

Rescued

By: Keith R. Keyser

Millions of Americans anxiously followed the three day drama that transpired in a collapsed mine in Somerset, Pennsylvania. Nine miners were trapped in a damaged shaft that was 240 feet below the ground, rapidly filling with water. Thousands of miners & rescue workers labored round the clock to free the trapped men. An enormous drill was imported from neighboring West Virginia in a desperate attempt to reach the men while air & life remained. Many prayed, others sat glued to their television sets, waiting for word of the fate of the nine endangered men. No doubt some observers gave up hope: the shaft was too deep, there was too much water, there were problems with the heavy excavation equipment. Others desperately hoped that somehow, somehow the men would be freed. The beleaguered men themselves wondered if they would be reached in time. Thankfully, on Sunday morning the glad news went forth that all nine had been saved!

This story was a rare example of good news in the media reports. So often the headlines are filled with tragedy & heartache. Nevertheless, this real-life rescue reminds one of an even greater true story of deliverance. Gal.1:4 records it succinctly: “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might *deliver us* from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” (Italics mine) This verse tells us that God undertook a dramatic rescue at great cost to Himself. Humans were in tremendous spiritual peril due to their sins. The Bible teaches clearly that “...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom.3:23) It also adds that “...the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom.6:23) Our sins put us under the wrath of a righteous & holy God. We were in danger of being lost not just for time, but also for eternity. Accordingly, God sent His Son into the world to accomplish a recovery effort on a massive scale. The Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily died on the Cross, suffering the judgment that sinners deserved. Gal.1:4 expresses the very heart of the Gospel. The celebrated expositor J.R.W. Stott remarks: “If the nature of Christ’s death on the cross was ‘for our sins’, its object was ‘to rescue us out of this present age of wickedness’ (verse 4, NEB). Bishop J.B. Lightfoot writes that the verb (‘deliver’, ‘rescue’) ‘strikes the keynote of the epistle’. ‘The Gospel is a rescue,’ he adds, ‘an emancipation from a state of bondage.’ Christianity is, in fact, a rescue religion. The Greek verb in this verse is a strong one (*exaireo*, in the middle voice). It is used in the Acts of the rescue of the Israelites from their Egyptian slavery (7:34), of the rescue of Peter both from prison and from the hand of Herod the King (12:11), and of the rescue of Paul from an infuriated mob about to lynch him (23:27). This verse in Galatians is the only place where it is used metaphorically of salvation. Christ died to rescue us.”

The nine miners are extremely grateful to be alive, & will no doubt for the rest of their lives remember the rescue effort that was mounted on their behalf. Those who have been rescued by the Lord Jesus from judgment, the power of sin, & the grip of this world should truly be thankful for their salvation. Moreover, they should attempt to bring others to the Captain of their Salvation—the Only One who can rescue the lost.