

HOW GOD SAVES SINNERS - Text: 1 Tim. 1:15-16

In Acts chapter 9 we have the story of Paul's conversion — this is how God saves sinners. You find in this story **two** things, which you will find true in every sinner's salvation: First, *a light from Heaven, Holy Ghost conviction*: and *secondly, A Voice from Heaven, the risen, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ speaking with all authority*. Then old Saul fell to the ground, crying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" That is a spirit of repentance, bowing to Jesus as LORD for time and eternity. And remember, God will never lift the white flag of peace in any sinner's heart until all rebellion has been conquered. The most important subject we could bring from the pulpit is this: "How God Saves Sinners." You will have to become acquainted with the truth; God will have to shut you up to His truth or send you to Hell.

We are shut up to three possibilities about God's salvation:

1. God will save all Adam's fallen race (**Universalism**).
2. God will save none (**Fatalism and Pessimism**). Or,
3. God will save some (**Calvinism**), and this is the truth of the Gospel. So our question is, How will He save those that He is going to save?

And face this question: Did Christ die to make salvation possible or to make it certain? Take your time, sit still and let God talk to you! Did God purpose to save all men? If so, then He is the biggest failure in all creation. Ladies and gentlemen, the thought is blasphemy! But as we come to look at how God saves sinners, maybe you will find out *whether you* are saved or not! Would you like to know? Oh, you say, "I know that I know that I am saved!" Shut up! You may be the most deceived person of all! Usually the person that knows so much really knows so little!

I. WHAT KIND OF SINNERS DOES GOD SAVE? Remember He is going to save some of the fallen race of sinners, and He saves sinners — just sinners — not good people.

1. He saves outrageous sinners.
2. He saves respectable sinners.
3. He saves religious sinners. Saul was religious, and he was the most likely sinner to ever be saved. You must junk your religion and meet Jesus Christ the Way of Life.
4. He saves and satisfies. What else does it take to satisfy you?
5. He saves and sanctifies. Separates you and fills you with the Holy Spirit.
6. Then He saves and glorifies. He will get you saved, satisfied, sanctified and ultimately glorified. Romans 8:28-31.

II. HOW DID GOD SAVE SINNERS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT? God has never had but one way. In salvation you must have five things — and this will kill easy-believe soul-winning! You must come to the feet of a Sovereign God who can save you or damn you as He pleases. In the O.T. they had:

1. A sacrifice, according to Divine specifications.
2. An altar, according to God's order.
3. A God-ordained priest.
4. Identity with the sacrifice.
5. An honest heart. Only God knows. Luke 8:15.

III. HOW DID THE SINNER KNOW THAT HIS SINS ARE FORGIVEN?

1. He did what God said.

2. He heard the bells ringing on the priest's garment, assuring his acceptance with God.
3. He had the word of the High Priest who came out and told him.
4. God had given him a new heart and a new spirit. A lot about it he didn't understand, but he knew that he was a different man.
5. God had given him a Divine nature and a new song. Psalm 40:1-3.

IV. HOW DOES GOD SAVE A SINNER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND HOW DOES HE LET HIM KNOW HIS SINS ARE FORGIVEN? As in the O.T. so in the New, a sinner must have a sacrifice, and Christ is that Sacrifice; he must have an altar and that altar is the Cross of Christ; he must go to God through a priest, and Christ is our Great High Priest; he must identify himself with the Sacrifice—there is no salvation except as the sinner comes to Jesus; then he must have an honest and sincere heart. See your sins! Come to Christ, lay your hands on the head of the blood-stained Saviour and cry, "Lord Jesus, I am an ungodly sinner; I come to Thee; I need Thee. Save me, Lord!" It is more than making a little silly "decision."

1. Repent and believe the Gospel. It is definite and God-ordained. Christ did not make a proposition to saint or sinner.
2. The sinner receives God-given peace.
3. He has the witness of a new heart. Ezek. 36:26.
4. He has the inward witness of a new nature. 2 Cor. 5:17.
5. He has the witness of God's indwelling Spirit. It is more than simply believing the Bible. The Bible is a record of the truth, but the Holy Ghost is a living witness of the truth! For the first 3500 years of history, men had no Bible but souls were saved by God through Christ.

V. WHEN DOES GOD SAVE A SINNER?

1. When it pleases God. God is in charge of salvation. I was 27 years old when I was saved, and I could not have been saved before the Lord touched my heart. Oh, they say, "You make the first move and God will make the second." That is a lie. God alone can quicken the spiritually dead and give them life. He saves them WHEN HE WILLS.
2. When the sinner receives Jesus as Lord. Romans 10:9.
3. When the sinner repents.

I have a sermon on "Who Makes the First Move in Salvation?" I hope you will get the recording and listen to it! No man will get saved if he can do anything else. If God didn't choose some, all would go to Hell. God makes the elect willing in the day of His power. Psalm 110:3.

VI. HOW SECURE IS THE SOUL THAT GOD SAVES? I feel sorry for a person who believes he can be saved and then lost again.

1. The saved sinner is IN CHRIST. How can Satan and Hell reach you?
2. His salvation is secure because it is recorded with God in Heaven. The devil can't get to the Lamb's Book of Life and change it. The names of God's people are graven on the hands of Christ and written in God's Book from before the foundation of the world. Isa. 49:16; Rev. 13:8.
3. Because Christ is in you, you cannot sink. "No water can swallow the ship where lies, The Master of ocean and earth and skies!"
4. They are sealed by the Holy Spirit. If an earthly seal carries authority, how much more does the seal of the Third Person of the Trinity. The One who created this Universe has put His eternal stamp upon you! Hallelujah.

Conclusion: The one great need of our days is a recovery of the Gospel and the restitution of the church. — **B. B. Caldwell**, circa 1970