

THE SALVATION IN CHRIST

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The subject of salvation is viewed by the voice of inspiration as something to be “obtained.” Paul wrote to the evangelist Timothy, “Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (II Tim. 2:10). The Bible discusses many features of salvation that draw the reality and meaning of the subject clearly into view.

Saving Lord

The God of heaven is the saving Lord. Peter proclaimed, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9). God is referred to as the “God of our salvation” in Psalm 68:19. “Salvation is of the Lord,” declared Jonah from the whale’s belly (Jon. 3:2; Matt. 12:40). Known all too well is the answer “no where” to the refrain of the beautiful Christian hymn “Where Could I Go but to the Lord?”

Saving Scriptures

God’s planning (Eph. 3:8-11), Christ’s performing (Heb. 10:7), and the Holy Spirit’s revealing (I Cor. 2:9-10) have brought about “the salvation in Christ.” The entire human family can know about it because it stands unassailably codified in the eternal word of the living Lord (Psa. 119:89; Matt. 24:35). James wrote, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas. 1:21).

Saving Gospel

The gospel message is God’s power unto salvation, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). The sinner cannot be redeemed without sufficient power exerted upon the sinful condition of the soul to save him or her from spiritual ruin and death. That saving power is the gospel of Christ. The entire gospel system presented in the New Testament stands upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory

what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:1-4).

Saving Grace

Another feature of “the salvation in Christ” is God’s amazing grace. Saving grace is made known by “the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). In his word he said, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us . . . 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” (Eph. 2:4, 8-9). Four kinds of works are mentioned in the New Testament. One, works of self-aggrandizement, “But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi” (Matt. 23:5-7). Two, works legitimate under the Mosaic system, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16). Three, works of human merit, which are those works being considered in the passages initially presented from Ephesians 2:4-9. And, four, works of faith, “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (Jas. 2:18-20). The recipient of “the salvation in Christ” must be “rich in good works” in order to be saved by grace (I Tim. 6:18).

Saving Church

“The church doesn’t save you” is a statement often made today. Usually those uttering it mean that it makes no difference concerning the church in which one has membership or the church is not crucial or vital to “the salvation in Christ.” None of the features mentioned in this study unconditionally save. Obedience to God is mandatory. The writer of Hebrews said, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9). The truth is

that no one is saved outside of the church of Christ because the church is “in Christ,” “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom. 12:4-5). The one body is “in Christ” and the one body is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 16:16). Paul wrote, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). All the saved are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). The church is an integral feature in “the salvation in Christ.”