

Freedom's Price

Having just celebrated our nation's 241st birthday, I am reminded of the great price paid to have our freedom today. We live in a world that often does not want to pay the price for freedom or remember the price already paid. Our freedom dare not be taken for granted and we must pray for those who are still under bondage.

What price was paid for each of us to have our sins forgiven? The price paid by God was the offering of his Son on the cross (John 3:16). The price paid by Jesus was leaving heaven to die on earth (Philippians 2:5-8). The price paid by the Holy Spirit was the rejection of his word by many (Ephesians 4:30). The price paid by the New Testament church was persecution and death. There were martyrs like Stephen (Acts 7) and James (Acts 12), and sufferers like Paul (Colossians 1:24).

What about today? What price is paid for the forgiveness of sins? The price paid by all to become a Christian is great. There is a price paid to hear and believe the gospel message (Romans 1:16), to repent of one's sins (Acts 17:30-31), to confess Jesus before others (Romans 10:9-10), and to be baptized (Acts 2:38-41). There is also a price to be paid for faithful Christian living each day (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Do you appreciate what others have done for you so that you can be free? Are you now willing to pay the price to be forgiven of your sins? - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- Stephen's death inspired others to be faithful and active to God. Will your death do the same?
- You can begin where you are to serve Christ, but don't stay there — grow!
- It's amazing how much work is accomplished when no one worries about who gets the credit.
- When coming to worship, don't give God orders, just report for duty.

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Website
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Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

With this article we conclude our series that answers the question: "What is man?" From Genesis 1-3, we have already learned that man is a spirit-being, man has a real body, man is a created-being, man has a place in the world, man is responsible, man is a creature of work, and man is suited for one mate in marriage. Let's now consider a few final thoughts about man.

What is man? **MAN HAS A CONSCIOUS IDENTITY (1:27)**. Man's personal identity and conscious existence is a blessing, contrary to Eastern Religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.).

God created "male" and "female" (Genesis 1:27; 2:18ff); two distinct individuals. Adam knew that he was not Eve and Eve knew that she was not Adam (Genesis 3:6). God addressed Adam and Eve as two distinct individuals (Genesis 3:9).

Many of the Eastern Religions say that man has a personal consciousness and identity, but that is a curse to be overcome. According to Eastern Religions, man's goal in life is to escape from a personal identity and become "one with the universe." He does this through meditation, self-denial, reincarnation, etc. Unfortunately, this effort to escape from a personal identity destroys one's sense of personal responsibility.

Jesus and Paul say that each person

will be raised in the last day and judged on an individual basis (Matthew 16:27; John 5:28,29; Romans 14:10,12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

What is man? **MAN IS CAPABLE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, BUT ONE SIN BREAKS THAT FELLOWSHIP (Genesis 2:1-25; 3:1-24)**. Man is capable of fellowship with God but sin breaks that fellowship, contrary to all claims that one can be right with God while sinning.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they enjoyed fellowship with God (Genesis 2:1-25). When they sinned, they died spiritually. They were separated from God and the fellowship was broken (Genesis 2:17; 3:1-24). Adam and Eve had committed only one sin, but God cannot have fellowship with even one sin (James 2:10; 1 John 1:5-9).

Modernism teaches that God accepts all men despite their sins on the basis of "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." Catholicism teaches that venial (lesser) sins do not separate man from God. Calvinism (much of denominationalism) says that we sin because of our depraved nature and that God will excuse us because of our depraved nature. Even some brethren say that if we sin while "walking in the light" (living a good life in general), God will have fellowship with us.

It was Satan who first told the lie that a man can commit one sin and still have fellowship with God. He said, "you shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

What is man? **MAN CAN BE FORGIVEN (Genesis 3:15)**. Man can be forgiven and restored to fellowship with God only through God's own merciful provision of a Savior. This forgiveness must be accepted by man upon certain conditions, contrary to all theories of unconditional pardon.

God would ultimately defeat Satan and sin by graciously providing sinners with a Savior (Genesis 3:15). God, however, has never forced his forgiveness and fellowship on anyone - from Adam to the present (Genesis 4:4,5; Mark 6:15,16). Man must choose to receive the forgiveness offered by the Savior.

Man must agree to and fulfill the terms (conditions) of forgiveness; namely, belief (John 1:11,12; 8:24; 20:30,31), repentance (John 3:19-21), confession (John 12:37-42) and baptism (John 3:3,5). If we sin again after our sins are washed away in baptism, then we must confess that sin, repent of that sin, pray, and ask for forgiveness (Acts 8:24; 1 John 1:7-2:2).

What is mankind? Mankind, both men and women, are what God says they are. Let's understand who we are and start living like men and women should. All the human philosophies of the world today do not change who men and women really are in God's sight. Be the human being God wants you to be! - *Chris Reeves*