

Rescued from Sin



Sixty years ago, atomic bombs were dropped on Japan to end World War 2. A recent documentary on the Discovery/Times Channel peaked my interest in this subject. As the decades pass, new generations have questioned whether using these bombs was necessary. This documentary explained how this action was brought about to bring a swift ending to the war with a minimal loss of American life. To get the best perspective, producers interviewed men who would have taken part in the planned invasion. Imagine having just fought your way across Europe—from Normandy to the streets of Berlin—and experiencing the taste of victory, having defeated the Nazi machine of Germany. While still celebrating the end of the war in Europe, you receive orders that place you on a ship to sail around the world to Japan where your military is preparing for an invasion. You have been selected to be part of the initial invasion force in Operation Downfall—an invasion that would have dwarfed the size and scale of Operation Overlord which took place a year before on the shores of France. What would your outlook on life have been?

Some of the troops who spent the summer of 1945 planning for the invasion described themselves as “dead men walking.” They knew they were going to die—because of the danger of the impending mission. The Japanese were well fortified in their positions and were willing to fight to the death. As time moved closer to the November 1 target date, tensions rose. The military estimated that between 500,000 and 1 million US troops would be killed in overtaking Japan. It was an extreme price, and thus the reasoning behind the usage of the atomic bomb. President Harry Truman gave orders and on August 6 and 9 atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A full, unconditional surrender was given by the Japanese on September 1, and the lives of millions of American soldiers were *rescued* from an almost certain death. The soldiers interviewed were extremely thankful for their new lease on life—knowing they most likely would have been dead otherwise.

In Galatians 1:3-5, Paul writes, *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore.* In verse 4, Paul uses the word *rescue* which underscores the importance of Jesus’ death. Those in need of rescue are in grave danger and have no ability to deliver themselves from their predicament. They are totally dependent upon outside intervention. In the scriptures we see examples of God coming

to the rescue of men, and even entire nations! For example, in Acts 7:12 we read of God *rescuing* Joseph from his afflictions. Israel was *rescued* from Egyptian bondage by the mercy and grace of God (Acts 7:34). In our text, Paul says Christians have been rescued from this *present evil age according to the will of our God and Father*. Spiritually speaking, those who are outside of Christ are “dead men walking.” They are lost and without hope. There is nothing to look forward to but eternal torment, anguish, and death. Thanks be to God who offers deliverance from this fate through the salvation offered through Jesus Christ! Christians can have a fresh start and forgiveness because of deliverance from the peril of sin. Have you been rescued from the dread and fires of hell!

The wording the Holy Spirit chose in Galatians becomes even more powerful to the reader when we consider that we were rescued from our sin even while being enemies of God. Paul wrote that we were *formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds* (Colossians 1:21). It is hard for us to fully grasp reconciliation, especially when looking at someone who has forgiven another person who has deeply hurt them. In Romans, Paul writes that we were enemies of God, aligned against Him, and yet it pleased God for Jesus to pay the penalty of our sin on the cross (Romans 5:8-10).

Are you in need of being rescued from your sin? Are you a “dead man walking” spiritually? Seek salvation in Christ today! Forgiveness is possible through the blood of Jesus Christ. Turn to God today! God wants you to believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 16:30-31), repent of your sin (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus as the Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and be baptized for the remission of sin (Acts 22:16). Will you do that today? There is no other way possible for your rescue to take place. You can’t get out of this on your own. Surrender to God today! If you’ve already been rescued, how are you doing with your “new lease on life”? Have you forgotten the horrible condition you were once in and how it was through God’s grace that you are now free from sin? Are you growing closer to God each day? Is your heartfelt thankfulness to God demonstrated by acts of service in God’s kingdom?

Just as those soldiers who were scheduled to take part in Operation Downfall remain extremely thankful for their lives being spared, so the Christian must ever be thankful for what has been done on his behalf. Let us praise God for what He has done for us and work to get the message of the gospel out so others may be rescued from the perils of sin.

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