

INTRODUCTION

Consider a common soldier in any one of many wars that have raged among the countries of Europe. This particular soldier is irreligious. He has heard the Bible read; He knows the name of Jesus Christ; He even has been to church. But he does not fear God, does not repent of his sins, does not believe in Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, as he sits around the camp fire with his buddies, he has just taken the name of the Lord in vain.

Then the trumpet sounds. He and all of his comrades take up their arms to meet the approaching enemy. As the enemy soldiers draw near, one of them takes aim at him and fires off a round. In its flight, the bullet misses its mark, and passes harmlessly just an inch from his forehead. The man, surviving the battle, considered himself lucky, and went on blaspheming God.

By whose decree was that man saved from death that day?

By whose power were so many factors arranged just so that the bullet flew just as it did?

Consider a woman in some small town in one of the Asian countries. As so many other people around her, she has scarcely ever heard the name Jesus Christ; she has never read the Bible; she doesn't pray the one true God, but to many false gods and to her dead ancestors.

After a long wait of nine months, the day finally has come for her to labor to give birth. But this baby is a big one, and it isn't turned right. She has labored to the limit of her endurance, and the baby still hasn't come. Now she and the women attending her fear neither she nor the baby will survive. But with what feels like the last ounce of her strength, she pushes one more time, and the blessed cry is heard. The woman, being greatly relieved, gives thanks to her ancestors for their help.

By whose decree were that mother and baby saved from death that day?

By whose power was her mortal body enabled to do so long and difficult a work?

Who was these people's savior?

Luck or chance are not forces that can do anything. False gods and dead ancestors have not power to save. Of course we know that these people, typical of so many in the world, were saved by the decree and power of the living God. Yet they did not even believe in God. How much more, then, can we who believe in Him know that no matter what labors we must perform in this life, and no matter what troubles we must endure, we can trust in God our Savior.

TEXT

1 Timothy 4:10

BODY

I. God Is the Savior of All Men

- A. We are used to using the word “savior” to speak of how God, through the death of Jesus Christ, saves us from His wrath, forgiving us our sins and granting us eternal life
- B. But the Bible many times speaks of how God saves His creatures from the dangers of this life, preserving their lives, in His providence, when they otherwise would have died
- C. Example of sailors at sea
 - 1. Acts 27:31
 - 2. Psalm 107:23-31
- D. God saves or preserves even animals in this sense - Psalm 36:6
- E. The Bible makes it very clear that, in this sense, God saves even men who do not truly believe in Him or trust in Him
 - 1. 1 Samuel 10:17-19
 - 2. Jude 5
- F. Since there is no other God but the one true, living God, we know that any time man or beast is saved or preserved from any trouble in this world, it is by the hand of God
- G. Pressing that truth further, we know that any good that any creature ever enjoys ultimately is by the goodness of the living God.

If God is the Savior of all men, then we can know with certainty that

II. God Especially Is the Savior of Those Who Believe

- A. He means those who believe in Him
 - 1. yes, believing that God is, that He is one true living God
 - a) instead of not believing there is a God
 - b) instead of believing there are many gods
 - c) instead of believing in some false notion of God
 - 2. but specifically with reference to Jesus Christ, the Son of God
- B. Look back at the things said just before this - 1 Tim 4:8-10
 - 1. a contrast is made between the kind of activity that is profitable in this life only, and the kind of activity that is profitable in this life and in the life to come
 - 2. those who devote themselves only to the physical things of this world receive from their devotion only a little benefit, because it is only for this life
 - 3. whereas those who devote themselves to godliness receive from their devotion benefits in all things, both in this life and in the life to come
 - 4. we are told that is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptance
 - 5. the application being that we can labor for the Lord and even suffer reproach for His sake, trusting in the living God, that He will deliver what He promised to those who exercise ourselves unto godliness
- C. Today's verse presents essentially that same concept
 - 1. we trust or hope in the living God in all things
 - 2. we know this trust or hope is well placed, because
 - 3. if God is a Savior in temporal matters of this life even for unbelieving men, even for animals,
 - 4. then God surely is a Savior in both temporal things and eternal things for those who believe in Him

III. APPLICATION - For those living in good times who seem to have hard times coming

A. Application

1. in good times
 - a) we can work at our jobs and businesses and earn our money
 - b) we can take that money and buy what we need at a well-stocked store or by ordering from a website
2. but hard times may come when
 - a) we may be fired for not complying with whatever the latest government mandates are
 - b) economic activity slows, so we can't earn much money
 - c) what we normally buy isn't available due to crippling government regulations
 - d) unsound government financial policies cause inflation, so that prices are so high we can't afford to buy what is available

B. Application

1. in good times
 - a) crime is rare
 - b) there is no widespread violence, no civil war
 - c) politics are peaceful; governments are chosen by elections, and there is peaceful transfer of power
 - d) people who aren't doing anything wrong have no trouble with the government
2. but hard times may come when
 - a) crime is rampant
 - b) the government treats good citizens as criminals
 - c) political struggles produce violent conflicts, even civil war

C. Application

1. in good times
 - a) on the Lord's Day, we go to church wherever we judge to be best; we worship according to the dictates of our own conscience, exercising ourselves unto godliness
 - b) every day, we abstain from evil, loving God and our neighbor as the Bible teaches us to do
 - c) we do these things in peace and quiet, undisturbed by anything within our country's borders, or anything coming in from outside our borders
2. but hard times may come when
 - a) we still worship God as our Lord Jesus has taught us
 - b) we still love our neighbors as ourselves
 - c) yet we are reproached or even persecuted for doing these things, as was our Lord Jesus Christ, as were the prophets who came before Him, as were His own apostles, and as so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ already have been in the past and are even now in other places

- D. If we see indications that such things are coming upon us in the near future; until then,
 - 1. let us not become anxious, worried, fretful, dismayed, discouraged, or disheartened
 - 2. but instead let us labor calmly and cheerfully in whatever the Lord has given our hands to do
 - 3. being strengthened in our faith in God, considering that if He is the Savior of all men, even those who do not believe, He especially is the Savior of those who believe in Him
- E. If any of these things do indeed come upon us in the days to come, let us meet such times with the faith, the trust, the hope that we read of here in today's verse
 - 1. we continue to
 - a) exercise ourselves unto godliness
 - b) to labor at whatever the Lord has given us to do
 - (1) whether in the organized work of the church
 - (2) or in the work of daily living
 - c) to suffer reproach peacefully, even gladly
 - 2. all because we trust in the living God, who, being the Savior of all men, especially is the Savior of those who believe in Him

Thad - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Luke 1:46-47

Jeremiah - Scripture Reading - Isaiah 45:18-22

~~Roel~~ Jeff - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Jude 25

~~Audrey~~ Allison - Prelude "Lead On, O King Eternal"

Haven - Trinity 402 "Amazing Grace"

Rita - Trinity 675 "A Wonderful Savior"

Rita - Trinity 195 "Alas! And Did My Saviour Bleed"

the Saviour of All Men

G4990 *soter* Thayer: saviour, deliverer, preserver

G4982 *sozo*

1 Samuel 10:17-19 Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, (18) and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and **delivered** you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' (19) But you have today rejected your God, who Himself **saved** you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."

Psalm 107:23-31 Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters, (24) They see the works of the LORD, And His wonders in the deep. (25) For He commands and raises the stormy wind, Which lifts up the waves of the sea. (26) They mount up to the heavens, They go down again to the depths; Their soul melts because of trouble. (27) They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, And are at their wits' end. (28) Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble, And **He brings them out of their distresses**. (29) He calms the storm, So that its waves are still. (30) Then they are glad because they are quiet; So He guides them to their desired haven. (31) Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

Acts 27:31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot **be saved**."

A sailor aboard a ship at sea found himself in a terrible storm. As the storm continued, growing more and more severe,

Jude 1:5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, **having saved** the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not **believe**.

Psalm 36:6 Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O LORD, You **preserve [GEN, ESV save]** man and beast.

Any man who ever has been saved from any kind of trouble was saved by the living God. Pressing this point further: every good thing that anyone in the whole world every has had, he received from the hand of the living God.

By whose decree was that determined or decided from all eternity?
By whose providence did that come to pass in just that way?

It was not by luck or chance; those are not forces, just ways to refer to things too complex for us to understand.

If God is the savior of all men, I know He will save us who believe in Him.

because if God is the savior of all men, then especially is He the savior of those who believe

If there is trouble that makes it hard to provide for my family, or if there is trouble that endangers me and my family...

There's trouble brewing
- "supply chain disruption"

normally

- we can work at our jobs and businesses and earn our money
 - we can take that money and buy what we need at a well-stocked store or by ordering from a website
- but times may come when
- we can't earn much money
 - fired for not complying with mandates
 - economic activity slows
 - what we normally buy isn't available
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normally

- crime is rare
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 - politics are peaceful; governments are chosen by elections, and there is peaceful transfer of power
 - people who aren't doing anything wrong have no trouble with the government
- but times may come when

normally

- we go to church
 - we abstain from evil
 - we exercise ourselves unto godliness
 - we do these things quietly
- but times may come

How do we think, then?

Calvin:

the word is here a general term, and denotes one who defends and preserves. He means that the kindness of God extends to all men. And if there is no man who does not feel the goodness of God towards him, and who is not a partaker of it, how much more shall it be experienced by the godly, who hope in him? Will he not take peculiar care in them? Will he not more freely pour out his bounty on them? In a word, will he not, in every respect, keep them safe to the end?

“The word Savior is not here taken in what we call its proper and strict meaning, in regard to the eternal salvation which God promises to his elect, but it is taken for one who delivers and protects. Thus we see that even unbelievers are protected by God, as it is said (Mat_5:46) that “he maketh his sun to shine on the good and the bad;” and we see that all are fed by his goodness, that all are delivered from many dangers. In this sense he is called “the Savior of all men,” not in regard to the spiritual salvation of their souls, but because he supports all his creatures. In this way, therefore, our Lord is the Savior of all men, that is, his goodness extends to the most wicked, who are estranged from him, and who do not deserve to have any intercourse with him, who ought to have been struck off from the number of the creatures of God and destroyed; and yet we see how God hitherto extends his grace to them; for the life which he gives to them is a testimony of his goodness. Since, therefore God shows such favor towards those who are strangers to him, how shall it be with us who are members of his household? Not that we are better or more excellent than those whom we see to be cast off by him, but the whole proceeds from his mercy and free grace, that he is reconciled to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, since he hath called us to the knowledge of the gospel, and then confirms us, and seals his bounty toward us, so that we ought to be convinced that he reckons us to be his children. Since, therefore, we see that he nourishes those who are estranged from him, let us go and hide ourselves under his wings; for, having taken us under his protection, he has declared that he will show himself to be a Father toward us.” — Fr. Ser.

Trapp:

Not of eternal preservation, but of temporal reservation. For every man should die the same day he is born, the wages of death should be paid him presently; but Christ begs wicked men’s lives for a season, saith one. Sin hath hurled confusion over the world, brought a vanity on the creature. And had not Christ undertaken the shattered condition of the world to uphold it, it had fallen about Adam’s ears, saith another divine

Poole:

that is, the Preserver...This seemeth rather to be the sense of the text, than to understand it of eternal salvation, for so God is not the actual Saviour of all; besides that the text seemeth to speak of a work proper to the Father, rather than to the Son.

Bengel:

Paul shows that he, and men like him, hope for a double salvation from God: salvation [or safety] in this life, for God saves [or else preserves] all men (nay, even He wishes all men to have salvation for ever): as also, what is of greater consequence, in the life that is to come, for He especially saves [or preserves] them that believe, who even in this life also experience greater protection, on account of their greater temptation.—μάλιστα, most of all) There lies hid beneath this word the strength of the argument from the less to the greater.

Gill:

in a providential way, giving them being and breath, upholding them in their beings, preserving their lives, and indulging them with the blessings and mercies of life; for that he is the Saviour of all men, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, is not true in fact.

Clarke:

Who has provided salvation for the whole human race, and has freely offered it to them in his word and by his Spirit.

Ellicott:

The living God is also a loving God, the Saviour of all, if they would receive Him

Barnes:

This must be understood as denoting that he is the Saviour of all people in some sense which differs from what is immediately affirmed - "especially of those that believe." There is something pertaining to "them" in regard to salvation which does not pertain to "all men." It cannot mean that he brings all people to heaven, "especially" those who believe - for this would be nonsense. And if he brings all people actually to heaven, how can it be "especially" true that he does this in regard to those who believe? Does it mean that he saves others "without" believing? But this would be contrary to the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures; see Mar_16:16. When, therefore, it is said that he "is the Saviour of 'all' people, 'especially' of those who believe," it must mean that there is a sense in which it is true that he may be called the Saviour of all people, while, at the same time, it is "actually" true that those only are saved who believe. This may be true in two respects:

- (1) As he is the "Preserver" of people Job_7:20, for in this sense he may be said to "save" them from famine, and war, and peril - keeping them from day to day; compare Psa_107:28;
- (2) as he has "provided" salvation for all people. He is thus their Saviour - and may be called the common Saviour of all; that is, he has confined the offer of salvation to no one class of people; he has not limited the atonement to one division of the human race; and he actually saves all who are willing to be saved by him.

Fairbairn:

The term Saviour (σωτήρ) represents Him as the deliverer and preserver of life; but in what sense, or to what effects, must be inferred from the connection. As the living God, He may be said to be the Saviour of all men, since by His watchful and beneficent providence they are constantly delivered from destruction and preserved in being. Actually He is not more to all men, although more in manifestations of goodwill and acts tending toward salvation, since He sets before men generally, and often even presses on their acceptance, the benefits of a work of reconciliation, which, from its essential nature, is perfectly sufficient to meet the necessities of all, and recover them to life and blessing. As it is in the character of a Saviour-God that He does this, there seems no valid reason why it should not be comprised in the sense we put upon the apostle's language. Yet, as the language indicates rather what God actually is to men, what they actually receive from Him, than what He reveals Himself as ready and willing to give them, we are led by the natural and unconstrained import of the words to think mainly of the relation in which God stands to men indiscriminately as the Author and Preserver of their present life.

especially of those that believe

Yes, we are to use the usual means to provide for ourselves and others

Joshua 5:12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

Proverbs 6:6-8 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, (7) Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, (8) Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 21:20 There is desirable treasure, And oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man squanders it.

Luke 22:35-37 And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." (36) Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. (37) For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS.' For the things concerning Me have an end."

Ephesians 4:28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

Titus 3:14 And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

No, we are not to treasure worldly things, nor to worry or be anxious about what we need for the future, but to trust that God will provide

Matthew 6:19-34

(19) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (22) "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. (23) But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (24) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

(25) "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? (26) Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (27) Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? (28) "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; (29) and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (31) "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

In all, we are to pray, Matthew 6:9-13

first for the things related more directly to God

In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

then also for the things we need

Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

