

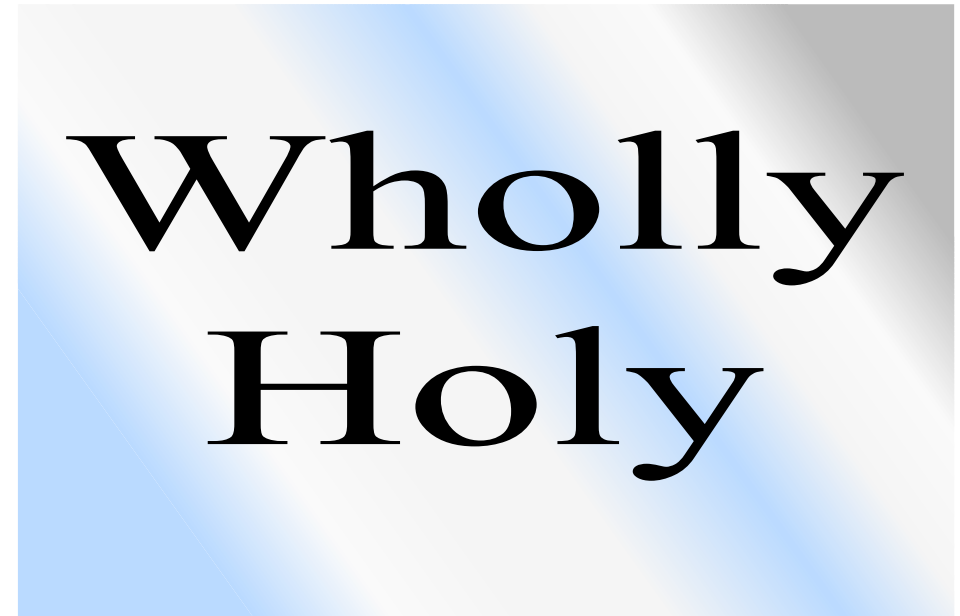
So we see that the subject of salvation is immense and the implications of it, sobering. That portion of it which we have received is eternal but that portion which we have not yet obtained can all too easily be "lost." Each believer's total salvation is a crucial matter and all of us should take it seriously. We all need to be saved, inwardly, outwardly - totally. Fortunately, God's salvation is free. It is available to anyone at any time. No one who is truly seeking God will be put to shame in any way. God is able to save you completely (Heb 7:25). Put your trust in Him. Open up your heart to Him today! Allow Him to come in and do His transforming work in you. This will be pleasing to God and pleasing to you also.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philip 1:6).

David W.Dyer

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- WARNING -

This tract will not tickle your ears. Many people may even be offended by it. It is a pamphlet written not for unbelievers but for Christians to encourage them to take serving Jesus seriously. The consequences of disobedience and apathy are great but the rewards of faithfulness are tremendous. It is high time that we realize that just because we have been born again or filled with the Holy Spirit, from then on everything is not necessarily okay. God has some further demands upon our lives. In a way it is painful for me to write this message because to some it may seem harsh, yet we must not shrink back from declaring the whole counsel of God just because someone may not like it. This is a message Christians need to hear! How we need to awake from the sleep of serving ourselves and prepare earnestly for His coming. May God use this writing to stir up many for Himself so that we may all rejoice together on that day. AMEN.

Today, among Christians and unbelievers alike, there is much disagreement and discussion about the meaning of salvation. Some believe that once you receive it you can never lose it. Others feel that if you misbehave, it can be taken away. Many think that salvation is just being "born again." Still others have the idea that it is something which you will receive when you die. Those who hold an opinion about the subject may

THE UNPOPULAR TRUTH

believe that they have the only “truth” concerning it. However, the fact is that there is some truth in all of the above statements. The confusion about this important topic results largely from a misunderstanding of the meaning of the word “salvation.” This message will attempt to show plainly and simply, from the scriptures, what “salvation” really means.

MAN’S THREE PARTS

In order to intelligently discuss “salvation,” it is first necessary to understand something about man - the object of salvation. Man was created by God with three parts to his being. In Genesis 2:7 we read that “. . .the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (or spirit) of life; and man became a living soul.” Here we see the three ingredients of man: the breath (spirit) of life, the dust of the ground and the living soul. These three things are the major elements which make up a human being. We know them today as the body, the soul and the spirit. Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, says, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless (entire) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess 5:23).” This verse plainly shows that man has three parts to his being.

In the Garden of Eden, man fell. This fall affected man completely. In man’s body, death set in. In his soul, the sinful nature began; his spirit was deadened and darkened. As you can see, this left man unable to contact God easily, sinning against Him and dying. This means that man needs to be saved completely!

Fortunately, God has a plan. Although man deserves to die because of his sin, God did not desire to destroy him. He wants men to be saved. God’s plan of salvation is manifested in His Son Jesus. Through Jesus’ death on the cross - because He died in our place - we can receive forgiveness. By His blood He provides for our cleansing and by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus offers us new life. As great as this may be, it is just the beginning. God’s plan is not only that we would be free from guilt and cleansed from sin, but that we would be changed completely! His desire is that we would be free from sin entirely. We not only need to be cleansed from sin, but also to be liberated from the working of sin in our souls and from the effect of sin in our bodies. All of the results of the fall need to be eliminated. Man needs total saving.

Now the question arises: “What happens to that portion of a believer’s soul which remains unsaved?” I am afraid that many Christians will not like the answer. Anyone who is lukewarm, half-hearted and insincere in their relationship with God is certain to be offended. No doubt, many who are living only for themselves and their own pleasure will reject it and find some way to deny the truth. Just the same, the answer is: it will be lost! Jesus’ words are plain: “For whosoever would save his life (Gk soul) SHALL LOSE IT (Mat 16:25).” That’s right. If we retain our own soul life and do not lay it down by denying ourselves daily for Jesus, we will lose it!

Contrary to popular belief, this verse is not about unbelievers missing out on eternal life. That it is a passage about Christians is evident from the context. Jesus was not talking to the multitudes here but to His disciples. He is speaking, not about unbelievers, but about believers denying themselves and following Him (verse 24). The same is true of the other passages which say essentially the same thing (Mat 10:39; Lk 9:24, 17:33; Jn 12:25). Receiving eternal life is not hinged upon works (such as denying our fallen self) but upon faith. Unbelievers are not required by God to deny but to believe. Unfortunately, it is all too easy for a man to receive eternal life and never follow Christ one step farther.

The Bible teaches us that we must all one day stand before God (Rom 14:10; II Cor 5:10), and that our God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:29). If, when we appear before Him, our nature is still selfish, evil and untransformed, it will not pass that test. Nothing which is of the old nature will endure in the presence of God for eternity. All that is natural in man will be burned. Only that which He has saturated with His Divine nature will be able to stand in His presence (Heb 12:14). So we see that the portion of our being which we do not allow Jesus Christ to save will be lost! This explains the apostle Paul’s fervent prayer that the believers would be preserved “entire” (I Thess 5:23).

The next question which most people ask is how such a judgment would affect the believer involved, or how believers would differ from one another in eternity. Although the scriptures do not give us a detailed answer, the difference would seem to be one of maturity. There are several passages (Eph 4:15; I Pet 2:2; II Pet 3:18; I Jn 2:12-14) which refer to growing in the Lord or to different stages of growth. Perhaps those who are unfaithful today will still be spiritual infants tomorrow and thus be limited in their ability to enjoy and experience God. Those who are faithful today and grow to maturity will no doubt have the greater reward. The faculties of the soul which today are preserved by Divine transformation will tomorrow be at our disposal so that we can enjoy the Father and what He has prepared for us.

A DEFINITION

soul life and allow His Divine life to live in its place (Mat 16:24). This is salvation continuing.

When we deny ourselves (our own thoughts, feelings, reactions and desires) and yield ourselves to God through the Holy Spirit, we are inwardly changed. Jesus' death on the cross and His rising again then becomes a spiritual reality. As we deny our self and allow Him to put it to death, His new life will begin to replace it. When we find ourselves expressing something which we know cannot be God's nature (hate, jealousy, pride, anger, unforgiveness, etc.) we must turn inwardly to God and cry out to Him that He would fill that area of our being with Himself. God will lead us in this. We cannot transform ourselves. He will show us when we need to deny a certain thought or feeling and then, if we are truly open, He will replace our nature with His. In this way, our soul is being saved.

This transformation process takes place over a period of time. To be saved from our self completely requires years of faithfulness and obedience to the Master. Slowly but surely, as we yield ourselves to Him, He saves us inwardly. This process happens in a Divinely mysterious way which we can experience but not wholly understand. It is the replacing of our fallen, human, perishable life with His holy, supernatural, eternal life. As this process happens, God will begin to be expressed in our lives. He will be saving our soul. The Bible reads: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit (II Cor 3:18)."

God's life is eternal. As we let it saturate and permeate our soul, our soul too becomes indestructible. A good analogy of this process is petrification. A piece of wood in its natural state is capable of decaying or being burned. Suppose this same piece of wood falls into a river. Under the right circumstances, slowly and gradually the water begins to make a change. The natural elements of the wood are washed away and the minerals from the water of the stream are deposited in their place. The outward form of the material remains the same, yet the content is different. It has changed from wood to stone. In this same way, God wants to replace our natural life with His Divine life (Eph 5:26). When He does this we will be "preserved." The outward appearance may remain the same but the inward substance will be changed. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves (II Cor 4:7)." This is the real saving of the soul, having our life and nature replaced with His.

We will now continue with a definition of salvation. Salvation is God's complete work in and for man, beginning with His cleansing and our experience of the new birth; continuing with the transforming of the soul; and ending with the glorification of the body. This includes everything: redemption, justification, atonement, regeneration, cleansing, restoration, purification, transformation, sanctification, renewing, resurrection, glorification, and if there is any other word which describes God's working in man, it can be included under the heading "salvation." Salvation is God's total work in, through, and for man. Salvation is a big word; it includes a lot.

This definition should eliminate any difficulty in our interpretation of the scriptures. With this understanding it will be easy to see that there are no contradictions. Everything which is revealed in the scriptures fits together perfectly. Much of the trouble which Christians have about whether or not they can lose their "salvation" comes from a misunderstanding of the word. Most of them see salvation only as the new birth. So, when they read verses from the scriptures which speak of salvation as if we have not yet attained it or as if we might lose it (Philip 2:12, Heb 2:2, Mat 10:22 just to name a few), they apply these verses to the subject of eternal life. Many times this is a mistake and does not lead to proper understanding. The new birth (receiving eternal life) is part of salvation but salvation includes much more than the new birth. Therefore, it should help our understanding of the scriptures and our relationship with other Christians to realize that salvation and regeneration are not synonymous. Even though most Christians use the word "salvation" when they mean being born again - and in so doing confuse the issue - they are not exactly the same. Keeping this in mind, let us continue.

SALVATION IS...

Salvation is an accomplished fact for those who have believed. In the Bible we read: "...not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy, He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5)." "...for by grace have ye been saved through faith (Eph 2:8)." This shows us that a part of God's saving work has been accomplished. Receiving Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour assures us that, at least to some extent, we have been saved. Once we have received this element of salvation (i.e. regeneration, the new birth), we can never lose it. In Hebrews 13:5 we read, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I forsake thee." This is a sure promise from God and we know that He is faithful and will fulfil His promises.

Salvation is a continuing process for those who are believing in the Lord. The Bible states: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Rom 5:10)." "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness: but unto us who are being saved (Gk) it is the power of God (I Cor 1:18)." "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition (destruction): but of them that have faith unto the saving (or gaining) of the soul (Heb 10:39)." These verses indicate that although there is an element of salvation which we have already received there is more which we need to seek. The apostle Paul also writes: "not that I have already obtained or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forth to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ (Philip 3:12-14)."

God wants us to be changed: totally, fully, utterly and completely. He desires that the old sinful nature be taken out of us entirely. All the effects of the fall must be nullified. This process is called transformation. It takes time. It also requires that we faithfully follow and obey the Lord during our lifetime. If we are negligent, we will miss out on a portion of our salvation. It is all too possible to "lose" part of our salvation in this way. This is why we should "...work out your (our) own salvation with fear and trembling (Philip 2:12)." If we are faithful to Him, He will be faithful to us and do the transforming work that is necessary. He will save us to the "uttermost (Heb 7:25)." We will be "...receiving the end of your (our) faith, the salvation of your (our) souls (I Pet 1:9)."

Salvation is a future hope for believers in Christ. We are looking forward to the day when God's saving work in us will be finished. We desire the redemption or glorification of our bodies. They too need to be saved. The Bible makes this plain when it says, "...we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23)." This is the last step in God's plan for our salvation.

As you can see, "salvation" covers a lot of territory. The truth which can be revealed here is immense. This subject is too vast for a complete discussion in this writing. It will probably take us a long time to appreciate what God has done, will do, and is doing in us today. However, we will continue here with a brief discussion of how the salvation process works within us.

As mentioned previously, every human being was created with three main parts: body, soul and spirit. Since man is totally fallen, God needs to save all three. This process begins in the human spirit. John 3:6 says, "...that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This means that the Holy Spirit of God (Spirit) unites with the spirit of man (spirit) and this effects the new birth. The uniting of God's Spirit with our own spirit means that we are born of God. The effect of this is that man's spirit and God's become one. "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit (I Cor 6:17)." God's life has then been imparted to us. Hallelujah! We have been born of the Spirit! Now, at least one part of us is "saved." This is the experience that most people refer to as "salvation." However, it is only the beginning, the first step in a life-long process, which the Bible calls "salvation."

The second part of man to be affected by God's saving is the soul, but we will skip over this part momentarily and go on to the body. The Bible teaches us that our bodies will be glorified (II Cor 5:1-3; I Cor 15:35-58; Rom 8:23,30). We can be looking forward to this great and wonderful event - finally our bodies will be "saved"! They will be redeemed and glorified. We will have a new body, prepared by God for us, which will be heavenly. In this new body there will be no more sickness and death. At last all the effects of the fall will be swallowed up completely.

THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL

Now we come to the most difficult part of the process, the saving of the soul. This is the process which takes time. Although some believe that after we die our souls will be changed instantly just like our bodies, the scriptures do not support this idea. Regarding our souls, the language of the Bible everywhere points to a continuous change, never an immediate one (see II Cor 3:18). The plain teaching of the Bible is that our souls need to be saved daily. "...behold, now is the day of salvation (II Cor 6:2)." God wants to continue His saving process if we will only let Him. We can do this by following and obeying Him every day. If we do this, He promises that He will save us completely.

How does this process work? Simply put, it is God's life spreading in us. After the Spirit of God (the Spirit of life, Rom 8:2) has become joined to our spirit, He desires to spread into our soul. He wants to fill our being entirely. Since God does not force His own way on anyone, we must be willing for Him to do this. Our first experience of salvation was based on a choice we made to believe in Jesus; the continuing process happens the same way. We must choose daily, based on a growing faith in Him, to allow His Spirit access to all of our being. This involves giving up our will and our way and allowing Him to have His will and His way. It means allowing Him to live His life in us. We must deny our own