

The Word Salvation

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The sermon explores the comprehensive nature of salvation as a divine work for individuals, emphasizing its past, present, and future aspects.

Scripture: Titus 3:8

Topics: "Salvation By Faith", "Divine Justification"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer emphasizes that salvation in the Bible is solely the work of God for individuals, not the work of individuals for God, and is granted upon the condition of faith. Good works are a result of salvation, not a requirement for it, as salvation encompasses various divine works like Atonement, Grace, Justification, and Sanctification. The transformation brought by salvation is the greatest work God can do for man, leading believers to be conformed to the image of Christ. Salvation is viewed in three tenses: past (saved from guilt), present (being saved from sin's power), and future (saved from the presence of sin into God's presence).

Transcript

THE word salvation is used in the Bible to indicate a work of God in behalf of man. In the present dispensation its use is limited to His work for individuals only, and is vouchsafed to them upon one definite condition. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the fact that now, according to the Bible, salvation is the result of the work of God for the individual, rather than the work of the individual for God, or even the work of the individual for himself. Eventually the one who is saved by the power of God may, after that divine work is accomplished, do "good works" for God; for salvation is said to be "unto good works" (Eph 2:10) and those who "believed" are to be "careful to maintain good works" (Tts 3:8). Good works are evidently made possible by salvation; but these good works, which follow salvation, do not add anything to the all-sufficient and perfect saving work of God.

As used in the New Testament, the word salvation may indicate all or a part of the divine undertaking. When the reference is to all of the work of God, the whole transformation is in view from the estate wherein one is lost and condemned to the final appearance of that one in the image of Christ in glory. This larger use of the word, therefore, combines in it many separate works of God for the individual, such as Atonement, Grace, Propitiation, Forgiveness, Justification, Imputation, Regeneration, Adoption, Sanctification, Redemption and Glorification. The two following passages describe the estate from which and the estate into which the individual is saved: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past

Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:11, 12). "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1Jo 3:1-2). There could be no greater contrast of possible estates for man than those described in these passages.

This transformation, it must be conceded, rather than representing the greatest thing impotent man can do for God, represents the greatest thing the infinite God can do for man; for there is nothing to be conceived of beyond the estate to which this salvation brings one, namely, "like Christ" and "conformed to the image of his Son."

Much of the whole divine undertaking in salvation is accomplished in the saved one at the moment he exercises saving faith. So, also, some portions of this work are in the form of a process of transformation after the first work is wholly accomplished. And, again, there is a phase of the divine undertaking which is revealed as consummating the whole work of God at the moment of its completion. This last aspect of salvation is wholly future.

Salvation, then, in the present dispensation, may be considered in three tenses as it is revealed in the Scriptures: the past, or that part of the work which already is wholly accomplished in and for the one who has believed; the present, or that which is now being accomplished in and for the one who has believed; and the future, or that which will be accomplished to complete the work of God in and for the one who has believed.

The following passages are clear statements of these various aspects of the one divine undertaking:

I. The child of God was saved from the guilt and penalty of sin when he believed: "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luk 7:50); "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Act 16:30, 31); "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1Cr 1:18); "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved; and in them that perish" (2Cr 2:15); "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8); "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2Ti 1:9).

II. The child of God, constituted such through belief, is being saved from the power and domination of sin on the same principle of faith: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jhn 17:17); "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom 6:14); "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phl 2:12, 13); "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2); "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal 5:16).

III. The child of God, begotten as such through belief, is yet to be saved from the presence of sin into the presence of God: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom 13:11); "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pe 1:3-5); "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1Jo 3:1-2).

So, again, there are passages in which these various time aspects in salvation are all combined: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phl 1:6); "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Cr 1:30); "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:25-27).

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