

Safe in the Fold

“Safe were the ninety and nine in the fold, Safe though the night was stormy and cold....” So begin the words to a beautiful old gospel song about Jesus' parable of the one lost sheep. As I thought on the song, I began to consider what it means to be *“safe in the fold.”* The parable Jesus gave refers to the lost world, which was “lost” to God when sin entered through the disobedience of Adam. Jesus came *“to seek and to save that which was lost”* Luke 19:10. He gave the conclusion to this parable, saying, *“...joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance”* Luke 5:17. Those who are *“safe in the fold”* are those who have “repented” and abide “in the fold” where they *“need no repentance.”*

The apostle John told us *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins”* I John 3:5. That's what *“salvation”* is; Christ came into the world to *“take away our sin.”* The apostle continues, *“...and in Him is no sin...”* ...that is, *“In Christ.”* He is the dwelling place of the children of God. He is *“the fold of the sheep.”* John continues, saying, *“...and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not”* I John 3:5-6. The *“sin”* that entered the heart and nature of man through Adam was not in Jesus Christ because He was *“born of God.”* Christ, who is the eternal Word of God and creator of all things, came into the world as *“the seed of a woman”* to destroy the sin that destroyed the world. He does it one person at a time, in those who *“repent and believe the gospel.”* They are *“created in Christ,”* where they will safely abide in *“righteousness, peace and joy...”* Romans 14:17. They are *“...as sheep, brought into the fold.”*

In the “fold” (Christ) there *“is no sin.”* It follows, there is no lion, no wolf, no bear, nor anything to hurt or harm the sheep *“in the fold (in Christ).”* Satan, sin and the Law (of Moses and all religious law) is the enemy of God. Those who don't believe “religious law” is the enemy should hear the apostle Paul: *“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law”* I Corinthians 15:56. Christ the creator came into the world as the *“seed of the woman”* (born of a virgin), to *“bruise the head of the serpent”* Genesis 3:15. He came as *“Immanuel”* (God with us), to *“save His people from their sin”* Matthew 1:21-23. He came as *“The Son of the living God”* to *“destroy the works of the*

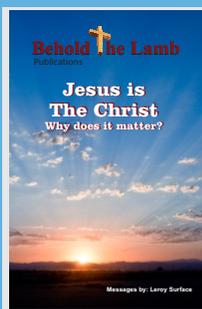
devil” I John 3:8. He came as *“The Lamb of God,”* to *“take away the sin of the world”* John 1:29. He came as *“The Messiah of the Jews”* to *“make an end of sins”* for whosoever will believe.

There are those who are “self-righteous” and believe they *“need no repentance.”* These have so perfectly disciplined themselves to the laws of religion that they are seen as “righteous” before men, but not before God. They are “self-righteous” simply because their “righteousness” is of their own works and not of God's works. They have *“washed the outside of the cup”* and call it clean, but the “inside” has never been cleansed. Jesus said, *“...cleanse first that which is within...that the outside...may be clean also”* Matthew 23:26. Only God can wash the inside of man. He does this by the *“blood of Christ”* who died on the cross to *“make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25. The “self-righteous” are not “safe in the fold.”

There are those who believe sin doesn't matter, because (they believe), “our sins are forgiven, past, present, and future.” These also believe they *“need no repentance,”* because they believe their sins are forgiven before they commit them. Yet others believe we are all sinners, and must sin every day, but if we simply tell God “forgive me” when we sin, it all “goes away.” None of those who believe such things are “safe in the fold,” so, what does it mean to be “safe in the fold.”

For those who “believe the truth” and “trust in Him,” Christ suffered the horrible death of the cross to *“put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”* Hebrews 9:26, thus *“taking away the sin of the world,”* the “sin” that entered through Adam's disobedience Romans 5:19. Those who are “safe in the fold” are *“born again”* in the likeness of Jesus Christ, who is *“the firstborn among many brethren”* Romans 8:29. They have received with their new birth *“a new heart and a new spirit”* Ezekiel 36:26. They are *“new creatures”* II Corinthians 5:17 in Christ; their “old man (creature)” died on the cross with Christ Romans 6:6, they are *“all new.”* They have *“the mind of Christ”* I Corinthians 2:16, and they are *“partakers of the divine nature”* II Peter 1:4. They are not *“gods,”* but they are *“...blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation...”* Philippians 2:15. Their hearts have been *“purified by faith”* Acts 15:8-9. Sin has been *“washed”* out of their heart and nature, and they do not sin, because sin is not in them. These are “safe in the fold.”

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