

Wise for Salvation (2 Timothy 3:10–17; 1 Peter 1:3–9)

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Introduction

1. Generally, *salvation* is a term that refers to deliverance or rescue of some kind. In Scripture salvation specifically describes God's deliverance of sinners through faith in Christ, the Savior, from the power and guilt of sin due to their fallen state.
 - a. Much of the common language used surrounding salvation was framed by those who hold to *decisional salvation*, which tends to limit the term to the initial act of *deciding* for Christ.
 - b. Scripture, however, describes salvation as a complex *process* beginning with the new birth and completed with total transformation of the new creature at Christ's return.
 - c. The process itself is not designed to determine whether one will make it to heaven or not but rather to demonstrate the change in one's nature wrought by the grace of God working through the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
2. Salvation is also often described in three aspects: *salvation*, *sanctification*, and *glorification*.
 - a. Decisional salvation proponents often regard sanctification as good but not necessary.
 - b. However, in the biblical view, the first stage is *not* salvation; it is *regeneration*. The term *salvation* rather describes the whole process (1 Corinthians 1:18; 15:1, 2).
3. Many people claim to be saved and have a relationship with Jesus, but they have only deceived themselves.
 - a. They prove their faith false when there is no evidence of transformation in their lives and no change from their old ways to new ones.
 - b. Salvation takes one out of the old life and invests him with new life in Christ.

I. Being Saved (2 Timothy 3:10–17)

1. Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy, his son in the faith, to ask that he come to Rome (2 Timothy 4:9; 13) as the apostle's final days on earth were upon him (4:6, 7). Paul was confident that he would be received into the heavenly kingdom (2 Timothy 4:8, 18).
2. Because of Paul's impending departure, Timothy needed to be strong to the face the continuing persecution that all believers were experiencing from both the Jews and the Romans (2 Timothy 3:12, 13).
 - a. To encourage Timothy, Paul reminds him of his own spiritual resources (3:10, 11).
 - b. Timothy was urged to follow or appropriate Paul's resources and to continue in what he learned and firmly believed (2 Timothy 3:14, 15).
3. Paul's statement that the "*sacred writings*" are able to make one "*wise to salvation*" presents an interesting question because it suggests that Timothy's salvation was not yet realized.
 - a. Was Paul suggesting that Timothy had not yet been born again to new life in Christ? This could hardly be the case since he was already serving as Paul's co-worker in the gospel.
 - b. Was Paul concerned that Timothy might turn away from Christ out of fear of a martyr's death and lose his hope of salvation? While Paul urged him not to waver, he also expressed firm confidence Timothy's spiritual standing, a standing based solely on God's gracious work of redemption.

4. Timothy was already following (imitating) Paul's spiritual walk (v. 10). He "*firmly believed*" (was assured of) what he had learned from childhood, being "*acquainted*" (literally *skilled in*) the "*sacred writings*" (Scripture).
 - a. The Scripture (whole body of divine truth) was "*God breathed,*" thus profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and discipline in righteousness.
 - b. Therefore, the main focus of Paul's exhortation was to trust the Word of God as true and able to transform a believer into a competent "*man of God, having been equipped for every good work*" (v. 17).

II. Salvation Promised (1 Peter 1:3–9)

1. The promise of salvation (as a process) rests on a present *living hope* as a result of God's begetting (birthing) new believers with new life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
 - a. The resurrection of Christ is the guaranteed *power* that enables God to raise the spiritually dead to this new life (v. 3).
 - b. The *living hope*, is described in terms of "*an inheritance*" imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, "*kept in heaven*" (v. 4). Being kept in heaven assumes that salvation is not *now* fully realized but will be when Jesus comes again—at "*the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (v. 7).
2. The power of God guards this final salvation promise to His own through *faith*—trusting in the divine means of saving.
 - a. Remember, salvation is defined as deliverance or rescue from some physical or spiritual danger.
 - b. The final stage of God's saving work is the believer's being kept until the last time when all is revealed (v. 5).
3. The protected hope anticipated of complete and final deliverance produces present rejoicing when believers are obedient to the will of God, even though they may be saddened and grieved by various trials. (vv. 6, 7).
 - a. The purpose of trials is to allow the "*tested genuineness of faith*" to reveal its true value, like that of gold purified by fire. *Faith* is not tested, but its *genuineness* is manifested (put on display) when purified, revealing the glory of Jesus Christ.
 - b. What is revealed is explained in verses 8, 9. In the trials, the invisible Christ is loved—selflessly served by His believers with willing, joyful obedience (1 Peter 1:14–17).
 - c. The qualifications of one who exhibits such faith are that he is *called* (1 Peter 1:15), *redeemed* (vv. 18, 19), and *purified* through Spirit enabled obedience (v. 22).

What We may take Away

1. True believers must die to self and overcome the flesh in pursuit of the glory of God through obedience of faith, which is absolutely necessary to final salvation.
2. Both passages that we have observed emphasize the importance of the Word of God in the saving work of God (2 Timothy 3:15–17; 1 Peter 1:23–25).

It is absolutely necessary for the child of God to saturate his life with the Word of God. Much time in the Word is an absolute priority if one is to prepare himself to be a citizen in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 6:33; 1 Peter 1:13).