

## THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

No teaching in Scripture is more deserving of Prayerful study by Christians than that of salvation. It was the supreme mission of Our Lord Jesus Christ – His only purpose for coming into the world was to save it (CP Mt 1:20-21; Lu 19:10; Jn 1:29; 3:17; 4:42; Ro 5:18; 1Ti 1:15; 1Jn 3:5, 8; 4:9). Christ gave His life up to death on the Cross as a sacrificial offering for mankind's sins so that whoever wanted to be saved could be (CP Isa 52:10 and 53:1-12 with Mt 20-28; Jn 3:14-18; 36; 10:15-18; Ac 20:28; Ro 5:6-21; 2Cor 5:15-21; Php 2:5-8; 1Ti 2:5-6; Tit 2:14; He 2:14-15; 9:12; 1Pe 1:18-20; 1Jn 2:2; 4:10). The Messianic Prophecy by Isaiah in Isa 52:10-53:12 is the heart of Scripture and Christians need to take the time to properly examine it (CP Isa 52:1—53:12). This entire Prophecy was fulfilled in Christ's First Coming, except for V13 and 15 in Isa 52, which will be fulfilled at His Second Advent.

Jesus teaches in Jn 3:14-17 that as the repentant Israelites in the wilderness in the Old Testament who looked upon the Brazen Serpent on the pole Moses lifted up were given new life, so repentant sinners in the New Testament who look to Him for salvation are given eternal life. As the Brazen Serpent brought peace and reconciliation with God for the repentant Israelites, so Christ on the Cross reconciled repentant sinners to God (CP Nu 21:5-9; Jn 3:14-17; 2Cor 5:15-21; Col 1:20-22). As the Serpent on the pole was a symbol of sin, so Jesus on the Cross was a sin offering, which is what 2Cor 5:15-21, Col 1:20-22, He 9:12, 1Jn 2:2 and 4:10 also teach.

But there are other dimensions to salvation also taught in Scripture and it is imperative that Christians know them too, in order that they may avail themselves of all the blessings God has provided for them in Christ's atoning death. The salvation Jesus purchased for fallen man with His life's blood is all-inclusive, gathering to itself all the redemptive acts and processes of God – Old Testament and New Testament alike – both present and future (CP De 28:1-14; Josh 1:8; Psa 1:1-3; 91:1-16; 107:20; Pr 4:20-22; Isa 53:4-5; Mt 8:16-17; 18:18-20; Mk 16:17-18; Lu 10:19; Jn 14:12-14; Ac 3:6-8; 9:32-34; Php 4:19; 1Th 5:9; He 1:13-14; Jas 5:14-16; 1Pe 2:22-24). Scriptures are clear: salvation is not just confined to deliverance from sin and its spiritual consequences as many in the contemporary Church believe. It also includes physical healing and good health, financial prosperity, being delivered from physical danger, victory over circumstances in life that adversely affect Christians, victory over sin and all the forces of darkness, preservation of physical life, even having control over the elements and other forces of nature etc (CP Jn 10:9-10; Ro 5:17; Ga3:13-14, 26-29). The abundant life Jesus promises Christians in Jn 10:10 here applies to this life, not the next life as so many Christians think. God's purpose is that Christians reign as Kings with Christ now, or Scriptures are meaningless. There will be no sickness or disease to be healed of, or adversities in life to be overcome, or the works of the devil that will have to be contended with by Christians in the next life (CP Isa 25:7-8; Ro 14:17; Rev 7:14-17; 21:7).

Sadly, most Christians in the contemporary Church do not accept these teachings as being valid for today. There is little consistency in the teaching on these subjects on the contemporary Church and Christians

do not know that these blessings are available to them. If salvation was presented with the same inconsistency, very few sinners would be saved. There is nothing equivocal with Scriptures – they mean what they say, and say what they mean. Their teaching is clear – salvation is more dimensional than deliverance from sin and its Spiritual consequences and Christians are depriving themselves of all the blessings God has provided for them in Christ's shed blood if they do not act on what Scriptures teach. God has made a Covenant with His children for not only the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of their souls from eternal damnation, but for their good health, healing, welfare and victory over all the works of evil etc, and He will not go back on that Covenant (CP Nu 23:19; 1Ki 8:56; Isa 55:10-11; Mal 3:6; Ro 3:3-4; 2Cor 1:19-20; 2Ti 2:13; He 13:8). Those Scriptures are clear and unequivocal – all of God's promises in Scripture for Christians are still valid for today through Christ's death on the Cross and subsequent resurrection.

Scriptures also clearly and unequivocally teach that salvation is available to all of fallen man, not just a select few whom God has especially chosen for salvation, before they were even born, as some in the professing Church would have us believe (CP Mt 11:28-30; Tit 2:11). 'All ye that labor and are heavy laden' in Mt 11:28 applies to all men. It is a universal call to salvation. God has made salvation through Christ's shed blood available to the whole human race but it only becomes effective in those who avail themselves of it (CP Jn 1:12; 3:16-18, 36; 5:24; 6:40; 10:9; Ro 1:16; 10:8-10). Everyone who receives Christ as Saviour becomes a child of God. No one is excluded from accepting the invitation, but sadly, most who hear it will reject it (CP Mt 13:3-11, 18-23). Salvation is a freewill choice of the individual – they choose for themselves if they want to be saved. God has not arbitrarily foreordained anyone for salvation. This is the plain teaching of Scripture, contrary to what many Christians in the contemporary Church are being taught – that God is absolutely Sovereign in the matter of salvation; that no one can be saved without being foreknown, elected, and predestinated for salvation by God. This is cited by the proponents of that teaching as the *Doctrine of Unconditional Election*. What it means in its most elementary form is that everyone's final destination – Heaven or Hell – is predetermined by God before they are even born; nothing they do has any bearing on the matter. This System of theology is known in the contemporary Church as *Calvinism*, the teaching of which, Scriptures of course categorically refute (CP De 30:19; 2Chr 15:2; Isa 45:22; 55:1-7; Eze 18:21-30; 33:13-20; Joel 2:32; Mt 22:1-14; Lu 16:19-31; Jn 1:6-12; 3:18, 36; 5:24-29, 39-40; 6:27-35; 7:37-38; Ac 2:21, 37-40; 10:34-35; 16:27-31; Ro 1:16; 4:3-25; 10:12-17; 1Cor 1:21; 8:3; Ga 3:7-9; 1Th 1:1-10; 1Ti 2:1-6; He 5:9; 1Pe 1:1-5, 18-25; 2Pe 3:9; Rev 3:7-13; 5:5-10; 21:6-8; 22:11-17).

God has not already determined for or against any man's salvation. His plan of salvation is the same for all men – everyone is invited to avail themselves of His offer to save them, solely on the basis of their individual choice to believe in the redemptive power of Christ's shed blood. It is worth noting here before moving on that while salvation is available to all men,

it is only available on the terms laid down by Christ in Scripture (CP Mt 19:16-30; Mk 10:17-30). The rich young ruler wanted to be saved, but on his terms, not Christ's. He was not prepared to obey Jesus and put Him above his possessions; they were more important to him. His heart was attached to the riches he possessed rather than the treasures of Heaven (CP Lu 12:15-34). This is a grim warning to Christians against making material possessions the focus of this life at the expense of their souls in the next life. They cannot become disciples of Jesus unless they are willing to forsake all for Him (CP Lu 9:57-62; 14:25-35).

Jesus uses an idiom of preference in Lu 14:26 to press His point. He is not teaching that repentant sinners have to literally hate their parents and families and spouses and children in order to be saved and become His disciples, but that they are to love them less than they love Him. Salvation is a paradox – it is both free and costly. Free because Jesus has already paid for it with His life's blood. Yet there is a cost in terms of its impact on His followers. Jesus told three parables in Lu 14:25-35 to impress upon would-be followers that there is a cost involved in following Him. Anything less than total consecration to the service of God and the cause of the Gospel eliminates one from the Kingdom of Heaven. Nobody can be saved who is not willing to forsake all for Jesus. The Parable of Savorless Salt in V34-35 clearly teaches that once-saved Christians can lose their salvation unless they are doing the work of God's Word (CP Mt 5:13-16; 7:21-27; 12:30 Jn 15:1-2, 4-6, 8, 16; Ro 2:13; Jas 1:22-25; Rev 3:7-13).

Christians are held individually responsible for working out their salvation. No one can be saved because they belong to a particular Church, as many professing Christians believe. It is the individual's responsibility to conform to God's will for their life (CP Php 2:12-13). *Work out* means to carry out to its ultimate conclusion. *Fear and trembling* refers to the attitude with which Christians are to pursue their Sanctification. It involves a healthy fear of offending God and a dread of sinning against Him, and of the consequences that may follow (CP also Psa 2:11-12; 15:1-5; 85:9; 119:119-120; Pr 3:7-8; 9:10; 14:27; 16:6; Ecc 12:13; Isa 66:1-2; Lu 12:4-5; 1Cor 9:26-27; 10:12-14; Eph 6:5-8; He 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 1Pe 1:17; 2Pe 1:11). While Christians are individually responsible for working out their salvation, it is God who actually produces the good works and Spiritual fruit in their lives (CP Php 2:13 with Hos 14:8; Jn 15:5; 1Cor 12:6; 2Cor 3:5; 1Ti 1:12-14). It goes without saying of course, that God can only produce good works and fruit in those who conform to His Word and allow the Holy Spirit to outwork in them.

Still another dimension to salvation is that it is past, present, and future. It is referred to in Scripture in the past tense on the basis of Jesus having already paid for it with His life's blood, and it is appropriated by faith (CP Mk 16:16; Jn 3:16-18, 36; Ac 15:11; Ro 1:16; 5:15-21; 8:24; Eph 2:1, 4-8; 2Ti 1:9; Tit 3:4-7; 1Jn 5:11-12; Jude 1-3). Salvation in the present tense occurs when repentant sinners are converted to Christ and become Christians. They are born again by the Holy Spirit who makes real for them the purpose of Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross. They become Christians, called to be Saints, and are referred to as

Saints thereafter throughout the New Testament (CP Ro 1:7; 1Cor 1:2, 18, 30; 2Cor 1:1; Eph 4:11-12; 1Th 3:13; Rev 19:6-9). But clearly salvation is future. It cannot become actual until '*the redemption of the purchased possession*' (CP Eph 1:3-14 with Ro 8:16-25). Salvation is fully certain, but it is only certain for those sowing to the Spirit at the end of their earthly life (CP Lu 13:22-27; Ga 6:7-8; 2Ti 2:12; Jas 2:19-26; Rev 2:1-7; 2:8-11; 2:12-17; 2:18-29; 3:1-6; 3:7-13; 3:14-22; 22:11-12).

While Scriptures clearly teach that salvation can be forfeited; that it is not an unforfeitable possession in this life, Christians can be saved, and know it (CP 1Jn 5:10-13). When Christians are totally consecrated to the service of God and completely surrendered to the authority of Jesus the assurance of their salvation is sealed by the witness of the Holy Spirit within them (CP Jn 15:1-6; Ro 8:1-16; 2Cor 5:17-18; Ga 5:5-6; Eph 1:13-14; 1Jn 2:24-25). God has given the Holy Spirit to Christians in this present life as the pledge or earnest (KJV), for their future resurrection and eternal inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is God's 'down-payment' (CP Ro 8:23; 2Cor 5:1-5; 1Pe 1:1-5).

There are yet still two more dimensions to salvation that we will examine before bringing this study to a close. One is that after the Church has been taken up to Heaven by Jesus to live with him eternally in the First Resurrection, salvation will not be available to those who have already heard the Gospel and rejected it (CP Jn 5:28-29; 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:20-24; 51-58; Php 3:20-21; 1Th 4:13-18; 2Th 2:7-17; Rev 20:4-6). Once the Church has left the earth salvation will only be available to those who never had an adequate opportunity to receive the knowledge of the truth, or to hear and understand the Gospel so that they might be saved. This is a sobering teaching and knowing this is sufficient reason for Christians to immediately impress upon their loved ones and other relatives and friends who have heard the Gospel and rejected it, the importance of being reconciled to God. It needs to be stressed also upon backslidden Christians and others who profess to be, but are not truly committed to the cause of Christ. The Rapture of the Church to Heaven can happen at any time – there are no prophecies awaiting fulfilment – and then it will be too late.

The last, but by no means least dimension to salvation we will examine in this study is that contrary to what many on the contemporary Church believe, there is no second chance of salvation given after death (CP He 9:27; 1Pe 3:18-20 (A) and (B)). Clearly, Scriptures refute the teaching by some in the contemporary Church of an intermediate state after death called *Purgatory*, to which the souls and spirits of the righteous go to be purged of sins not yet forgiven, while awaiting entry into Heaven. There is no such teaching in Scripture nor is there such a thing as *Reincarnation* or *Transmigration* – the passing of the soul into another body after death. The righteous go straight to Heaven when they die and the unrighteous go straight to Hell (CP Lu 16:19-31; 23:39-43; 2Cor 5:8; Rev 22:11-21). Rev 22:11-21 is clear and unequivocal: there is no second chance whatever for salvation given unto men. What they are when they die will determine their eternal destiny "... *behold, now is the day of salvation*" (CP 2Cor 6:2).

See also author's studies *What Being Born Again Means*; *Lordship of Jesus*; *Sowing and Reaping*; *Confessing God's Word*; *Healing and The Rapture* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith**. *Salvation – a Freewill Choice or Predestinated?*; *Who are the Spirits in Prison?*; *Forgiveness - A Matter of Life or Death for Christians*; *Chosen by God?*; *The Cost of Discipleship: Forsaking All for Jesus*; *The Significance of the Seven Churches in Revelation*; *Psalm 91*; *The Kingdom of God*; *Psalm 119 – A Study on Salvation by the Word of God*; *Haggai – The Significance of His Messages for Today*; *The Beatitudes – The Principles of the Kingdom of God*, and *The Old Testament Day of Atonement and God's Plan of Salvation* in his book **Advanced Studies in**

**the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**. *The Doctrine of Grace*; *Making the Impossible Possible*; *Christian – Flee from Idolatry*; *A Daily Confession for Christians*; *Christians, Love not the World*; *Christian – Beware of Failing God's Grace and Forfeiting Your Salvation*; *Regeneration and Sanctification Defined*, and *A Scripture Guide for the Christian Walk* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**. *Christians - Keep Your Tongue from Evil and Your lips from Speaking Guile*; *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*; *The Fear of the Lord*; *The Doctrine of Repentance*; *Righteousness Defined*; *Christian Ethics*; *The Doctrine of Justification*, and *The Key to Answered Prayer* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**.