

The Cross – The Work of Jesus Christ

Salvation, Sanctification, Glorification

Distinctions in the process of Salvation

When we use the word “*salvation*” in the biblical sense, we speak of the whole scope of Christ’s saving work, from first to last, as it applies to the believer. This salvation was planned and promised by the Father, wrought and purchased by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit to all whom God has intended to save. The nature of salvation however, even though it is an eternal work, is much like a process that is worked out in time and space, which culminates in eternal glory in the presence of God in the eternal state. Thus, the Bible makes a distinction in the different stages of this process. These stages are referred to as “*Salvation, Sanctification and Glorification.*” Although the term “*salvation*” can be used to speak of the whole scope of these stages, it can also be distinguished from them. This is because salvation is described in three tenses, past, present and future. We were saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. NASB

However we are being saved even now.

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. NASB

We will also be saved in a yet future sense at the return of Christ (Heb 9:28). At this time we will be completely delivered from the power and presence of sin and enter into the glorious presence of God.

Romans 8:23-25 - 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body**. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, **with perseverance we wait eagerly for it**. NASB

Therefore in order to understand this great salvation we possess, it is important to grasp these different stages which are expressed in the Bible.

Salvation

The idea or concept of salvation is necessary from the fact that mankind has been alienated from God because of sin. Mankind has fallen under the darkness and power of sin, through the destructive work of Satan, and now exists in a world hopelessly destined to perish under the wrath of Almighty God.

Ephesians 2:1-3 - And **you were dead in your trespasses and sins**, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest**. NASB

Sin has *personally* alienated mankind from God and caused us to be the objects of His wrath, that is, the manifestation of His holy moral judgment against it. This wrath is culminated in death, *eternal* separation from God’s good presence to bless.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 - dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And **these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power**. 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. NASB

Therefore being saved, or the idea of salvation, is to be saved from sin and death, so that we are delivered from its power and transformed into a new creation of God. But this deliverance from

sin and death is really only secondary. It is important to note that in a *primary* sense we are really being saved from God Himself. God is the One who is personally offended by sin, and unless we are reconciled to Him, having our relationship restored and His holy wrath because of sin satisfied, we will perish under the just consequences due to us because of sin. This wrath is God's wrath, His personal outrage toward sin, and the persons who perpetrate it.

Romans 1:18-19 - 18 For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. NASB

We are saved then from the being of God Himself, who is governing the universe by His Providence, and is Himself the avenger of sin. God will make sure that every unrepentant sinner receives the just recompense for their sins and is destroyed in hell forever.

Psalms 145:20 - 20 The LORD keeps all who love Him; **But all the wicked, He will destroy.** NASB

Romans 2:5-9 - 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart **you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God**, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **wrath and indignation.** 9 **There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.** NASB

It is God who has been offended by sin, and it is God who will inflict His wrath upon those who continue in sin and do not believe the Gospel. Dear reader, if we do not believe the Gospel, we will fall hopelessly under the judgment of Almighty God. Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved from the wrath of God, which is coming upon every person who has not taken refuge in Him. This we should greatly fear. You or I cannot imagine the severity of these words! They are very severe indeed. Let us be careful to heed the warnings of God in the Scripture.

Hebrews 10:26-31 - 26 For **if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.** 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31 **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** NASB

Reconciliation to God then is absolutely necessary in order to be saved. This reconciliation not only requires our *negative* guilt to be removed (expiated), but also a *positive* righteousness credited (imputation) to us. This salvation from the wrath of God then, is exactly what the Gospel declares is available to all who will by faith trust in the finished work of Jesus the Christ.

Romans 5:9 - 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** NASB

Through Jesus and the finished work offered in the Atonement, we can be fully reconciled to God and saved from the wrath of God, and the power of sin. This salvation is pictured in many ways in the Old Testament, but its most *vivid* picture is that of the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. That deliverance brought them from tyranny in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. In this, the mighty saving power of God was demonstrated dramatically as the Israelites formed a holy nation of priestly servants of the Lord. In the Exodus we have a pattern (or *type, shadow, analogue*) of the reality of salvation which has now come to us in our Lord Jesus Christ who is Himself, the Savior, the promised One who fulfills all of the types and shadows of the Old Testament.

Hebrews 10:1 - For **the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things**, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. NASB

Colossians 2:16-17 - 16 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — 17 **things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.** NASB

The New testament then is the account of how Jesus the Christ did come and actually bring the fulfillment of all of the promises of God to save His chosen people from the bondage of sin and its destructive consequences of wrath and death. Now we read of the realities of Salvation which **“have been”** accomplished already by Christ, and we now eagerly await the fulfillment of all that He has worked as the stages of that Salvation are being brought to pass in time and space which will all culminate in the eternal state. This will happen when Jesus returns and brings all earthly rule and power under His dominion and destroys all His enemies, including death itself.

1 Corinthians 15:22-26 - 22 For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all shall be made alive.** 23 **But each in his own order:** Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 **For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.** 26 **The last enemy that will be abolished is death.** NASB

We are now in that stage of fulfillment where we eagerly await His second coming. During these **“last days”** (*gk. eschaton*), this Salvation is now being applied by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to all the elect people of God, during **“this age,”** as we await the future fulfillment of **“the age to come”** when Christ will consummate the ages.

Sanctification

It is no small thing that God has **“sanctified”** those who are in Christ. Indeed for those who have come to Him, they are reckoned as **“holy and without blemish”** in **POSITION** before God. ***The sacrifice of Christ has completely covered over the sin of His people and His sinless life of perfect righteousness has been imputed to their account.*** Christ Jesus is a perfect priest who accomplished a perfect mediation between God and man. We can have confidence and assurance before God because of what Christ has done. Jesus has merited for us eternal salvation by His broken body and shed blood. The debt of our sins has been paid in full (redemption), our guilt has been removed (expiated), and the wrath of God on our behalf has been satisfied (propitiated).

Hebrews 10:10, 14 - 10 By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**.... 14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.** NASB

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Colossians 1:21-22 - 22 But now he has reconciled you **by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-** NASB

1 Corinthians 6:11 - 11 And such were some of you; **but you were washed, but you were sanctified,** but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB

Indeed it is true that Christ Jesus died to sanctify and cleanse us from our sins and that through Him we have been justified (declared righteous). ***Although we have been sanctified in POSITION before God, the Lord is actively sanctifying us in our conduct and PRACTICE.*** The work of salvation is continuing in those of us who are actually being saved. God is the *primary* agent in this process. We as humans are no more capable of sanctifying ourselves as we are of saving ourselves. Without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we would be powerless against temptation and sin, continuing to trample the grace of God under our feet. This practical aspect of salvation will not be completed until the resurrection of our bodies.

Philippians 1:6 - 6 *For I am confident of this very thing,* **that He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus. NASB

John 17:17,19 - 17 **"Sanctify them in the truth;** Thy word is truth....19 **"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.** NASB