

## *Article 1: It's Time*

St. Paul spoke to the people of Athens (Acts 17:29-31), even so God speaks to all:

“Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.”

The Creator has “fixed a day.” Knowing that, how can we not count today the day to repent? Jesus Christ has died for you and is the risen One. Trust in Him for the forgiveness of all your sins. Abraham saw His day and believed, and Abraham’s faith in the Son of God was counted as righteousness. God will judge the world by the righteousness of faith in His Son. Whoever believes in Him will not perish but shall have eternal life.

Christians, who believe that the Bible is God’s holy Word—in its entirety—have a precious treasure to be shared with all other people. From these Holy Scriptures comes, not only the proper understanding of and view toward mankind, but also the answer to how one is saved, in order that we might be certain of our salvation.

Mankind is in desperate need when it comes to things spiritual. For we are “by nature children of wrath, just like the rest [of mankind]” (Ephesians 2:3). Paul says that we were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). This sounds pretty desperate, but it gets worse. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:14, “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

Ever since the Fall, man’s reason cannot teach correctly and his will cannot act rightly. As God puts it in Genesis 6:5, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” There is no squirming free from that or from what David later would say about himself in Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and my mother conceived me with sin.”

How then can anyone be saved? How can anyone believe? What will work the change in sinful man’s heart? “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). The Word of God’s Gospel both opens our ears to hear and works faith in our hearts.

Oh, the wonder of that message: “Rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even while dead in our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2). God worked out our salvation outside of us, in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ, in order that Jesus might complete it, that you and I might receive it freely. To Jesus be all the glory!

There is nothing within you on which to rely, but only on Jesus, who lived and died and rose again for you. So God tears you away from yourself and places your hope on that which is outside you: the promised forgiveness won for you by Jesus and bestowed on you freely by grace alone through faith alone. The promise and truth of God cannot deceive, and thus you have certainty of your salvation—courage to live and courage to die—knowing you will live forever.

Remember that what is real is that God the Creator makes things unceasingly new for you. Rejoice in the name of your Savior Jesus Christ the Righteous.

Next: How does God make you new and save you? Could it be Baptism?

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