

Doctrine of God Part 28- God the Savior

We conclude this study of the doctrine of God with an extensive look at the good news that the King, Lawgiver, and Judge of the universe is also the Savior.

THE GOD WHO SAVES

As we look at the texts of Scripture that affirm the saving work of God on behalf of sinful men, not only will we learn that God is willing to save, but we will also discover that He alone has the power to save.

1. Note the names that are ascribed to God in the following texts from both the Old and New Testaments?

a. **Savior** (*Psalm 17:7*). From the Hebrew word **yasha**, which may also be translated, "deliverer." Notice that God is Savior of those who seek refuge in Him.

b. **Savior and Redeemer** (*Isaiah 60:16*). The word "Savior" comes from the Hebrew word **yasha** (see definition above). The word "Redeemer" is translated from the Hebrew verb **ga'al**, which means, "to buy back or act as a kinsman," as set forth in Leviticus 25:25 and illustrated in the life of Boaz (*Ruth 4:1-15*).

c. *God our Savior* (*Titus 3:4; 1 Timothy 2:3*). From the Greek word **sotér**, which may also be translated, "deliverer," "rescuer," or "preserver."

2. Note how God is described in the following texts...and what these descriptions teach us about His saving work.

a. *Psalm 3:8; 37:39 Salvation belongs to the Lord; Your blessing be upon Your people!...But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in time of trouble.*

NOTES: The idea is that salvation comes from God. It is His prerogative. He alone is able to save or deliver. The reference to the righteous does not point to people whose lives are marked by moral perfection, but to those who are trusting and relying upon God and His salvation. The righteous shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4).

b. *Psalm 68:19-20 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, the God who is our salvation. Selah.²⁰ God is to us a God of deliverances; And to God the Lord belong escapes from death.*

c. *Psalm 74:12 Yet God is my king from of old, Who works deeds of deliverance in the midst of the earth.*

NOTES: The word "deliverance" comes from the Hebrew word **yeshuah**, which may also be translated, "salvation."

d. *Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord."*

NOTES: Because of Jonah's rebellion against God's call, he was languishing in the belly of a great fish at the bottom of the sea. His salvation was a human impossibility. God alone could save him. The same may be said of every man.

3. The Scriptures teach us not only that God is Savior but also that He is the **only** Savior. Note what Isaiah 43:11 and Isaiah 45:21 teach us about this truth...

I, even I, am the Lord, And there is no savior besides Me

Declare and set forth *your case*; Indeed, let them consult together.
Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it?
Is it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me,
A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.

NOTES: These texts are extremely important for two reasons: (1) they demonstrate that salvation is exclusively the work of God, and thereby (2) they prove the deity of Jesus

Christ. In the New Testament, Christ is called “Savior,” and even “the Savior of the world” (John 4:42). If Christ is not God in the fullest sense of the term, then He cannot be Savior. By extension, if Christ is Savior, then He must truly be God!

4. Isaiah 45:22 Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.

5. I Chronicles 16:23-24 Sing to the Lord, all the earth; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. ²⁴Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.

...and Psalm 96:1-3 Sing to the Lord a new song; Sing to the Lord, all the earth. ²Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. ³Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.

GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

God’s work of salvation was determined and designed before man ever fell, even before the foundation of the world!

1. I Peter 1:20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

NOTES: The word “foreknown” comes from the Greek word *proginósko* [*pro* = before + *ginósko* = to know]. In the Scriptures, the word denotes more than mere knowledge—it also denotes choice. The text proves that, before the world was created, the Father had already determined or decreed to send His Son to die for the sins of His people. Furthermore, this text proves that the Father also determined the exact time that He would send Christ. In Galatians 4:4, Paul confirms this truth: “But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son.”

2. In Ephesians 1, we find further proof that God’s plan of salvation reaches back before the creation of the world.

- a. Ephesians 1:4 Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

The “time” of God’s choosing...

NOTES: The word “chose” comes from the Greek word **eklégo**, which means, “to select, elect, or pick out.” The word is often used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) with regard to God’s unmerited choice of the nation of Israel (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). The phrase, “before the foundation of the world,” refers to the eternal counsels of God before the world was made.

In Whom we are chosen...

NOTES: Before the foundation of the world, God both chose His people and determined the way in which He would reconcile them to Himself.

The purpose of God’s choosing...

NOTES: God’s election of His people in Christ before the foundation of the world has a moral aim or goal—that we would be holy and blameless before Him. We are already these things now “in Christ”—that is, **positionally**. However, it is also God’s desire that we become holy and blameless in our daily lives—that is, **practically**.

- b. *What does Ephesians 1:5 teach us about God’s plan of salvation? In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...*

The “end” of God’s predestination...

NOTES: The word “predestined” comes from the Greek word **proorízo** [**pro** = before + **horízo** = to mark off by boundaries, to determine], which means, “to predetermine or foreordain.” Before the foundation of the world, God predetermined that His chosen

people would be adopted as His sons and daughters and be His heirs (Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7; Ephesians 3:6).

Our adoption...

NOTES: Our adoption is not through our merit or worth, but through the person and work of Christ on our behalf. This truth both humbles us and instills confidence within us. Our position before God is not founded upon our feeble efforts, but upon Christ's perfect and immutable work on our behalf.

God's motivation for our adoption...

NOTES: The phrase "kind intention" is translated from the single Greek word *eudokía*, which literally means, "good pleasure." "Kind intention of His will" can also be translated, "purpose of His will" (ESV) or "pleasure of His will" (NET). God loved us because He is love (I John 4:8) and because He determined to set His love upon us (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). God adopted us because it pleased Him to do so!

c. Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

NOTES: *The ultimate purpose for which God saved us is His own glory. His work of salvation is a demonstration of His glorious grace and will result in ceaseless praise from men and angels throughout all eternity.*

In Romans 8:29-30, we find what is often referred to as the "Golden Chain of Salvation," because in these two verses we see God's plan of salvation from beginning to end.

God foreknew us (v.29). From the Greek word *proginósko* [*pro* = before + *ginósko* = to know]. In the Scriptures, the word denotes more than mere knowledge; it also denotes choice. The same word is used in I Peter 1:20 with regard to Christ being "foreknown before the foundation of the world."

This does not mean that God in His omniscience merely foresaw that Christ would redeem His people, but that God specifically chose Christ for the task.

God predestined us (vv.29-30). From the Greek word **proorízo** [**pro** = be-fore + **horízo** = to mark off by boundaries, to determine], which means, “to predetermine or foreordain.” Before the foundation of the world, God predetermined that His chosen people should become conformed to the image of His Son.

God called us (v.30). From the Greek word **kaléo**, which means, “to call, summon, or invite.” God chose us and predestined us before the foundation of the world, but He called us at a specific time in our lives through the preaching of the gospel. This truth is set forth clearly in Galatians 1:15-16. In this text, Paul declared that God had set him apart even from his mother’s womb (election and predestination), but then called him through the gospel at the specific time in Paul’s life when it most pleased God to do so.

God justified us (v.30). All those who have been effectively called through the preaching of the gospel and the regenerating work of the Spirit do come to faith in Christ and are justified. The word comes from the Greek word **dikaióo**, which means, “to show or de-clare to be righteous.” In the context of our salvation, justification is a forensic or legal term. Because of the perfect work of Christ on behalf of the believer, God is able to legally declare him or her perfectly righteous before Him.

God glorified us (v.30). From the Greek word **doxázo**, which means, “to think, render, or esteem glorious.” The glorification of the believer refers to his final standing before God in his resurrected and perfected body; a body conformed to the image of Christ and freed forever from the power of sin. Here Paul refers to the believer’s final glorification as already complete. This is probably due to Paul’s great confidence in God and His sovereign decrees—the God who began a good work in the believer will perfect it (Philippians 1:6). It is important to note that there is only one stage of our salvation that Paul seems to have omitted—our sanctification (*i.e.* our progressive

growth in conformity to Christ), which occurs between our justification and our final glorification. Since glorification is the aim or goal of the process of sanctification, Paul may have simply skipped over the process in order to emphasize the goal that will certainly be attained in the life of every believer by the sovereign power of God.

The Father's Work of Salvation

We will now consider several great truths regarding the Father's role in the salvation of His people: God the Father sent His Son, imputed our sin to His Son, punished His Son, raised His Son from the dead, exalted His Son to His right hand, and now calls all men to repent and believe.

THE FATHER SENT HIS SON

We must always remember that our salvation begins with God the Father, and it is because of His love for us that He sent His only Son.

1. For good reason, John 3:16 is one of the most beloved verses in all of Scripture.

NOTES: The little adverb "so" comes from the Greek word *houtos*, which may denote either the extent to which God loved the world (*i.e.* God loved the world so much that He gave His Son) or the manner in which God loved the world (*i.e.* in this way God loved the world—that He gave His Son).

2. What does each text teach us about the Father and His role in our salvation?

a. *John 3:17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*

b. *1 John 4:14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.*

THE FATHER IMPUTED OUR SIN TO HIS SON

God the Father did not send His Son into this world merely to teach us truths about God or give us principles by which we might live a life that would be pleasing to Him. God sent His Son into this world to die as an atoning sacrifice in our place. For this to happen, it was necessary for God to impute our sin to His sinless Son. The word “impute” comes from the Latin verb **imputare** [**im** = in, toward + **putare** = reckon], which means, “to reckon to one’s account.” On the cross, the Father reckoned our sin to His Son’s account. This is one of the greatest doctrines of the Christian faith.

1. According to Romans 8:3, God sent His own son “in the likeness of sinful flesh”

NOTES: As a man, He was subject to the same limitations, frailties, afflictions, and anguishes of fallen humanity. It would have indeed been a great humiliation if the Son had taken the nature of pre-fall humanity, when it was in its full glory and strength. However, His humiliation was even greater than this, as He was sent in the “likeness of sinful flesh”!

2. According to II Corinthians 5:21, God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

NOTES: God made Christ to be sin in the same way that the believer is made to be “the righteousness of God.” The moment a person believes in Jesus, he is pardoned of his sin, and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him or placed into his account. God legally declares him to be righteous and treats him as righteous. When Christ hung upon the cross, God imputed our sins to Him, legally declared Him to be guilty, and treated Him as guilty.

THE FATHER PUNISHED HIS SON

It was not enough for the Son to bear our sins; it was also necessary that He suffer the wrath of God and die in our place as a sin-bearing Substitute. Through the Son’s suffering and death, the demands of God’s justice against us were satisfied, and the

wrath of God against us was appeased. Only in this way could God both maintain His justice and justify the sinner.

1. In Isaiah 53:4-5 is found one of the most important texts in all the Scriptures regarding the nature of Christ's suffering and death.

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.

NOTES: Seven words are used to describe Christ's suffering under the wrath of God—He was stricken, smitten, afflicted, pierced, crushed, chastened, and scourged. The New English Translation provides helpful insight into the meaning of this text: "...we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done. [But] he was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins; he endured punishment that made us well; because of his wounds we have been healed."

2. In Isaiah 53:10, we find another extremely important text with regard to the nature of Christ's suffering on Calvary.

But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting *Him* to grief;
If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring,
He will prolong *His* days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.

NOTES: The word "pleased" is translated from the Hebrew word **chaphets**, which means, "to delight in, be pleased with, or desire." God was pleased that through Christ's suffering and death the will of God was accomplished and the way of salvation was opened for His people. The word "crush" comes from the Hebrew word **daka**, which means, "to crush, smite, or break in pieces." Christ was crushed by the Father and put to grief so that His people might be saved through His suffering and death.

THE FATHER RAISED AND EXALTED HIS SON

God the Father sent His Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh; He imputed our sins to Him and crushed Him under the full force of His wrath. Through the death of His Son, the Father made atonement or full payment for our sin. Then, on the third day, He raised His Son from the dead, and He later exalted Him to the place of honor at His right hand as the Lord of all and the Savior of those who believe. Having proven His own authority by raising Christ from the dead and having proven Christ's authority through His exaltation, the Father now declares that all men should repent, and He commands that they believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

1. The Father raised his son From the dead. The following Scriptures testify that the resurrection of Christ was the work of God the Father.

a. *Acts 2:32 This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.*

b. *Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

NOTES: The phrase, "glory of the Father," is most likely a reference to God's glorious power (see also Ephesians 1:19-20).

2. the Father exalted his son to his right hand. Having raised His Son from the dead, the Scriptures teach that God also highly exalted Him as Lord of all and Savior of those who believe.

a. *Philippians 2:9-11 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

b. *Acts 5:30-31 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. ³¹ He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

NOTES: In this context, Peter is speaking specifically to the nation of Israel, but the truth can be applied to all peoples. God has raised and exalted His Son as the Savior of all who believe.

3. the Father now calls all men to repent and believe. God raised His Son from the dead and exalted Him as Lord and Savior. According to the following Scriptures, how should every man respond to this great work of God? What has the Father declared and commanded?

a. *Acts 17:30-31 Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, ³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."*

NOTES: The phrase, "overlooked the times of ignorance," is a reference to the longstanding ignorance and idolatry of the Gentiles. It does not mean that they were not held accountable for their sin, but only that God demonstrated patience toward them. "He permitted all the nations go their own ways" (Acts 14:16) and restrained His wrath against them with a view to Christ's coming and the offering of the gospel to all.

b. *1 John 3:23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.*