

What does the

BIBLE

say. . .

About

§ALVATION?

SALVATION:

A Radical Transformation

**When a person is converted,
the changes are evident.**

What is salvation? It is justification by faith, being born again or forgiveness of sin. It converts the heart from bad to good. It happens when a person recognizes that he is a sinner, confesses his sins to God, repents, forsakes them, and believes that the Blood of Jesus, shed on the cross of Calvary washes away his sins, God forgives him. The Spirit of God will let him know. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Conversion produces a noticeable difference in a life.

True salvation makes a change, a real transformation. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

What are the old things that pass away at salvation? The outward sinning ceases; the alcoholic no longer drinks; the drug addict no longer takes drugs; the thief stops stealing and the smoker stops using tobacco. The works of the flesh will no more be in his life. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

However, many people never commit sins of this type. Yet they, too, find that salvation makes a change. The occasional curse word no longer slips out. The “white lies” disappear. God will give him the power to go and sin no more. “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (I John 3:8, 9).

A few people who have not yet been converted even manage to live so there is no outward sign of sin in

their lives, but they are still sinners. The Bible says, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “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). Although there is no visible sin, a change of heart is still necessary. Salvation transforms the thoughts, desires, and attitudes. The difference may not be so noticeable to others, but the person himself will be aware of it.

When God takes the old things out of a life, He does not leave a vacuum; He puts in “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5: 22-24).

God changes a person’s interests. The old associates and activities are replaced with Christian friends and a hunger for more of God. Reading the Bible becomes a daily necessity.

In place of turmoil in the heart, peace prevails. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By who also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1, 2). Joy that only God can give abides,

even when circumstances are difficult. True happiness results from knowing God is in control and allows everything that happens in the Christian's life. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

With salvation comes a desire to share this new-found experience, so that others will find this change of heart. There is also a determination to rectify past wrongs, and to make peace with enemies.

Indeed, salvation brings a transformation. It is a miraculous change made by God's power. All the self-help efforts in the world cannot change the heart. But God can, when a person repents of his sins, asks for forgiveness, and believes God's promises.

Have you been converted? Have you experienced this transformation? If not, pray today. Ask God to change your heart. He is mighty to save!

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

How I came out of the car was a miracle! My rescuers were astonished! The vehicle had somersaulted and was a complete write-off. I had

always thought I was a good driver. How could this happen to me!

I was on my way from Lagos to Abeokuta, with two of my friends, to meet a herbalist who I was told could give me power and protection. I knew right then that my pursuit of power and protection through a spiritualist would be fruitless; I turned back to Lagos and thereafter abandoned the journey. The fear of death had driven me to this stage: who will deliver me?

I was born in a polygamous and idolatrous home, but was brought up by an uncle who was a devout catholic and who converted me. I attended Catholic Mission Schools and became a member of the Church choir. In 1968, not being satisfied with this orthodox religion, I decided to be a free thinker. I joined the AMORC and other secret cults and I became spiritually and morally bankrupt.

Sin and Satan totally enslaved me. I was a polygamist, a womanizer, a fighter, a drunkard. I was dishonest at work and lying was my way of life. I was always at loggerheads with my boss; though I was very notorious among my colleagues as the leader of their "drinking circle", they feared me. Seeing me at home, my co-tenants would keep away, saying: "The lion is coming." I would never greet them nor smile at anyone.

I had a very good salary which any average man could be proud of, but I was always in great financial difficulty, and was borrowing without paying back. It was with great effort that I managed to dress well to my office to meet the standard required and having lost one car in the said accident, I was soon forced to sell the second car because I could not maintain it.

Meanwhile, my wife, who had started going to The Apostolic Faith, invited me to the Church but I refused to follow her. I told her to go on serving her God and leave me to enjoy myself. Though I pretended to have a good time, my life was miserable. There was neither peace for me at work, at home nor in my body. All the members of my family, especially the children, were always sick, and every month I spent thousands of naira on preventive medical care. In spite of this, I was afflicted by a lingering illness that neither traditional healers, spiritualists, praying prophets, nor the western medical doctors seemed able to diagnose nor heal. I travelled to Togo, Republic of Benin and many parts of Nigeria in search of healing, all to no avail.

One glorious Sunday, in the eighth year of my living in this hopeless condition, I was alone watching the television in my sitting-room when I suddenly heard:

“Give me account!” I trembled. I thought the voice was from the TV so I switched it off. In a moment, it re-echoed. I ran to the entrance to see who was at the door. There was nobody. I was so terrified that I locked up the door and ran into the bedroom to avoid the strange voice. As I lay on bed, the voice continued coming intermittently until I became scared and restless. I murmured impulsively: “O God! Here am I, just have mercy on me, tell me what all this is about and what I should do, please”. The voice subsided, the waves of fear disappeared and I became calm. As I was pondering over the mysterious encounter, my wife and children returned from the Church about 1.30pm. I narrated the whole episode to her and promised to follow her to the Church the following Sunday. Truly, I went to Church as promised. It was during the 1987 Apostolic Faith camp meeting, in Lagos, Nigeria. After the service, my wife requested that I should be prayed for. The ministers asked if I believed that Jesus could heal me and I said, “Yes”. They anointed me with oil, laid hands on me and prayed for me. That night, I slept like a baby till 6.00am. My sleeplessness disappeared. That was how Jesus miraculously healed me and I continued to go to the Church.

One day at the 1988 camp meeting, I heard from a sermon that the root of every suffering in a person’s life was sin, but that God could forgive him and

change his situation for good if he came to Him in repentance. I believed what I heard and I wanted the transformation so I went to the altar to pray. There on my knees, God clearly revealed all my sins to me one after the other. I admitted, confessed them, pleaded sincerely for forgiveness through the Blood of Jesus and promised not to commit them any more. Jesus answered my prayer. The Spirit of God made me know that my sins were forgiven. My heart was filled with joy and peace. That was on August 16, 1988, around 3.40pm.

Immediately, my life was transformed and I became a new person. Drinking and running after women stopped. In fact, before I was saved, I learnt from God's Word that anyone who had more than a wife would not get to Heaven. I prayed and God led my second wife to go away voluntarily. God's salvation has made me gentle, loving, honest and able to live without committing sin. My co-tenants are surprised because I become very friendly with everyone. My colleagues at work come to me for advice and my boss has great confidence in me. In spite of the bad economy, God has made me comfortable financially and enabled me to build six houses. I have success in all I lay my hands on. Though my age is above 60 years, my strength is like that of a 20-year old and I have a buoyant health. I now have peace at work, at home, in my body and in my heart. I praise God.

Bernard Agbaffa is a member of The Apostolic Faith Church, Anthony Village, Lagos, Nigeria

Steps to Salvation

Acknowledge

Admit that you have sinned and need God's help.

(Romans 3:23)

Confess and Repent

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.

(Acts 3:19)

Forsake

Determine with God's help to turn away from all the sins in you life.

(Isaiah 55:7)

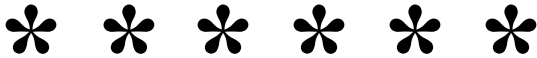
Believe

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will save you. *(John 3:16)*

Receive

God will let you know that the work is done.

(Romans 8: 16)



THE APOSTOLIC FAITH
Campground Road, Anthony Village,
P.O. Box 78,
Ebute Metta, Lagos, Nigeria

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