are made pure at salvation, and in life we still have to deal with this old human mind and body. We will still sin, we will still do things contrary to God's will, but there is one big difference, we will always be reminded by the Holy Spirit who lives in us that we are sinning and He will urge us to ask God for forgiveness. The Apostle John made this clear in 1 John 1:8-9.

1 John 1:8-9

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If a person is truly saved this will be no issue, he will understand that he will try not to sin, but the flesh will sometimes win out, and He will have to come to God and ask for forgiveness.

The Fourfold Process of Salvation – Summary and Conclusions

Many do not understand that salvation is more than simple faith, but is a process that requires substantive faith and personal confession to God of one's sins, which includes one's total acceptance of Jesus Christ as God's supreme blood sacrifice. Further the salvation process is not completed until God grants forgiveness and bestows the Holy Spirit upon a person. Then and only then is a person truly saved.

It is a fact many whose names are on the church rolls are not saved, but are just fooling themselves into thinking they can reap the eternal rewards of Christianity without the bother of obeying God's Commandments regarding salvation . They are sometimes hard to identify for they look and act just like the rest of the sheep, but there is one major exception, they know who they are and are fully aware they are trying to get to heaven by deception.

Jesus addresses such people as these in Matthew 7:21-23.

Matthew 7:21-23

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Who are the false Christians today? They are the ones who teach doctrines contrary to God's Word but claim to be spokesmen for God. They have a false message and bring only false hope. They in fact are going to hell and are taking many others along with them.

These false Christians are not just highly educated religious leaders; they are found in our schools, governments, pulpits, and even the pews. They are the people who tell us we evolved from monkeys, the Bible cannot be trusted, God will not bring judgment on unrepentant sinners, all people of all religions will go to heaven, there is no hell, and on and on they continue trying to cast doubt on the Words and power of God.

They have a message of revelation that adds to or subtracts from the Bible. Their messages are always human oriented and they somehow always tie the spiritual promises of God into earthly rewards. They distort the Bible to prove their false doctrines and convince ignorant and uninformed people they are speaking for God.

Some of these teachings are manifested in human prosperity, a life time of health, and false presentations of the work of the Holy Spirit. In view of today's distortion of the truths of God's Word we also see the sins of abortion, homosexuality, and general sexual aberrations accepted as being the normal Christian life. Such people as these are not speaking for God, are not of His Kingdom, and are destined for the final judgment which is confinement in the eternal lake of fire.

Jesus was specific that those who follow the teachings of false prophets will be just as bad off in the end as the false prophets themselves. This is clear in Jesus' own words in Matthew 23:15.

Matthew 23:15

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

How then are we to be saved? This is an age old question and is the natural human response to spiritual mysteries for we naturally want to do something to acquire

salvation. The answer is you can do nothing to be saved from a human standpoint, so get that out of your mind, for with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

The Philippian jailer asked this question and accepted the answer and he was saved, along with his whole household. You remember the story of Paul and Silas being jailed in Philippi and the Lord sent an earthquake that opened the prison doors. The jailer was so impressed with Paul's and Silas' religion that he accepted the entire process on the spot and asked the age old question. "What must I do to be saved?" They told him to believe on the Lord Jesus and he would be saved."

This simple statement to the Philippian jailer encompassed all the steps of salvation as verified in Acts 16:34 where it records he believed God. When he believed God he accepted by faith that he must identify his sins, ask for God's forgiveness, believe in Jesus Christ, and accept God's free gift of salvation.

Acts 16:34

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

In another record Phillip had a discussion with an Ethiopian eunuch as presented in Acts 8. You probably remember the event where Phillip explained the Old Testament Scriptures in relationship to the Gospel of Jesus and the eunuch was convicted and wanted to be baptized. Philip responded by letting the eunuch know he had to be saved before he could baptize him by asking the crucial question regarding his acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This account is given in Acts 8:37.

Acts 8:37

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The eunuch had already proven he believed the Scriptures. He had already indicated his response to the Gospel which was conviction, and now he wanted to finish the process and ask for God's forgiveness and receive the Holy Spirit.

What must you do to be saved? Exactly what God specifies in His Word. Accept Him as the supreme creator, realize you are a sinner, acknowledge your sins, accept Jesus as your Savior, ask Him for forgiveness, and receive God's blessings.

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(Be sure and take the self grading exam on the next page)

The Fourfold Process of Salvation – Final Exam

Have I accepted that “God Is” by faith?

Have I fully realized that I am a sinner?

Have I come to God with a contrite heart?

Have I asked God for forgiveness of my sins?

Have I accepted Jesus as my Savior?

Has God granted me forgiveness?

Does the Holy Spirit bear witness that I am saved?

Does my lifestyle stand as proof that I am a Christian?

My language?

My attitude?

My associates?

My church affiliation?

My entertainment?

My prayer life?

My home life?

T_{he} **W**_{ord} **O**_f **G**_{od} **I**_s **S**_{harper} **T**_{han} **A**_{ny} **T**_{wo} **E**_{dged} **S**_{word}

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