

PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

VOLUME 2

**THE
NEW
BIRTH**

DAVID K. BERNARD

THE NEW BIRTH

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1

AN HONEST QUESTION

*“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).
“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).*

Every human being is a sinner and stands in need of salvation. Through the centuries many people have realized this fact and have asked, “How can I be saved?” Christianity proclaims that God has provided salvation through Jesus Christ. However, the question remains, “How can I receive the salvation that Jesus Christ provides?”

We believe the Bible provides the answer to this simple yet vital question. The goal of this book is to find the biblical answer to the question just posed, and to discuss the many issues arising out of this subject. We will attempt to lay aside the doctrines of men and man-made denominations and see what the Bible itself teaches.

The Universal Need for Salvation

The Bible emphatically declares that all human beings are sinners. “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Proverbs 20:9). “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6). “There is no man that sinneth not” (I Kings 8:46; II Chronicles 6:36).

The first three chapters of Romans affirm that both Jews and Gentiles stand condemned in God’s sight. Those who did not have the law of Moses are condemned by conscience, and those who had the law of Moses are condemned by the law (Romans 2:12-16). In short, all mankind is under sin (Romans 3:9). “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10; see Psalm 14:1-3). All the world is guilty before God (Romans 3:19). “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Because of this, all mankind is under the sentence of death. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:15).

Salvation Comes Only Through Faith in Jesus Christ

Not only does each man need salvation, there is nothing man can do to save himself. No amount of good works or adherence to law can save a man. Ephesians 2:8-9 pro-

claims, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." This means salvation is a free gift from God. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ made this free gift of salvation available, and the only way to receive salvation is to have faith in Jesus and in the sufficiency of His sacrifice. Of course, saving faith in Christ includes obedience to His gospel and application of His gospel to our lives. (See Chapter 2 for further discussion of grace and faith.)

We must stress that salvation can come only through faith, and that faith must be in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus asserted, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He also said we must believe He is God manifested in the flesh as our Savior. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Why is reliance upon Christ absolutely necessary? Since all men are sinners, the holiness of God demanded that He separate Himself from sinful man and also required death as a penalty for man. God chose to bind Himself by the principle of death for sin. Without the shedding of blood (the giving of a life) there can be no remission or release from this penalty (Hebrews 9:22) and no restoration to fellowship with the holy God. (See Ephesians 2:13-17; Colossians 1:19-22.) The death of animals is not sufficient to remit the sin of man (Hebrews 10:4), because man is much greater than the animals in that he was created in the spiritual, mental, and moral image of God (Genesis 1:27). Neither can an ordinary man become the substitutionary sacrifice for another, for