



# God's standard is perfection

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## Understanding man's condition before God

**Galatians 3:22** - But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

### What does it mean to be confined?

Restrained, restricted, held under the authority of, limited, enclosed, in bondage

### From what are we confined?

- Being under sin means being separated from God.
- Being under sin keeps us from knowing and having a relationship with our Creator.
- Being under sin keeps us from making eternally wise decisions.
- Being under sin keeps us from escaping the consequences of sin.

### How does our confinement keep us from having a relationship with God?

Sin blinds us from the truth. Sin keeps people from discerning spiritual matters. If our focus is only on the temporal things of this world, we can not see the eternal things of God..

2 Cor 6:14 - For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

### Who is confined?

All people are confined under sin.

### Why is it true that all are under sin?

The Scriptures say that all people have a sin problem...

Rom 3:10-12, 23 - As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

God has given us the ability to chose or reject a relationship and all of us were born choosing self over God...

Isa 53:6 - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Most people have never turned to God. And some who look like they've turned to God have not despite appearances because it is human nature to sin...

Jer 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

God has given all people an opportunity to be saved...

Titus 2:11-13 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

### Wait a minute, how can Scripture claim that the news about Jesus that brings salvation has appeared to all men?

All people have received the revelation of God in His creation. If there is a watch, their must be a watchmaker, if there is a creation, there must be a Creator...

Rom 1:20 - For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Also, all people have some of the law of God written on their hearts...

Rom 2:14-15 - for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)

These revelations are not sufficient for salvation but could lead to a knowledge of Jesus Christ if the person responds by turning to God in faith.

### Do people generally recognize that they are confined under sin?

No

### Why don't people agree that all are under sin?

People who reject God reject God's Word as being true. Man's condition is a spiritual problem and the unsaved can not understand spiritual matters...

1 Cor 2:14 - But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to

him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

### **What does Galatians 3:22 say has confined us under sin?**

This verse says that Scripture has confined all under sin.

### **How has Scripture confined us under sin?**

God's Word makes clear what sin is and what the consequences of sin are. God is faithful and must make sure the truth of His Word is demonstrated because His very character is at stake...

Deut 7:9 - Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments

### **What does Galatians 3:22 say is given those who believe?**

The promise.

### **What is the promise?**

Eternal life.

### **How is the promise received?**

By faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Why do we need faith in Jesus Christ to receive the promise of eternal life?**

Because Jesus made the only way to be saved. His death on the cross was fully sufficient to pay the price for everyone who yields their life to Him by trusting in Him.

### **Jesus is only one man, how could His death pay the price for the millions of Christians who has faith in Him?**

Jesus is not just a man, He is the only sinless man. He is also God the Son who had never experienced separation from the Father and the Holy Spirit from eternity past up until He bore our sins on the cross. The Father could not look on the Son because of our sins which He bore...

Matt 27:46 - And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

However long it was that Jesus experienced being forsaken, it would have been like a lifetime for every one of us to Him due to the eternal nature of His relationship with the Father. People speak of the passion of Christ in terms of the physical pain of dying a humiliating, slow, torturous death by crucifixion. Commentators often cite this in explaining what Jesus prayed for in the Garden of Gethsemane the evening before He was taken away to be crucified...

Luke 22:41-44

41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,  
42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Many say the reason Jesus asked the father to take this cup away from Him was that in His humanity, He was not looking forward to the painful death He was to die. It may have been in His humanity that Jesus voiced this prayer but in His Deity, He knew the pain of physical death would be insignificant in light of bearing our sins and the spiritual separation from the Father that He faced.

### **How do we come by the faith in Jesus that saves us?**

It is a gift from God that the promise by faith in Jesus might be given to those who believe...

Eph 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

### **Why would God give eternal life to people instead of making people earn it?**

- God wouldn't be able to demonstrate His sacrificial love and amazing grace if we could do anything to earn salvation.
- Also, if we could do anything to earn eternal life, we would be making God have to respond to us. God has already made the way to have a relationship with Him through Jesus paying the price for our sin, the ball is in our court to respond to Him.
  - To say we can have any part in earning our own salvation is to render Jesus mission on the cross as ineffective, a slap in the face.
  - It would be like offering to pay for a present that someone gave you. A gift is a gift, it is not paid for.
- The other major problem with this is that we would have to be perfect. This is not humanly possible, only God is perfect...

Matt 5:48 - Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

- Even messing up with one commandment like Adam and Eve did is enough to prove that you are less than perfect...

James 2:10 - For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

### **How did Jesus indicate that God's standard (spirit of the law) is higher than man's understanding of the Law (letter of the law)?**

The classic message on this is His Sermon on the Mount. For example...

Matt 5:43-48

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Here Jesus equated anger that may or may not even lead to murder the same as murder. Likewise, He considers looking with lust the same as committing adultery.

### **Why do people believe they must earn salvation?**

- It is the way of the world to believe "you can't get anything of value for free." Well while the greatest possession anyone can have can not be earned, it wasn't free; our Lord paid the price.
- It is our nature to be the "captain of our own soul" (in the words of Timothy McVey).
- It is man's perspective putting people in the driver's seat in their search for God. (The Bible teaches that it is not us who search for God, it is the Shepherd who searches for the lost sheep.)
- It is what all the religions of the world teach. (Religion has lead more people away from salvation than anything else in the world.)  
Prov 14:12 - There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

### **How do people try to earn their way to heaven?**

By striving to be good. By suffering for God, going to church, giving, and many other things to earn favor with God. They rationalize imperfection by claiming "good intentions" (the road to hell is paved by good intentions).

### **Wait a minute, aren't we supposed to do good things? Since we can't earn our way to heaven, why be good?**

- While good works have no value in our salvation, good works are why Jesus saved us (Ephesians 2:10) and proof that we are saved (James 2:14-24).

- Good works properly motivated have eternal value because there are rewards in heaven (see the parable of the talents, Matthew 25, for example).

1 Cor 3:11-15

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

### **Who does Galatians 3:22 say receives the promise of eternal life?**

Those who believe receive the promise of eternal life.

### **What does it mean in Galatians 3:22 to believe?**

To believe means to trust or have faith in Jesus' act of redemption at the cross.

### **Is this not a sure thing? Why does it say that "the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe?"**

The word "might" does not apply to those who believe, it applies to all who are confined under sin.

### **Why isn't it a sure thing for those confined under sin to be given the promise of eternal life?**

We have a choice and most will exercise that choice to reject Jesus.

### **What is the difference between knowing about Jesus' act of redemption and believing it?**

You can know about a truth without accepting it.

- I have a Sikh friend who knows the fundamentals about what Christians believe. In fact, there was an occasion where he explained the gospel to an unsaved mutual friend as well as I could have but he didn't believe it himself. He said Christianity is a very American religion since you didn't have to do anything to earn salvation, it was all done for you. He believed the world's lie that to obtain anything of value, you have to earn it.

It is head knowledge versus heart knowledge. It is like the difference between knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge applied to your life... believing is knowing the truth about Jesus and acting on that truth.

### **What do you have to believe to receive the promise of eternal life?**

That Jesus paid the penalty for your sin on the cross for you and that He is who He presented Himself to be, God in the form of a man...

John 8:23-25

23 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

25 Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.

Jesus said it is necessary to believe that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed of God, the one sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world.

### **Why is faith necessary to believe the promise?**

- Faith goes hand-in-hand with believing spiritual truths.
- Faith is necessary to relate to God because of His nature:

John 4:24 - God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

- In order to have faith, we must be open to God in our lives. Faith is a gift that is a byproduct of having a relationship with Jesus. As we respond to the Lord in faith, He gives us more faith...

Romans 1:17 - For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

### **What role does Scripture play in our salvation?**

In Galatians 3:26 we see that the Word of God is what declares all to be under sin but it also provides the solution to overcome sin. The Word of God gives us the promise of eternal life and it is what God uses to reveal Himself to mankind. It is God's contract to man, written down for all to see and guaranteed by His own character.