

Salvation: Present and Future

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THERE are some scriptural expressions that have been so misused by ignorant and fanatical persons that they have almost fallen into disrepute among sober-minded people. One of these terms is the word “saved,” as applied to an individual in this present life.

In a certain class of revivals it is very common to hear persons who have been wrought up to the proper pitch of excitement, testify that they are saved. The more that can be induced to rise and say with greater or less vehemence, “I am saved,” or who in response to the question, will hold up their hands to that effect, the greater the list of “converts” the revivalist has to report.

Now we earnestly deprecate any such methods as this; yet simply because the term “saved” is abused, we ought not to reject it, any more than we would refuse to believe in present conversion, because the term is used by many people who have not the slightest idea of its meaning.

Present Salvation

The word “saved” is frequently used in the Bible in a sense similar to that of “conversion.” Paul says:

1 Corinthians 1

¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Here it is used in the present tense, and has no reference to future salvation. Again he says:

2 Timothy 1

⁸ Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

⁹ Who has saved us, and called us with a 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.

To the same intent the word is used in:

Titus 3

⁴ But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men appeared,

⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

⁶ Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Other texts might be quoted, but these are sufficient. They show that when one has been forgiven for all his past transgressions,—when the burden of sin that clung to him as a body of death, has been removed,—and a new heart has been given him,—a heart loving righteousness and hating iniquity,—it is proper to say that he is saved.

Future Salvation

The trouble arises from confounding that salvation with eternal salvation. There is a salvation which is wholly future, as is evident from the following texts:

Matthew 24

¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Here we learn that those who are converted—saved—must endure to the end if they would be saved.

1 Peter 1

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has 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 fades 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.

Here again we learn that at “the last time” a salvation is to be brought to those who, having a hope in God through the resurrection of Jesus, endure, through the grace of God, to the end. There is a possibility that this present salvation may not be lasting, that those who have “tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (*Hebrews 6:5-6*), may fall away; but the salvation “to be revealed at the last time” cannot be lost, as is seen by the following text:

Isaiah 45

¹⁷ But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; you shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

From this we learn of a salvation that is to be everlasting, that will be shared by Israel—all who overcome. This is the salvation that is to be revealed at the last time.

The Connection

Now, what connection have the two? Simply this, the first is a preparation for the second. One is salvation in the kingdom of grace, and the other is salvation in the kingdom of glory. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, prays that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing:

Colossians 1

¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;

¹³ Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Here is present salvation, and translation into a kingdom; yet it is not until Christ comes “the second time without sin unto salvation” (*Hebrews 9:28*), sitting upon the throne of his glory, accompanied by all his holy angels, that he says to the righteous:

Matthew 25

³⁴ Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Now, of those who have been delivered from the powers of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s grace, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” only those will have an entrance ministered unto them “abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” who heed the exhortation, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (*2 Peter 1:10-11*), so that they do not fall.

The kingdom of grace receives subjects to be fitted for the kingdom of glory. It saves men from the guilt and the love of sin, clothing them with the divine nature, so that when the Lord shall come in his glory, they may be clothed upon with immortality, which will then be the only thing lacking.

But none will share this glory who indulge in vain boasting, or who imagine that a work just begun for them is already done.

1 Corinthians 10

¹² Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

