

A New Beginning Our Great Salvation

By Kenneth L. Birks

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new—2Corinthians 5:17

The Christian journey begins when we are genuinely born again and translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son. As a result, a great opportunity lies before us. We are given the keys to the kingdom and receive access to the wonders of God's grace that leads us onto the invisible and mysterious path that lies before us.

You are on a journey in which you will experience the fullness God intended for your life as your spiritual eyes are enlightened to this new paradigm of thinking God has purposed for you. (*Ephesians 1:17-18*)

The Bible refers to our common salvation experience as a great salvation of which Old Testament prophets and righteous men and even angels desired to look into, but could not experience. (*Matthew 13:16, 2Peter 1:12*) We, now, have the privilege of experiencing something these great heroes of our faith were never able to experience. Paul writes to the Ephesians, "*We are now partakers of the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now revealed by the Spirit of God's holy apostles and prophets.*" (*Paraphrased from Ephesians 3:4-5*) We are being drawn into the heart of God in a way that they were never able to.

Having the Eyes of our Understanding Opened

As we allow the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the wonders that we find on the path God has for us, we are able to appreciate all that He has given to us. We now have all things that pertain to life and godliness. (*2Peter 1:3*) All that we will ever need is on this path that leads to the unforeseen purposes of God. It is as we are bold enough to take the steps that lead into this invisible kingdom realm that we experience all that God has intended for us.

Are you ready for such a journey? If so, may God bless you mightily as you allow the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your understanding so that you can move forward in faith towards an unknown destiny!

Before our salvation experience, our minds were trained to respond according to our carnality and logical reasoning. Now that we have been born

again and made new, God's desire is for us to learn how to live and function according to faith and being spiritually minded. As spiritual beings, we can no longer lean on our understanding. (*Proverbs 3:5*) As we purpose to see with the eyes of our understanding, the Holy Spirit is within us to illuminate the path and direct our steps more correctly unto Him.

As we see and hear through our spirit, our lives are then shaped by that which is invisible rather than that which is visible. It is when we see and hear through our spirit that we connect with the power and victory that allows us to find our way through the maze of the world. We can see the invisible forces of God and His kingdom at work in our lives, which gives us the confidence we need to accept whatever comes our way.

Getting Started

Getting started on the path of life begins with a salvation experience from a God who is rich in mercy. He fills us with faith, hope and love while daily loading us with benefits. (*Psalms 68:19*) Having heard the joyful sound that comes from the Throne of Grace, we begin to walk with great joy and enthusiasm as we embrace the new nature God is pouring into us. As a result, our old nature and ways begin to dissipate. We enter into a new sense of invincibility which gives us the courage to start the journey wherein lies our destiny that is yet to unfold before our eyes.

Our salvation experience is a result of our belief in Jesus Christ. (*Romans 10:9-10*) We must believe that He is much more than a great prophet or teacher. He is the Son of God, the manifestation of God in the flesh, who came to give His life as a ransom for our sins. (*John 1:1, 14, 3:16*) He did this by dying on the cross, rising from the dead and then ascending into Heaven from where He came.

As the Scriptures so clearly say, "*He is the only way to the Father, and there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we experience salvation.*" (*John 14:6, Acts 4:12*)

1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

One of the most astonishing facts concerning Christ and the atonement He made for our sins is that He became sin for us. Jesus, who was without sin,

was filled with sin as He hung on the cross and cried out to the Father in agony, *"Why have You forsaken Me?"*

Because Jesus was full of the sins of the world, His Father could no longer look upon Him. The close intimacy He continually experienced with Him during His time on earth was no longer there. As a result, He died a sinner's death and became our righteousness. Because Jesus died for our sins, we are now totally righteous in Him. Those who are sanctified, He has perfected forever in one act. *(Hebrews 10:14)*

2Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Many years ago I came across a tract that explains the punishment that Christ bore on our behalf. Here it is. It's called, *"Justice."* The author is unknown.

Justice

At the end of time, millions of people were scattered on a great plain before God's throne. Some of the group near the front talked heatedly – not with cringing shame but with belligerence. "How can God judge us? How can He know about suffering?" snapped a joking brunette. She jerked back a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp. "We endured terror, beatings, torture, and death!"

In another group, a black man lowered his collar. "What about this?" he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn. Lynched for no other crime but being black! "We suffocated in slave ships, were wrenched from loved ones, and toiled until only death gave release."

Far out across the plain were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering He had permitted in His world. How lucky God was to live in heaven where all was sweetness and light, where there was no weeping, no fear, no hunger, and no hatred. Indeed, what did God know about what man had been forced to endure in this world? And after all, God leads a pretty sheltered life, they said.

So each group sent out a leader, chosen because he had suffered the most. There was a Jew, a Black, an untouchable from India, an illegitimate, a person from Hiroshima and one from a Siberian slave camp. In the center of the plain, they consulted each other. At last, they were ready to present their case. It was rather simple: before God could be their judge, He must endure

what they endured. Their decision was that God should be sentenced to live on earth—as a man!

But, because He was God, they set certain safeguards to be sure He could not use His divine powers to help Himself. Let Him be born to a hated minority. Let the legitimacy of His birth be doubted so that no one will know who His father is. Let Him champion a cause so just, but so radical, that it brings down upon Him the hate, the condemnation and eliminating efforts of every major traditional and established religious authority. Let His dearest friends betray him. Let Him be indicted on false charges, tried before a prejudiced jury and convicted by a cowardly judge. Let Him see what it is to be terribly alone and entirely abandoned by every living thing. Let Him be tortured and let him die the most humiliating death—with common thieves.

As each leader announced his portion of the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the great throng of people. When the last had finished pronouncing sentence, there was a long silence. No one uttered another word. No one moved. For suddenly all knew: God already had served His sentence.

God served His sentence in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus got a bad deal. The Bible says He took your sin and my sin on Himself and offered back His righteousness. He died so that we might have life. The wages or price of sin is misery, guilt, lack of peace of mind, death and hell. But Jesus died on the cross to save us from that sin so that we might have real peace, abundant life, and eternal life.

We despised Him and rejected Him—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way when He went by. He was despised, and we didn't care. It was our grief He bore, our sorrows that weighed Him down. And we thought His troubles were a punishment from God, for His sins! But He was wounded and bruised for our sins. He was chastised that we might have peace; He was lashed—and we were healed! (Isaiah 53:3-10 Living Bible)

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The Father Deals with us as Individuals

For all of us who have come to know Christ, we have our stories to tell. The Father deals with each one of us as individuals whom He has created. We

have been fearfully and wonderfully created by Him, our Creator, and He knows every aspect of our lives.

Psalm 139:13-16 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

When the Father draws us unto Christ, we must make the choice to either accept or reject Him. We must either acknowledge Him as the Lord of our lives or harden our hearts to the truth He desires to impart. The beautiful thing about God is that He never gives up on us, but is longsuffering towards us and continually woos us into His presence.

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

Thankfully, God was very patient with me. I was very stubborn, continually resisting His wooing until I was broken and worn out from the resistance. His longsuffering won out over my resistance as I surrendered to His Lordship. Thus, my journey with Christ began.

I have often likened my journey to a fisherman who is trying to land the big fish. When it first bites at the bait and gets the hook into its mouth, the fisherman jerks the line and sets the hook. He then lets the fish run with the line for a while before slowly reeling it in. He may repeat this process several times until the poor fish is worn out from the fight and finally succumbs to the net that either lands him on shore or in the boat.

With me, it took three long years after getting the hook in my mouth. I was in Vietnam and had been heavily involved in drugs when one day I experienced violent convulsions from getting a shot of penicillin. The penicillin must have reacted to all of the drugs I had been taking. Later that evening I received a vision of my life flashing before me. It became one of the strongest defining moments I would ever experience to date.

Even though raised in a healthy Christian environment and making several false starts at trying to be a Christian as a child, I never fully surrendered to the Lord. As a result, during my teenage years and early 20s, I rebelled quite

strongly to the upbringing I had. I allowed the world and drugs to get a death grip on my soul and became a very deceived, lost, and wandering soul. I tried to fill my life with everything except what God wanted. I have written about this period of my life in another book titled, "[The Adventures of Space and Hobo](#)."

I came to understand the longsuffering of God. He never gave up on me even though I was in rebellion to Him. He continually reminded me that He was there watching over me and even protecting me from myself. He would reel me in from time to time to remind me He was still watching over me, only to let go again, but never completely releasing me. He is a gracious and compassionate God, who loves us even in our most disgusting states of mind.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

At the end of this season, I was on the verge of totally losing it. I was a broken and tattered vessel who had lost all sense of reality. I was a burned out hippie freak with no sense of purpose. I had become lost in isolation.

In my [memoir](#), I wrote, "*I knew in spite of my heart being somewhat disengaged, the seed was still there, and I did not want to lose it. However, I also didn't sense that I was ready to become one of His followers at this point in my life wholeheartedly. It was interesting, though, how the Lord would bring me in touch from time to time with what was happening in the Jesus people culture.*"

"In some unique and mysterious way, I did sense God was leading me in spite of my stubbornness and refusal to submit to Him. Sensing God was still with me gave me a feeling of peace, just knowing that He was being longsuffering with me and hadn't given up on me. But the question was, how long would He continue to allow me to have my way?"

I eventually came to a place where I sensed the time had come when God was going to reel me in for the final catch, or I was going to break the line of communication and be given over to the hardness of my heart. It was during this season I discovered how God leads us to repentance through His goodness and mercy.

Romans 2:4 or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Over the next three months, I experienced the goodness of God leading me to genuine repentance. It culminated one Sunday morning, when my family had invited me to attend my niece's baby dedication. I kneeled at the altar in the church I had grown up in and fully surrendered to Jesus.

God is no respecter of persons. His call goes out to everyone. It went out to me—a poor lost and wandering soul who had been in rebellion towards Him and continually goes out to everyone regardless of their state of mind. Salvation through Jesus Christ is a gift from God that is all inclusive, meaning He died for everyone, not just a chosen few.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

When the Bible says, "Whoever believes in Him has eternal life," it means God is no respecter of persons. He died for everyone so that we can all claim for ourselves salvation in Christ. Our part is to believe in Him.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Romans 5:18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Since all humanity came under judgment in Adam, all mankind must come, at least, into the possibility of eternal life in Jesus Christ. It's when we come to a place of brokenness and humility in our lives that the Father can begin to draw our hearts unto His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms 138:6 though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly, but the proud He knows from afar.

Psalms 34:18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.

It was during this season that I was on the verge of totally losing it. I was a burned out hippie freak now being drawn into the heart of Jesus by God our

Father. (*John 6:44*) As a result, I came to a place of complete belief and trust in the reality of who Jesus is.

It's as we come to this place in our lives and sincerely believe with all of our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead that we are born again, and our journey into this wonderful, invisible and spiritual path begins.

Romans 10:9-10 (NASB) that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

The key is that we must believe with our heart. The word "believe" is a verb, meaning there is action involved. Our heart must be involved. Heart-felt belief is much more than just intellectual knowledge. The Bible says even the demons in hell believe. (*James 2:19-20*) Heart-felt belief is when your whole life comes into alignment with what you think. You adhere to it.

Jesus is the Mediator between Man and God

As mentioned earlier, every one of us begins our life with a natural birth. Jesus referred to this birth as being "born of water"—the natural birth that comes forth as a result of a woman's water breaking during childbirth. (*John 3:1-9*) Through Adam, sin entered into this world. Because of his sin, all humanity is separated from God, and therefore, has a need for a Savior. Jesus is the Savior of humanity and the only mediator between man and God, which is why He is the only way to man's salvation. There is no other way no matter how hard one may try. (*1 Timothy 2:5-6, Acts 4:12 John 14:6*)

Salvation is a gift from God, and there are no amount of good works we can do to earn it. (*Ephesians 2:6-8*) It's Free! Salvation has nothing to do with whether we deserve it or not. It has nothing to do with how good we are or have been. It is God's unmerited favor bestowed upon us in spite of ourselves—a result of our belief in the person of Jesus Christ and who we believe Him to be.

Once we accept Jesus Christ for who He is by coming to Him with repentant hearts, we are born again of the Spirit. His Holy Spirit then comes to abide within us.

The born again experience is a very exciting time because all things become new. As we ask forgiveness for our sins and past transgressions, we are entirely forgiven. As far as the East is from the West, the past is completely

wiped clean with the weight of sin and guilt removed from our lives. It's a gift from God. (1 John 1:9, Psalm 103:12, Hebrews 10:17) We become new creatures in Christ with a brand new lease on life.

2Corinthians 5:17-19 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Becoming a new creation is what sets us up to begin the greatest journey anyone could ever ask for in this life—a journey into the mysterious and invisible realms where God exists and invites us to join Him.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Have you ever heard His voice? Has He been knocking at your door? If so, open your heart to Him and allow Him into your life, and you'll be ready for the greatest adventure of your life—a life designed for the person God created you to be.

**This article was taken from a chapter in my new book
“The Journey – Discovering the Invisible Path”**

*To Purchase the book or learn more about it, please go to the following
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