

The Perfect Salvation

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“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Rom. 1:16.

“Power belongeth unto God.” Ps. 62:11. It is an attribute of Divinity, for “there is no power but of God.” Rom. 13:1. God is the Almighty—the One who possesses all the power there is in the universe. “Wisdom and might are His.” Dan. 2:20. “His way is perfect,” and whatsoever He doeth, “it shall be forever.” Ps. 18:30; Eccl. 3:14. Therefore it follows that the salvation which is effected by the power of God must be perfect, all-comprehensive and eternal. “My salvation shall be forever,” says the Lord. Isa. 51:6.

This salvation is not a theoretical salvation from some possible future evil, but a present salvation from a present and very real trouble. It is not merely salvation from some danger that threatens, but salvation from ills that have already well-nigh overwhelmed us.” “Behold, now is the day of salvation.” It is true that the Gospel reaches out into the future, but only because it saves now, and eternity is only one continual now. “Godliness if profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

When the birth of Jesus was foretold, it was said “Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.” Matt. 1:21. Jesus means Saviour. He saves people from sin. When sin entered into the world, death entered (Rom. 5:12), for sin carries death within it (James 1:15). “The sting of death is sin.” 1 Cor. 15:56. Sin, therefore is a mortal disease that is on all mankind. Unless men are saved from sin, they must die; and in being saved from sin, they find salvation from death.

Death is simply the absence of life. If life be taken away, death results. The words of the Lord are life and those who hear His words have life; even tho dead already, they receive life through the Word. Isa. 35:3; John 5:24, 25. Death has come upon all men, because all have rejected the Word of the Lord, the source of life. Jesus Christ is the Word (John 1:1), and He is the life (John 1:4; 14:6). So it is by giving men Himself that He saves them from sin and death. We are saved by His life. Rom. 5:10. His life is the power that conquers death, and it conquers death because it is proof against sin, which is the cause of death. “There is no unrighteousness in Him.” His name is Jesus, Saviour, because He is in Himself salvation.

A Saviour from All Trouble.

Any so-called salvation that should deliver a man from one trouble, only to leave him to be destroyed by another, would be no salvation at all. If a man were condemned to death,

the person who should nurse him through an illness only that he might be spared to be hanged, would not be entitled to the condemned man's warmest gratitude. It is not in any such way as that that God saves us. The inspired prayer, which must be fulfilled in every believer, is, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

Jesus Christ saves us from sin—not merely from the punishment of sins already committed, but from sinning—by giving us His own sinless life. This life is eternal life. Now, the characteristic of eternal life is that it is ever new. It is eternal because each moment it springs up fresh. Then it follows that the renewing of the body is necessarily included in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God says, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee," or, literally, "I am the Lord thy physician." Ex. 15:26. So when Jesus was on earth, He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." Acts 10:38. For be it known that the Gospel does not stop with the mere saving of a man; it has for its object something far beyond that—so far beyond that it leaves no room for anybody to wonder if the Lord can save him,—it takes a man from the very lowest state of degradation and makes him a salvation to others. Isa. 49:6-9. So the well of water which spring up into everlasting life to those who receive the words of the Lord, also flows out in rivers of living water to refresh others.

When Jesus saw the poor paralytic lying at the pool of Bethesda. He asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" John 5:6. When Peter found the man who had kept his bed for eight years, he said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. . . . And he arose immediately." Acts 9:34.

This wholeness which comes through Jesus of Nazareth is wholeness of body as well as of soul and spirit. This is shown by the fact that the body was made whole; and the body was made whole in order that men might see the completeness of the salvation that is in the Gospel. So we read, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Ps. 103:2-3. The words of the Lord are "life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." Prov. 4:20-22. This is no theoretical, imaginary, or mystical salvation, but a real thing for practical, every-day life.

A Perfect Wholeness.

The words "whole" and "holy" have a common Saxon origin. They are, in fact, but one word. So to be made whole means to be made holy. Wholeness is holiness. Now a man is

not made whole if something is lacking. There can be no real wholeness of body without inward holiness. A man may have eyes that are as good as any man has in the world; but if he does not see God in His works, they are of no use to him. Ears are useless to a man who will not hear the Word of the Lord. If a man does not speak as the oracles of God, of what use are a mouth and a tongue to him? If a man does not think God's thoughts, he might as well have no brain. In short, if our bodies do not move in response to the impulse of the Spirit of God, they are altogether corrupt and perverted, no matter how fair and healthful an appearance they may present.

“The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” God sees the sin in the heart; and since death is the product of sin, and disease is the working of death, He looks at the body of the person who is a sinner, and sees that “from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it.” Isa. 1:5, 6. For that sin, if not removed, will at the last reveal itself as “a noisome and grievous sore.” Rev. 16:2.

Now, it is from every sin and every disease that Jesus saves those who believe on Him. “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” Matt. 8:17. When the lame man at the gate beautiful had been healed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, Peter said, “His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong; . . . yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” The next day, being questioned, about the matter, he said: “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, . . . even in Him doth this man stand here before you whole. . . . And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.” Acts 3:16; 4:10-12, R.V.

The man who was healed, made whole, was saved. He is presented as a specimen of Christ's salvation. Peter's statement was, “He stands here before you whole in the name of Jesus, and there is not wholeness in any other.” Jesus takes the man in whom there is “no soundness,” and give him “perfect soundness.” He makes the man whom He saves “every whit whole.”

In the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, this identity of sin and sickness is indicated: “Whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all Thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house; then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and forgive.” 1 Kings 8:37-39. The plagues that come on the land are only the outward manifestation of the plague that is in the hearts of men; and that is why it is said to those who make the Lord their refuge, “There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” Ps. 91:10.

The limits of this article do not allow us to go into any details. We can only look at the general facts as stated in the Scripture. It must suffice now to say that this healing of the body, together with the forgiveness of sin, is not an arbitrary matter. It comes from an intelligent faith in the Word of the Lord. That Word must be taken absolutely as one's life, and must be brought into every act of life. When one lives wholly by the Word of the Lord, then it must necessarily follow that he will be every whit whole. God contemplates nothing less than this.

This does not mean that the believer is immortal. Immortality is a gift bestowed only at the coming of the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:51-55. But it does mean that the perfect life of Christ shall be manifested in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4:2), so that none of the weaknesses of the flesh shall hinder our perfect service to God and humanity. Jesus Christ has "power over all flesh," so that even as He Himself conquered in the flesh, He can deliver every one from the bondage of the flesh. Heb. 2:14, 15. And this life of Christ dwelling in us is the assurance of immortality at His coming in glory.

Absolute Freedom.

This deliverance is the absolute freedom which Christ declares to the world. He proclaims "liberty to the captives." Isa. 61:1-3. "For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." Ps. 102:19, 20. This freedom that the Lord gives, is His own freedom. It is freedom from every bond. The one who acknowledges that he is the Lord's servant by right, and that God has perfect right to him, soul, body, and spirit, can say, "Thou hast loosed my bonds." Ps. 116:16. Nothing that pertains to this sin-cursed earth can bind the soul that is absolutely yielded to God.

The soul that knows this perfect freedom which the Gospel gives, will never, can never, appeal to any lower power to deliver him from oppression. "The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed." Ps. 103:6. "I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor." Ps. 140:12. Surely the Lord will care for His own, and "hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?" "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily," said Jesus.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." James 5:7. "What!" exclaims one, "have we, after all, to wait till some future time for deliverance?" Be patient. The Lord has not promised that tribulation shall cease before His coming. In fact, it is impossible that it should cease as long as sin is in the world. Even the inanimate creation suffers because of sin which man has committed, and so long as there are sinners there must needs be trouble; but the Lord gives peace that is proof against tribulation. John 16:33. He promises enough to sustain life to all those who trust Him. Matt. 6:31-34; Ps. 37:3. And at His coming there is the surety of such

complete deliverance from every semblance of evil and oppression as the wildest dreams of social reformers is nearer than any reformer has dared to set for a realization of his plans.

Therefore, “trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” “With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.”

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