

# House to House volume 20 NUMBER 2 WWW.housetohouse.com House to House to House volume 20 NUMBER 2 WWW.housetohouse.com



When the devil entices a person into a sinful life, God never thinks, "That's okay. I didn't want him anyway." Every lost soul brings tears to God's eyes and pain to His heart. He wants all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Still, some feel unworthy of God's love. Why would God want to save someone like me? they think. It is not about us and what we have done; it is about God and who He is. There are four reasons God wants to save "someone like you":

*He made you* (Genesis 1:26–27; Acts 17:28–29). We do not carelessly discard something handcrafted; neither does God.

He bought you (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18–19). He has a lot invested in you. His only Son's blood was a high price to pay, but you meant that much to Him.

He has chosen you (Mark 16:15–16). God could have chosen to do His work on earth in any number of ways; but He has chosen to work through His people. If Christians do not tell others the gospel, they will never learn. In a world of bil-

lions, He desires that each one of his children tell others of His love.

He loves you (John 3:16; Galatians 2:20). God loves the rich, the poor; the educated, the uneducated; the up-and-coming, the down-and-out. God loves all sinners, every sinner, each sinner, everywhere, all the time. Most important, He loves you!

Yet many feel hopeless regarding the prospects of their salvation. Let us directly address four reasons some feel spiritually irredeemable:

#### "I have sinned too much."

Some think they committed so many sins so many times for so many years that they crossed a threshold beyond the point of return. They feel that God could never forgive so much.

It is true that sinners do not deserve forgiveness. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). It is also true that no sinner is unsalvageable. Paul continues: "The gift of God is eternal life (6:23b). "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).

There is no limit to divine grace. God's boundless grace is sufficient for man's ceaseless sin. Jesus even forgave Saul of Tarsus, who killed Christians and made havoc of the church of Christ (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 9:1–21; 22:16).

How many can be saved?

- "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish" (John 3:16).
- Christ gave Himself a ransom for *all* (1 Timothy 2:6).
- Salvation appeared to *all* (Titus 2:11).
- God is not willing that *any* should perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Jesus wants to adopt you and move you into His house in heaven (John 14:1–3). Not all will come to God, but there is room—and a welcome mat—for all in heaven.

### "I committed an unpardonable sin."

Someone says, "I cannot be saved regardless of anything I do now, for in the past:

- I murdered someone."
- I killed people in a war."
- I took a life as a drunk or careless driver."
- I spoke blasphemously against God and the Holy Spirit."
- I committed adultery and broke up someone's home."

Murder and adultery have serious consequences and must not be taken lightly by society or the church, but they are not unpardonable. David was guilty of both, yet he was forgiven after repentance and confession (2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 51). Jesus sent the "woman taken in adultery" away uncondemned (John 8:1–11). Those who murdered Jesus were offered remission of sins—and about three thousand immediately accepted (Acts 2:36–41).

The basic definition of the "unforgivable sin" is simply rejecting the gospel. It is not a mere impulsive, rash exclamation against the Holy Spirit that once spoken condemns a person forever.

The Bible speaks of three kinds of sins:

- Sins that have been forgiven (2 Samuel 12:13; Ephesians 4:32);
- Sins that are forgivable but are not because the conditions of pardon have not been met (Acts 3:19, 1 John 1:9);
- The unpardonable sin (Matthew 12:22–32; Luke 12:9–10).



Consider to whom Jesus said this. When Jesus taught on the unforgiveable sin, the Pharisees had just seen Him work a miracle, heard Him preach salvation, saw His perfect example, and were still so hard-hearted as to accuse Him of being in league with Beelzebub, the prince of devils. This showed a callousness that put them in great spiritual danger. A person who persistently rejects the New Testament evidence for Christ's deity today (cf. John 20:30–31), in principle, exhibits the same Pharisaic attitude. If he does not repent, he will commit the unpardonable sin.

Consider when Jesus said this. It was a time of transition from Old Testament law to New Testament gospel. At that unique time in history, it was possible to live in the latter days of God's dispensation, continue through Christ's life, and move into the Spirit's dispensation.

- Thus one could reject the Old Testament—even blaspheming God—yet repent and accept Jesus' preaching and be saved.
- The same person might reject both the Old Testament and Jesus' teaching even blaspheming Jesus—yet later obey the apostles' inspired preaching on or after Pentecost and be saved.
- However, if he rejected the Old Testament, Jesus' sermons, and the Spirit's words, there was no other coming dispensation. To reject the New Testament was to reject God's last lifeline.

One who blasphemes the Spirit cannot be saved in that condition; so long as he remains a blasphemer, he has no hope of grace, mercy, or salvation. If one worries that he has committed this sin, it is unlikely he has, for he shows that he still believes in God, desires salvation, and fears being lost. If this motivates him to obey the gospel, he can be saved (Mark 16:15–16).

## "I have not received a sign that God saved me, so I must not be of the elect."

If you are of the impression that God flipped a coin and you lost, rest assured that He did not. If you asked God to save you and nothing happened, do not worry that He decided to reject you for some reason. If you heard that you speak in tongues if the Spirit saved you, do not fret. This is not the case. The sky does not change color depending on how much evil happens on the ground beneath it. It is the same with God's love.

Preachers influenced by Calvinism have taught many to expect a special miraculous call by the Holy Spirit (called "irresistible grace") to save them and confirm that God elected (predestined) them to salvation. Such a miracle would violate four Bible truths:

- God's impartiality toward man (Acts 10:34–35; Romans 2:11).
- Man's free moral agency (Joshua 24:15).
- God's economy of government (1 Corinthians 14:40). Economy is the most expedient and intelligent system of operation. Is it easiest to save each man differently or to put the message in a book for all to read?
- The principle and order of the great commission (Mark 16:15–16). Why

send disciples to tell every creature of salvation if they cannot respond to the preaching? In Calvinism, the written Word has no power until the Holy Spirit makes the sinner respond. Why preach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" if one is saved by a miracle and baptized later? A subjective "better-felt-than-told-experience" is not to be trusted more than an objective understanding and complying with Scripture (Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jeremiah 17:9).

The Bible teaches predestination (Ephesians 1:3–11), but not a Calvinistic version of it. This text says all blessings are "in Christ" and that we are chosen "in him." To be in Christ is to be in His body, the church (Galatians 3:26–27; Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:4). In short, then, God predestinated that each person could be saved in the church. God voted for us; the devil voted against us; we cast the deciding vote.

#### "I have a sin I cannot quit."

It is true that we must live a holy life to enjoy God's approval and fellowship (Luke 13:3; Romans 12:1–2). God's forgiveness is not temporary, but we can return to a sinful life and lose our salvation (2 Peter 2:20–22).

To be addicted to a sin is a serious problem, but it is by no means hopeless. God made us some promises that help in this situation. Keep in mind that God is powerful enough to do anything He wants to do and is honest enough to do everything He promised to do.

- God does not expect perfection. He looks for "good and faithful" servants (Matthew 25:21), not perfect ones. He knows we make mistakes. Solomon said, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20; cf. Isaiah 53:6). "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psalm 130:3). John wrote, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8).
- If we mess up and fall, we don't have to give up; we can get up and start again as many times as we need. As His children, if we confess our sins we will be

- forgiven (1 John 1:9). If we are to forgive others seventy times seven times (Matthew 18:21–22), then how many times will God forgive?
- If you have tried and tried but nothing works, remember that breakthroughs can happen even after years of failure. Ponder Paul's simple promise: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).
- Physical addictions are overcome by spiritual strength (Ephesians 6:12–18). God gives us the spiritual tools to overcome any sin. Weapons at our disposal include fasting (1 Corinthians 7:5), praying (Ephesians 6:18), Bible reading (Psalm 119:11), meditating on Scripture (1 Timothy 4:15), and the support of other Christians (Galatians 6:2).
- When you feel you cannot win, read John's assurance: "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Also read Paul's promise: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- If you feel you are spinning your wheels, remember God is working on you and won't quit. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).
- When you feel Satan is too strong, rest assured that he can be defeated: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:7–8). Satan is a sore loser and will not leave us alone, but he fights a losing battle as long as we remain committed to God.
- We must never quit trying to overcome (Galatians 6:9), make excuses (Luke 14:18), or cover up our sins (Proverbs 28:13).

Someone said, "People might criticize us, condemn us, gossip about us, find fault and nitpick us, berate or belittle us, accuse us, but God just loves us." He wants nothing more than for us to succeed and make it all the way to heaven.



## **Presidential Wisdom**

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."

> "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" PSALM 33:12

## God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace, Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood, Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel, Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith, Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance, Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession, Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism, 1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work, James 2:24
Christian's Hope, Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance, Revelation 2:10

## Home PAG

## **Hit and Run**

The hit-and-run victim was just getting to his feet when a policeman ran up to help. "My mother-in-law just tried to run me over!" the shaken man told the cop.

"The car hit you from behind," the officer said. "How could you tell it was your mother-in-law?"

"I recognized the laugh!" he replied.

## **The Best Crop**

The rugged farmer and his devoted wife sat near the back of the auditorium. Graduation exercises were in progress. When the time came for the honors to be presented, their only son was cited as the outstanding Christian in the graduation class. His character, his leadership, and his service had made him far and away the first choice. Joy filled their souls, and even though their eyes were moist with tears, there was great gladness in their hearts. And again, it was an unforgettable moment when they heard their son bring the valedictory address as the highest ranking man in his class. All the effort and sacrifice they had made to see their son through four years of college now seemed so small. The good wife gripped the farmer's arm a little tighter when he leaned over and said, "Well, Ma, I guess that's about the best crop we ever raised!"

"Beloved in the sight of my mother"

PROVERBS 4:3



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

# If You Are Sent to PARCHMAN PRISON

Every place I go, people with diverse reasons ask me, "What should a new arrival at Parchman Prison expect?"

It is a legitimate question. The answer should be presented to our young people. Yes, even "church youngsters" should hear about it.

First, after sentencing, you are sent to Rankin County Prison for processing. You will be housed in Quick Bed One or Two. Both units are the general population type where gang members rule. Stabbings and fights are common. Three to four weeks later, you will be transported, in yellow jumpsuits with hands cuffed, 100 miles to Parchman Prison.

Your next place of residence will be the huge Maximum Security Unit in the middle of the prison farm. Here your new home will be a gray, six-byten cell where you will live by yourself, twenty-four hours a day for many days. Here you will eat, sleep, and do whatever other activities you desire. Unless you have a mirror, you cannot see the man in the next cell. A white block wall separates you from the man across the aisle. The stench is terrible from stopped-up toilets. The noise continues twenty-four hours a day.

After spending your required time here, you will be moved to another unit. One would think that after the solitary, monastic existence at the Maximum Security Unit, a new unit would be better. Wrong.

Your next housing unit will be Unit 29, the largest unit on the farm. It is "home" to over 1,500 men. Here you will be required to work somewhere on the farm. Each block building in this unit houses over 200 men in open sleeping areas with bunk beds. Your bed will provide the closest thing to privacy you

will have while here. The zone is cold in the winter and hot in the summer.

After a hard day's work in the fields, in the yard, or in the kitchen processing food, you will be too tired to eat, and you will long for lights out. But lightsout will bring a type of "night life" to which you are not accustomed. Organization or gang members will soon pay you a visit. You can either join up or pay up. Extortion is a late night activity. Strong tattooed arms will hold you down as the visitors search your locker for valuables or food.

If you resist, you will be stabbed with a hand-made prison knife called a "shank." If you choose to join this organization, then when your "partners" are not around, another group will come calling.

If you are wondering where Security is, there are generally only two officers for the entire building at night. They cannot watch all the zones all of the time, even if they cared to do so.

Life goes on daily with the same routine. Work all day and fear for your life all night. You are allowed one visit a month for six months, *if* anyone comes to see you. The food is greasy and soon you will have digestive problems.

There is no comfort to be found here. Parchman Prison is one of the worst places on earth. *Don't* choose to come here.

Young people, listen: Alcohol, drugs, and bad company will eventually send you to prison. Every man in prison once said, "It won't happen to me." They are here anyway. Make wise choices based on godly virtues. So-called friends will make such choices difficult. Just remember this: Others will not serve your prison sentence with or for you. Remember this when the pressure to do wrong comes.

—Roger Burdge, Chaplain

"Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard."

PROVERBS 13:15

## All Things CONSIDERED

## What Makes Porn Dangerous?

In the Saturday Review, Norman Cousins wrote concerning pornography:

"The trouble with this wide open pornography . . . is not that it corrupts, but that it desensitizes;

not that it unleashes the passions, but that it cripples the emotions;

not that it encourages a mature attitude, but that it is a reversion to infantile obsessions;

not that it removes the blinders, but that it distorts the view.

Prowess is proclaimed, but love is denied.

What we have is not liberation, but dehumanization."

I especially like the points that he makes about desensitizing and dehumanizing. Paul described some who had their conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:2). These individuals had lost their sensitivity to sin. They had lost their ability to blush (Jeremiah 6:15).

Furthermore, they began to see other people as objects. Their eyes were "full of adultery" (2 Peter 2:14). When they saw a woman, they viewed her through lustful eyes. Of course, our world is guilty of the same. The words of Jesus must ever be before our eyes: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.



# Bible VOLUME 20:2

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the Noah by the Numbers bookmark as a way of saying "thanks" for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name:	 
Address:	
Phone:	

Questions Taken from the King James Version

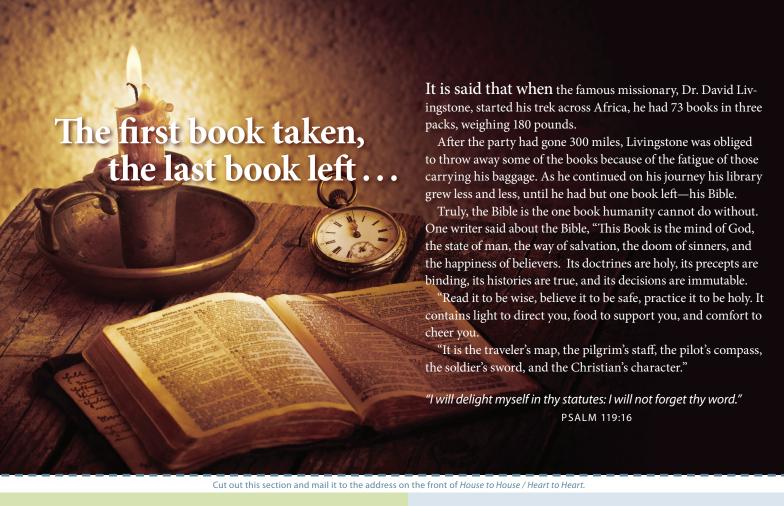
Answers to Last Issue: Mary, and Other Mothers: 1. Carpenter (Matthew 13:55); 2. Judah (1 Samuel 16:12–13; Luke 2:4); 3. Gabriel (Luke 1:26–27); 4. After Jesus was born (Matthew 1:25); 5. Elizabeth (Luke 1:38–40); 6. Three months (Luke 1:56); 7. To be enrolled (for taxes) (Luke 2:5); 8. Passover (Luke 2:41); 9. His own mother, Jochebed (Exodus 2:8–9); 10. Hagar (Genesis 16:1–4); 11. Heritage (Psalm 127:3); 12. Elizabeth (Luke 1:57–60); 13. John the Baptist's (Luke 1:31–60); 14. Hannah to Samuel (1 Samuel 2:18–21); 15. Lemuel (Proverbs 31:1); 16. James' and John's (Matthew 20:20-23; Mark 10:35); 17. Jesus (Matthew 23:37); 18. Zilpah (Genesis 35:26).

### The "Lost" Parables

**Directions:** Find your answers in Luke 15.

- 1. To whom did Jesus tell the parables of Luke 15?
- 2. In Jesus' parable, how many of his 100 sheep did the shepherd lose? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. When the shepherd found the lost sheep, what did he do with it? \_\_\_\_
- 4. In the parable of the lost coin, how many coins were *not* lost? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. "Joy shall be in \_\_\_\_\_ over one \_\_\_\_ that repenteth."
- 6. Of what kind of metal was the woman's lost coin made?
- 7. How many sons did the father of the prodigal son have? \_\_\_\_
- 8. Which son asked his father for his portion of goods?
- 9. What did the son decide to do after he received his inheritance?
- 10. In the new country, what did he do with his money? \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. What happened in the country where the prodigal son went?

- 12. After the prodigal son wasted all of the money, what job did he get? \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. What food did the poor son desire to eat?
- 14. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had \_\_\_\_\_, and ran, and fell on his neck."
- 15. "Father, I have \_\_\_\_\_ against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. He planned to ask his father to make him a hired \_\_\_\_\_\_.
- 17. What four things did the father give the returning son? \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. "My son was dead, and is \_\_\_\_\_ again he was \_\_\_\_\_, and is found."
- 19. Who was jealous of the prodigal son?
- 20. Where was the prodigal's brother when the prodigal returned? \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. What was his brother's response to the celebration?



## Recommended Resource



The Light Network is a network of podcasts (online radio shows) dedicated to encouraging, enlightening, and empowering you in your service to God. With programming for men, women, new Christians, and much more, there's sure to be something you will enjoy! New content is added daily! To check it out, go to www.thelightnetwork.tv.

## I want to learn more about the Bible!

Name: Address: \_\_\_ City/State: \_\_\_ Phone: \_ Email: \_\_ Prayer requests or comments: \_

#### I would like:



☐ A Bible Correspondence Course



☐ A DVD Bible Study



☐ An In-Home Bible Study

## **New**Tracts!



☐ Offering Community to Our Community



Believe the Rible



☐ Don't Give Up. Don't Ever Give Up



Nagging Fear I Am Not Saved

### **More subjects:**



□Where Omnipresent God Isn't



□lfl Don't Preach on Hell







Mother



□ Don't Quit: Passing God's Faith Tests



☐ What Would it Take to Get Us Back on Sunday

☐ Can I Change?



☐ Scared of the Dark



□The Wondrous Cross (Shadow of the Cross)



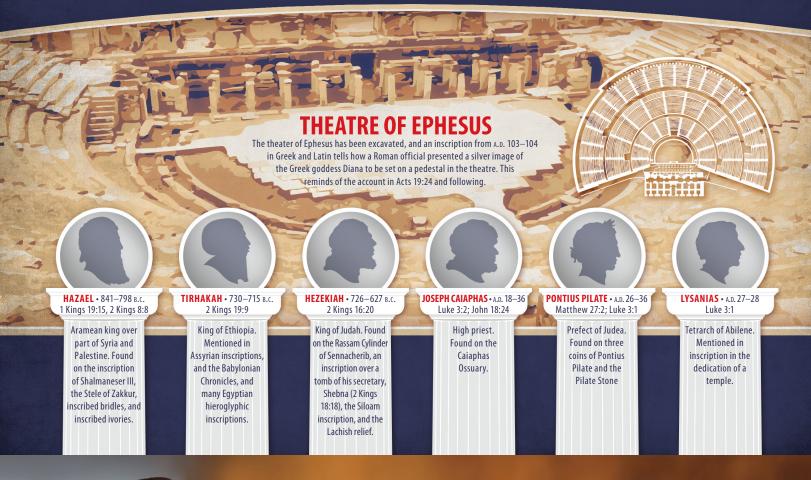
☐ The Weakness of a Strong Man





## HISTORICALLY CORRECT

One of the reasons we know we can trust the Bible is that it contains verifiable history, places, and people. Sometimes the people mentioned are minor players on the historical stage and sometimes they had quite an impact. Here are a few mentioned in the Bible, who have been verified through archaeology.





## The Greatest Gift of All

A long time ago in Persia, a benevolent ruler named Shah Abbis reigned. To get to know his people better, he wore disguises to mingle among them. One day, he went as a poor man to the public baths, and sat by the fireman tending the furnace. At mealtime, he shared his food, and talked to the poor man as to a friend. Again and again, he visited the fireman until the man grew to love him. Finally, the emperor revealed his identity to the fireman. The emperor expected the fireman to request a gift of him. However, the fireman requested nothing. With love and wonder, the fireman declared, "You left your palace and your glory to sit with me in this dark

place, to partake of my coarse fare, and to care whether my heart was glad or sad. On others you may bestow rich presents, but to me you have given yourself." Of course, we know a ruler far more benevolent than this Persian monarch. We know a ruler who left the ivory palaces of heaven to come and to live among us (Psalm 45:8). We know a ruler who was clothed with flesh and took upon himself the form of a servant (Philippians 2:5–8). We know a ruler who became poor that we might be made rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). We know a ruler who was such a friend to us that He gave His life for us (John 15:12-13). Of course, the King is Jesus Christ.





Christians sometimes sell the grace of God short. While we intellectually know that grace is undeserved, we sometimes tend to limit God's grace to the more "deserving sinner." You know, the guy who is trying to do right but makes "ordinary" mistakes. But that's our problem. There's no such thing as a deserving sinner.

The guy who walks too close to the mudhole and gets a little mud on the sides of his shoes is just as defiled and unfit for heaven as the guy who wallowed in the mudhole. Yet we sometimes seem to forget this truth. Friends, God's grace isn't for those who have most things under control but just need a little extra help. Rather His grace is for the helpless, and that includes all men whether they have just a little mud on their shoes or are covered from head to toe.

Maybe we need to be reminded of what we sing,

Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot;
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Instead of limiting God's grace, let's lift our voices and give thanks that God's grace reaches even me!

—Steve Higginbotham, MercEmail



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