

## **Salvation—The Work of Christ** (1<sup>th</sup>)

(Today we begin looking more specifically at the work of Christ regarding salvation. We begin by reviewing somewhat the meaning of salvation and supply some thoughts illustrating that salvation is by the finished work of Christ and not centered on any action of man.)

Previously we studied somewhat of the Person of Christ in relation to His incarnation, virgin birth, the Seed of the woman from the Garden of Eden, the Seed of Abraham, and the Seed of David, now we turn our attention to the work of Christ for the salvation of His people. As with various subjects previously covered, it will be impossible to cover each aspect and detail of the work of Christ for our salvation. Nevertheless, it is our desire to consider the basics to show that He did not come to make salvation possible, but that He actually saved all that the Father gave Him.

Before taking up this topic, allow me to give again my definition of salvation. It is as follows:

Salvation is that all-inclusive word summing up all spiritual blessings bestowed by God on His elect people in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This wonderful word denotes perpetual deliverance beginning in the mind of God and experienced in the believer's life. Its highest claim is victory over sin, sorrow, and death. Its glorious and final reality is eternal life with Christ Jesus our Lord. This is common salvation; that is, it is common or it belongs to all the elect of God. Jude 3.

I believe the words of Robert Traill aptly apply to this definition. He said, "All the grace that Christ giveth, all the grace that believers receive and act in this life, are but things that accompany salvation, that do pertain unto the state of salvation, and prepare for the full of enjoyment of salvation in heaven." *The Works of Robert Traill*, Volume II, p. 50.

Salvation is generally presented as being delivered from hell and being with God in glory after this life. In fact, the final state of salvation is often presented as that which is experienced at death. Little is said regarding the intermediate state between death and the resurrection. Yes, as the beloved Apostle Paul wrote, "We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," II Corinthians 5:8. However, he further stated in Philippians 3:10: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." And while being delivered from hell or being absent from the body and present from the Lord, or to enter into the fullness of salvation after the resurrection are no small things, I believe we often fail to be familiar with the many blessings and benefits of salvation in this life. Allow me to direct your attention to the part of the definition given which says that salvation sums "up all spiritual blessings bestowed by God on His elect people." Also, note the words of Traill when he said salvation includes, "All the grace that Christ giveth, all the grace that believers receive and act in this life, are but things that accompany salvation." The Lord willing we will direct our attention more specifically to some of these things in the future, but at this time I would like to direct our attention to a couple of passages that reveals somewhat the all-inclusiveness of our lives in the salvation of God. First, Philippians 1:29: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Here we see that not only is belief given to the child of grace but suffering for the cause of Christ is equally granted to His children. We rejoice to know that God gives us faith but are we equally appreciative of suffering for the cause of Christ? Yes, suffering for the cause of Christ is one of those "spiritual blessings bestowed by God on His elect people." If you question this, please consider our second passage: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." (I Peter 1:1-2.) In the Greek text, the word "elect" is not in the second verse; it is in verse one. It reads as thus: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect strangers [or sojourners] scattered ...." In other words, their being scattered and persecuted for their faith was inclusive in their election unto salvation.

Many other such like passages could be provided to support this truth, but hopefully, these two will open to you a fuller and richer meaning of the first part of our definition of salvation which says, “Salvation is that all-inclusive word summing up all spiritual blessings bestowed by God on His elect people in Christ through the Holy Spirit.”

Another important truth we want to establish at the outset, which is clearly stated in the definition, is that Christ did not come to make salvation possible or to give an example of salvation or to show how a person may be saved. He came to save. Allow me to remind you of a trilogy that was previously given as presented by John Owen in Volume 10 of *The Works of John Owen*, pages 173-174, as published by The Banner of Truth Trust.

The Father imposed his wrath upon the Son, and the Son was punished for:

1. All the sins of all men.
2. All the sins of some men.
3. Some of the sins of some men.

In which case, it may be said:

- a. That if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so none is saved.
- b. That if the second be true, then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of some men (i.e., all the elect in the whole world), and this is the truth.
- c. But if the first be the case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins?

You answer, “Because of unbelief.” I ask, “Is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If it is, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or he did not. If he did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which he died? If he did not, he did not die for all their sins!”

Also, I would like to share with you a standing challenge that Elder W. J. Berry gave in the magazine he published for many years entitled *Old Faith Contender*. This is taken from his biography, *An Inkhorn By His Side* by M. Macena Berry, p. 140. It is as follows:

### **A Standing Challenge**

**For those who preach a universal offer system, we challenge you to give us ONE Scripture to prove that—**

1. God has ever offered eternal life to anyone, to be **“accepted” or “rejected.”**
2. One or more persons **for whom Christ died**, or made vicarious atonement, shall suffer eternal destruction or torment; and that—
3. God has left the eternal destiny of one or more of the redeemed to **any human means or agency whatsoever.**

ONE SCRIPTURE—without interpretation.

It is not uncommon that when someone reads such a challenge they will immediately supply the familiar passage of John 3:16. The problem with this is that this verse does not teach what is often stated by most preachers, theologians, and the average professed believer. It says, “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.” It is obvious to any Bible reader that the word world is used to define more than one thing, and, the Lord willing we will address this in the future. For now let us look at what the verse is actually saying about the “world” that God loved and for which gave His Son. The text says that “whosoever believeth” “should not perish.” It does not say “whosoever will believe” “should not perish.” The word “believeth” is in the present tense. When we see “eth” on the end of a verb it denotes present tense. (This is one of the many superior blessings and benefits of the King James Version Bible.) The Greek equally bears this out since the word for “believeth” is the present, active, participle. Therefore, without dissecting the rest of the verse, John 3:16 is simply saying that whosoever is currently believing already has everlasting life. (The word “have” is present, active, subjunctive, and does not imply “will have” but currently has everlasting life.) Therefore, we find that the often miss-applied and falsely interpreted passage of John 3:16

does not support the idea that if anyone will simply believe the gospel he will have or obtain everlasting life. In fact, the entire Gospel of John was written to believers; that is, people who were already believers. The general consensus is that this gospel is for the purpose of getting unbelievers to believe on Christ. But John 20:30-31 tells us why the Lord inspired John to write this gospel. It says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." There are only seven signs or miracles mentioned in the Gospel of John, and they were written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The verb tense in the Greek clarifies the proper interpretation of this as understood in our day. The renown Greek scholar A. T. Robertson said of this verse that the phrase "that ye might believe" is "present active subjunctive of *pisteuô*, 'that you may keep on believing.'" He further said, "**And that believing ye may have life in his name** (*kai hina pisteuontes zôên echête en tôi onomati autou*). Note present participle *pisteuontes* (continuing to believe) and the present active subjunctive *echête* (keep on having)." Therefore, John was writing to believers to encourage them to "keep on believing" and "continuing to believe" that they would "keep on having" life in Christ. Sadly, many well-known commentators are not honest in their exegesis of this verse, but our time is exhausted for today. We will, the Lord willing, enlarge upon this in our next podcast. Farewell.