



## Our slavery problem and God's Solution



### What is going on?

From time to time our thoughts can get very big and far-ranging. What's the problem with people? In fact, what's the bottom line about our human condition? Why are we in such a mess? Then we take a deep breath and turn our attention back to more immediate issues, like what we should be doing right now.

But let's take a moment at the close of our experience with the Biblical festivals to let our thoughts expand and wander over the whole broad landscape of our common humanity. An overview like we've just gone through together goes way back in time, culture, and civilization to celebrate God's faithfulness to His chosen people in the broken conditions and situations they and we have found ourselves caught up in.

### The difficulty with free will

Once we make the foundational assumption and confession that the God of the Bible – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – exists and that He created us in His Image, we receive the key to understanding and overcoming our core problem, which is God's gift to us of free will. To exercise free will, we have to be allowed to make mistakes. And, having been put in charge of the choices we make, we inevitably end up making some poor ones.

Let's face it: no matter how much good we do, we're still imperfect and make one mistake after another, which has negative consequences for us and those around us. It can be really bothersome. We aim for the bullseye but miss the mark. Or we don't even know where the bullseye is and just aim in whatever direction feels right or seems to be the way to go in the moment. Or, imagine it, we shoot directly at what we've been led to believe is the target and hit its bullseye dead center, only to find out later that we were quite mistaken.

Basically, all we're really looking for is to have our own needs and those of the ones we care about met, and the most basic need we're hungering for is to be appreciated and loved. So when the going gets tough we try to meet these needs ourselves, often by seeking in the wrong places. We chase after money or things or emotional

and physical experiences to comfort and encourage ourselves, and before you know it we're caught up in treadmills and rat races that just get us deeper in. For the sake of simple clarity, we can identify all of these human errors, large and small, with one time-honored word: sin.

The sad reality is that the burden of sin accumulates. Our parents were like this, and so were theirs. Our bosses and coworkers and neighbors and friends are all in the same boat with us. Along the way we pick up baggage – hurts, bad habits, things that trigger us and hold us back. And, as we wake up and begin to look around, we realize that all of us are mixed up in the same mess of human error – trapped there so to speak – and the pot keeps stirring. In another way of describing it, we're all enmeshed in and slaves to our own sin and the damaging effects of the sins of all those who surround us in time and space. Or, in even simpler words, we're drowning and lost in sin. God help us! How do we get out? Who will save us from these lives doomed to disappointment, frustration, and death?

### **A God-sized problem**

Well, the condition we find ourselves in is certainly what could be called a God-sized problem. Fortunately for all of us the same God who made us, gave us free will, and knows us inside and out, has also provided us with a solution: a loving, ongoing, and working relationship with our Creator Himself.

For starters, He's taken the initiative in reaching out with a messianic plan to save us, as Isaiah prophesied millennia ago when he wrote, *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Read Isaiah 53 from beginning to end. You can start with the portion printed on Page 35. Then recognize the sacrificial character of God brought to human life in the person of His son and chosen Messiah, Jesus, and ask Him to rescue you and become your Savior.

Jesus knows all about humanity's problem in general and our version of it specifically. He's right at hand and ready to help us identify where we're mixed up, forgive us for the mistakes we've made, cleanse our hearts, and point us in the right direction. He cares about us and has the answers we need. He knows what's right at any given time and is able to communicate and share it with us whenever we're ready to listen. This is the God of the Bible that we celebrate in each of the festivals we've been studying.

Secondly, as soon as He's gotten our attention and commitment to participate in His plans, God has an amazing way of working out relationships and straightening out the messes we and others have made in our lives. We've gotten bent out of shape, bruised and broken, down and dysfunctional, but He will save and restore us if we will but yield to Him as LORD of our lives and cooperate with Him in mutual love.

Finally, He has great plans for us to work with Him in spreading the goodness of His Kingdom wherever we go, whether it's at home, in our communities, or in the broader world around us. All we need to do is keep asking, seeking, and knocking at His door, and then let Him lead and work with us in all we say and do.

### **Now it's your turn**

What can and will you do with God's invitation? In the privacy of your life, call out to the God who saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, to the God who preserved Esther and her people, to the One who overcame evil plots, pushed back enemies, healed the sick, forgives sin and illuminates the universe with His Word and Spirit. Receive Jesus as your LORD and Savior! Gather with the saints to grow in your love for God, sing the songs of the redeemed, and rejoice in your salvation! Hallelujah! Let's keep our own lifelong Biblical festival going!

**Source:** *The Biblical Festivals*, available at <https://tinyurl.com/365dctv6>