

Spiritual History of Jehovah's Saints

Psalm 66:16

I will declare what God has done for my soul.

Part 4: What God the Spirit Has Done for My Soul

The salvation of Jehovah's saints involves all three Persons in the Holy Trinity.

Our salvation is of God the *Father* with regard to its *origination*. The saint of Jehovah acknowledges that God the Father, before the foundation of the world, foreknew me; loved me; purposed my salvation; predestined me to be His adopted child, to be Christ-like, and to be called and justified and glorified; chose me to salvation; and highly favored me to be eternally joined to Christ.

Our salvation is of God the *Son* with regard to its *acquisition*. The saint of Jehovah acknowledges that God the Son, during the days of His incarnation, and especially in His death on the cross, and by the blood He shed in His death, performed and acquired what God had foreordained for me. The Son of God saved me, redeemed me, justified me, sanctified me, perfected me, cleansed me, healed me, remitted my sins, and reconciled me to God.

Our salvation is of God the *Spirit* with regard to its *application*. He applies to each of the Father's elect the saving benefits of the Son's death.

Having already declared what God the *Father* and God the *Son* have done for my soul, I here will declare what God the *Spirit* has done for my soul.

I. The Holy Spirit regenerated me. To be *regenerated* is to be "born again" (John 3:3). This was absolutely necessary for my salvation. For "unless one is born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God" (ibid) and "he cannot *enter* the kingdom of God" (v.5).

I was regenerated through being "born of God" (John 1:13; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). No one else was involved. For I was "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). For example, I was not born again by baptism, as some wrongly aver. Nor was I born again by believing in Christ. Indeed, my regeneration preceded my faith in Christ. I believed and trusted in Christ for my salvation because I had been already born of God, and given faith by Him. Life precedes faith! Faith evidences life!

I was "born of *God*" through being "born of the *Spirit*" (John 3:5, 6, 8). That is, God in the person of the Holy Spirit regenerated me. My new birth was therefore a *spiritual* birth, in contrast to my previous *natural* birth.

This regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is performed on spiritually dead sinners through the preaching of the gospel of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This truth is very vividly described in Ezekiel's vision of a valley full of dry bones, which came to life and became an exceedingly great army through the preaching of the gospel (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

I therefore confess:

- I was "begotten through the gospel" (1 Corinthians 4:15);
- I was "born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23);
- "Of His own will [God] brought me forth by the word of truth" (James 1:18 adapted);
- "Jehovah's word has given me life" (Psalm 119:50).

I was born again at the time of my conversion to Jesus Christ. Indeed, regeneration and conversion are, as it were, two sides of the same coin.

I cannot tell you how this event occurred. It was beyond my comprehension and control. Jesus compared regeneration to the blowing wind (John 3:8): "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." I had no more to do with my *second and spiritual* birth than I had to do with my *first and physical* birth. (Anyone who preaches or writes on how to be born again is ignorant of the gospel!)

But this I do indeed know! Once I was "dead in trespasses and sins", but now I am "quickened" (Ephesians 2:1). I now have eternal life, and will never perish. This I know because I believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and trust in Him alone for my salvation. I did not believe in Jesus Christ in order to be born again. Rather, I believed in Jesus Christ because I was already born again.

Accordingly:

- The *ground* of regeneration is *God's grace*: my works had nothing to do with it.
- The *agent* in regeneration is *God's Spirit*: no mortal regenerates.

- The *instrument* in regeneration is *God's Word* in His gospel of His Son: no ritual regenerates.

The next three things the Holy Spirit did in saving me are enumerated in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

Therefore consider these three works of the Holy Spirit in saving God's elect.

II. *The Holy Spirit washed me* (1 Corinthians 6:11): "you were washed ... by the Spirit of our God."

The Lord Jesus Christ emphasized that in regeneration one is "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5).

Paul the apostle expands upon this when he tells saints that God saved them "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

When God did so, He fulfilled His prophecy that "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

III. *The Holy Spirit sanctified me* (1 Corinthians 6:11): "you were sanctified ... by the Spirit of our God."

God the *Father* sanctified me from eternity by decreeing that I would be holy, and by placing me in Christ as holy (Jude v.1; Ephesians 1:3-7).

God the *Son* sanctified me on Calvary by removing from me all my sins (Hebrews 10:10-12).

God the *Spirit* sanctified me in my regeneration by imparting to me a holy nature: through Him I have become a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

Consequently, "Whoever has been born of God [regenerated] does not sin, for God's seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God [regenerated]" (1 John 3:9; 5:18).

IV. *The Holy Spirit justified me* (1 Corinthians 6:11): "you were justified ... by the Spirit of our God."

God the *Father* justified me from eternity by decreeing that I would be blameless, and by placing me in Christ as blameless (Ephesians 1:3f).

God the *Son* justified me on Calvary by paying the penalty required by God's law against my sins (Isaiah 53:11).

Here in 1 Corinthians 6:11 is the only Scriptural text explicitly connecting the believer's justification and the *Holy Spirit*. But the same phrase is read in 1 Timothy 3:16: Jesus Christ was "justified in [or by] the Spirit". As the Holy Spirit vindicated Jesus Christ from all false charges raised against Him, so does He do for me.

V. *The Holy Spirit sealed me* (Ephesians 1:13f): The Holy Spirit assures me that "In Christ you trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of your inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory" (cp. 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5).

"I will declare what God has done for my soul."

And you will know that He did these things for your soul if you trust in Him for your salvation.

– Daniel E. Parks