

"FOUND AND SAFE"

by Stephen Joyce

The message "FOUND AND SAFE" tinkled cell phones across the country. What rejoicing, what relief, what thanksgiving! In the North, South, East, and West, many stood by in prayerful, tearful, and fearful anticipation of the news.

In December of 2011, forty-five kilometers into the heavily wooded back country of the North Arm Hills, Newfoundland, two hunters, a husband and wife, lost their way. With 32-plus years of hunting experience, you would think it was impossible. The hunters followed a wounded moose deeper and deeper into the tangled woods, not watching carefully to mark the return path nor noting the setting sun. Sub-zero temperatures, wet clothing, and exhaustion all made for a potentially deadly ending. After tracking the moose for about thirty minutes, the couple turned around to head back to the road. After an hour of at-



tempting to find their way back, the husband turned to his wife on that dark and misty evening and said, **"I AM LOST."** Being lost at that moment was more than just a positional reality. It hit the couple in the pit of their stomach that in their condition and with the temperatures dropping well below zero, they had little chance of making it through the night. With only a rifle, four bullets, a small hatchet, and a camera, they looked about in despair. All survival equipment had been foolishly left in the clearing where the animal had been wounded.

Immediately after uttering the words, "I am lost," the husband turned and found himself shaking his head, thinking he was hallucinating. About twenty feet away stood the moose they had wounded. With enough light to aim and fire, they killed the animal.

Of what value was this creature to them now? The wife quickly spoke, "We could skin this moose and use its hide to keep us from freezing."



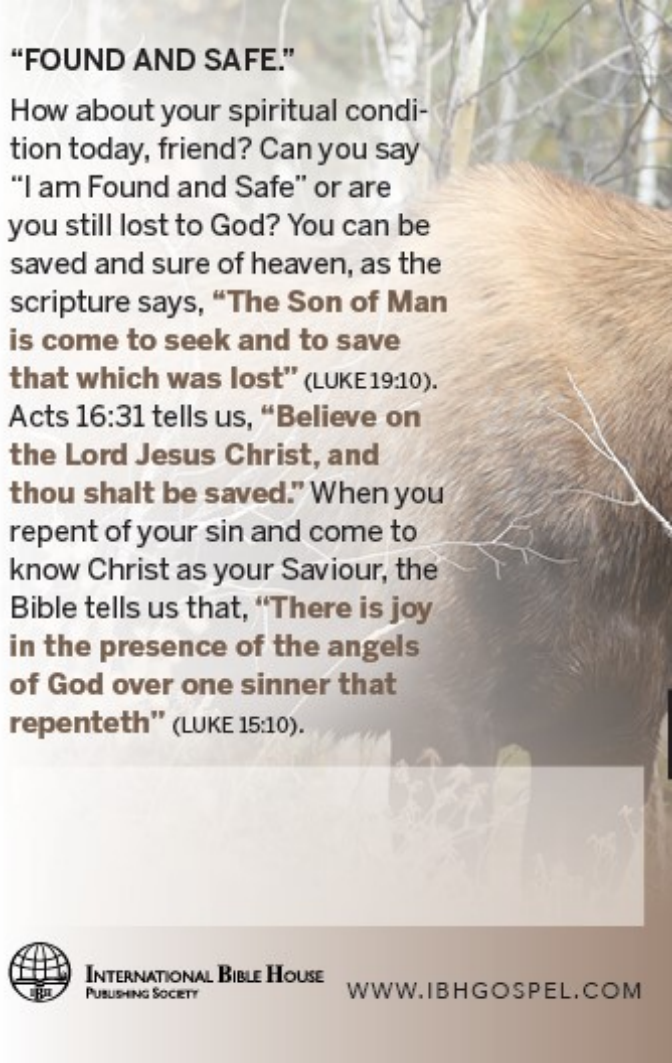
They immediately took to the task of skinning the animal in the dark with a dull hatchet and the help of the LED light on the back of the digital camera. The husband looked at his wife and said, "In reality, this moose has given its life for us." They wrapped that 4-by-5-foot swath of moose skin around them, so thankful for the warmth and protection it afforded through the long, cold, windy hours of the night.

What a tremendous story this incident illustrates. You and I are **LOST TO GOD** because of sin. Romans 3:23 tells us, **"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."** Romans 5:12 states, **"Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** Not only are we positionally lost because of our link with Adam (born in sin), but we are also perishing in that condition. Romans 6:23 re-



minds us, **"The wages of sin is death..."** We have no personal good with which to present ourselves before a righteous and holy God. **"There is none that doeth good, no not one"** (ROMANS 3:10). Not only have we sinned, but all our good deeds are also stained with sin as Isaiah 64:6 states, **"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."** Our sin CANNOT be overlooked. It must be punished. How wonderful to realize that like the animal that gave its life (though not willingly) to save the perishing couple, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ (God in human flesh), to this sinful world so that **HE MIGHT WILLFULLY** go to the cross of Calvary and suffer there under the hand of God for your sin and mine. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (JOHN 3:16). The punishment we deserve, God laid upon His Son (1PETER 2:24; 3:18; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21).

While the husband and wife were lost and perishing that night, unknown to them and at a tremendous cost, a search was being made. Midmorning the following day, by God's grace the couple was able to report,



"FOUND AND SAFE."

How about your spiritual condition today, friend? Can you say "I am Found and Safe" or are you still lost to God? You can be saved and sure of heaven, as the scripture says, **"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"** (LUKE 19:10). Acts 16:31 tells us, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."** When you repent of your sin and come to know Christ as your Saviour, the Bible tells us that, **"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"** (LUKE 15:10).

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