

Aspects of Salvation

Salvation Promised... In Titus 1:2, Paul writes that God promised eternal life before the world began. There is an aspect of salvation not often preached from the pulpits of today; an aspect on which a vast number of Christian congregations were united some 200 years ago. In 2 Timothy 1:9, Paul said that salvation was according to God's purpose and grace, "which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." In Romans 8:29, Paul speaks of those things that God purposed before the world began. Again, in Ephesians 1:4-5, Paul sets forth this aspect of salvation using the words "chosen" and "predestinated" along with the phrase "before the foundation of the world." While it may not be preached, it is the truth nonetheless that God established his purpose in the salvation of sinners before the world began, and His purpose included election and predestination. If you have faith in Christ, it is because you were a part of God's purpose, which was established for a specific but innumerable multitude of people before the world began.

Salvation Accomplished... Time and time again, Jesus made it clear that his purpose in coming into the world was to do the will of the Father. In Matthew 1:21, before Jesus came from the womb, we hear the angel proclaim that purpose: "for he shall save his people from their sins." Before Jesus went to the cross, we hear him say to his Father in John 17 "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Jesus accomplished all that was necessary to fulfill that purpose of saving his people from their sins; he finished the work that the Father gave him to do. Isaiah prophesied that the warfare is accomplished and our iniquity has been pardoned. Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for sin to the Father and obtained eternal redemption for us. God calls on us to be obedient but it is by the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ that many shall be made righteous. When so many today are saying that Jesus 'can' or 'will' or 'wants to', isn't it joyful news to learn that Jesus 'did' and 'has' and 'does'! Do you serve a successful Savior?

Salvation Applied... Before there can be any spiritual action, such as repentance, faith, or love, there must exist spiritual life. In John 3:8, Jesus describes how this spiritual life begins, how every one of us are born of the Spirit. He uses the blowing of the wind to describe the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. In John 5:25, Jesus tells us how his life-giving voice is effectual. In Galatians 4:4-6, Paul explains what God does to us because of what Jesus accomplished for us. Ephesians 2:1 tells us that we who were dead in sin are made alive in Christ, and the ensuing verses give all the glory to God's mercy, grace, and love. According to the mercy of God, salvation is applied, given, bestowed upon us; not according to our works, our will, or even our faith. Many today unwittingly preach an unsuccessful Savior who cannot save until the sinner cooperates. But what a hopeless situation if the sinner must cooperate with the Spirit while he is still dead in sin! The sinner must first be made spiritually alive! We have the responsibility to study to show ourselves approved unto God; interpret God's word within context, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Salvation Enjoyed... Any spiritual action, such as repentance, faith, or love, must be preceded by spiritual life. After God does His work in the heart, we can begin to enjoy salvation through faith and obedience. This aspect of salvation is greatly misunderstood. In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul tells us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We cannot do such work without first being given the tools! Paul tells us how we are given the tools and where they come from: "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Until now, we have been passive in the other aspects of salvation – *promised, accomplished, and applied*. The purpose of our work is not to obtain eternal salvation, but to manifest it and enjoy it, while giving all the glory to God for it. Likewise, in Acts 2:37-40, Peter tells those whose hearts had been pricked by the gospel (pricked because they were spiritually alive) to save themselves from this

untoward generation. How? – through repentance, faith, obedience, baptism, and continued steadfastness in the Apostles' doctrine.

Salvation Yet to Come... “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us...” (2Cor.1:10) Through Jesus Christ we have been delivered from the penalty of sin. By the Holy Spirit we are delivered from the power of sin. By God's grace we shall one day be delivered from the very presence of sin. Redemption was obtained by the blood of Jesus Christ. Our relationship and fellowship with God is based upon the forgiveness of our sins. Because of the successful work of Christ, we have received the Spirit of adoption – we have been translated out of the bondage of this world into the glorious liberty of His heavenly kingdom. In Romans 8:23, Paul tells us what adoption ultimately means – the very redemption of our bodies. Christ is coming back, bringing the souls of the saints with him, and will raise our bodies from the grave – made incorruptible and immortal. Those who are alive and remain at his coming will be changed, caught up together with those reunited souls and bodies, and so shall we ever be with the Lord, praising Him in perfect righteousness for all eternity! All this He has done to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

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