



**“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”**  
Ephesians 2:1.

## **Salvation**

**Lesson Aim:** To emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation

**L444. Date:** March 1976. **Text:** Acts 16:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-10.

**Topic:** Church Covenant; Salvation.

**Covenant:** “Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the LORD Jesus Christ as our Saviour . . .”

The Spring Issue of your Sunday School Quarterly presents an interesting series of studies. The lesson texts are taken from various books of the New Testament, but the subjects follow a theme. The aim of the thirteen lessons is “to make a comprehensive study of the commitments of each orderly believer as expressed in the church covenant.”

What is the church covenant? Who wrote it? Do churches of the Baptist Missionary Association subscribe to it? Is it authoritative in church life?

The Baptist Church Covenant is not a creed for formulation of church law. It is a simple statement of Christian conduct, based upon Bible teaching, which is expected of each person who joins a Baptist church in the work of God. A copy of the church covenant is printed in this quarterly.

The movement toward writing a church covenant for Baptist churches began on June 24, 1830, at the session of the New Hampshire Baptist State Convention. A committee of three brethren (William Taylor, N. W. Williams, and I. Pearson) was selected to prepare a systematic statement of Baptist doctrines to be issued under the title “A Declaration of Faith.” The committee worked through the year. Their draft of the doctrinal statement was approved in 1831. The committee was dismissed, and the completion of the work was left to the Bro. Pearson. He reported back to the annual session in 1834. His report was approved; the doctrinal statement was placed under

the study of a select committee of four which made some slight alteration in wording. (The actual work of revision was done by Dr. J. Newton Brown and a certain Brother Stow. It was completed in October, 1834.) It was sent out to the churches as a recommended statement of the Baptist faith. Most Baptist churches still accept it as a valid statement of their doctrine.

The church covenant was written by Dr. J. Newton Brown as an appendage to that “New Hampshire Declaration of Faith.” The covenant was intended to be the practical application of what Baptists believe and how Baptists are to behave. It sets out how Baptists must live in order to be consistent with the doctrines they profess to believe.

“Being only recommended to the churches, it was never intended to be an iron clad creed and covenant to be binding upon any Baptist church, as Baptists believe and teach the Bible alone to be their authoritative standard of faith and practice”—Dr. D. N. Jackson.

Only Baptist churches subscribe to the covenant, and many of them largely ignore it. No church is obligated to accept the covenant. Each member of each Baptist church, however, should be willing to live according to its principles. It is a practical expression of what Christian conduct is.

Today's lesson deals with the opening phrase of the church covenant: “Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour . . .” It aims “to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation.” It is an important study because without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, salvation would be impossible.

## I. ENLIGHTENMENT BY THE SPIRIT

Jesus said. **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . .”** John 6:44. That statement is absolute truth. The sinner is “dead in trespass and sins,” Ephesians 2:1. How can one who is dead be alive again, unless some power outside him effects new life? The work of the Holy Spirit in enlightenment, causing the sinner to see his true condition and God's offer of mercy, is absolutely essential to salvation. Paul and his missionary party preached the first gospel sermon on the continent of Europe to a group of women who had gathered by the river side near Philippi. Several heard, but only one was converted. Luke recorded, **“ . . . A certain woman named Lydia . . . heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken . . .”** Acts 16:14. Observe how Luke described her conversion experience — the Lord opened her heart! That is the essence of the work of the Holy Spirit in preparing sinners to be saved. The proclaimed gospel is accomplished by the

enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner.

Remember your experience when you trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour. Remember how, at a particular point, you became aware that you were a sinner and needed to be saved. That is the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. It is essential to salvation.

## II. LIFE BY THE SPIRIT

**“... You hath he quickened, who were dead ...”** Ephesians 2:1  
Observe that term, “quicken.” It means “to restore to life; to raise from the dead.” Paul inferred that being saved is like being raised from the dead. That is it! The essence of salvation is receiving the life of God through Jesus Christ.

Salvation is a resurrection out of spiritual death into spiritual life. “But,” some one may object, “is the sinner truly dead?”

The Bible answers with an emphatic “Yes.” The essence of death is separation. The sinner is separated from God because of his sin. Over and over, the Bible refers to the unbeliever as being dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:12.) Conversion is often spoken of as a birth (John 3) or as a resurrection (Ephesians 2). Paul wrote of believers being “quicken” (resurrected, verse 1), “quicken together with Christ” (verse 5), and “raised up together” (verse 6) when they trusted Jesus as Saviour.

Jesus used a little different expression to indicate that salvation means “to receive the life of God.” Jesus said it was a matter of one's being “born of the Spirit,” John 3. Either expression, resurrected by the Spirit or born of the Spirit, indicates that a person is saved when the Spirit of God imparts the life of God to him.

## III. WITHOUT THE SPIRIT

The person who has not trusted Jesus as personal Saviour is in a terrible spiritual condition. He is in a condition of spiritual death — “dead in trespasses and sins.” He is in a condition of spiritual bondage — walking “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.” He is in a condition of spiritual depravity — being “by nature the children of wrath.” Ephesians 2:1-3 reveals man's true spiritual condition.

Man's spiritual plight is the result of his “... having not the Spirit,” Jude 19. To be unsaved is to be separated from the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. The Bible says, **“... If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is**

**none of his,”** Romans 8:9.

Man is a spiritual being. He will be governed by some spiritual power. Before being saved, he is subject to “. . . **the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience . . . fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind . . .**” Ephesians 2:2-3. After one is saved, the Holy Spirit of God lives within him and works the will of God through him. Paul expressed it this way, “**Being . . . made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness,**” Romans 6:18. To which spirit is your spirit yielded? Government by the Satanic spirit brings condemnation; government by the Holy Spirit brings salvation.

#### **IV. LOVE OF THE SPIRIT**

Does it seem strange to speak of the “love of the Spirit”? Men commonly think of the love of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit loves, too (Romans 15:13). Love of the Father, Son, and Spirit is the motive behind God's offer of forgiveness to sinners.

“**. . . God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us . . .**” Ephesians 2:4. There is the motive behind the salvation of each sinner. Nothing in man merited God's redemptive act. Ephesians 2:1-3 gives an accurate description of man — dead, disobedient, depraved. How could that recommend any man to God or merit any mercy from God? Salvation is based upon God's love, mercy, and grace. How else could a man, whose righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), ever be saved?

Salvation is provided by grace because God loves sinners. Nothing can be done to merit it. It is the gift of God. No ritual, ordinance, institution, or act of self-righteousness can deserve His forgiveness. That is holy ground where only mercy and grace hold sway. Even when they were dead in sins, God raised believers in Christ. They are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5).

#### **V. CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT**

Do not misunderstand the lesson comments to infer that anyone can be saved apart from Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit of God effects salvation by raising from spiritual death and imparting spiritual life, but He saves in respect of what Jesus Christ has done and is doing for sinners.

Salvation is all of God through Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:5-7 makes that clear. (1) When the sinner is resurrected to spiritual life, out of spiritual death, he is “quickened “(resurrected) together with Christ,” verse 5. (2) When the sinner is made a child of God and given access to God because he

is saved, he is not only raised but he also sits “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” verse 6. (3) When the saved sinner goes to be with God in glory, he sits at the Father's right hand as a sign of his acceptance in Christ. Salvation is based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ — nothing more or less. Be sure your faith is in Jesus. **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,”** Acts 4:12.

## VI. ALL OF THE SPIRIT

What does Ephesians 2:8, 9 mean to you? Pause; read those two verses; meditate upon them. What do they mean to you? They tell me that salvation is a gift of love (which is just another expression for “grace”) from God. Is that what they say to you?

Salvation is by grace. Grace means that God is for believers. God takes their side. God does for them what they can never do for themselves. Grace is love in action — a gift of love.

It has been suggested that G-R-A-C-E means “God's Riches At Christ's Expense.” That catches the idea rather well. Beck translated Ephesians 2:9 as, “You didn't do it. It is God's gift.” That is what is meant in saying, “Salvation is by grace, through faith.”

Since salvation is by grace, not by works, it is all God's doing. John 1:13 makes it clear that one is not saved by physical birth, nor by his own will, nor by the desire or preference of another man, but only of God. “Born of God” makes spiritual birth as impossible of human accomplishment as physical birth is an impossible accomplishment of the fetus in the womb. Salvation is all of the Spirit. He enlightens, convicts, calls, reveals Christ, grants power to believe, effects regeneration through a spiritual birth, seals unto redemption, places the believer in Christ, and takes up permanent indwelling in each who is saved. It is all of the Spirit: **“Not of works, lest any man should boast,”** Ephesians 2:9.

## VII. MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT

The same Holy Spirit who brings the sinner to a conscious need of Christ and effects the new birth in him, abides with and within him to enable him to live the Christian life. Review the truths set forth in Ephesians 2:10. (1) God has made believers what they are. They are His workmanship! (2) They have been made anew through their union with Jesus Christ — “. . . created in Christ Jesus . . .” (3) As new creatures, they are able to live lives filled with the kind of deeds Jesus would do, if He were upon earth — “. . .

unto good works . . .” (4) It is God's ordained plan that each believer should live a life marked by good deeds for people in the name of Christ. Those truths form the foundation of Christian ethics and the guidelines for Christian living.

What makes the difference? How is one of the “children of disobedience” who lived “fulfilling the desire of the flesh and of the mind” changed so that his life is filled with “good works”? Compare Ephesians 2:2, 3 with 2:10. The difference is because of the indwelling Holy Spirit who imparts to the believer the very life and purpose of God. “. . . **It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,**” Philippians 2:13.

Good works, therefore, are the manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It is God, living His life through His children through the indwelling Spirit. Is your life marked by the things which show it is the life of the eternal God living in you?

Look back at the opening statement of the church covenant: “Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour . . .” That is the basis of all church fellowship, of all Christian experience, of all Christian testimony in word and deed. If one is saved, it is because the Holy Spirit brought him to God and effected regeneration upon his faith in Jesus Christ.

As one began in the Spirit, so he is to continue in Him. All service to men, all worship and prayer to God, all spiritual activity are done in the Spirit, if they are acceptable to God and profitable to men. Be sure you are filled — controlled and empowered — by the Spirit who brought you to Christ.

## Questions

1. What is the Church Covenant?
2. Why is the Covenant needed?
3. How does the Spirit enlighten a sinner?
4. Why is that work of the Spirit essential to salvation?
5. What do “mercy” and “love” mean in Ephesians 2:4?
6. How does the Holy Spirit present Christ as Saviour?
7. According to verses 8 and 9 how is one saved?
8. What does verse 10 teach?
9. How does the study relate to what the Church Covenant says about the Holy Spirit?
10. How is the study related to Ephesians 4:30?