

SEEKING SALVATION

Gary McDade

A Sad And Serious Consideration

Although salvation from sin readily is available through Christ and his church, many people will be lost because they will not think of God and his will. Jeremiah faced a similar nation as he appealed to them to consider the consequences of forgetting about God. The false gods that had them enthralled he contrasted with the true and living God who had them under evaluation. Jeremiah's remarks to them about how they called upon their idols saying, "Arise, and save us," reflected the desire of God's heart to hear them make that request to him. Amid their misplaced affections God assisted them to seek him through efforts to correct them. The destruction of the prophets God sent became a self-inflicted blow to their spiritual wellbeing. Jeremiah wrote about how the shame of their circumstances reached to the highest levels of their society:

As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the Lord. In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion. O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them (Jer. 2:26-37). God wants people to love him and to call upon him for salvation, but he

does not miraculously take over the lives of people and remove every temptation and test that tries them.

A Strong And Sobering Communication

Isaiah affirmed, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). It is not a matter of what God can and cannot do when it comes to man’s sin, but it is the fact that sins committed by the sinner stand between him and the loving and holy God of heaven. It is healthy and wholesome to maintain a conscious concern for the power of sin to separate from God. Additionally, the free moral nature of man emerges from Isaiah’s statement on sin and just who it is that is responsible for the separation it can bring. People are free to make weighty choices that relate not only to their existence here but hereafter also. These choices people are free to make involve right and wrong, that is, morality. The free moral nature of man separates man from the animals whose nature is based on natural instincts. All people may be saved provided they will seriously and sincerely seek the salvation which is in Christ Jesus by obeying the gospel of Christ and continuing faithful to him throughout life (II Tim. 2:10; Rom. 10:16; Rev. 2:10).

If There Is A Sin God Will Not or Cannot Forgive, Then What Would It Be?

In coming studies this question will be addressed by exploring what people sometimes refer to as the unpardonable sin and various suggestions as to what that might be. Next, what the Bible refers to as the “sin unto death” will receive attention, and consideration of a person’s long and languishing involvement in sin will be discussed as to the possibility of such a one reaching a point of no returning to repentance. Where the Bible teaches or alludes to such concepts will be singled out for study. For now the closing thought to encourage everyone to seek salvation, even if they presently feel they may be guilty of having committed such transgressions, comes from the pen of the apostle Peter who wrote by the inspiration of God, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9).