



# CGOM

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People working together to proclaim the Gospel

"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"

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## Gospel Focus

by James McBride

Jerusalem in the 30sAD buzzed with excitement as thousands of Jews—including ‘...a great company’ of priests and Pharisees—became convinced that Jesus was the Messiah and the long-promised Saviour.

They responded to the simple message that despite their past commitment to Judaism yet they each needed to personally understand that they had crucified that same Saviour. They experienced guilt and shame—and a burning sense of their sinfulness and need of forgiveness. Distraught, they asked Peter what they should do.

The apostle pulled no punches, explaining that they needed a radical change of heart— ‘to repent’ ‘...Each one of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God’s gift, the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2:38).

Mere outward observance of ordinances, however important—and it is important— isn’t enough. Paul warns Timothy of those ‘...having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’ (II Timothy 3:5). The outward structure (Sabbath, holy days *etc*) is there but they lacked the empowering of the indwelling Spirit (Acts 1:8).

### Way of Death

Sin separates us from the Deity. It has blighted mankind and all our works since we first rejected God’s way in favor of our own devices. Unless dealt with our destiny is that we crumble into dust. Only by heart-felt repentance, acknowledgment of the sacrifice of Jesus and commitment to his revealed way is reconciliation possible.

Feeling sorry for yourself isn’t repentance! Writes Paul: ‘... *godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, a repentance not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world finally produces death*’ (II Corinthians 7:10).

Two millennia of the distortion of this good news of salvation has dulled the terrible nature of Calvary. But our alienation from God is no less complete than with Peter’s hearers. Nor the urgent need for repentance—for sin is no less sinful today!

### The Difference

Peter’s focus in that first outreach sermon was on what makes a difference—*the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:38).

Whether a person’s life is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is *not* the bench-mark for salvation—the planet is peopled by millions of both! The indwelling Spirit alone is the key: ‘...*if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*’ (Romans 8:9).

The Spirit imparts new (spiritual) life to us, witnessing to us that we are (like the child in the womb) in process of a new birth: ‘...*The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*’ (v.16). The apostle adds: ‘...*if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [person]*’ (II Corinthians 5:17).

Such have the constant awareness that they are the Almighty’s ‘sons and daughters’, that they are children of the Father (II Corinthians 6:18).

### An Enduring Inheritance

The good news that our sin can be forgiven is

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available to all. Respond to God's invitation and the rewards are immeasurable—an eternity working in harmony with our Saviour—heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ—in the outworking of the Father's plan. It's a plan veiled from the world but revealed to us through God's Spirit:

*'...Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God'*  
(I Corinthians 2:9-11)

The apostle adds *'...the mystery having been hidden from the ages and from the generations, but now was revealed to His saints'* (Colossians 1:26).

And to the brethren in Colosse, he adds: *'...of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance'* (Colossians 3:24). And not only heirs of a mere temporal estate but *'...those being called might receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance'* (Hebrews 9:15).

By a quirk of history or through hard graft or by hook or crook individuals build vast estates to pass on to their progeny. But as history reveals—they in their turn crumble to dust or pass from the family. Our inheritance is immeasurably different. It is *'...an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for you'* (I Peter 1:4).

As children of the Father true believers are assured of a permanent inheritance stretching through the endless millennia ahead. As notes the apostle, we are now being prepared for the immensity of this incredible endless future: *'...giving thanks to the*

*Father, who has made us fit [capable] for a share of the inheritance of the saints in light'* (Colossians 1:12).

It is a process of tender supervision by a loving Father: *'... Have you forgotten the encouraging words which God speaks to you as his children? "My child, pay attention when the Lord corrects you, and do not be discouraged when he rebukes you. Because the Lord corrects everyone he loves, and punishes everyone he accepts as a child." Endure what you suffer as being a father's punishment; your suffering shows that God is treating you as his children'* (Hebrews 12:5-7).

This is the plan—and you can have a role! *Will you take on the challenge?*

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