

## The Salvation of God

(The study for today is the first of a series concerning the doctrine of salvation. Obviously, this subject is an umbrella covering many other doctrines taught in the Scriptures. The lesson today introduces the need for such a subject because of the general misconceptions believed by many.)

Today we desire to begin studying a subject that is often misunderstood and misrepresented in many ways by both Baptists and Protestants. This is the doctrine of salvation. The modern concept of salvation considered from a so-called Christian perspective is that of a person making a decision regarding some religious standpoint. Regardless of the system of religious ideology and the form in which such a decision is made, this modern idea when reduced to its most basic concept is nothing more than a belief based on the thought of some person. The idea presented in most pulpits today is that Christ died for the sins of everybody. Such belief causes people to believe they can live anyway they please and still be saved or live with God in eternity. In 2009, a man went on a shooting spree and killed and wounded some people and then killed himself. In a diary prior to the shooting he wrote, "Maybe soon, I will see God and Jesus. At least that is what I was told. Eternal life does NOT depend on works. If it did, we will all be in hell. Christ paid for EVERY sin, so how can I or you be judged BY GOD for a sin when the penalty was ALREADY paid. People judge but that does not matter. I was reading the Bible and The Integrity of God beginning yesterday, because soon I will see them." Such is the thinking of many and, sadly, such is the conclusion of the false teaching about salvation in many pulpits today. If, indeed, Christ paid for the sins of everyone then the obvious conclusion is that everyone will be saved. However, when one studies the Holy Scriptures he finds that there are many more things involved than a simple decision. Also the Scriptures do not teach that Jesus paid for the sins of every human being. There are other subjects that must align and fit together to better understand the doctrine of the salvation of God; such things as the following: the fall of man; sin; redemption; justification; adoption; faith; regeneration or the new birth; the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; the resurrection of man; the judgment of man; election; reprobation; the will of God; the will of man; predestination; the sovereignty of God, and many other related topics. Some of these subjects are rarely taught by the modern preacher today.

When the idea of salvation is considered, one question should be salvation from what? Sadly, today the number is increasing where many question the reality of God and if there is no God then from what does man need to be saved? Likewise why do a vast amount of people believe in some kind of existence after physical death, if indeed there is no God? It is not uncommon to hear that when a person dies he is portrayed as someone who is continuing his avocation or dream in the after-life; for example, the golfer is playing golf; the race car driver is running his race; the gardener is enjoying his produce or his vast ocean of flowers and shrubs. The list can be expanded to almost any occupation or profession. However, if there is no Creator, how is it that such a state of after-life becomes a reality from non-living matter or from some type of cosmic explosion? Explosions do not create; explosions destroy. Obviously we cannot answer all of these questions or try to search out the end results of each of the different philosophies of life. As a Christian, our purpose is to study and seek the answers to such questions as found in the Scriptures of God—the book called the Bible.

Logic, as well as common sense, tells us that there must be a first cause of all cause that is without cause. This is not meant to sound sophisticated or to be some high profound philosophical statement. It is simply saying that there must first have been some intelligent being that created everything and that *nothing* caused this intelligent being to be. He always existed. He is God.

In order to know anything about God and His acts, God must reveal it to us. Man can study the creation of God and learn some things about Him, but such knowledge is limited and often perverted

because of the sinful nature of man. In fact, man today is spending billions with the space programs of the various nations and one of the main objectives is trying to find out how we got here. Man supporting such programs also are seeking to find sustainable life on other planets and if there are other forms of life different from what is found on planet Earth. Such people believe that life as we know it will cease here and that we need to establish life elsewhere to be saved from our current self-destructive path. However, let us turn our attention to the Bible because this is the only source that tells man how the creation was made, how man was made, why God created the universe, what caused the universe to be destructive, how man became sinful, from what does man need to be saved, how is it that man is saved, what is the purpose of salvation, what is the results of salvation, and many other things.

As stated before, the only way man can know God and the reason for creation is for God to reveal these things to him. God did this by inspiring man to write down the things that He would have man to know. As we will see in further studies, God must further work a change in man because of his fallen condition to better understand the written Word of God—the Holy Scriptures or the Bible. However, after God changes the will and understanding of many by the new birth, man is still unable to understand everything in the Scriptures. Yet, enough can be understood by man so that he is without excuse for his sinful lifestyle and his refusal to be obedient to the commands and laws of God. But when God initially created everything He said that all of creation was “good” and “very good,” Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31. It was not long before man sinned by eating of the one and only tree in creation forbidden to him. This sin by Adam caused a curse to be placed on the creation. See Genesis 3:14-24. Though Eve and the devil were involved in the fall in the Garden of Eden, the fall of man (mankind) was charged to the sin Adam. Romans 5:12 says, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Though the idea of representative headship is generally denied by modern man, it is still true. We will not at this time study out this truth, but for those who may be interested in a quick glance I would suggest a few additional passages that reveal this doctrine. They are Romans 5:12-19; I Corinthians 11:1-16; 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-14.

At this time I would like to give a definition of salvation that I have used for years to explain what I mean. It is as follows:

Salvation is that all-inclusive word summing up all spiritual blessings bestowed by God on His elect people in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This wonderful word denotes perpetual deliverance beginning in the mind of God and experienced in the believer’s life. Its highest claim is victory over sin, sorrow, and death. Its glorious and final reality is eternal life with Christ Jesus our Lord. This is common salvation; that is, it is common or it belongs to all the elect of God. Jude 3.

As you can see from this definition, a lot is involve in showing the truth of this definition from the plain teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Obviously, it is much more than the concept of someone “making a decision,” or believing that Christ paid the sin debt for every human being and regardless of how a person might live he will still be with God in peace forever after one’s death. As we explore this definition, we will not necessarily start at the beginning of the definition and work our way through it. I believe it is important that we begin at the origin of salvation—God—or as stated in the definition “beginning in the mind of God.” Therefore, since God is the first cause of all cause, then the cause of salvation resides in God. The Scriptures plainly declare that before the creation, God ordained the salvation of a people designated as the elect, the sheep, the believer, as well as other descriptive terms. Immediately, many will cry that such is not fair! The issue is not whether it is fair or not. The point is, “Is it just?” In fact, as we progress through the study of the subject, if God had

not selected some to be saved then no one would be saved; the whole human race would be cast into eternal fire to suffer for their sins forever.

I covet your prayers as we work through this profound and voluminous subject. It is tempting to jump into the middle of the subject seeking to proclaim each facet of this glorious diamond all at the same time, which, of course, is impossible. May God bless us to build from the solid foundation of the Holy Scriptures and develop the picture so that all parts blend together into one glorious portrait magnifying the beauty of holiness in the salvation of God. Farewell.