

What Does It Mean to Be Saved?

By Elder Herb Hatfield

During a recent discussion with the Historic Baptist Symposium, I received this message from Brother Herb Hatfield of Aberdeen, Mississippi. The truths presented are scriptural and valuable. After reading the message, I asked Brother Hatfield for permission to copy it as an article in the Bruin Park Missionary Baptist Notes. He graciously gave his consent. Here is his article, and I quote:

"Brother John you have asked the question a couple of times 'what does it mean to be saved?' I don't know if I can give you the answer that you are looking for, but I will try to give you my understanding of the subject. Of course we all have lexicons and Strong, and Vine, or Young so to save time I will not quote these unless I must.

I do believe that salvation is a much broader subject than what many make it to be. Some seem to limit it to regeneration, justification, and glorification. I believe that Romans 8:29-30 does give us a proper description of what salvation entails. Our salvation began in eternity past and reaches into eternity future. It is sure and certain. Not one of those whom God foreknew in the covenant of grace shall fail to be glorified. I believe they **all** (including those elect infants that die in infancy) shall be effectually called by the Holy Spirit and regenerated, caused to hear the gospel of their salvation, and caused to trust Christ as their Saviour.

The elect (those who do not die in infancy) when they are regenerated, will believe the gospel, repent of their sins, and begin living a life of Christ in them. We call this conversion. They begin to 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (II Peter 3:18). This growth is by the grace of God working in us to conform us to the mind and image of Christ by which grace '*we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord:*' (II Corinthians 3:18). It is this same grace that teaches (trains and disciplines) '*us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*' (I will not quote the rest of these verses for the sake space.) (Titus 2:11-14).

My understanding of the meaning of being saved is this whole process by which God in His marvelous grace is delivering His elect from the judgment of their sins (at the cross), from the power of sin (regeneration) from the guilt and practice of sin in their heart and lives (conversion) and from the sting sin (their glorification). The particular meaning of the word "saved" seems to be dictated by the context in which it is being used.

Peter told those whose hearts had been pricked that they should '*repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for* (eis in the accusative case meaning 'in view of or because of' see Matthew 12:41) *the remission of sins,*' (Acts 2:38); and then in verse 40, He says '*Save yourselves from this untoward (crooked, perverse) generation.*' I don't believe that was something they could do on their own and thereby merit some saving benefit from God, but rather as they, by the grace of God, were made to believe Peter's message and to obey His instructions, they would be "saved" from the crooked and perverse generation in which

they lived. I believe that the word "save" here has reference to the impact that the grace of God has on our lives in this world in which we live. It saves us from its wicked and sinful practices. So Paul says in I Corinthians 1:18 '*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are (being) saved it is the power of God.*' We '*run not with them to the same excess of riot,*' (1 Peter 4:4).

In I Timothy 4:16 Paul told Timothy that he should '*take heed unto thyself, and unto doctrine; continue in them for in doing this thou shall both save thyself and, them that hear thee.*' Certainly Paul was not telling Timothy that he could redeem himself from his sins, nor get born-again, nor deliver himself from pending judgment, but that by heeding the teachings of the Word of God, he would save himself from the false teachings and practices of the world's religion and the many other devices of Satan. So every time the word is used it does not mean to get born-again.

I believe I have been "saved" many times. I believe that by the grace of God I was "saved" in eternity past when God chose me in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4; II Timothy 1:9). I believe that my being saved was secured by death of Christ on the cross. I believe that I was saved from the power of sin over me when I was regenerated, that I am saved from the guilt and influence of sin in my life as I believe and obey the Word of God. I believe that I have been saved from many false teachings of Satan that lay hold upon so much of the religious world today such as Arminianism, Christmas, Easter, and many other false teachings and practices. I hope to be saved from the power of the grave over my mortal body. All of this is by the grace of God.

I believe that Cornelius and the Ethiopian were born-again believers in the Lord God of Israel. They were Gentiles who had become Jewish proselytes and were worshippers of the God of the Old Testament. Like many others of that day, they needed to hear the good news that Messiah had come, died, and rose again for their justification. God sent Philip to preach the gospel to the Ethiopian and Peter to preach the gospel to Cornelius, not so that they might be born again, but so that their regenerated hearts and ears might hear the good news, believe it, and thereby be saved from their bondage of law keeping.

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