

The Promise of Salvation

(The Prophecy that Assures Eternal Life)

Introduction

Our journey on earth is short. When young, the future is filled with plans and excitement. When old the reality of an “end” begins to hit us. Then, when we begin to see friends pass away, things become serious.

The Christian assurance that there is *eternal life* is wonderful!

- That Christian hope is very personal.
- ***That “forever” begins*** when Jesus returns:

*“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we **ever be** with the Lord”*
(I Thessalonians 4:17).

There are urgent questions: “How can I be sure I’m saved?” “How can I know that I’m going to have eternal life?” “Are there any ‘conditions’ to obtaining a home with Jesus in heaven?” “Once I’m ‘saved,’ can I lose that gift?”

These questions must be answered by all Christians. There are so many opinions and false teachings regarding this topic! More and more people even believe that we can be saved in sin and not from sin!

Jesus, however, gave a pointed illustration regarding salvation and being lost:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him... he will separate people one from another.... He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. And these [goats – the wicked] shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous [sheep – the saved] **into life eternal**” (Matthew 25:31-33, 46).



- There is a forever loss to the wicked.
- There is a forever life to those who choose right.

There are two very important thoughts that this suggests:

1. Christ died for everyone (II Corinthians 5:14-15). He spilled His blood for every person ever born – but – not everyone is saved.
2. When He comes, all decisions are complete – they will never change! (Matthew 25 tells us that there will be a judgment.)

That is why the prophecies of Salvation are so vital!

Jesus Must Become Our Savior



If a person is drowning, will a life preserver save him/her? Only if the person grasps the preserver. It can be right there – but only if it is used can it be a means of salvation.

What is God’s “**life preserver?**”

- For by **grace** you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8 – NET).
- “**Grace**” is the “life preserver?” It is a gift from God that’s always there to rescue us.
- “**Faith**” is our grasping it!

Grace is:

- Unmerited kindness, mercy, respect and power God gives to us. He constantly floods the world with this!
- It is God at work to save us. It really describes the work of the Holy Spirit.

What does grace bring when we grasp it?

1. Justification – total forgiveness (Titus 3:7).
2. Gift of righteousness – God sees us as perfect (Romans 5:17) because Jesus has acquitted us (expiation).
3. Salvation (Titus 2:11) – eternal life.

Sometimes the gospel is called the “grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

Grace is free – but it has to be activated!



In chemistry there are many products that can be blended or shaken together but still

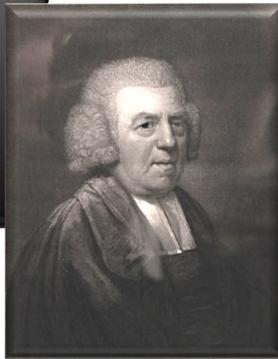
remain as separate chemicals from each other. But – there are *catalysts* (special types of chemicals) that can stimulate or incite them to join.

- Some super glues require a second chemical to activate them.
- Dentists often use bonding agents that must be activated by a *catalyst*.

Faith is the catalyst to make grace explode in our lives – and Jesus begins the bonding process with heaven!

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2 – NIV).

- John Newton, after killing and torturing so many, discovered that God had mercy for every person!
He became a minister and an advocate for God’s kindness and respect for every individual.



Newton wrote in 1789:

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found,
Was blind, but now I see.

T'was grace that taught,
my heart to fear.
And grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear,
the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come.
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead us home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand
years, bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise,
than when we first begun.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

There’s even more to these words that are so elevating!

First: God is so gracious He first implants a measure of *faith*, that *catalyst*, in every heart.

- *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith”* (Hebrews 12:2a).
- *“... according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”* (Romans 12:3c).

Second: What does this word “faith” really mean?

- Faith – a noun (*pistis* – G) is that gift that God gives to each person. But it, too, like the life preserver, has to be used. It is a conviction that there is something better outside of mankind.
- Faith – a verb (*pisteuo* – G) goes much deeper. It is frequently translated as “believe.” It means that we now have put our trust in God so much that we are willing to please Him – obey Him.

Having a “faith experience” means everything to our salvation.

- Jesus said: *“I know what faith you have”* (Revelation 2:19).
- Peter notes that faith is the first step in our Christian journey: *“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith excellence, to excellence, knowledge; to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness; to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish love. For if these things are really yours and are continually increasing, they will keep you from becoming ineffective and unproductive in your pursuit of knowing our Lord Jesus Christ more intimately”* (II Peter 1:5-8 – NET).
- Peter also said: *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ”* (I Peter 1:7).

Faith is trusting in God, believing He knows best what is for our good and pleasing Him in every way we know. However – it has to be **used** and **tested** to be sure it is genuine.

- *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6).
- This “seeking” means having a strong effort to obtain something personal.



God’s Love for Man

Though sin blighted this earth and God’s final judgments brought devastation in Noah’s flood, He yet wants us to know today:

- Like Jonah: *“I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.”* (Jonah 4:2).
- Like Micah: He *“is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy”* (Micah 7:18).

God so loved this world, He gave Jesus to us that if we believe in Him, we have eternal life (John 3:16 – adapted). This is a forever promise if we believe!

What kind of person was Jesus?

- Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love.
- He exercised the greatest tact and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people.
- He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul.
- He did not censure human weakness. He spoke the truth, but always in love.
- He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes.
- He wept over Jerusalem, the city He loved, which refused to receive Him, the way, the truth, and the life. They had rejected Him, the Saviour, but He regarded them with pitying tenderness.
- His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes.
- While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.

He wants us to be just like he was: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). This “believe” (*pisteou* – G) is copying Him to be just like He is. Faith is *risking* everything to do just that.

The Individual’s Need of Christ

Jesus died in our place; Jesus bore our guilt – but does that save everyone? The Matthew 25 parable shows there ARE “goats” who will be lost. Did Jesus die for them? Certainly!



“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:15).

There’s that people problem! God told Isaiah approximately 2700 years ago:

*“But we are all as an **unclean thing**, and all our righteousnesses are as **filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our **iniquities**, like the wind, have taken us away”* (Isaiah 64:6).

- This is so bad one wonders if anything can be done to help us!
- *“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? **not one**”* (Job 14:4).



- “Because the carnal mind is **enmity against God**: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).

Stunning, our natural heart has even some hatred for God!!! **But there is one Person who can transform all that. He is called a “Savior.”** He specializes in rescuing people.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). (Crucial verse to know)

How do I even sense a need for Christ?

- This is important – it gets to the very core of how God deals with man.
- That is also part of the faith God gives to each person.
- **God creates situations where we have only one place to turn!**

What about those who never came in contact with all these truths?



- Romans 2:14-16 tells us that God will judge them by how they followed their conscience, their understanding of right.

How, then, can I be saved?

If I have exercised this faith, if I really want to please Him, there are several important steps God asks us to take to mature our bonding with Him:

1. We come to God seeking friendship and mercy: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).



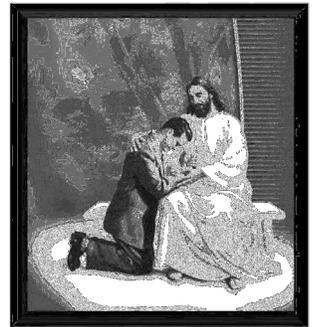
We pray like David: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions” (Psalm 51:1).

2. Repentance:

- On the Day of Pentecost people cried out, “What shall we do?”
- Peter’s first word was, “Repent” (Acts 2:37-38).
- Repent and be converted – make a change in your life (Acts 3:19).
- What does repentance mean?
 - Sorrow for sin
 - Turning away from sin



- Even here God ***gives special power*** to follow through with this decision (Acts 5:31).
 - *“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye”* (Ezekiel 18:32).
3. Then we pray that God will reveal all areas that displease Him that we can see how deep sin really is.
- Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, ***persistently cherished***, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel.
 - *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”*
*“Today if ye will hear His voice, **harden not your hearts**”* (II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8).
4. Confession – accepting personal blame
- *“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy”* (Proverbs 28:13 – NIV). (A good verse to know.)
 - *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I John 1:9 – NIV).



Jesus wants us to recognize that He died because we sinned!

“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18 – NIV).

In a true confession experience we don't make any excuse for sin.

5. Consecration
- We surrender our whole being, our all, to please Jesus.
 - It means going against what we want to do in order to do what He asks.
 - *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (II Corinthians 5:17).

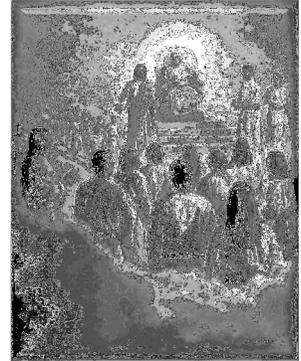
Warning:

- *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”* (James 4:17).
- *“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”* (I John 2:4).
- *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law”* (I John 3:4).

What Heaven Does!

Though Jesus is our Savior, though He died for every sin of every person (I John 2:2), we have to establish our ties with God's throne. We must grasp the life preserver and hold on to it tightly!

- That's when Jesus again comes to help us.
- Not only do we have the Holy Spirit but He promises:
 1. To be our **attorney** before the throne of God: *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"* (I John 2:1).
 2. To be our **mediator**, our "go between": *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (I Timothy 2:5).
 3. To **intercede** for us: *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Hebrews 7:25).



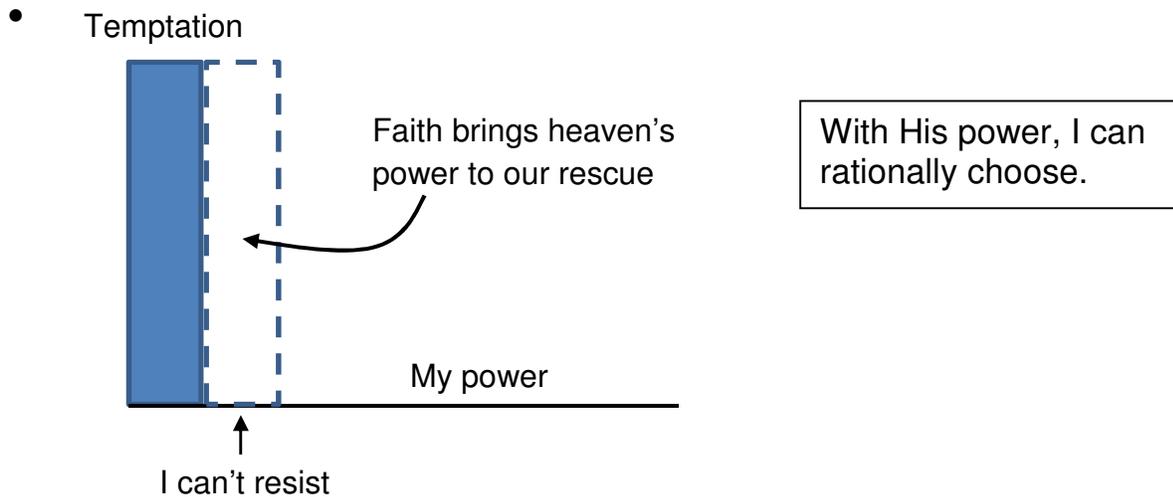
The Wonders of Jesus' Help!

"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" (Philippians 1:6).

- God wants to finish His transformation work.
- Paul went further: *"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Hebrews 5:9).

But we have no power to obey Him! **God has the answer.**

- *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"* (I Corinthians 10:13).



When I have that kind of faith and choose Him, I am justified.

Christ becomes our Righteousness.

Once saved – always saved?

Once lost – always lost?

Orientation: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).*

- Claiming Jesus Christ as one’s Lord does not guarantee salvation.
- It requires obedience – just as it did for Adam and Eve.

Paul lists many sins in Galatians 5:19-21, as he does in II Timothy 3:1-6. Then he says: *“They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21).*

Who, then, can be saved?

- The meek (Matthew 5:5)
- The pure in heart (Matthew 5:8)
- Those who do the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21, Romans 2:13, Hebrews 5:8-9)
- Those who are converted (Matthew 18:3)
- Those who are baptized (Mark 16:16, John 3:5)
- Those who are born again (John 3:3)
- Those who believe in Jesus (John 3:16)
- Those who love thoughts of His Second Coming (II Timothy 4:8)

- Those who resist temptation (James 1:12)
- Those who repent (Revelation 2:5)
- Those who overcomers (Revelation 2:7, 3:21)
- Those who obey (Hebrews 5:9)

These all reveal that God's salvation is **conditional**.

Lip service will not do (Mark 7:6, Matthew 15:8-9; Isaiah 29:13).

Can a person lose his/her salvation?

The parable of the sower tells us (Luke 8:12-18):

- Wayside – plant began to be broken when trodden down, then birds finished
- Rocks – plant started, then withered
- Thorns – plant came up but was choked out

*“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”* (I Timothy 4:1).

*“Now the just shall live by faith: but **if any man draw back**, my soul shall have no pleasure in him”* (Hebrews 10:38).

*“When the **righteous turneth from his righteousness**, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby”* (Ezekiel 33:18).

We can lose our salvation! Once saved, always saved is a false doctrine!

Can we return to God after having fallen away?

The most famous parable is the **Prodigal Son**.

- The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house.
- *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and **let him return** unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for **he will abundantly pardon**”* (Isaiah 55:7).

The promise is sure: *“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: **return unto me**; for I have redeemed thee”* (Isaiah 44:22).

Perhaps one of the greatest verses to lean on is: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I John 1:9).

Recall Peter's question:

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Matthew 18:21).

Jesus' answer was 70 x 7 – meaning never stopping.

That's just how God is! Until the judgment, we can return to Him.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him" (Job 13:15-16).

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