

ARE YOU A SINNER?

What does a person need to be saved from?

THE QUESTION

My wife and I were wondering the other day why the pastors of a congregation we attend seems to avoid speaking about the sin. More specifically, we wondered if those present had any reason to 'believe in Jesus' since a reason seems never to be given? Coincidentally, Dr Arnold Fruchtenbaum posted an answer to the question: 'What am I being saved from?'¹ and someone else published an article in *The Christian Post* that examined whether Christians knew whether they sinned or were sinners, quoting from a study published by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University.²

It seems that church congregations these days will do anything to avoid people feeling uncomfortable about attending. In our part of the world, churches no longer deliver sermons, which speak to the heart about Jesus Christ, but rather 'talks' that are benign and impotent. Congregations do not sing hymns, but rather 'songs' avoiding a reference to the fact that our singing should be worshiping or praising the Lord God Most High.³ This is the starting point; it leads to sermons avoiding content that impacts the heart and that conflicts the conscience. So, the words hell, sin, sinner, lost and sinful nature etc. are never mentioned. Sure, the pastors all want people to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ but they provide no reason for doing so. The question, from what am I being saved is never answered.

SHORT ANSWER

All humans are sinners, born so. A believer in Jesus Christ is also a sinner, but is saved from the wrath of God, whose judgement will cast non-believers into the Lake of Fire, called Hell. Thus, a believer is saved from Hell.

¹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum: *Arnold Answers 'What am I being saved from'*, Ariel Ministries, https://ariel.org.au/blogs/spiritual-life-and-practice/i-hear-people-saying-you-have-to-be-saved-but-my-question-is-what-am-i-being-saved-from?goal=0_abe5406364-171e5b90c5-194249949&mc_cid=171e5b90c5&mc_eid=1ebe52d0e7 (Accessed 7 September 2025)

² Ryan Foley: *Churches failing to preach about sin is a 'bodyblow' as many Christians reject basic teachings*: Barna, Christian Post, Saturday, September 06, 2025. <https://www.christianpost.com/news/barna-calls-churches-failure-to-preach-about-sin-a-bodyblow.html> (Accessed 7 September 2025)

³ These typically are inward and self-focused matching the current generation's preoccupation with self, rather than focusing on what God the Father has done for us, through Jesus Christ.

EXPLANATION

Before a person is saved, meaning being born again

We are all sinners, right from birth:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

And

as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one (Romans 3:10)

This was known from the very beginning:

Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins. (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

The Apostle John is more forthright:

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
(1 John 1:8.)*

Indeed, we were born with a sin nature – the physical body – and could do nothing but sin, until saved by the grace of God through faith, when we were given a new spiritual nature. Indeed, we are born enslaved to this sinful nature. It does not mean non-believers cannot do good, for they surely do, but they cannot know or please God.

Consequence of sin

The consequence of sin is God's judgement upon the individual which ends in death. Death is separation from God and being cast into Hell also referred to as the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15). The Bible says:

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

It is from the consequence of sin that people seek to be saved.

Hence the question: "as to what am I being saved from?" can be answered with one word: "Hell".

How to be saved from hell?

The basic meaning of being saved, is being saved from hell into an everlasting life with God in heaven. It means one moves from being condemned to eternal judgement to everlasting life in heaven. This is achieved through faith in Jesus Christ. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes: *To have faith means "to believe," "to trust," "to be persuaded of," "to place confidence in."* It means "to trust in

the sense of relying upon.”⁴ **Faith is the substance by which you are saved – what you need to believe to be saved.** As the Apostle Paul writes:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

To unpack this. Jesus Christ died for our sins – we must believe that Jesus Christ’s death was for me, an individual sinner (anyone can believe Jesus died). Further, he was buried as evidence of his death, and he rose again on the third day, proving death was defeated. A sinner to be saved must believe that Jesus died as his or her substitute because they are a sinner, was buried and rose again. In summary one puts their trust in Jesus Christ as their saviour. Thus, it is the work of Jesus Christ that saves you - he substituted you and died in your stead.

Consequence of faith in Jesus Christ

The consequence of faith in Jesus Christ – his birth (to a virgin), his death on the cross, his burial and resurrection is God gives the believer a new (divine)⁵ nature: this is what being born again means and is the process by which we are given a new spiritual nature (John 3:8) .

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:44)

ONCE SAVED AM I STILL A SINNER?

An unsaved person has one nature – the 'fleshly nature', which can do good, but is subject to sin, indeed enslaved to sin, and thus subject to death and hell.

***we all** once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. Ephesians 2:3.*

Paul writes about our life before we were saved by faith – our bodies and mind were subject to sin, and like all other non-believers were subject to God's judgement. A believer is no longer a slave to sin, and not subject to God's wrath, as Paul writes:

*But thanks be to God, **that you who were once slaves of sin** have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed. (Romans 6:17)*

⁴ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, op cit.

⁵ 2 Peter 1:4

However, even though a believer has a divine spiritual nature now, believers still sin. This is what John was alluding to in his letter (1 John 1:8) – a believer still sins. This leads to a believer wondering why we still have this desire to do the wrong things. This was Paul's confession in Romans 7 – he a believer, with a spiritual nature given to him by God, yet did things he did not want to do.

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (Romans 7:15-17)

But in his anguish, Paul sees a way through:

For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (Romans 7:22-23)

In essence we are still in our physical fleshly 'container' or body which is corrupt – every bit of it – and indeed when we die, the body will return to the earth as dust and our spirit (the bit that makes us, us) is judged and cast into hell. Our new spiritual nature on the other hand, desires to please God. Thus, we have a conflict between the old and new, which we are urged to take control off. We have a physical and a spiritual influence over our life. With the aid of the Holy Spirit, that dwells within every believer, we need to take control of our minds and obey the Law of Christ⁶

*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth
(Colossians 3:2)*

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⁶ Galatians 6:2, also called the Perfect Law (James 1:25) of which love is the centre principle (Galatians 5:14; 1 John 15:12)