Title: THE TENSES OF SALVATION

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:9-10

(Psalms 126) "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. (2) Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. (3) The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. (4) Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. (5) They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. (6) He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

#### **INTRODUCTION**

I am a man whom the Lord God has lifted from the gates of death and snatched as a brand from the burning. He did it, if you will permit me to borrow David's words, "*That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation*" (Psalms 9:14). Listen to these passages from the Psalms.

(Psalms 13:5) "But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation."

(Psalms 20:5) "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions."

(Psalms 40:10) "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation."

(Psalms 74:12) "For God *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth."

Truly, "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." But none of those great things our God has done for us compare to or give us such gladness as the salvation of our souls in Christ. How we rejoice to know that God, our King of old, is, ever has been, and ever shall be God "working salvation in the midst of the earth!"

I pray that God the Holy Spirit will graciously enable me to once more proclaim his salvation to you. How I pray, as I describe his salvation to you as he has revealed it in his Word, that he will make it your own.

Turn with me, if you will, to 2 Corinthians 1:9-10. That which Paul states here with regard to his deliverance from physical death by the hands of wicked men, is a very good declaration of God's great work of grace in the salvation of our souls by Christ.

(2 Corinthians 1:9-10) "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: (10) Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

**<u>Proposition</u>**: Salvation is the deliverance of our souls from the sentence of death by the grace of God.

Let me speak of my own experience. As I do, I will speak for you, my brothers and sisters in Christ

- There was a time when, as Paul put it in verse 8, "we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." There was a time when the Lord God caused me to see that I was a lost sinner, cursed, condemned, under the just sentence of death, eternal death in hell.
- When I had the sentence of death in my soul, I was made to see that I should not, must not, and could not trust in myself.
- I was altogether shut up to Christ, graciously, sweetly forced to trust "in God which raiseth the dead."

Now, trusting him, I am here to speak to you as one sinner to another, about God my Savior, "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

I have told you many times that "salvation" is a big, big word. It includes all that is involved in delivering our souls from the sentence of death into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." In our text, Paul speaks of this salvation in different tenses: past deliverance, present deliverance, and future deliverance.

If you will search the Scriptures, you will find that salvation is described throughout the Book of God in various tenses. In fact, when we speak of "salvation" in Bible terms, we must recognize that it is God's work alone and that it is a work with **FOUR TENSES**. Look with me into the Scriptures and I will show you **THE TENSES OF SALVATION**.

#### THE ETERNAL PAST

- I. Salvation is a work of the eternal past. The Holy Spirit tells us in <u>Hebrews 4:3</u> that all the works of God involved in this thing called salvation "were finished from the foundation of the world."
  - We were chosen in eternal love (Jer. 31:3).
  - We were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).
  - We were accepted in the Beloved and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him before the world began (Eph. 1:3-6).

(Ephesians 1:3-6) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

• We were named the children of God, justified, sanctified, preserved and glorified in Christ by God's decree in old eternity (Rom. 8:29-30; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Jude 1).

(Romans 8:29-30) "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) "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, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:"

(Jude 1:1) "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called."

#### THE HISTORIC PAST

- II. The Spirit of God also declares that our salvation was finished by the obedience of Christ as our Substitute in the historic past.
- A. When our Savior cried, "It is finished," it was finished (John 19:30; Heb. 9:12). Redemption and righteousness were performed by Christ and finished by Christ when he died as our Substitute upon the cursed tree.
  - He brought in everlasting righteousness for us.
  - He put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself.
  - He made us the righteousness of God.
  - When he arose from the dead, we rose with him.
  - When he sat down in heaven, we sat down with him.

## B. The experience of grace in salvation is also spoken of as something accomplished in the historic past.

When I say, "the experience of grace," I am talking about the experience of salvation, the experience of the new birth, the experience of receiving Christ. We who now live unto God have

been saved. There came a time when we, who were dead in trespasses and in sins, were born again by God's omnipotent mercy and grace, when we were called from death to life, by irresistible mercy, a time when we were given faith in Christ and sealed in him by the Spirit of God (Eph. 1:13-14; 2:1-9; Ps. 34:6).

(Ephesians 1:13-14) "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

(Ephesians 2:1-9) "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: (2) Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (7) That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast."

(Psalms 34:1-8) "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth. (2) My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad. (3) O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. (4) I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. (5) They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. (6) This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles. (7) The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. (8) O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him."

## Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, we received the atonement, we received justification, and we received life eternal. Now we stand in grace experimentally (Rom. 4:25-5:11).

(Romans 4:25) "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

(Romans 5:1-11) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not

ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

#### **MUST BELIEVE**

If you would be justified before God in your soul, if you would be saved, if you would have Christ, you must believe on the Son of God. You must receive him (John 1:11-13).

(John 1:11-13) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Some men preach as if they are scared to death one of the non-elect might get saved! They throw up barbed wire, razor fences all around the gospel, doing everything they can to keep sinners from believing on the Son of God.

I never cease to be amazed that the heads of sinful men often swell with such dizziness, under the intoxication of heart-pride, that they imagine themselves smarter than God and presume to assert that that the very language of Holy Scripture is heretical and blasphemous, if not qualified by their own "explanations." Recently, an imaginary theologian who thinks he has come to "new light" has vehemently asserted that anyone who uses the terms "saving faith" and "effectual faith" is a blaspheming heretic. Were his assertions not so serious and deluding, they would be laughable.

#### **OUR SAVIOR'S WORDS**

Would you like to hear what the Lord Jesus said to sinners in his day who trusted him?

#### • To the Woman with an issue of blood he said...

(Matthew 9:22) "But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."

(Mark 5:34) "And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

(Luke 8:48) "And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

## • To the Woman of Canaan he said...

(Matthew 15:28) "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

#### • **To Blind Bartimaeus** he said...

(Mark 10:52) "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."

#### • To Another Blind Man he said...

(Luke 18:42) "And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee."

### • To the Woman Who Forgiven Much he said...

(Luke 7:50) "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

#### • To the Leper Who was Healed he said...

(Luke 17:19) "And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

#### **GOD'S GIFT**

We recognize and rejoice in the fact that faith in Christ is the gift and operation of God the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:8-9; Col. 1:12). No sinner can or will believe on the Son of God, except God the Holy Spirit graciously causes him to do so by omnipotent, effectual grace (John 5:40; 6:37, 44; Ps. 65:4; 110:3). Every gospel preacher proclaims, and every saved sinner knows, that it is Christ (the solitary object of our faith) who has redeemed, justified, and saved us by free grace alone. He has reconciled us to our God.

But <u>faith in Christ is not a passive thing</u>. In regeneration we are as passive as a child in birth. But being born of God faith in Christ is as active as a newborn baby crying to breathe and nursing at its mother's breast.

Yet the Word of God plainly declares that we receive the atonement by faith in Christ (Rom. 5:10-11). We have the peace of complete justification and reconciliation to our God, by faith in Christ. Yes, faith in Christ is effectual and saving in the experience of it. — "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

#### **OUR FAITH**

Faith in Christ is not a notion, or a doctrine, or a principle. It is the heart confidence of every needy sinner who looks to Christ as his only Savior that causes him to confess, "My Lord, and my God" (John 20:28). Yes, it is God's gift and God's operation in us. Faith is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23). Yet, it is our faith. If God gave it to me, that makes it mine.

#### **NECESSARY FAITH**

The breath in my lungs is God's gift. He enables me to breathe. Yet, it is my breath and my breathing that is the evidence that God still gives me life. And the breathing of my body is as necessary to my living as God's gift of life. The two cannot be separated. If you doubt that, try putting a plastic bag over your face and see if you can live without breathing!

So it is with faith. We "are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). The Holy Spirit tells us plainly that the faith you have by his grace is "your faith in Christ" (Eph. 1:15; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2:5). It is God's gift; and because God gave it to you, it is "your faith."

And "your faith in Christ" is just as necessary, just as vital to your everlasting salvation, and just as precious (2 Pet. 1:1), as God's decree of election, Christ's accomplished redemption, and the Holy Spirit's effectual call. — "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" (Heb. 11:6).

#### TWO QUESTIONS

Do you, like the Philippian jailer of old, ask, "What must I do to be saved?" I do not hesitate to answer with Paul and Silas, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:30-31). Do not allow anyone to put you looking to yourself, and your experience. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and salvation is yours.

Do you ask, "How can I know that I am saved?" Answer this one question — "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (John 9:35) It does not matter whether you can answer "What did you know when you first professed faith in Christ?" or "Was the man preaching a sound gospel preacher?" or "When did you believe?" Those questions are totally irrelevant. This is the only question to be answered — "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" If you now trust the Lord Jesus Christ, salvation is yours.

As for those imaginary theologians who are offended by these things, as far as I am concerned, if men find the language of Holy Scripture offensive, I do not hesitate to offend them. As **Bro. Gary Shepard** put it, "It is not blasphemy to say what God has said. It is blasphemy to replace what God has said with the words and wisdom of man. What He says plainly is what He means and all else is blasphemy!" Be assured, that which men call "new light" is old satanic darkness!

(Psalms 126:1-3) "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. (2) Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. (3) The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

#### THE PRESENT TENSE

III. This thing called salvation is frequently spoken of in the present tense. We who trust Christ are being saved. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:18 that the preaching of the gospel is "unto us who are being saved" the power of God. In Romans 13:11 we read, "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Yes, I have been saved; and I am being saved. I have come to Christ; and I am coming to Christ — ("To whom coming" 1 Pet. 2:4). I am being saving in this sense — I am "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5).

- Kept From Temptation
- Kept In the Midst of Temptation
- Kept In All My Trials
- Restored From All My Falls
- Continually Forgiven of All My Sins

(1 John 1:9) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(1 John 2:1-2) "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: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."

(Lamentations 3:21-26) "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. (22) It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (23) They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. (24) The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (25) The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. (26) It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."

We rejoice in that which the Lord our God has done for us and in us. But, we rejoice to know that his work for us and in us is not over yet. There is more yet to come, more certain to come. It is written, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

#### THE FUTURE TENSE

IV. The Scriptures speak often of our salvation in the future tense too.

Truly, with regard to this matter of our salvation, "the best is yet to come." There is a very real sense in which the salvation of our souls is a salvation yet to be revealed.

(1 Peter 1:3-9) "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, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) 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: (8) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Let me talk to you just a little about this future tense of our salvation. Obviously, I cannot say much about because I do not yet know much about it; but I know a little.

#### A. **Soon, I will drop this robe of flesh, and live.** — Then, I shall be saved.

(2 Corinthians 5:1-9) "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: (3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (4) For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (5) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. (6) Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (7) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) (8) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (9) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

For the unbeliever death is a horrible thing. For the unbeliever, anything short of death is mercy. But, for the believer death is a great blessing.

<u>John Trapp</u> wrote, "To those that are in Christ death is but the day-break of eternal brightness; not the punishment of sin, but the period of sin. It is but a sturdy porter opening the door of eternity, a rough passage to eternal pleasure."

For us death is not a thing to be feared, but anticipated. Why should Israel be afraid to cross the swelling Jordan into the land of promise, with the ark of God before them? Believers do not die in the sense that others do. Our Lord said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

- To the ungodly, death is the penalty of sin; but to the believer it is just a change of location.
- Death to the wicked is the execution of justice, but to the believer it is a deliverance from sin.
- To the worldling death is the beginning of sorrows, but to the believer it is admission into glory.
- To the rebel death is imprisonment, but to the believer it is freedom.

### 1. <u>Death will bring us into the presence of many friends</u>.

Death takes a wife from her husband, a child from its mother, and a father from his family. We cheer ourselves, however, with the prospect of a happy reunion in glory.

It is true, above all else, that we will see Christ and be with Him. But it is also promised that we will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When we die we will leave some behind, but we are going up to "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven." And we shall know one another then, even better than we do now, even as the disciples knew Moses and Elijah on the mount.

#### 2. Dying in Christ means our most earnest and constant prayers will all be answered.

How often have we prayed to be free from our trials and temptations! When we close our eyes in death, we will leave this veil of tears behind.

- Does your soul long to be free from all sin? It will be when this body lies in the grave.
- Oh, how our hearts long to be more like Christ! And we shall be perfectly like Him in glory when we have put off this body of flesh.
- We pray for a brighter and clearer vision of Christ in His glory. After we are no longer hindered by the sight of things in this world, our eyes will be opened to see the Son of God as He is!

We need not to weep for those who have died in the Lord! We might well envy them, but not weep for them.

#### 3. The death of God's saints is accompanied with many comforts.

Death can never separate us from the love of Christ. He will go with us through the dark valley. I am sure that the believer never has such full revelations of Christ's love, grace, glory, and greatness as he is given in the hour of death. The Lord will make His people triumphant over the last enemy in that hour.

(Exodus 15:16) "Fear and dread shall fall upon them (all our enenies); by the greatness of thine arm they shall be *as* still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, *which* thou hast purchased."

# B. Then, when Christ comes again in his glorious second advent, our bodies shall be raised from the grave.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) 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. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

This body must die. But, blessed be God, we shall arise! This is my satisfying confidence: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me!" With such a hope, the grave causes me no alarm!

# C. When we are raised in incorruption and immortality, we shall be glorified forever with Christ, glorified with the very glory of Christ himself (John 17:5, 22).

(John 17:5) "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

(John 17:22) "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:"

What will that everlasting thing we call "glorification" be? What will heavenly glory be? No words of man can begin to describe that which awaits us. But we are told a few things about it.

- There will be no sorrow more or sighing forever!
- There will be no more sickness, bereavement, or death forever!
- There will be no more pain forever!
- There will be no more crying forever! "or God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!"
- There will be no more sin forever!
- And we "shall see his face" forever!

"We read of a place that's called heaven. It's made for the pure and the free. These truths in God's Word He hath given. — How beautiful heaven must be!

In heaven no drooping nor pining, No wishing for elsewhere to be. God's light is forever there shining — How beautiful heaven must be!

Pure waters of life there are flowing; And all who will drink may be free. Rare jewels of splendor are glowing — How beautiful heaven must be!

The angels so sweetly are singing Up there by the beautiful sea. Sweet chords from their gold harps are ringing. — How beautiful must be!

How beautiful heaven must be! Sweet home of the happy and free, Fair heaven of rest for the weary, How beautiful heaven must be!"

Yes, "we will rejoice in thy salvation!" May the Lord our God make his salvation yours for, Christ's sake.

Amen.

Danville — Sunday Morning — April 17, 2005 Date:

Fairmont Grace Church, Sylacauga, AL (04/22/05)

Todds RD Grace Church, Lexington, KY (04/27/05)

Tape # Y-68a Reading: Psalm 126