

Salvation

Introduction:

What is the biblical notion of salvation? One would think that this is the one area that the Body of Christ should be in agreement on, however there are as many doctrines on the subject of salvation as there are denominations. Of all the different things that the church is divided on, this one certainly ranks as the most consequential, seeing as we are supposed to be the light of the world and to show them the way of salvation. This can hardly be accomplished if the ones charged with the responsibility of bringing light are themselves walking in darkness. In the course of this teaching I will show what the biblical position is on salvation. We will study what it is, when it is imputed, how to obtain it, and whether or not it can be lost. Once again the reader is asked to suspend any previously held ideas on the subject and to consider the teachings of the Scriptures without the blinders of preconceived erroneous ideas. We will find that there is much more to salvation than you previously thought, and that it is much more than merely not going to hell when you die.

I will also explain the proper relationship between faith and works and their role in salvation. In addition other areas to be considered are the doctrine of predestination, and "once saved always saved"? We will continue on with a discussion of the role that the Holy Spirit plays in salvation and finally moving on to a discussion of grace and the mystery of the Book of Life. So as always, let us begin with a look at the foundation Scripture upon which this teaching will be based.

I. Foundation Scripture: Romans 10:8-9: *What does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart. (that is the word of faith which we preach) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

There are many ways that the Gospel can be summed up simply, but I have always found this one to be elegant and quite effective in communicating the essence of the promise of life from the Father. One of the reasons that it is so compelling is that it leaves no room for additions which would serve the cause of the flesh. In my opinion one of the most important parts of the above Scripture is the period after the word saved, which implies that the condition of being saved is totally fulfilled in the two requirements mentioned in the first part of the verse. Notice that, conspicuous in their absence, are references to eating, drinking clothing, feast days and the like. This tells us in a most unequivocal manner that these things are superfluous to salvation.

Looking at the Greek definition of the word that is translated salvation, we find something very interesting.: Gr. Soteria (4992) *deliverance, preservation*, 4982 Soto - *Material & temporal deliverance from danger, suffering, sickness* Notice how salvation carries with it the promise of actual deliverance from danger, suffering and sickness. Now the thing that makes this so important is that we can actually use these things while we are at home in the body, and as such they provide an environment in which we may enjoy the fruit of salvation. It also provides for the opportunity to continue in the body so that we may be found useful as beacons of light to others, so that they too may be made partakers of so great a salvation.

At this time there are some who might be thinking that this is all too easy to result in true salvation. Well I agree that it is easy, but only to whom it has been revealed. To those who are

still in darkness, these words of life remain mere foolishness. Now let's see if these two verses can really result in salvation. According to verse 8 we can see that salvation begins in two places, in your heart and in your mouth, and that both of these are the fruit of receiving the word of faith that was preached. What one must realize is that the power of the Gospel is in the words of the Gospel themselves. The sowing field for those words is the heart and not the carnal mind, where these words will always remain foolishness. In other words, that which is spoken as spirit and life must be received and understood in the place from which spirit and life flow; namely the heart. The Lord Jesus testifies to this in John 6:63 (*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*) So then the ability of the Gospel to effect the changes necessary to demonstrate a changed heart, is contained in the power of the words themselves. These are words that are repulsive to the natural mind, and rejected by the flesh. Nevertheless they resonate within the heart of man where, when coupled with faith and understanding, they will give rise to salvation. This principle is dramatically illustrated in the parable of the soils. (Matt 13:23) When the seed, which is the living word of the Gospel, is sown into a heart which has been prepared by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, (and to whom it has been granted by the Father, the good ground) it will result in a changed nature which will produce the fruit of salvation.

Returning now to Romans 10:8-9, it should be easy to see how the word of faith alone can be sufficient to produce salvation in the hearer. The process is such that the hearing of the word of faith will produce faith in your heart, and this faith in the heart will be accounted to you for righteousness. Then, because the mouth will speak in accordance with the abundance of the heart, confession will be made unto salvation. Now this confession, what does it mean? The Greek word translated confession is the word *homologia*: which means basically: *to say the same thing as*: So then confession with the mouth is saying the same things about Jesus that He says about Himself. And we will say the same things about Him that He says about Himself when we truly believe in Him.

II. Why do we need saving?

This is a valid question, but only to those who are not aware of the fact that they are in mortal danger. For example, the one who has fallen overboard does not question the one who throws him the life preserver because he is acutely aware of the fact that he is in jeopardy. Well in similar manner to this, we will not begin to seek the way of salvation until we are aware that we have fallen short of the glory of God. This is known as the process of enlightenment and is a function of the ministry of the Holy Spirit on the earth. The process of enlightenment begins with the realization that we are in darkness, and estranged from the family of God. Now the thing that keeps us in darkness is sin, which dwells in us,

meaning that it is our nature to do evil, and this evil is contrary to the ways of God (Mark 7:14-23).

The sobering thing to consider for anyone who thinks of themselves as outside of this conviction, and therefore not subject to its consequences is this. Are you of Adam? For sin entered in because of Adam, and as in Adam all die, because of sin (Rom. 5:12-21, 1st Cor. 15:22). If you are reading this and you were born of men then you are of Adam, and are a partaker of his nature. Therefore you are subject to condemnation because all have sinned and those who confess otherwise are deceived and make the Holy Spirit out to be a liar. (1st John 1:10) Now the case for this condemnation is not made because we could sin, but because we would sin. You see the choice to sin will always remain, but once we have passed from death into life, we will choose not to sin, seeing as it has become contrary to our new nature in Christ Jesus. Simply stated, salvation breaks the connection between what we could do by way of choice, and what we would do by way of constraint.

Ultimately the purpose of salvation is to provide a mechanism by which we all may escape the condemnation that is reserved for the disobedient. It serves as the way whereby we are reconciled to the Lord God, so that He can be our God, and we can be His people (Rom. 5:9-11, Jer. 31:33).

III. How is one saved?

Now that we have discussed the necessity of being saved, it would be prudent to find out exactly how this salvation process works. Basically, we are saved through a process that I will call Identification. According to the Scriptures, those of us that belong to God are identified with Christ Jesus in every way. In other words we have been melded together with Him and our destinies are swallowed up in His by way of the election of the Father who chooses to see us this way. Now the only valid work on our part is to receive by faith the witness of the Father concerning the salvation that is contained within the name of the Son. The witness of the Father is the words of the Gospel, and these words are permeated with the life of the Father and infused with the power of the Holy Spirit to bring deliverance to all of those who hear it. When we receive the words of the Gospel, then a process of identification begins in us to transform us into

the express image of the Son of God even unto a perfect man. The Identification process is as follows.

1. He is identified with us in sin:

This is the first and most important of the steps of identification since we were condemned and justice could not be denied, it was necessary for Christ Jesus to take upon Himself our iniquities. In other words, He had to serve as the scapegoat.

Isa 53:1-12

2nd Cor 5:18-21

1st Pet 2:18-25

2. We are identified with Him in life:

Herein the master plan of the Father is revealed, for when He raised Jesus from the dead, He also saw us raised with Him into newness of life. Thus when Christ conquered death, He did so not only for Himself, but also for us who are called by His Name.

Eph 2:4-22

2nd Tim 2:11-13

Gal 2:20

3. Identification is accomplished through the name of Jesus:

Acts 4:10-12

Rom 10:1-13

1st Thes 5:9

2nd Tim 2:10

4. We are identified with Him in the power of His resurrection:

Eph 2:4 - sitting together in Heavenly places

2nd Cor 2:14-17 - The fragrance of Christ

Gal 4:16-20 - Christ is formed in you

Dan 11:32 - Carry out great exploits

Acts 1:8-9 - Power to be a witness

John 14:12-13 - The works that I do

Rom 8:1-15 - Spirit vs. Flesh

Rom 8:31-39 - More than conquerors

5. We are identified with Him in the exercise of the mind of Christ:

1st Cor 2:14-16

Heb 5:12-14

John 16:13-15

1st Cor 4:14-21

The result of all of this identification is that we have our consciences purged from dead works, that we should serve Him in newness of life. This leads to an inescapable, almost unfathomable conclusion, which is, that to those who have obtained eternal life through Christ Jesus, God will not reckon something as sin unto you unless you reckon it as sin unto yourself. Thus we become acquainted with the liberty of the Gospel. This is powerful doctrine indeed, and one must be on guard against being spoiled by those who seek to ensnare you again by the weak and beggarly things, which fool the feeble minded with empty religion but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. I have provided a number of scriptural references below to convince anyone with ears to hear and a heart to understand, of the enormous blessing of identification with Christ Jesus.

Heb 9:13-14

Heb 10:1-18 – without sin consciousness

Tit 1:15-16 - to the pure all things are pure

Rom 14:1-23

Gal 4:9-11

Col 2:20-23

2nd Cor 3:1-18

IV. Salvation's frame of reference:

A very important factor in understanding salvation is to realize that it is comprehended differently according to whose frame of reference is under consideration. Failure to understand this has led to much confusion with doctrines, such as predestination, "Once saved always saved?" and the like. To illustrate this principle, let us look at salvation from two perspectives, first from ours, and then from God's.

A. Ours:

According to Gen. 1:14-19 we find that God established the concepts of times and seasons and tied them to the celestial ordinances of the heavens. Thus anyone who is an inhabitant of the earth is bound to those ordinances, and tends to think linearly with regards to the elapsing of "time" between two events. Now since we are temporally based creatures, we view everything in terms of yesterday, today & tomorrow, and we tend to approach our salvation in the same linear way. We view salvation as either a snapshot (some alter experience), where once one undergoes some sort of ritual no further active input is necessary. We view it as a result of wages earned in exchange for services rendered. This severely limits salvation, since then we tend to be distracted by the mistakes of the past, which gives rise to condemnation, and the uncertainty of the future, which gives rise to doubt. We must realize that neither salvation nor condemnation can be measured by a single "snapshot" of our life, but it is the "reel" that will indicate whether or not our faith has prevailed unto eternal life.

B. God's:

Since God is an eternal being who is not at all confined to the earth, nor subject to her ordinances, He does not reckon time as such, but merely employs it as a concession to our deficient understanding. The best way to define His time frame is to realize that He exists in an eternal "now". Nothing is hidden from His sight, and He encompasses about all that we call creation. He is called the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, stretching from everlasting (the unsearchable past) to everlasting (the unsearchable future). Now with all of this in mind, it is obvious that He sees salvation differently than we do. From His point of view salvation takes place in the temporal context of "today" (Heb.3:12-15), since that is the only tense that He operates in. We can see then that as far as He is concerned, it has been "today" for the past two thousand years.

Now if all of that weren't confusing enough we find that He has known and called those who would be His from before the foundation of the world. How is that possible you ask? Quite easy for a being to whom time has no meaning, and who stands at the beginning and sees to the end. It is no hard matter for Him to make decisions and prognostications at the beginning, based upon those things that He saw at the end. Allow me to tell you a parable.

The Parable of the Train:

The Kingdom of God is like a train that leaves a station. Now the station master knows that everyone will have an opportunity to get on that train so He makes a master list to eventually compare the names of those to whom it was given to be on the train, with those who not only got on the train, but stayed on it until it arrived at its destination. Moreover, those that He foresaw would stay on the train until it arrived at its destination, He decreed beforehand, that at the appointed time, they should, be given special white robes with the Name of His Son inscribed on them to identify them as rightful passengers. Then to those who He had beforehand decreed, He sent messengers so that when it was time to enter the train they would be ready. Those who heeded the call of the messengers and reported to the train, He declared them worthy to get on the train. Now in the course of time many of the passengers grew weary of the journey and some fell asleep, and others stuck their heads out of the window and began to look back from whence they came Some even decided to get off of the train before it reached the final stop, but they had to surrender their garments first because no one could leave the train with the garment until it had arrived at its final stop. Now there were a few who cherished their garment and the Name that was written on it and determined to remain on the train until it got to the last station. When it did they were greeted by the station master Himself who praised them for their faithfulness, and caused them to shine as the noonday sun. As they exited the train He checked off their names against the master list, and anyone who was not on the train had their name crossed off of the list. The station master then showed them to their new dwelling, a marvelous building encrusted with all manor of precious things, and they all rejoiced greatly in receiving so great a gift as this.

Now to the spiritually astute the meaning of this parable should be obvious, but to those who are slow of heart I will offer the explanation. Now hear the meaning of the parable. The train is the path of life that all will follow, and the station is the arrival on the earth. The station master is the Lord of Glory eternal in the heavens. The master list is the Book of Life that was prepared before the foundation of the world, which contains the names of everyone who would ever be born of woman on the earth throughout all of the ages. Since the Lord sees the end from the beginning, He stood at the beginning of the train route and looked over to the end of the line and saw who was on the train. These He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn of many brethren, and those who He predestined, these He also called because He foreknew that they would seek Him. Now those who He called He also justified or declared them to be righteous, and those who He had justified, these He also glorified.(Rom.8:29-30). Now in many that the seed is planted, the wicked one is able to pluck it up before it takes root and produces fruit, and these are them who fall asleep and look back to perdition. And there are even those who grow so contemptuous of the Owner of the garment that they return it and get off of the train. Now at the end of the age those who have been faithful will be greeted by the Father Himself and given everlasting habitation in the heavenly city New Jerusalem. Those who got off of the train will have their names blotted out of the Book of Life, and then they will receive the penalty of their error which is eternal damnation.

Below are some other Scriptures to explain the concept of predestination.

Rom 8:28-30

2nd Thes 2:13-15

1st Cor 2:7

Eph 1:3-11

V. **Faith vs. Works:**

This is about as hotly debated as the chicken and egg paradox, but it is actually much easier to understand. Simply put, works cannot produce faith, but faith which is produced by the hearing of the Word, can be evidenced by works. I cannot express how important it is to understand this principle, since there are many denominations that stress all manner of empty, vain works as a doorway to salvation. In so doing they cause the destruction of many. It is the receiving of the words of faith that will establish your heart on the Lord. It is this that will produce in you the works that give evidence of the fact that you are now a new creature in Christ Jesus.

A. Faith not only establishes but maintains your salvation.

Heb 11:1

Heb 3:5-6

Col 1:19-23

Rom 10:8-10

Heb 10:3

Salvation is by faith, and faith alone. Faith is what? - The grace of God provided by the blood of Jesus, which is obtained through belief in His name.

B. What role then do “works” play?

There are works of faith and works of the flesh. The latter will profit you nothing, but the former will breathe life into your confession of faith. The works of faith then are doing those things that the Bible has commanded of those who profess the Name of Jesus. This is the evidence that we really believe in Him, which maintains in us, true saving faith.

James 2:14-26

1st John 3:1-12

VI. **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Salvation**

A. **Convict:**

His first job is to convict us of our sin nature otherwise we would not seek God in the first place. This is the process of enlightenment whereby we discover the darkness that resides in each of us, and produces in us deeds worthy of death. For those of us with hunger this will provoke us to seek the true and living God, who is the source of Light in our lives. (John 16:7-11)

B. **Convert:**

He is the inspirational agent of our “new birth.” In the same manner that he quickened in Miriam the divine spark of the life that gave rise to Emmanuel, He is the agent by which our spirits are quickened and we are immersed into eternal life in Christ Jesus. (In other words, He is the agent of the new birth.) (John 3:5-8)

C. **Conform:**

He conforms us to the image & nature of Christ Jesus, through the revelation of the Word of God,. His job is to teach us all things of the Lord that we may grow strong in faith. John (16:12-14, 1st Cor 2:9-16)

D. **He bears witness with our spirits that we are saved.**

Rom 8:16

John 14:16
Eph 1:13-14
2nd Cor 5:1-8
1st John 5:7

E. He empowers us to:

1. Overcome the flesh
Rom 8:1-11
Gal 5:16-26

F. To Be witnesses to Christ Jesus in mighty signs & wonders.

Acts 1:8
John 14:12

VII. Once Saved Always Saved?

Can one be assured of their eternal salvation, or is it subject to revocation at the whim of the Lord? These ideas have been hotly debated for a long time. Well I won't keep you in suspense. The answer is that you can be quite fully assured of your continued salvation. You can also refuse to accept the free gift of salvation, in which you have lost nothing, since you never had anything to begin with. This will be more fully explained in another parable later. For now let us explore what the Scriptures tell us can be known about our salvation.

A. We can have full assurance of it: This word is used several times in reference to our salvation, and according to its Greek meaning, certainly gives strong evidence that God wants us to be sure of our status with Him. Def; 4136 - Plerophoria - *entire confidence* from 4135 - Plerophoreo- *to carry fully in evidence completely assure of convince, most surely believe, to fully know, make full proof of.*

Col 2:1-10
1st Thes 1:2-6
Heb 6:9-12
Heb 10:12-25

We may know that we are saved.

1st John 5:10-13
2nd Cor 13:5

B. Not everyone who hears the words of the Gospel receives the Gospel. Even though they may have a "form" of godliness, they deny its power. 2nd Tim 3:5. They are pretenders who merely exhibit the shadow of Christ, but true salvation is in the substance of Christ.

Matt 13: 1-9, 18-23 (parable of the soils)
Matt 3;24-30 (parable of the wheat & tares)

People who mistakenly think that you can lose salvation do so because they judge the saved according to the shadow, not the substance. In other words, you cannot lose what you never had.

C. Predestination: This doctrine becomes invalid if you can lose your salvation, since that would require God's vision to fail! Remember that He stood at the beginning and looked down through the corridors of time and saw those who would be faithful and be in the kingdom at the end. These He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. If some of these do not make it, then His vision has surely failed.

D. Salvation is a gift.

Eph 2:8

Rom 6:23

It is irrevocable

Rom 11:29

E. Salvation becomes sight & ceases to be faith at the judgment seat of Christ. (See the parable of the train.)

F. The Mortgage Parable:

Consider this, Salvation is like buying a house. You see it as something desirable and inquire as to what steps are necessary to “purchase” it. You make an offer (yourself) and when it is accepted, you enter into a contract (covenant) with the Seller (God). Since you have nothing of value to offer the seller, He provides the Down Payment (The Holy Spirit). His contract states that you will make payments (works of righteousness) and He (the Seller) will hold the title deed (you in the glorified body with His name written on your forehead) until the day of redemption. At that time, if you have been faithful to make all necessary payments, He will transfer to you full ownership of the house (salvation).

Now before that day arrives you act, for all intents and purposes, as though the house is yours: making improvements, (growing up spiritually) fixing faults (not walking according to the flesh), and walking around in it with great confidence and boldness. Now nobody walks away (falls away) from the house while they are making payments (works of righteousness- which is love your neighbor as yourself), but when they have grown wanton against the truth, they go into default (pride which says, “ I’ve paid enough to the Seller (God), and will pay no more) and then they walk away (fall away to perdition). If you walk away, then the house (salvation) was never really yours to begin with so you’ve lost nothing. For in order to lose something, you must have had it in the first place.

On the other hand, if you make payments to the satisfaction of the Seller, He will transfer to you the title deed to the house so that you can lay claim to by sight, that to which you have been clinging to by hope through faith.

VIII. What Limit Grace

To what extent will God go to keep those who have come to Him from being lost?

Much further than we would think. He is quite willing to go to great lengths to rescue us from carnality stemming from weak faith. This may include allowing our habitations (bodies) to be destroyed by the evil one in order to preserve our spirits in that day.

1st Cor 5:1-5 Delivered to Satan for destruction

1st Cor 11:27-32 Not condemned with the world

John 17:6-12 “I have lost none”

IX: Falling Away

There is a difference however between rebellion in the face of weak faith and that which occurs in the face of strong faith. God is tolerant and gracious toward those who continue to live short of their calling because of weak faith they do however continue to pay the price in the natural realm. But to them that much is given, much the more is required. To the one that has obtained perfection through the word, it is required that they live according to the revelation of that word. If pride is allowed to poison ones faith, they can become disqualified which is rejecting both the blood, which has sanctified you and the witness of the Holy Spirit who has

sealed you. This is known as falling away and cannot be undone. Consider very carefully the following Scriptures.

Heb 6:3-6

1st John 5:16-17

Heb 10:26-30

2nd Pet 2:20-22

1st John 2:19 (final step denying Jesus as the Christ)

X. The Book of Life

Just what is this mysterious book anyway? As I have already alluded to, it is a record book of all who have ever or will ever be born on the earth. It serves as startling evidence that God has appointed all unto life, and that everybody has an equal opportunity to escape judgement. Those who fall short will have their names blotted out of the Book of Life, and as such they then become subject to judgement. The process is not as so many have thought; to have your name written into the Book when you get born again. However, the sight of your name blotted out, proves that God wanted you to live but you rejected His plan of salvation. That way no one can accuse Him of being a respecter of persons. There are thirteen references in the Bible to the Book of Life. Consider them all carefully and convince yourself that what I have told you is the truth.

1. Ex 32:32-33

Moses upon interceding for the children of Israel when they sinned by making the golden calf said: “yet now if You will forgive their sin - but if not I pray **blot** me out of Your book which You have written and the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will **blot** him out of My book.”

2. Dan 12:1

“At that time Michael shall stand up the great prince who stand watch over the sons of your people; and there shall e a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that time. And that time your people shall be delivered. Everyone who is **found** written in the book.”

3. Phil 4:3

“And I urge you also true companion help these women who labored with me in the gospel with clement also and the rest of my fellow workers who names are in the Book of Life.”

4. Rev 3:5

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments and I will not **blot** out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

5. Rev 13:8

“All who dwell on the earth will worship him (the beast), whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

6. Rev 17:8

“The beast that you saw was, and is not and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was and is not and yet is.”

7. Rev 20:12

“And I saw the dead small and great standing before God, and books were opened and another book was opened which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books.”

8. Rev 20:15

“And anyone **not found** written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

9. Rev 21:27

“But these shall by no means enter into anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lambs Book of Life.”

10. Rev 22:19

“And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

11. Psalm 69:27-28

“Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written with the righteous.”

12. Psalm 109

“Let his posterity be cut off and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

Note: it is clear from the prophetic context in these Psalms, that they are referencing the events surrounding the betrayal of the Lord Jesus, and are clearly spoken against Judas, and the leadership of Jews (Acts 1:15-20).

Question: What is Judas’ name doing in the book of life in the first place?

13. Luke 10:19-20

“Behold I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that they spirits are subject to you but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

Conclusion:

In these few pages I have given you a brief overview of the Biblical perspective on salvation. I have covered some of the more controversial subjects in this area, and as you have seen, there is frequently quite a difference between the traditional view, and the Biblical one. The devil has worked diligently to “muddy” the spiritual waters concerning salvation. In this way, he can distract as many of us as possible, toward the end that we may be found short of the glory of God. And as such, then we would be subject to the same judgement as he. As we have seen, the salvation message is not hard at all. Moreover, it is clearly visible to those who are seeking. Let us not weigh down the seeker with burdens that are not only too hard to carry, but also utterly superfluous. The message of salvation is simple, and it is this. Believe on Christ Jesus with all of your heart. Call upon His name and you will be saved. The evidence of your faith in this matter will be, do you obey His commandments? Now, His commandments are simple, and can be summed up entirely in this one saying.

Do you love your neighbor as yourself! If you have fulfilled this, then you have fulfilled all of the law, all of the prophets, and all of the epistles. Nothing else is necessary from you. Nor will anything else be required of you. Selah!