

to experience both good and evil, for a very specific reason--to save us.

That's the good news: that God intends to save us from our condition as mortal sinners through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul assures us that because of what Christ did for us, in dying on the cross, we will all be raised to immortality, delivered from our mortal dying condition, forgiven of our sins, reconciled to God. It has always been God's intention to save us.

God left nothing to chance. Remember, we had no choice in becoming mortal sinners. But, being sinners, we have all acted like sinners through our own volition, choosing to sin. Nothing we did could have changed our condition. And, too, there's nothing we could have done to make ourselves righteous or earn ourselves a relationship with God. From the beginning, God placed us in this "school of hard knocks," subjecting us to a mixture of good and evil, with the same goal in mind, so that each of us would ultimately desire to love and have fellowship with Him. Goodness, love, joy, and so forth, however, cannot be truly appreciated apart from experiencing their absence, their loss, or their opposites.

And in saving us God also leaves nothing to chance. Salvation is totally God's work. It was accomplished by Jesus Christ's obedience to God, and His death on the cross for sinners. He died for all of us. God's intention is to save all of us. He will be satisfied with nothing less. We will all be saved in due time.

Paul insists that we are saved totally by grace. There are no conditions we have to perform in order to be saved. We don't have to repent, be baptized, tithe, join a church, speak in tongues. We're saved through faith. If we believe the good news, we are saved. But we're not saved by believing it. Faith is not a condition. It's the result. The faith to believe is given to us by God. Not only is there no way we could have qualified for life, or earned God's forgiveness, but nothing we do after receiving God's forgiveness

can disqualify us from fully experiencing God's salvation. Nothing! According to God's purpose, some of us will be chosen to receive this gift of faith in this life. The rest will be saved later. But all mankind, each in his own order, in due time, will receive the salvation Jesus secured by His death on the cross.

So what, specifically, is this good news from God? Jesus Christ, God's Son, died, and rose from the dead, and He did it for you. Jesus actually died; His death secured the forgiveness of our sins. He was actually raised from the dead; His resurrection secured our justification. We are, in God's sight, not just forgiven sinners, but fully righteous. Not only that, but He is completely conciliated to us, and asks us to be conciliated to Him, thus establishing complete reconciliation. There is no condemnation--only peace between us and God.

Jesus did this for us while we were sinners. In fact, this salvation was planned even before God created the world. God has no backup plans. The sin of Adam and Eve did not take God by surprise. God is God. He's absolutely sovereign. He knows the end from the beginning. He is operating all things according to the counsel of His own will. And His intention has always been to save mankind, and, to be reconciled with all His enemies. You see, even God's enemies are fulfilling His intention. Good and evil are both necessary to fully reveal God and His goodness and love.

You may have thought that millions are going to spend eternity in "hell." Nothing could be farther from the truth. That would mean that God is a failure--either unable to save those He wants to save, or unwilling to save all He could have saved. That's not good news. That's not what God's Word declares. "Hell," as most envision it, is a medieval fiction.

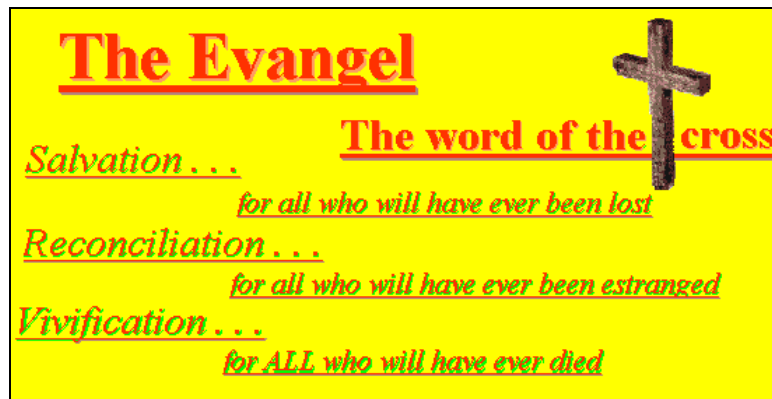
You may have thought that we can refuse God, resist God's will, even choose to be lost, or, if we're not careful, become disqualified and lose our salvation through sin or neglect. Again, nothing could


be farther from the truth. How can we possibly disqualify ourselves from something we never "qualified for" in the first place? Salvation is a gift.

What do we have to *do* to be saved? *Nothing*. We've already done all we need to do: *be lost!* The Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior, not we ourselves. He's the One Who saves. He actually saves. He's the Good Shepherd. He's the One Who seeks and finds His lost sheep. Jesus doesn't seek and save provisionally, potentially, or conditionally. He actually seeks and actually finds lost sheep, and returns them to God's sheepfold.

Are you lost, a sinner? God loves you. Christ Jesus died for you, and rose from the dead for you. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do, that's *proof* that you have been saved by the Savior. Continue believing, and thus continue being saved in your daily experience. Reconciliation and peace with God are yours. This is truly good news.

Richard C. Condon



The Evangel 

The word of the cross

Salvation . . .
for all who will have ever been lost

Reconciliation . . .
for all who will have ever been estranged

Vivification . . .
for ALL who will have ever died

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Good News from God

God has good news for you! He sent it by way of a man named Paul. It's recorded in the Bible, in the New Testament book of Romans.

What I'm going to share with you is a summary of that good news from God. I'm not going to directly quote from Romans. I invite you to read the book of Romans itself to discover this good news first-hand.

Paul starts by telling us several things we know all too well, that we are all sinners and that we are all going to die. These things we know. We all violate rules and go against our consciences. And we're all mortal, destined to die. This doesn't sound like good news, does it?

But Paul assures us that we're in this condition through no fault of our own. Paul places the responsibility for our condition on one man, Adam, the father of our race. When Adam sinned, back in Eden, all of his descendants became mortal dying sinners. Now we didn't "elect" Adam as our head. We didn't choose him as our parent. We had no choice at all in what he did, or in what we became. Yet we suffer, we are affected, by what he did. It is true that when we sin, we exercise our own volition; we sin willingly, and experience the consequences. Nevertheless, *death* lies ahead for each one of us, not because of anything *we* have done, but because of what Adam did.

In fact, later in this book of Romans, Paul tells us that it is God Himself Who claims direct responsibility for placing the human race in the condition in which we find ourselves. It is God Who has made us mortal sinners. It is God Who has placed us in this world