

The Sinner's Need of Christ

Memory verse: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

"The only hope of redemption for our fallen race is in Christ."—[The Desire of Ages](#), p. 147.

Suggested Reading: Steps to Christ, chapter 2, pp. 17-22. (At the bottom of this page)

1. The Original State of Man

Sun, Jul 5

a. Describe man's original state in Eden. Genesis 1:26, 27, 31; Psalm 8:4-6.

Genesis 1:26, 27

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. **27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 1:31

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Psalm 8:4-6

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? **5** For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. **6** Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

"Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God."—[Steps to Christ](#), p. 17.

“Man was to bear God’s image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is ‘the express image’ (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will.”—[Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 45.](#)

b. How did Satan work to thwart the divine plan in the creation of man? Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 6:16; 1 John 2:16.

Genesis 3:1-7

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 ¶ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Romans 6:16

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

“Through disobedience, [man’s] powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter’s purpose to thwart the divine plan in man’s creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God’s work in creating man.”—[Steps to Christ, p. 17.](#)

a. After their sin, how did Adam and Eve react when they heard the voice of God? Genesis 3:8-10.

Genesis 3:8-10

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. **9** ¶ And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? **10** And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

b. Why are sinful human beings unable to stand in the presence of the Infinite One? Exodus 33:20; Deuteronomy 4:23, 24.

Exodus 33:20

And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

Deuteronomy 4:23, 24

Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. **24** For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

“In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God’s presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire.”—[Steps to Christ, pp. 17, 18.](#)

b. Why is it impossible for man of himself to escape the penalty of sin? Job 14:4; Romans 8:7, 8; Isaiah 64:6.

Job 14:4

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Romans 8:7, 8

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. **8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Isaiah 64:6

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.

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ Job 14:4. . . . Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.”—*ibid.*, p. 18.

3. The Need of a Saviour

Tue, Jul 7

a. What must we realize about the human heart? Psalm 14:1-3; Romans 3:9-11.

Psalm 14:1-3

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. **2** The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. **3** They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 3:9-11

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; **10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: **11** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

“The Word of God declares, ‘All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23). ‘There is none that doeth good, no, not one’ (Romans 3:12). Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They

wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.”—[Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 320](#).

b. Why are we as human beings unable to discern the spiritual realm and see the kingdom of God? 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

2 Corinthians 4:4

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

“The Saviour said, ‘Except a man be born from above,’ unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, ‘he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ John 3:3, margin. The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a fatal deception. ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ ‘Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.’ 1 Corinthians 2:14; 3:7. Of Christ it is written, ‘In Him was life; and the life was the light of men’—the only ‘name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ John 1:4; Acts 4:12.”—[Steps to Christ, pp. 18, 19](#).

c. Although we cannot save ourselves, what can we do? Matthew 11:28-30; John 3:3.

Matthew 11:28-30

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

“God was to be manifest in Christ, ‘reconciling the world unto Himself.’ 2 Corinthians 5:19. Man had become so degraded by sin that it was impossible for him, in himself, to come into harmony with Him whose nature is purity and goodness. But Christ, after having redeemed man from the condemnation of the law, could impart divine power to unite with human effort. Thus by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen children of Adam might once more become ‘sons of God.’ 1 John 3:2.”—[Patriarchs and Prophets](#), p. 64.

a. What was the apostle Paul’s problem when he came to a full knowledge of his state as a sinner before God? Romans 7:12, 14, 24.

Romans 7:12

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Romans 7:14

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Romans 7:24

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

“It is not enough to perceive the lovingkindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, ‘I consent unto the law that it is good.’ ‘The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’ But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, ‘I am carnal, sold under sin.’ Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ Romans 7:24, margin. Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29.”—[Steps to Christ](#), p. 19.

“There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are vainly striving to obtain it. . . . The Saviour is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, ‘Wilt thou be made whole?’”—[The Desire of Ages](#), p. 203.

b. By what means was Jacob assured by God that he was not forsaken when he fled from his brother Esau? Genesis 28:10-13.

Genesis 28:10-13

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. **11** And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. **12** And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. **13** And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

“[Jacob] felt that he was an outcast, and he knew that all this trouble had been brought upon him by his own wrong course. The darkness of despair pressed upon his soul, and he hardly dared to pray. But he was so utterly lonely that he felt the need of protection from God as he had never felt it before. With weeping and deep humiliation he confessed his sin, and entreated for some evidence that he was not utterly forsaken. Still his burdened heart found no relief. He had lost all confidence in himself, and he feared that the God of his fathers had cast him off.

“But God did not forsake Jacob. His mercy was still extended to His erring, distrustful servant. The Lord compassionately revealed just what Jacob needed—a Saviour. He had sinned, but his heart was filled with gratitude as he saw revealed a way by which he could be restored to the favor of God.”—[Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 183.](#)

a. What is the lesson to be learned from the ladder that Jacob saw in the wilderness? Genesis 28:16, 17; John 1:51.

Genesis 28:16, 17

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. **17** And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

John 1:51

And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

“In this vision the plan of redemption was presented to Jacob, not fully, but in such parts as were essential to him at that time. The mystic ladder revealed to him in his dream was the same to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathanael. [John 1:51 quoted]. Up to the time of man’s rebellion against the government of God, there had been free communion between God and man. But

the sin of Adam and Eve separated earth from heaven, so that man could not have communion with his Maker. Yet the world was not left in solitary hopelessness. The ladder represents Jesus, the appointed medium of communication.”—[Patriarchs and Prophets](#), p. 184.

b. Describe the connection that Christ’s mediation has established. Romans 3:23-26; Hebrews 1:14.

Romans 3:23-26

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: **25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; **26** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Hebrews 1:14

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

“In the apostasy, man alienated himself from God; earth was cut off from heaven. Across the gulf that lay between, there could be no communion. But through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven. With His own merits, Christ has bridged the gulf which sin had made, so that the ministering angels can hold communion with man. Christ connects fallen man in his weakness and helplessness with the Source of infinite power.”—[Steps to Christ](#), p. 20.

“The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption.”—[ibid.](#), p. 21.

1. Contrast the state of humanity before and after the fall.
2. After the fall, what did man do and why?
3. What was the only answer to the problem of sin?
4. Explain the meaning of the wonderful symbol given to Jacob in his dream.
5. What means of communication does God maintain with humanity?

Suggested Reading: Steps to Christ, chapter 2, pp. 17-22.

Chapter 2—The Sinner’s Need of Christ

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter’s purpose to thwart the divine plan in man’s creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God’s work in creating man. (SC 17.1)

In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God’s presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. (SC 17.2)

It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” Job 14:4. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness. (SC 18.1)

The Saviour said, "Except a man be born from above,"(John 3:3) unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, "he cannot see the kingdom of God."(John 3:3), margin. The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a fatal deception. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."1 Corinthians 2:14. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:7. Of Christ it is written, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men"(John 1:4)—the only "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. **(SC 18.2)**

It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, "I consent unto the law that it is good." "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Romans 7:24, margin. Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. **(SC 19.1)**

Many are the figures by which the Spirit of God has sought to illustrate this truth, and make it plain to souls that long to be freed from the burden of guilt. When, after his sin in deceiving Esau, Jacob fled from his father's home, he was weighed down with a sense of guilt. Lonely and outcast as he was, separated from all that had made life dear, the one thought that above all others pressed upon his soul, was the fear that his sin had cut him off from God, that he was forsaken of Heaven. In sadness he lay down to rest on the bare earth, around him only the lonely hills, and above, the heavens bright with stars. As he slept, a strange light broke upon his vision; and lo, from the plain on which he lay, vast shadowy stairs seemed to lead upward to the very gates of heaven, and upon them angels of God were passing up and down; while from the glory above, the divine voice was heard in a message of comfort and hope. Thus was made known to Jacob that which met the need and longing of his soul—a Saviour. With joy and gratitude he saw revealed a way by which he, a sinner, could be restored to communion with God. The mystic ladder of his dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man. **(SC 19.2)**

This is the same figure to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathanael, when He said, “Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” John 1:51. In the apostasy, man alienated himself from God; earth was cut off from heaven. Across the gulf that lay between, there could be no communion. But through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven. With His own merits, Christ has bridged the gulf which sin had made, so that the ministering angels can hold communion with man. Christ connects fallen man in his weakness and helplessness with the Source of infinite power. **(SC 20.1)**

But in vain are men’s dreams of progress, in vain all efforts for the uplifting of humanity, if they neglect the one Source of hope and help for the fallen race. “Every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17) is from God. There is no true excellence of character apart from Him. And the only way to God is Christ. He says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” John 14:6. **(SC 21.1)**

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption. **(SC 21.2)**

Oh, let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labor and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost, and bring them back to the Father’s house. Motives stronger, and agencies more powerful, could never be brought into operation; the exceeding rewards for right-doing, the enjoyment of heaven, the society of the angels, the communion and love of God and His Son, the elevation and extension of all our powers throughout eternal ages—are these not mighty incentives and encouragements to urge us to give the heart’s loving service to our Creator and Redeemer? **(SC 21.3)**

And, on the other hand, the judgments of God pronounced against sin, the inevitable retribution, the degradation of our character, and the final destruction, are presented in God’s word to warn us against the service of Satan. **(SC 21.4)**

Shall we not regard the mercy of God? What more could He do? Let us place ourselves in right relation to Him who has loved us with amazing love. Let us avail ourselves of the means provided for us that we may be transformed into His

likeness, and be restored to fellowship with the ministering angels, to harmony and communion with the Father and the Son. (SC 22.1)