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STUDIES
IN
DOCTRINES

SALVATION AND SECURITY

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SALVATION - GOD'S PLAN AND PURPOSE

Salvation is the work of God to redeem man from his sin. Jesus Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13.8) and for the purpose of redemption of man by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. God's foreknowledge of man's inability to be holy even as He is Holy allowed Him to provide a way for man to be reconciled to God.

God's plan of salvation for man has several factors. These factors are first and foremost that God has only one plan. This plan has several parts, such as, it is God's plan; it is for man's reconciliation; it is God's conditions, not man's; and it is to be accomplished in the manner in which God prescribes. Being just one plan, it provides salvation for all people who will believe. It has no special conditions for certain people. It has no time barriers, since it spans man from the garden to the grave.

God's purpose is found in two parts; man's nature and what the Scripture has to say concerning God's purpose. In man's nature the tragedy of man's fall is that his nature changed from innocence and holiness to that of a sin nature. In the change God allowed man to retain spiritual knowledge of God and to know that apart from God man was of a sin nature and could not please God. Man was given knowledge of his sin and of his need to please God.

In the scriptures we find that God appeared to man to provide for him a way to acknowledge his sin. God provided punishment for disobedience of God's laws concerning sin and the Bible says "Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3.20). The scriptures also indicate that the coming of Christ for man's sin was foretold by the prophets and that through the prophets we can know God's purpose of redemption for man's sin.

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

The Doctrine of Election has been embroiled in extremes on either side of the issues or questions which this doctrine causes to surface. As part of God's salvation plan, man attempts to dissect every word and part, consequently, many questions arise. Some of the questions are stated below with Biblical responses.

The first question which needs to be asked is; What is election? According to Thiessen,

In its redemptive aspect, election means that sovereign act of God whereby he graciously chose in Jesus Christ for salvation all those whom he foreknew.¹

¹Henry C. Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 258.

As each question is posed it brings forth another supposition which must be answered.

What is the foreknowledge of God?

The foreknowledge of God is God foreseeing those who will respond to the gospel.

What is predestination and fore ordination? This answer involves the elect as those who accept God's Son for salvation. God's predestination and fore ordination accomplishes God's plan. According to the Apostle Paul in Romans 8.29 God "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son."

Is grace available to all men or just the elect?

Although man lost much of God's favor in the fall in the garden, God continued to provide man with the ability to choose God. This choice, God's grace was for all men and not because one man was something more than another. All had sinned.

Did Christ die for all?

Many scriptures point to this answer as an empathic "Yes!". Many text indicate that Christ died for everyone, that God was not willing that any should perish and salvation was offered for "whosoever".

Is God's call for everyone?

This seems to be an extension of the question above. But Titus 2.11 answers it thus "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men".

Is God arbitrary?

God in His foreknowledge knows how man will respond to the gospel, but God does not cause the decision. The response belongs to man.

Is God just?

God is just and has provided salvation by grace to all men and will restore everyone who response to His Son Jesus into the fellowship of God. Some men of course, by their own volition, reject God's favor.

THE CROSS - SALVATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

Salvation is God's way of providing a way for man to be reconciled to God. The two factors which are clear in the salvation process is that God provided a way to redeem man from sin both before and after the cross. God further emphasizes salvation as a finished work performed by God's Son to take away the sin of mankind.

Before the cross, the Bible is clear that a blood sacrifice was necessary on the part of sinners for the atonement of the penalty of death. The death of animal sacrifice in no way took away the sin of man, God merely accepted the blood sacrifices as a covering for sin until such time as Christ would bring sin and death into submission to Him. The New Testament provides an explanation for atonement and covering mentioned in the Old Testament. This passing over occurred for those who believed God would provide a sacrificial lamb to be slain for their sins. God sent His beloved Son to the cross to be that Lamb slain before the foundations of the earth for the sins of man both before and after the cross.

After the cross, stresses a finished or completed work. The Lamb has been slain. Mankind does not need to look forward to God providing an adequate sacrifice, because the sacrifice has been provided and Christ has shed His blood for the remission of sin. Individuals no longer need to bring an animal blood sacrifice to God for the remission of their sins. God has provided His own and most worthy sacrifice. Man only has to repent of his sin and turn to Jesus and believe that Christ has paid the ultimate price for man's sin. The finished work is not just a phrase used to conclude Jesus earthly mission. The phrase uttered by Jesus on the cross of Calvary was "It is finished" and represents Christ giving of Himself in man's place for the sin of the world. The finished work was that of the cross and was not finished until Jesus died. An understanding of the finished work is not sufficient to save man from his sin. It is necessary that man recognize that Jesus paid the ultimate price to ransom man from his sin and man must believe that Christ's death satisfies God's holy judgment against man for his sin. Once man believes in Christ's finished work on the cross, he should be justly overwhelmed that God would send His only begotten Son to pay the wages of sin, death for our salvation.

SOTERIOLOGY TERMS

Any discussion of Soteriology requires the understanding of such terms as call, repentance, faith, conversion, regeneration, adoption, redemption, assurance, and justification. These terms are discussed as follows:

Call.

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross for the sin of man. Call is that grace which is extended to man as an invitation to accept by faith God's plan of salvation in His Son Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2.8-10 states that this call is a gift of God.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man

should boast. For we are his workman-ship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Repentance

The Scripture stresses that salvation is accomplished in man after he repents. Paul indicated that repentance is of paramount importance. The Book of Matthew stresses that it is fundamental to faith "when you had seen it, repented, not afterward, that ye might believe him" Matt 21.32.

Repentance is a change of mind but must be considered as a complete change in an individual which consist of how he sees, feels and believes. Repentance as a change of the way man looks at sin is different. Man must see sin as something which is his and for which he is responsible unless God provides away for him to transfer that sin to another.

Repentance in man must also have some element of distress which can be recognized as regret for his sin and a true desire to be forgiven of his sin.

The third element is that action which makes confession of sin a desire to turn one's life over to God. True confession is accomplished by faith in God through Christ Jesus by acknowledging that forgiveness is nothing of ourselves.

Faith

Faith is the starting place for salvation and should be considered a most important concept within the area of conversion. The Bible says that we are saved by faith and that faith continues to keep us. Much is said about faith and how to live but the Bible says that "without faith it is impossible to please God."

Faith has no easy definition, since it is not a singular word in its usage. The word faith is used in many different context with many different meanings. In conversion, faith is used as a moving of the soul toward God. This faith requires according to Thiessen an involvement "in intellect, an emotional, and a volitional change."²

Conversion

Conversion is considered as man turning to God in response to the call to repent and accepting salvation through faith. Conversion is a complicated term which encompasses two other terms. The terms are repentance and faith.

Regeneration

Regeneration may have several definitions which can communicate its meaning but it is the exchanging of an old nature for a new nature. Regeneration is the new birth. Jesus talked about it as a need to be born again. Being born again is the beginning of a new creature in Christ Jesus.

²Thiessen, Lectures, 271.

Adoption

This Pauline doctrine is translated from the Greek as "placing as a son," a change from one's past position to a new position in Christ Jesus. This change is from an old family, the devil, to the new family of God. This adoption is necessary to make us sons of God.

Redemption

According to Ephesians 1.7 "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace". The definition therefore of redemption is the giving of Christ blood to ransom mankind from sin. The further need existed that a Holy God forgave mankind of his sins in light of the shed blood of Christ. God was able to redeem mankind because of His great riches, God's grace.

Assurance

It is important to distinguish between assurance and eternal security. Assurance is a realization within oneself that they possess salvation. That it is part of them and that they are complete in Christ, that they have an experience which assures them of a proper testimony of that assurance and that by faith they have assurance that they have accepted the promises of salvation. It can be described as the Spirit of God within each individual giving evidence of that indwelling which can only be described as a spirit presence thus, providing assurance of salvation.

Justification

Justification is the need for God to place a previous child of the devil and transgressors of God's laws into a right relationship with Him because man has believed in Jesus Christ. God declares man to be righteous because through man's new relationship with Jesus Christ man has a need for righteousness.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Biblical evidence of righteousness seems to be separated into four types. These are: The righteousness of God; Man's self-righteousness; God's imputed righteousness; and the righteousness giving by the Holy Spirit.

The Righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God is declared to be that which permits man to obtain a right relationship with God. Romans 1.17 declares that the righteousness of God is revealed by faith to those who will live by faith. Paul says that man can only be righteous in the sight of God by believing in God's provision of a sacrificial lamb to cover man's sin. In God's righteousness He provided a means whereby the sinner can obtain righteousness. This means is God's plan to save sinners by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Man's self-righteousness.

The Bible is extremely plain concerning man's righteousness. The Bible says that man's righteousness is as "filthy rags" in Isaiah 64.6. Man certainly thinks of himself as righteous but the Bible in Romans 3.9-18 declares that man is sinful and list many types of sin and behaviors which are present in man. Accordingly, Romans 3.10 states "There is none righteous," and God in His righteousness provided Jesus righteousness to cover man's need for righteousness.

God's Imputed Righteousness.

Man has a need for righteousness which can only be supplied by God. God imputes on all who believe the righteousness of Christ. This is accomplished because God accepts the sin offering paid by Christ for the whole world. This is only possible since Christ is worthy to be slain. By being saved man can be made righteous. Further, those saved become a part of Jesus. This becoming part of Jesus is called "union". The union takes place as man puts his faith and trust in Jesus and are saved. This is when man then becomes "in Him". Also, the Bible speaks of a covering which is provided. This covering according to Revelation 19.8 is a wedding garment which is the righteousness of God. Last, when one is said to be righteous then one is said to be justified since the words are the same usage in the New Testament. God seeing Christ righteousness covering man's sin justifies man bestows on man the merits of Christ. Man is then said to be "in Christ" and has been justified by faith in the sight of God on the basis of Christ imputed righteousness.

Righteousness giving by the Holy Spirit.

Truly born again, justified and righteous man will when filled with the Spirit of God exhibit works of righteousness. This is not a work for salvation doctrine, but a doctrine of salvation which gives evidence of righteousness in Christ by doing work which is recognizable as "fruits of the Spirit. A life that is changed by Christ and fill with the Spirit demonstrates the righteousness of God which is imputed to man in Christ by "walking not after the flesh but after the spirit".

SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

Two views of the "security of the believer" or "Can one who is saved be lost? exist. This is a vital view of one's salvation and one which has great impact on where one might spend eternity. Depending on one's view, it is a question that must be answered.

Can one who is saved, be lost again and again and again . . .?

The two opposing views are that of the Arminian view and the Calvinistic view. These views are so named because of the role each man played in the espousing of their beliefs.

Taking the Arminian view first seems appropriate since this view believes in a conditional security. The proponents of this view cite some eighty-five passages of scriptures to demonstrate that they have the correct view. The scripture being true and every man a liar must then speak for itself. There is no confusion in the scripture, but a confusion concerning the interpretation of cited passages. The cited passages raise questions like how to identify one who is really saved; man's works; superficial belief; rewards; fellowship; chastened; fallen; out of context; misinterpretations; and who does the work for salvation.

The Calvinistic view or the view of one saved always saved has as its basis scripture passages which are plain and clearly interpretable without danger of previous cited confusions.

Four positions have been established for each member of the Godhead in relationship to the security of the believer. True believers have eternal security because:

The Father.

He provides a promise of redemption. John 3.16 and other passages describe the promise as "whosoever believeth . . . have everlasting life."

He has the power to do what He promises. Jude 24 says,

Unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

He is able to fulfill His purpose. Romans 5.8,9 clearly states that,

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

He provides the righteousness necessary for redemption. God forgives man's sin on the basis of Christ finished work on the cross. Christ righteousness provides man's eternal security. Not anything man can do by works is sufficient for salvation or the forgiveness of sin.

The Son.

He gave His life for man and His death on the cross covered all sin. Romans 8.1 is testimony to Christ saving and keeping power. "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit".

His resurrection assures eternal security. Jesus conquered death and for those "in Christ" death is no longer a threat. They are covered by grace and have inherited eternal life.

He is our advocate before God the Father.

For each believer Christ shows His Father that the debt of sin has been paid at Calvary and that true believers are no longer guilty. This assurance of an advocate is found in 1 John 2.1 "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous".

He is our intercessor. He intercedes for "the weakness, ignorance, and immaturity of the believer - things concerning which there is no guilt."³

The Spirit.

His work of regeneration is irreversible. 1 Peter 1.23 assures irreversibility. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

His indwelling of believers is forever.

Titus 3.4-6 says that "according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The Baptism of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit places us "in Christ" and 1 Corinthians 12.13 declares "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body".

The Sealing of the Spirit.

Eternal security of the believer is not a work of man but is a work of God. The Spirit keeps the believer to the end. According to Ephesians 1.13,14 you "were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. . . until the redemption".

It can be concluded from this body of scriptures sighted that eternal security is not a work of man but of God. Man's eternal keeping of those who have believed unto salvation has not been trusted to man. God the Father does all the keeping by the Spirit "in Christ Jesus".

SANCTIFICATION

According to Chafer the New Testament doctrine of sanctification falls into three divisions. These divisions are "Positional sanctification, experiential sanctification and ultimate sanctification."⁴

Positional Sanctification.

Positional sanctification has nothing to do with the saint and everything to do with the Savior. It is the shed blood of Christ that provides the separation unto Christ of every true believer. No matter what each saint's gifts or use of gifts to demonstrate their righteousness each saint has the same position before God. They are sanctified in Jesus Christ.

³Lewis Sperry Chafer, Major Bible Themes Revised by John F Walvoord. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 226.

⁴Chafer, Major, 206.

Experiential Sanctification.

Experiential sanctification differs from positional sanctification in that positional sanctification is wholly of the Lord, whereas, experiential sanctification is of the believer. This may be how he yields to the Lord, or his ability to shun sin, or even his growth in the Lord. His yielding to God's indwelling of the Holy Spirit provides a greater peace and joy because he believes he has been set aside. One can be set free from the shackles of sin and have victory over sin by the power of the Spirit.

Following the Word of God, knowing of Christ interceding, and possessing the power to put sin out of your life by the indwelling spirit are three examples of God's keeping power of His saints from sin.

To grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord is Christian growth and is demonstrated as we attempt to be more like Jesus. Our changing lives experience experiential sanctification when we strive to be holy and set apart even as God is Holy.

Ultimate Sanctification.

Being covered by Christ righteousness and striving to live righteously will some day become ultimate sanctification when by the power of God we will be changed to true righteousness in that we will be "like him".

Ultimate sanctification is again as free as salvation and is a continuing demonstration of God's saving grace. We who are unworthy are made righteous by Christ blood even to being brought before all mighty God as a spotless bride. A life of power over sin is given by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Simultaneously, believers are provided with provisional sanctification, experiential sanctification and ultimate sanctification.

CONCLUSION

Individuals who are saved should possess a fear and love to serve our Savior with all their hearts. Christians should draw on the Spirit of God within them to live a life which demonstrates sanctification and power over sin which the indwelling Spirit provides. Recognizing one's uniqueness in Christ Jesus believers should especially strive to put sin as far from them as possible. Turning to the Spirit provides the power of experiential sanctification. Christians are provided with the ability to live as if they are soon to receive ultimate sanctification.

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