

So Great Salvation

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~ 1940 ~

Second Edition

Strombeck Agency, Inc.

Moline Illinois

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Chapter Nineteen

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE LOST?

JESUS said of Himself, "**For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost**" (Luke 19: 10). Paul writes, "**But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost**" (II Corinthians 4:3). The word lost here applies to persons, and it tells of the state of these individuals in their relationship to GOD. Because JESUS came to seek them, it is evident they who are lost must be away from GOD. They have not received the benefits of the Gospel of grace for the good news of a free salvation is hidden to them because their minds have been blinded by Satan, the "**god of this world**" (II Corinthians 4:4). As these statements are applicable to those who are not saved, it follows that all who are not saved are lost.

Men do not become lost because of anything they do. They are lost until they become saved. Only Adam and Eve became lost and in them the whole human race. JESUS CHRIST came into the world that men might be saved from their lost condition.

Inasmuch as those who are lost are not saved, to be lost means first of all to be without any and all of the great benefits, previously explained, that come to man through salvation. But it means more than that. Just as few realize how much is included in salvation so also only a few realize what it means to be lost and how terrible the destiny of the lost shall be.

GOD's Estimate of the Present State of the Lost

Salvation includes deliverance from the power of darkness (**V. Delivered**

from the Power of Darkness). Therefore, to be lost means to be in the realm over which Satan has sway and consequently to be outside of the kingdom of GOD. It is to be in that realm which as a whole is at enmity with GOD.

GOD, in His Word, gives an estimate of the present condition of the lost. They are said to be "**dead in trespasses and sins**" (Ephesians 2:1, 5). Death in the Bible always means separation. Physical death means the separation of spirit and body from GOD. To be dead in trespasses and sins is to be spiritually dead -- spiritually separated from GOD.

Someone has defined death as being out of correspondence with environment. To be spiritually dead is to be out of correspondence with GOD.

When Adam and Eve took of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6) they died spiritually. Their sin separated them from GOD. Sin has ever since separated man from GOD. That is why those who are not saved are dead in trespasses and sins.

It is not only sin in the form of gross immoralities such as murder, drunkenness, adultery, falsification, bribery and the like, but many other things that are not even considered as sins. All that does not measure up to the perfection and holiness of GOD is sin. It is said; "**All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23). Even the most moral and refined are separated from GOD by sin.

What is more, every man is a sinner by nature, because he is a member of a sinful race descended from Adam, the original sinner. Until any man has the sin question settled with GOD, he is separated thereby from Him.

What it means to be dead in trespasses and sins is learned from the changed attitude of Adam toward GOD after he had sinned. He hid himself from the presence of GOD among the trees of the garden because he was afraid (Genesis 3:8-10). Those who are spiritually dead are afraid of GOD. Something deep down in the heart, though at times dormant, causes the unsaved, as Adam did, to fear to meet GOD. Little do they realize that, as GOD in love sought Adam, so GOD even now in love is seeking them to bring them into complete harmony and union with Himself.

The lost are said to be without CHRIST, having no hope, and without GOD in the world (Ephesians 2:12). To be without CHRIST is to be without the only means of coming to GOD and receiving His benefits. JESUS said: "**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by**

me" (John 14:6). To be without Him is to have no hope as to the future state. To be without GOD is to be without the CREATOR and SUSTAINER of man and the universe. It is to be without GOD as FATHER. It is to be "far off" from Him (Ephesians 2:13). Yes, those who are without GOD still enjoy much of GOD's providence but they have no claim upon His care and provision. They have no standing before Him because they belong to a rebel domain. It is only in the name of JESUS CHRIST that any man can claim anything from GOD. JESUS said; "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you**" (John 16:23). The lost cannot ask in the name of Him whom they have not received.

Those who are saved have been called out of darkness into GOD's marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). The unsaved are still in darkness. They are said to be "**Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart**" (Ephesians 4:18).

Men may be very intellectual as far as the things of this world go but in darkness as to spiritual things. The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not lest the glorious gospel of CHRIST should shine unto them (II Corinthians 4:4).

The unsaved are called the sons, or children, of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2). This is so because they "**obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (II Thessalonians 1:8). Being disobedient to the Gospel and rejecting the SON of GOD they are "**by nature the children of wrath**" (Ephesians 2:3). "**He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him**" (John 3:36).

The above is not a very pleasing picture of the unsaved in their present state, but it is GOD's own description of their condition and is therefore true.

The Final State of Being Lost

Those who do not heed the Gospel of the LORD JESUS CHRIST but reject salvation "**shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power**" (II Thessalonians 1:9). This is an everlasting condition. In the present life there is opportunity to become saved and brought back to GOD, but when the final separation from Him has taken place there shall be no such opportunity.

This separation is not only from the presence of the LORD, it is also from His power and therefore from all benefits that go out from Him.

Many think lightly of being separated from GOD. They have nothing to do with Him now and do not admit that they are getting anything from Him. They think that they can do very well without Him. Little do they realize how much they are depending upon and receiving from Him every moment of their lives. The air they breathe was made by Him. The rain that falls and the sun that shines are both sent by Him. They call this nature, and so it is, but GOD brought it all into being and sustains it all by His power. Apart from GOD's providence for man, every creature would die instantly.

When man becomes separated from the glory of the power of GOD he shall not benefit in the slightest from GOD's providence. The creature will be completely separated from every phase of His provision. That state is called "blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13). There shall be no ray of light to pierce the absolute darkness; no drop of rain to quench an insatiable thirst; no morning star to point to the break of a new day after that everlasting night.

Lost man, in that state is also described as being cast into the lake of fire. It is said that all who are "**not found written in the book of life**" shall be cast therein (Revelation 20:15). Some say that this is only figurative. If so, that makes the condition more serious, for the reality is always more than the figure. It is also spoken of as . . . **hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched**" (Mark 9:47-48). And still again as ". . . **outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth**" (Matthew 8:12).

All who are not saved are already under condemnation. "**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 3:18). They are living under a suspended sentence, but the judgment shall surely be executed unless they turn to GOD and in dependence upon Him receive JESUS CHRIST as their SAVIOUR.

The essence of sin was seen to be a desire to be independent of GOD. The final state of the lost shall be one in which there can be no dependence upon Him. Hell, then, is nothing more or less than the fulfillment of man's desire and the ultimate consequence of his own action.

~ end of chapter 19 ~
