

Do You Understand the
Three Tenses of Salvation?

SALVATION
IN
THREE TIME
ZONES



DENNIS M. ROKSER

**SALVATION
IN
THREE TIME
ZONES**

**Do You Understand the Three
Tenses of Salvation?**

Dennis M. Rokser

Salvation in Three Time Zones: Do You Understand the Three Tenses of Salvation?

© 2013 Dennis M. Rokser

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as provided for by USA copyright law, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Duluth Bible Church
201 W. Saint Andrews St.
Duluth, MN 55803
U.S.A.
(218) 724-5914

INTRODUCTION

HAS ANYONE EVER ASKED YOU: “Are you saved?” If you have been asked that question and have never trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you probably answered with, “I don’t know” or “I hope so” or perhaps with a definite “No.” On the other hand, if you have trusted in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross and received the gift of eternal life, you should be able to confidently announce an emphatic “Yes” to this important question. But did you realize that if you have believed in Christ as Savior and clearly understood the teaching of the Scriptures, you could answer this same question with the threefold answer: “Yes, I *have been* saved; yes, I *am being* saved; and yes, I *will be* saved.” Confused? Let me explain as we study and search the Scriptures together about *salvation in three time zones*.

WHAT DOES “SALVATION” MEAN?

The biblical words “saved,” “save,” and “salvation” are English translations from the Hebrew language of the Old Testament and from the Greek language of the New Testament. The various forms of the word “salvation” repeatedly carry with them the concepts of “deliverance; safety; rescue; help; preservation; release; and victory.” Even our English dictionary states that salvation is “deliverance from the power and effects of sin; preservation from ignorance or illusion; deliverance from danger

or difficulty.”¹ Thus, if you were asked, “Are you saved?” a legitimate question would be: “What salvation are you referring to?”

- If you were drowning, to be “saved” would mean for you to be rescued *from* the water *to* safety in a boat or on a shore.
- If you were facing financial ruin, to be “saved” would mean for you to be delivered *from* poverty *to* ongoing monetary prosperity.
- If your marriage was saved, it would mean that it was delivered *from* the ruin of divorce and preserved *to* ongoing harmony.

The Scriptures also repeatedly teach that salvation is *from* some object or state *to* another object or state. This usually involves being saved from physical or spiritual peril to a state of wellbeing or blessedness. The context determines the specific salvation being referred to in each passage.

THE OCCURENCES OF “SALVATION” IN THE BIBLE

It can be clearly demonstrated that “salvation” is a dominant theme in the written Word of God. The concept of salvation occurs over 600 times in the Bible. A sampling of this can be seen by noting the number of times the following words occur on the pages of Scripture (following the New King James Version): “salvation” (162x); “save” (160x); “saves” (6x); “saved” (101x); “saving” (6x); “Savior” (36x); “saviors” (1x); “rescue” (11x); “rescued” (4x); “rescues” (1x); “preserve” (35x); and “preserved” (16x). Thus, it is obvious that the concept of “salvation” is thoroughly expressed through a variety of terms in the Old and New Testaments.

¹ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

God wants you as a student of the Bible to “study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15). God’s Word requires that you handle it accurately if you are going to properly interpret and discern its true meaning. Careful observation and interpretation are needed to arrive at the divinely-intended meaning of each text of Scripture as desired by the original author of each biblical book.

It is also important to remember that the Bible correctly understood and accurately handled never contradicts itself. All apparent contradictions in the Bible reflect a problem of some kind with the *reader’s* skewed understanding of a verse. The text of Scripture itself is never the problem, for the Bible itself states in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” This is helpful and important to remember when studying the truth of “salvation” in the Bible since the nature and usage of “salvation” varies from passage to passage.

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

If you are going to arrive at the correct interpretation of the Bible that the Holy Spirit supernaturally directed the original authors to write (1 Cor. 2:12-13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21), you must study carefully the *context* of the passage under examination. This involves studying the verses before and after the passage you are considering in order to ascertain the subject, flow of thought, meaning, and usage of the words being examined. In addition, the broader context looks at the big picture, such as who wrote the book being studied, when it was written, who is being addressed, and so forth. Recognizing the context of a verse is absolutely crucial to its proper interpretation. For example, suppose your mate would say to you, “That

is garbage.” Would you know what he or she was referring to without the context? Is it the trash that needs to be collected? Is it a television show you are watching? Is it an inaccurate statement that someone has uttered? Apart from specifically knowing the context of the statement, you are left to guess at the meaning of “That is garbage” and your conclusion will likely be wrong.

USAGE OF A WORD IN ITS CONTEXT

While a word’s *etymology* or root meaning plays an important part in understanding the concept being communicated by the word, its *usage* in a particular *context* ultimately determines its exact meaning. A single word may have a variety of meanings and usages, but a careful examination of the context where it is found clarifies which of those meanings is intended. This is true with the word “salvation.” Depending on the context, salvation may refer to either *physical* or *spiritual* deliverance, with the latter being deliverance from sin’s *penalty, power, or presence*. But before addressing the vital subject of salvation in these three tenses, physical salvation must be distinguished from spiritual salvation.

PHYSICAL SALVATION

When the principle of usage and context is consistently and correctly applied to the term “salvation,” several significant facts and features about salvation begin to surface. First, regarding the *nature* of salvation, you will observe that there is a distinction between physical and spiritual salvation in both the Old and New Testaments.

In the Old Testament, salvation primarily refers to deliverance from *physical* danger, such as deliverance from one’s *physical* enemies (Pss. 7:1; 17:7; 37:40; 44:6; 59:2; 138:7), *physical* troubles (Isa. 37:35; 46:7), or even *physical* death (Dan. 3:17).

While this emphasis on *physical* salvation in the Old Testament does not remain the primary emphasis in the New Testament, the New Testament at times still employs this usage of *physical* salvation in some passages (Matt. 8:24-25; 27:40; Mark 3:4; Acts 27:20, 31, 42-43; Jam. 5:15).

SPIRITUAL SALVATION

When one carefully examines and exegetes the New Testament, the most common meaning and usage of “salvation” and its derivatives is by far that of *spiritual* deliverance. The reason for this change in emphasis from the Old Testament seems to clearly involve the coming of Jesus Christ who came “to *seek* and to *save* that which is lost” (Luke 19:10).

FOR THE UNBELIEVER, GOD’S PROMISE OF ETERNAL SALVATION IS (AND CAN ONLY BE) FUTURE UNTIL HE BELIEVES IN CHRIST ALONE

For unbelievers without Jesus Christ as their Savior, whether they are immoral, moral, or religious sinners, God offers salvation from a Hell they deserve to a Heaven they don’t. This, of necessity, must be a *future* salvation since they have never been saved. This is how the term “saved” is used in Jesus Christ’s conversation with a religious man named Nicodemus:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through

Him *might be saved*. (John 3:14-16, emphasis added)

Jesus Christ had previously told this self-righteous, religious sinner:

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)

Having explained that Nicodemus needed a spiritual birth from God just as he had experienced a physical birth from his parents (John 3:4-8), Christ begins to explain to him three essential truths about the new birth.

1) The New Birth Is through CHRIST Alone. (John 3:9-13)

In order to be born again, a lost sinner must come to grips with who Jesus Christ is. Jesus Christ is “He who came down from heaven” (v. 13). He is God who became a man. Apart from the incarnation of the Son of God, salvation would have been impossible.

2) The New Birth Is through the CROSS Alone. (John 3:14)

In order to be born again, a lost sinner must come to understand what Jesus Christ did for him. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (3:14). Since Nicodemus knew well the Old Testament, Christ’s illustration from Numbers 21 concerning the brazen serpent would be clearly understood.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze ser-

pent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. (Num. 21:8-9)

Though the penalty for sin before a holy God is death, God's grace made a means of deliverance or salvation for these guilty, serpent-bitten, rebellious Israelites through the lifted-up bronze serpent. And just like the brazen serpent had to be lifted up on a pole, so Jesus Christ needed to be lifted up on the cross for the sins of all mankind (John 12:32-34).

Christ's death for our sins is a once-for-all, non-repeatable event as He paid for all sin, for all mankind, for all time. Thus, no amount of good works or church rituals can atone for man's sin since Jesus Christ triumphantly cried out on the cross, "IT IS FINISHED" (John 19:30), indicating that your sins were paid in full by Jesus Christ.

3) The New Birth Is through FAITH IN CHRIST Alone. (John 3:15-18)

In order to be born again, a lost sinner must trust in Jesus Christ alone for his/her salvation. Relating to Christ's analogy of the lifted-up brazen serpent from Numbers 21, John 3:15 goes on to explain "*that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*"

- The **extent** of the offer - "*that whoever.*" God's offer of salvation is available to all.
- The **condition** of the offer - "*believes.*" This refers to one's willingness to rely on, depend on, or trust. There is nothing more required of you.
- The **object** of the offer - "*in Him.*" Your object of faith must be in the Lord Jesus Christ alone as He alone died for your sins and rose again.

- The **result** of the offer – “*should not perish but have eternal life.*” Instead of perishing in Hell, the believer in Christ now has eternal life. The word “*have*” is a present tense verb indicating a present possession, not a future attainment. It belongs to the believer *now*. The phrase, “*eternal life,*” occurs 16 times in John, setting forth a *right relationship with God* which will last *forever* and can *never* be lost.

To underscore the one human condition for the new birth, the word “*believe*” is found seven times in John 3 (vv. 12 [2x], 15, 16, 18 [3x]). This is consistent with numerous other verses in John’s Gospel which stipulate that faith alone in Christ alone results in eternal life (John 1:12-13; 5:24; 6:40). John 3:16 goes on to say, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*” This great verse has five parts to it:

- God’s part..... *For God so loved the world*
- God’s part..... *that He gave His only begotten Son,*
- Your part *that whoever believes in Him*
- God’s part..... *should not perish*
- God’s part..... *but have everlasting life.*

This truth must have astonished Nicodemus who had a religion of “do” instead of “done,” or “faith *plus works*” instead of “faith *plus nothing.*” The possession and assurance of eternal life is based solely on the person of Jesus Christ (God who became a man) and His finished work (His death for our sins and resurrection) coupled with the unfailing promises of God’s Word.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, *that you may know that you have eternal life.* (1 John 5:9-13, emphasis added)

To emphasize further God's purpose in sending Jesus Christ to earth, verse 17 says,

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him *might be saved.* (John 3:17, emphasis added)

Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, who came not to condemn but to save. In the context of verse 17, the term "saved" refers to not perishing eternally in Hell, since the terms "perish" and "everlasting life" both occur in verse 16. This verse clearly links being "born again" (vv. 3, 7), and "eternal life" (vv. 15-16), with being "saved" (v. 17). Like with physical birth, being "born again," receiving "eternal life," and being "saved" happen at a moment of time and are all onetime, non-repeatable, unchangeable realities. Salvation, just like the new birth, is a work of God for man, not a work of man for God. The cross-work of Christ paid 100 percent of the penalty for our sins. Salvation is not an 80-percent God, 20-percent man proposition. Christ's work accomplished it all. Jesus Christ's

finished work on the cross for all your sins is not merely *needed* to save you; it is *enough* to save you! Now it is simply a matter of whether you as a helpless, hopeless and Hell-bound sinner will choose to rely on the finished cross-work of Christ alone to save you. Does it really matter? Yes – eternally! For a failure to trust Christ alone means you remain condemned before God.

He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:18)

What ultimately condemns sinners to Hell? Is it their personal sins? No! For Jesus Christ fully paid for all sin at Calvary. What a righteous God cannot tolerate is one's rejection of His Son through unbelief.

Dear friend, if you have never rested your eternal destiny upon the truthfulness of God's Word, which promises you eternal life the very moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work to save you, why not receive this gift of eternal life RIGHT NOW by trusting the work of Jesus Christ alone and not your religious works to save you? God always keeps His Word!

IS SALVATION FROM HELL REALLY THAT SIMPLE AND SURE?

And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." (Acts 16:30-31)

Paul and Silas's scriptural answer to the jailer's crucial question is marked by tremendous clarity, simplicity, and certainty. The subject of this verse is "you," a sinner (before a holy God) who senses your need to be saved

from a Hell you deserve to a Heaven you don't. Otherwise, there is no reason to ask the question, "What must I do to be saved?" This jailer obviously possessed some prior knowledge of God and a biblical frame of reference to even ask this pertinent and personal question.

The one and only condition for eternal salvation is also emphatically stated, namely, you need to "believe" (*pisteuō*), trust in, or rely on someone else to save (passive voice) you, since you cannot save yourself by your good works or religious rituals (Eph. 2:8-9). And for you to "believe" (aorist tense – completed action) involves a choice (active voice), and all of this is absolutely necessary (imperative mood) to be saved. What simplicity!

Keep in mind that this one condition for salvation is in contrast to the erroneous thinking of the jailor who asked, "What must I *do* to be saved?" (16:30). The word "do" (*poieō*) is in the present tense, denoting that the unsaved jailor thought he needed to repeatedly do some kind of religious works or rituals in order to be saved and go to Heaven. This is typical of most people who naturally think, or have been religiously taught, that salvation is an earned reward for good people and good works, rather than an undeserved gift for unworthy sinners.

And who must you believe, trust, or rest upon in order to be saved? Who must be your sole Object of faith? He is "the Lord Jesus Christ." Whenever you hear a name, you mentally seek to answer or analyze at least two questions, "Who is He?" and "What did He do?" A simple name without a context or frame of reference is meaningless. This is why we read in the very next verse of this evangelistic narrative that Paul and Silas gave an explanation of the Gospel. "*Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house*" (Acts 16:32).

Dear reader, embodied in the name of the "*Lord Jesus Christ*" are the wonderful truths that He is the eternal God who became fully human and died for your sins and rose again (Rom. 1:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). He is the one mediator

between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5) who gave His life a ransom payment for all mankind (1 Tim. 2:6). And this good news includes *you*. What clarity!

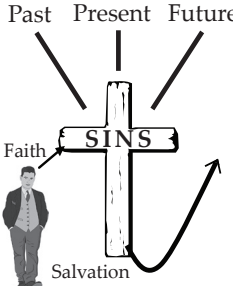
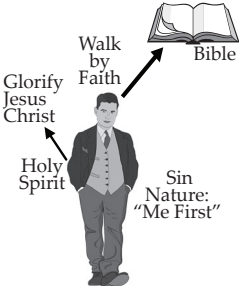

In addition, what blessing or result is attached to this Gospel explanation and invitation when it says, “and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31b)? God promises that as a result of believing in Jesus Christ He will save you (future tense - passive voice); and this is God’s guarantee or promise (indicative mood) to you. There are no further conditions attached! This is an offer of God’s grace with absolute assurance of eternal salvation and security expressed. What certainty!

For the unbeliever, all promises of eternal salvation that are conditioned on faith alone in Christ alone are of necessity in a *future* tense since salvation is not yet his or her personal possession. But like the Philippian jailor in Acts 16, this can all change TODAY. If, right now, you place your faith in the only Savior God ever provided – the Lord Jesus Christ – you will receive the guaranteed result of faith alone in Christ – “you shall be saved”! If you have never trusted in Christ alone for your salvation, will you do so today?

For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor. 6:2)

Other examples of a certain, future salvation from the penalty of sin which is offered to the unbeliever are in Mark 10:24-26; Luke 8:12; 9:56; 18:26; John 3:17; 5:34; 10:9; 12:47; Acts 4:12; 11:14; 15:1, 11; Romans 11:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 9:22; 10:33; 1 Thessalonians 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 1 Timothy 1:15 and 2:4.

3 TENSES OF SALVATION

PAST TENSE Saved from the PENALTY of sin (in Hell)	PRESENT TENSE Saved from the POWER of sin (in your life)	FUTURE TENSE Saved from the PRESENCE of sin (in Heaven)
		
Titus 3:5 Ephesians 2:8-9 Luke 7:50 2 Timothy 1:9	2 Corinthians 7:10 1 Timothy 4:16 James 1:21, 2:14, 5:20 Philippians 2:12-13	Romans 5:9-10 Romans 13:11 1 Corinthians 3:15
JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION	GLORIFICATION
Happens at a POINT OF TIME (When you trust in Christ alone.)	Happens over a PROCESS OF TIME (While you walk by faith by means of the Spirit.)	Happens at a POINT OF TIME (When you die or are raptured.)
By God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. (Acts 16:31)	By God's grace through daily dependence on the Lord via the Holy Spirit. (Romans 6:1-14; 8:1-4)	By death (2 Cor. 5:10) or by Rapture. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

**FOR THE BELIEVER, GOD’S PROMISES AND
PROVISIONS OF SPIRITUAL SALVATION ARE
IN THREE TENSES OR STAGES**

The preceding chart depicts God’s plan of salvation for the believer in Christ in three tenses, three stages, or three phases. The three tenses of salvation *must* be understood in order to interpret the Scriptures without contradiction and keep key truths clear in your own thinking. Each of these tenses of salvation will now be examined from the Scriptures.

**SALVATION PAST TENSE:
SALVATION FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN**

While eternal salvation is always future for the unbeliever, the moment a sinner trusts in the all-sufficient work of Christ to save him, he can then state with confidence, “*I have been saved from Hell*” (which is God’s righteous penalty for your sins [Matt. 25:46; Rom. 1:32; 6:23; Rev. 20:14-15]). Death in the Bible always carries with it the idea of separation, including the “second death” which involves being separated from God forever in the Lake of Fire. But for the one who has believed in Jesus Christ as his Savior, who now possesses eternal life, that person can know beyond the shadow of a doubt that he has been saved (past tense) from the *penalty* of sin which is eternal Hell.

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy *He saved us.* (Titus 3:3-5)

These verses make it clear that these believers in Christ (“we,” Paul and Titus) knew for sure that they *had been saved in the past* by the undeserved kindness, love, and mercy of God when they had trusted in Jesus Christ alone instead of their own works of righteousness (i.e., water baptism; trying to keep the Ten Commandments; going to church; tithing; living a holy life; etc.). The apostle Paul stated the same reality about the Ephesian Christians when he wrote,

For by grace *you have been saved* through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9, emphasis added)

Again, note that this gift of salvation from God’s wrath (Eph. 2:1-3) was given on the basis of God’s “grace” (His undeserved favor and kindness) and received “through faith” in Jesus Christ (2:7) alone. Furthermore, observe that this salvation became theirs in the past and was a settled and permanent possession that they were absolutely assured of by God (“you have been saved” – perfect periphrastic construction). In addition, their salvation was not a result of anything from them (“and that not of yourselves” – like repenting of their sins, asking Jesus into their hearts, etc.); but it was the “gift of God” (not a reward for good behavior). Lastly, verse 9 states that their past salvation from sin’s penalty and God’s wrath was “not of works lest anyone should boast.” In other words, if your salvation depended upon your holy life, your good works, or your faithfulness to obtain it or to keep it, this would allow you to boast in what *you* have done for God, instead of rejoicing in what *God* by His grace has already fully accomplished for you. The Scriptures clearly state, “It is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD’” (1 Cor. 1:31). In addition, the past tense of salvation can be easily identified when Paul says to Timothy,

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, *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 to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim. 1:8-10, emphasis added)

Paul stated with absolute assurance that this salvation from Hell (sin's penalty) was a past reality (aorist tense) and that God alone (active voice) by His grace and power (rather than Paul or Timothy) accomplished this great feat of saving redemption for these unworthy sinners. The absolute assurance of a completed and certain salvation from Hell is every believer's birthright from the very moment he or she believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dear believer, it is not an arrogant boast of one's own righteousness to declare with absolute certainty that you *have been saved* the moment you transferred your faith from your good works and religious rituals that could not save you and instead believed in Jesus Christ who died for your sins and rose again to give you eternal life. This is not prideful boasting in oneself; rather, it is appropriately giving glory to the Lord! Would it be boastful if you were drowning and someone came and rescued you, and then you declared to others, "I have been saved"? Instead it would be the joyful declaration of one who had been delivered by another. Such is the absolute assurance and birthright of every believer in Jesus Christ the moment he or she has been saved forever by the grace of God!

It is also helpful to recognize that past tense salvation from sin's penalty is connected theologically with

the biblical doctrine of *justification*, which means to be *declared righteous* before God in His courtroom in Heaven (Rom. 3:23-25, 28; 4:4-5; 5:1; Gal. 2:16). Every ungodly sinner who believes in Jesus Christ and His finished work alone has been justified before God, and based upon the authority of God's Word he can know and state with absolute certainty, "*I have been saved from sin's penalty!*" This occurs at a *point in time* when a sinner believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Other examples of first-tense or phase-one salvation for the believer can be found in Luke 13:23; Acts 2:47; Romans 6:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; Ephesians 2:5; and Colossians 1:13, as well as the earlier verses that offered salvation to the unbeliever.

SALVATION PRESENT TENSE: SALVATION FROM THE POWER OF SIN

Having been saved from sin's penalty forever by God's grace, the believer in Christ then enters into the second stage or phase of God's salvation plan which involves deliverance from sin's power. This is needed because every Christian has an internal foe (the sin nature), an external foe (the world system), and an infernal foe (the Devil) that work in collusion to defeat him spiritually and thus hinder the believer from walking by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), growing in grace (2 Peter 3:18), and impacting others for Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-21). The daily salvation that God in His grace now offers believers is from sin's controlling power (Rom. 6:11-14) and its damaging effects in their walk and fellowship with Christ (1 John 1:5-7). This is needed because all redeemed sinners still retain a sin nature (1 John 1:8) and still *can* and *do* sin (1 John 1:9), even though God does not desire this in their lives (1 John 2:1).

James writes to believers in Christ who were clearly born again (Jam. 1:18), and who were dearly loved by God ("beloved," 1:19) and part of the family of God ("brethren," 1:19).

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to *save your souls*. (Jam. 1:19-21)

James is writing to suffering saints who were experiencing various trials and persecutions (1:2-12), as well as facing the temptation to retaliate and do evil (1:13-16), especially in light of being persecuted, defrauded, and treated poorly by the rich (1:2-11; 2:6; 5:1-6). But the only way to respond right when you have been wronged and thus avoid the damaging effects of sin in your life is to be “swift to hear” God’s Word, “slow to speak,” and “slow to wrath” (1:19). Instead of taking things into your own hands (“lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness,” 1:21), you are to humbly welcome or “receive with meekness” the “implanted word which is able to save” your “souls” or lives from sin’s damaging reactions and results. The believer’s soul has the capacity to live and enjoy the abiding and abundant life offered by Jesus Christ (John 10:10; 15:1-5). James 1:19-21 is clearly not a passage about salvation from Hell for the unbeliever. It is written to believers about the second phase or stage of salvation from sin’s *power* amidst a difficult trial that God allows in believers’ lives but which Satan also wants to use as a temptation to sin and hinder one’s spiritual progress and testimony for Jesus Christ. A failure to understand and “rightly divide the Word of truth” regarding the three tenses of salvation will lead to utter confusion in this passage and others like it.

While every child of God has been born again (John 3:3-7) into the family of God (John 1:12-13) with a new destiny (John 3:16) and a new nature (2 Peter 1:3-4) that desires the things of God (Phil. 2:13), he still retains from

his first birth a sin nature that wants to reign as a king in his life (Rom. 6:12). This creates an internal battle between the believer's new nature and sin nature (Rom. 7:15-18). Only the power of the Holy Spirit can provide victory over the sin nature or flesh (Gal. 5:16). This occurs as the believer walks by faith in the Word of God, reckoning upon his identification with Jesus Christ and the Savior's defeat at Calvary of the sin nature's legal right to reign in the believer's life (Rom. 6:1-13; 8:2-4).

In addition, the believer carries over from his pre-salvation life many wrong human perspectives and attitudes, along with potentially picking up defilement from having daily contact with this ungodly world-system (1 John 2:15-17), which only a steady intake of the Word of God can change by internally transforming him into Christ-likeness (2 Cor. 3:18) to do the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Thus, critical in all aspects of the Christian life and salvation from sin's power is the believer's growing knowledge of God's Word regarding his own insufficiency against his spiritual enemies and the necessity of a daily, moment-by-moment walk of faith in God's sufficiency with Christ as his life and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Observe that the following verses are also clearly written to individuals who were already believers in Christ (saved from sin's penalty) but who still needed salvation from sin's power in their life as they appropriated the Word of God daily by faith.

Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. (1 Tim. 4:13-16)

The apostle Paul exhorts pastor Timothy, who was already a believer in Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:2; 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15), to first of all “take heed to himself” regarding his own walk and growth in the Lord. Every busy pastor and teacher of God’s Word needs to remember that the key to effective ministry to others horizontally is his daily vertical fellowship with Jesus Christ. In doing so, Timothy needed to take heed to the “doctrine” or the study and teaching of God’s Word (4:13-15). But since this was not just a onetime experience, he was to “continue” in both (taking heed to himself and the doctrine) “for in doing this you will save yourself” from sin’s power in your daily life. Timothy’s godly walk and scriptural teaching could then be used of the Lord to affect others under his teaching (“those who hear you”) to also enjoy and experience salvation (“save . . . those”) from sin’s power and damaging effects. The word “save” in the future tense here indicates an offer by God’s grace of personal deliverance from sin as the result of Timothy and others taking heed to the Word of God in their present Christian experience.

Like salvation from sin’s penalty, this salvation from sin’s power involves decisions (active voice) to respond to the Lord and His Word, with God’s second-tense salvation then being guaranteed (indicative mood). Apart from handling accurately the Word of God regarding the three tenses, stages, or phases of salvation, we would be confused about what type of salvation is being referred to in this passage.

Another example of salvation from *sin’s power* is found in Paul’s epistle to the Philippians:

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12)

We must recognize immediately that Paul is writing to believers rather than unbelievers in this epistle (“beloved,” 1:1, 6; 2:12; 3:1). In this particular verse, he does not exhort them to work *for* their own salvation, since this would contradict Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5 studied earlier in this booklet. Instead he states “work *out* your own salvation.” Since they had been saved already from sin’s penalty, these Christians were now exhorted to continue to “work out” (or have produced in their “own” Christian lives) a salvation from sin’s power in the present which would be characterized by obedience to God’s will (“as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence”). But lest we wrongly conclude that first-tense salvation is by grace while second-tense salvation is by law and obedience, Paul quickly explains the means of this “worked-out salvation.” He adds, “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). This verse highlights the truth that the divine means of salvation from sin’s power comes from “God who works [present tense] in you”; it is not by external pressure from men or legalistic conformity by a church. How exactly does God accomplish this?

The verse explains that “God works in you both to will [through the new nature] and to do [through the Holy Spirit] for His good pleasure.” Salvation from sin’s power in your daily Christian life does not come from sheer human willpower or strength (which was Paul’s failure in Romans 7:15-25) but by supernatural divine enablement as the believer responds by faith to the Son of God as He is presented in the Word of God (Romans 8:1-4).

Salvation from sin’s power is connected theologically with the biblical doctrine of practical or progressive *sanc-tification* which involves God progressively *making* (not *declaring* like at justification) *the believer righteous in his daily walk* by his reliance on the Lord and his response to the provisions of God’s grace (the Word of God and Spir-

it of God).² Unfortunately, many believers do not enjoy spiritual growth or experience salvation from sin's power in their Christian lives. Instead, they live in ongoing carnality by yielding to their sin natures (instead of to Jesus Christ via the Holy Spirit), and they operate daily under human wisdom (instead of the Word of God). This was true of the Corinthian Christians.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to *carnal*, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still *carnal*. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not *carnal* and behaving like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not *carnal*? (1 Cor. 3:1-4, emphasis added)

Were these Corinthians genuine believers? Yes, they were! In verse 1, Paul says they were "brethren" (i.e., a brother or sister in the family of God) and they were "in Christ" (i.e., in union with Jesus Christ). But Paul could not describe them as "spiritual" believers (controlled by the Holy Spirit and directed by the Word of God). Instead, four times in four verses he calls them "carnal" believers (characterized by the sin nature and directed by human wisdom). Their carnality had adversely affected their spiritual growth since they are called "babes in Christ," and they were behaving like unbelievers ("behaving like mere men") instead of children of God! Yet, does Paul

² For further explanation of sanctification, see J. F. Strombeck, *Disciplined by Grace* (reprint, Duluth, MN: Grace Gospel Press, 2013); and Kurt Witzig, "Sanctification by God's Free Grace" in *Freely by His Grace: Classical Free Grace Theology*, ed. J. B. Hixson, Rick Whitmire, and Roy B. Zuck (Duluth, MN: Grace Gospel Press, 2012), 363-418.

call into question the reality of their salvation from sin's penalty? Not at all! Instead, he exhorts them to now live in keeping with their identification with Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, which brings honor to Jesus Christ with positive eternal ramifications so as to not waste their earthly lives (1 Cor. 3:5-15). Thus we see that while salvation from sin's power is available daily to all believers and is God's desire for them, not all believers are willing to yield to the Lord and walk by faith in God's Word through the enablement of the Holy Spirit.

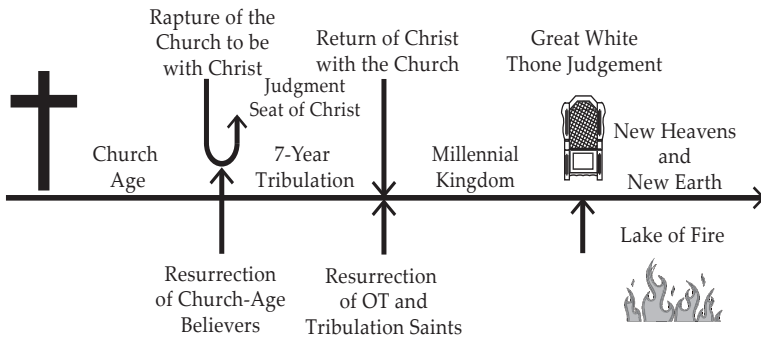
This study in the Scriptures has shown that every person who believes in Jesus Christ can state with absolute certainty, "*I have been saved from sin's penalty,*" and when walking by faith in Jesus Christ and His Word under the power of the Holy Spirit that person can also state, "*I am being saved from sin's power.*" But unlike justification or first-tense salvation which occurs at a point of time when the sinner believes the Gospel, practical or progressive sanctification or second-tense salvation is an ongoing *process in time* that involves daily victory over sin and spiritual maturation from Christian babyhood, to adolescence, to adulthood as a believer in the faith (1 John 2:12-14). This is accomplished only by God's grace through a yielded, daily dependence on Jesus Christ as one is filled with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Other examples of the use of the word "salvation" in a second-tense or phase-two sense can be found in Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33; and 1 Corinthians 15:2. In addition, there are numerous passages in the New Testament devoted to explaining and exhorting believers to live lives of victory over sin and fruitfulness to God as we walk worthy of our high and holy calling in Christ. See Romans 6-8; 12:1-2; Galatians 5-6; Ephesians 4-6; Colossians 2:6-3:17; and 1 Peter 1:13-2:3.

SALVATION FUTURE TENSE: SALVATION FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN

Having been saved forever from sin's penalty by God's grace, and having entered into the second stage or phase in God's plan of salvation from sin's power, believers can now look forward with great expectation to the day when they will be delivered from sin's *presence* in the future. This third stage of salvation is needed because every Christian still lives in a physical body which is under the curse of disease and death (Gen. 3) and in a world that has been corrupted by Adam's original sin (Rom. 5:12; 8:18-23).

Jesus Christ not only came to pay for our sins (Rom. 5:6-8) in order to save us from the *penalty* of sin (Rom. 6:23) and to deliver us from the legal reign and *power* of the sin nature in our bodies (Rom. 6:6), but He came to save us from the very *presence* of sin one day in the future.



He will accomplish this future salvation in stages by first of all taking believers in Christ to Heaven (instead of Hell) either at the moment of physical death (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23) or at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18) when believers in Christ will receive glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-52). Later when Jesus Christ comes again to earth, He will reverse the curse of Adam by establishing His

kingdom on earth (Isa. 11), followed later by the creation of a “New Heavens and a New Earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).

In light of God’s sure promises, the believer in Christ can look forward with certain “hope” that one day he or she will be saved (future tense) from the very presence of sin by God’s grace. Observe the following verses of Scripture that point to this wonderful *future* and guaranteed reality.

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; *for now our salvation is nearer* than when we first believed.
(Rom. 13:11, emphasis added)

If the believer has already been saved by God’s grace, how could his salvation be “nearer” than “when he first believed” in Christ? This would be very confusing if one did not “rightly divide” the three tenses or stages of salvation. Paul makes it clear that there is coming a future “salvation” from sin’s presence that grows “nearer” with each passing day. The phrase, “first believed,” recognizes that this person is a believer in Christ as his or her personal Savior. While the unbeliever is offered a future *salvation from sin’s penalty* because he or she has *never* believed the Gospel, the believer is promised a future *salvation from sin’s presence* that draws closer every day from the moment he or she “first believed” in Jesus Christ. This future salvation is eternal and secure since it depends solely upon God’s faithfulness, not the believer’s. This divine guarantee of future salvation is for all believers (whether spiritual or carnal) and should cause Christians to not waste their lives on earth in a spiritual slumber (Rom. 13:11, “wake out of sleep”) but to live *pure* and *holy* lives that honor their coming Savior.

As a result of having been “justified by faith” (Rom. 5:1), God has blessed every believer in Christ with “all

spiritual blessings" (Eph. 1:3), including the promise of a future salvation from His wrath in Hell.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, *we shall be saved from wrath through Him*. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, *we shall be saved by His life*. (Rom. 5:8-10, emphasis added)

Once again we see an absolute guarantee of future salvation for everyone who has "been justified" or declared righteous before God by faith in Christ alone. How was justification before God obtained? Justification is only "by His blood" – the sacrificial death of Christ for our sins upon the cross. The believer's justification in the past and eternally secure future salvation from God's "wrath" (5:9) are not by our faithfulness but by Christ's finished work that has already satisfied God's holy demands forever (1 John 2:2; 4:9-10). According to Romans 5:9-10, this blessing of salvation from sin's presence is only for believers in Christ ("we"); it involves a future salvation ("shall be saved"); and it is absolutely guaranteed ("saved" – indicative mood), indicating that God alone will accomplish this ("saved" – passive voice) rather than the believer. This salvation is not referring to the believer's practical sanctification in time (which is desired but not guaranteed – see Romans 6:4 with its subjunctive use of "should walk"). Rather, this salvation is referring to a guaranteed future salvation that does not depend in any way on the believer's daily walk or faithfulness. Otherwise, it could not be guaranteed because all believers still sin and fail. When believers do sin, they are to confess their sin to God and claim by faith His forgiveness and

cleansing (1 John 1:9) in order to be restored to “fellowship” with God (1 John 1:3-7), not in order to be born again and again and again. Why? It is because once you have been born again as a child of God you can never cease being a child of your heavenly Father (John 1:12-13), possessing forever the gift of eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:35-40; 10:27-30).

Furthermore, Romans 5:10 underscores that “when we [who are now believers] were enemies we were reconciled [aorist tense – completed event; passive voice – God did it; and indicative mood – it’s a fact] to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved [future tense – in the future; passive voice – God will do it; indicative mood – it’s a guarantee] by His life.” But notice what is conspicuous by its absence: the believer’s guaranteed present sanctification, which is desired by God but not absolutely promised since it requires a believer’s ongoing willingness to walk by faith in Christ as enabled by the Holy Spirit. It should also be noted that a guaranteed salvation (second tense) is also noticeably absent in Romans 8:30 where Paul wrote, “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). Why is sanctification not mentioned in this verse? It is because the believer must continually respond to the Lord daily to be enabled by the Holy Spirit to live a holy life, which he or she might or might not choose to do.

The believer’s guaranteed future salvation from sin’s presence and all its effects is also wonderfully taught by the writer of Hebrews. The epistle of Hebrews sets forth a crucial contrast between the Old Testament priesthood which was constantly changing because of the death of each priest and Jesus Christ’s unchangeable priesthood because He has permanently risen from the dead. The writer of Hebrews proclaims without uncertainty or apology:

Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore *He is also able to save to the uttermost* those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:23-25, emphasis added)

“To the uttermost” indicates that Jesus Christ saves forever and completely from sin and all its effects every sinner who comes to God through Him alone. Why is this promised and guaranteed? It is because Jesus Christ “ever lives to make intercession for them” as an everlasting High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (7:20-22). The phrase “to the uttermost” encompasses not only a past salvation at the moment of initial faith in Jesus Christ as one’s Savior but also a guarantee of eternal security and final future salvation. What a Savior!

Salvation from sin’s presence is connected theologically with the biblical doctrine of *glorification*. Every redeemed sinner was saved in the past and should now eagerly anticipate this future hope or divine guarantee of glorification. The Scriptures use the word “hope” in reference to salvation from sin’s presence simply because it is yet future, not because it is questionable or uncertain.

For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. (Rom. 8:24-25, emphasis added)

The word “saved” indicates the past reality (aorist tense, indicative mood) of salvation from sin’s penalty that God accomplished for the believer (passive voice), not because of what the believer has done for God. Salvation

is all by God's grace! Note once again that the believer's daily walk does not maintain in any way this future reality since this "hope" of glorification does not depend on our daily faithfulness or continual, ongoing faith. But we eagerly and patiently wait ("perseverance") for it amidst the sufferings of this present life because one day in the future God will fulfill His promises, and then our faith will become sight because of His power and grace! Hallelujah! In light of this, the eighth chapter of Romans ends with the triumphant promise:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35-39)

Every individual who believes in Jesus Christ can not only state with absolute certainty, "*I have been saved from sin's penalty,*" but when he is walking by faith in Jesus Christ and His Word he can also say, "*I am being saved from sin's power,*" and he can know with absolute certainty that one day "*I shall be saved from sin's presence.*" Can you see the utter confusion that results when a person fails to "rightly divide the Word of truth" regarding these three tenses, stages, or phases of salvation? The painful result has been much false teaching that has either blinded the unsaved from believing the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-5) or has robbed the believer of the absolute assurance of

eternal salvation by making his final destiny dependent upon his daily walk, faithfulness, or personal holiness.

I was reminded of this tragedy a while ago when a Christian woman approached me after a session I taught at a Bible Conference. She sadly told me, "I have been a believer in Christ for many years, but I had never heard of the three tenses of salvation until today. Why didn't someone teach me this earlier?" I wonder how many times that unfortunate story has been repeated in the lives of God's redeemed children?

Other examples of third-tense salvation from sin's presence can be found in Romans 8:21; 1 Corinthians 5:5; and 2 Corinthians 1:10.

Keep in mind that this study has restricted itself to verses that use the words "saved" (verb) or "salvation" (noun) in their various forms, though there are many more passages of Scripture that are related or connected to the truths of the three tenses or phases of salvation that utilize other words that have not been included in this study.

OBSERVING ALL THREE TENSES OR PHASES OF SALVATION IN ONE PASSAGE

Now that we have derived from the Scriptures this important biblical distinction of the three tenses or stages of salvation, we can begin to see this wonderful truth on the pages of God's Word expressed in various ways. Each tense of salvation is stated in brackets in the following verses.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men [in the past], teaching us [believers in the present] that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for [in the future] the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-13)

Dear believer, the grace of God that brought you salvation from sin's penalty in the past through Jesus Christ at the time of the new birth and *justification* is now seeking to teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live a godly life of *sanctification* in the present age, while you are to be looking eagerly for the Lord to return for you at the time of resurrection and *glorification*. Consider another passage that involves the three tenses of salvation:

Therefore, having been justified by faith [in the past], we have peace with God [in the present] through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access [in the past and continuing in the present - perfect tense] by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God [future glorification]. (Rom. 5:1-2)

This passage clearly describes and delineates God's three-phase plan of salvation for every believer. Another passage stating all three tenses of salvation says,

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols [in the past] to serve the living and true God [in the present], and to wait for His Son from heaven [in the future], whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come [guaranteed]. (1 Thess. 1:8-10)

In each of the previous scriptural examples, the three phases of salvation (past justification, present sanctifica-

tion, and future glorification) were in their exact chronological order (past, present, and future). Other passages of Scripture also contain all three stages or phases of salvation of what has been, should be, and will be true of the believer, but not necessarily in chronological order. Consider the following:

And now, little children [those who were justified in the past], abide in Him [in present sanctification], that when He appears [related to future glorification], we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (1 John 2:28)

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God [through past regeneration and justification]! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God [through past regeneration and justification]; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be [at future glorification], but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him [at future glorification], for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself [in present sanctification], just as He is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) [past regeneration and justification], and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kind-

ness toward us in Christ Jesus [future glorification]. For by grace you have been saved through faith [past justification], and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [past regeneration and justification] for good works [in present sanctification], which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them [in present sanctification]. (Eph. 2:5-10)

Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. And do this [in present sanctification], knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep [in present sanctification]; for now our salvation is nearer [third tense - at future glorification] than when we first believed [at past justification]. (Rom. 13:10-11)

If then you were raised with Christ [past justification], seek those things which are above [in present sanctification], where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above [in present sanctification], not on things on the earth. For you died [past justification], and your life is hidden with Christ in God [past justification]. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory [at future glorification]. (Col. 3:1-4)

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteous-

ness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith [related to justification]; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death [all related to sanctification], if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead [related to glorification]. (Phil. 3:7-11)

Philippians 3 sets forth not only Paul's saving knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord (vv. 7-8) and his obtaining of God's righteousness in the past when he was justified through faith in Christ alone (v. 9), but it also demonstrates that he deeply desired and aimed at having a growing intimate knowledge of Christ in his present, daily sanctification (v. 10, "that I may know Him"). Paul's sanctification was fueled by his desire to one day attain to being among those rewarded for their faithfulness to Christ (v. 11) with "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (v. 14) at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10) which occurs when all believers in Christ experience the future resurrection of the body at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

It is both exciting and encouraging to observe the three tenses, phases, or stages of God's plan of salvation in multiple passages of Scripture which shed light on these truths and grant us a deeper understanding of God's objectives with His redeemed ones in Christ from beginning to end.

A FINAL CONCLUSION

Let me end this booklet with the same question I asked at the beginning. Has anyone ever asked you, "Are you saved?" If not, let me invite you right now to transfer your faith from your own faithfulness, good works, and

religious rituals and to place your faith in Jesus Christ alone and His finished work at Calvary for you. Don't put it off for another moment. Right NOW you can decide in your heart to stake your eternal destiny on the truthfulness of God's Word and what Jesus Christ did for you personally on the cross and be assured of having as your present possession eternal life, the forgiveness of all your sins, and a home in Heaven. 2 Corinthians 6:2 states, "Behold now is the accepted time. Behold now is the day of salvation."

On the other hand, if you have already trusted in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross and received the gift of eternal life, you should be able to confidently announce an emphatic "Yes" to this important question. Remember the absolute assurance of your eternal salvation does not depend upon your daily walk but Christ's finished work and the faithful promises of God (1 John 5:9-13). But I trust that by examining the Scripture passages in this booklet you now understand the three tenses of salvation so that you can answer this same question with the threefold affirmation: "Yes, I *have been* saved; yes, I *am being* saved; and yes, I *will be* saved."

Believer, don't waste your life in ongoing carnality by running down the dead-end streets of life looking for meaning and happiness in all the wrong places. Instead, I encourage and exhort you to hear and heed the following appeals in light of God's love and grace to you:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Dennis Rokser (M.Div., D.Min., Grace Biblical Seminary) pastored Duluth Bible Church from 1985-2022. The focus of his teaching has been the Gospel of God's grace as it relates to salvation, eternal security, the believer's identification/position in Christ, and living by grace through faith-resting in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit.



“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (2 Timothy 4:2-4)