

## The Salvation of Man # 2

Ephesians 2: 4-10

*William Dixon lived in Brackenthwaite, England. He was a widower who had also lost his only son. One day he saw that the house of one of his neighbors was on fire. Although the aged owner was rescued, her orphaned grandson was trapped in the blaze. Dixon climbed an iron pipe on the side of the house and lowered the boy to safety. His hand that held on to the pipe was badly burned.*

*Shortly after the fire, the grandmother died. The townspeople wondered who would care for the boy. Two volunteers appeared before the town council. One was a father who had lost his son and would like to adopt the orphan as his own. William Dixon was to speak next, but instead of saying anything he merely held up his scarred hand. When the vote was taken, the boy was given to him.*

—Neil Strait<sup>i</sup>

In our last study dealing with basic biblical doctrine we considered the utter depravity and hopelessness of humanity apart from Christ. All are born in sin, separated from God, and condemned to judgment because of sin. Each of us was just like the young boy in the story we just heard. We were trapped by sin and bound to face the eternal torments of hell. We stood in need of a Savior, One who could rescue us from the bondage of sin and deliver us from the wrath to come. Jesus bore our sin, suffering the wrath of God so that we might have the opportunity of salvation. He stands without outstretched arms, waiting for those who will come to Him.

The passage we have read this evening is a familiar and wonderful passage that reveals the grace of God that brings salvation to hopeless sinners. I want to take a few moments to examine the [gracious doctrines](#) concerning salvation as we think on: [The Salvation of Man](#).

### **I. The Gift of Salvation** (4-5)

**A. The Authority** (4) – [But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us](#), We are aware of the holiness of God. Man was created in His image, with God desiring fellowship with man. As Adam sinned in the Garden, all of humanity inherited that sinful nature, bringing enmity with God. God's holiness demanded righteousness. God's holiness must be achieved if humanity is to have fellowship with Him and enjoy His presence.

- In the previous verses, Paul reveals the sinful condition of all humanity and the desire to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. All stand condemned of God because of sin, and God alone has the right to judge or pardon sin. Our sin caused separation and faced eternal judgment, but God chose to provide a means for salvation and reconciliation. God is our authority for salvation!

**B. The Amazement** (4-5a) – *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, [5] Even when we were dead in sins.* Every time I pause to ponder all that I have received in Christ, I stand amazed. Have you considered the mercy of God lately? God's mercy withheld the judgment we rightly deserved. *Mercy* is “*kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them.*” We could do nothing to merit the favor of God, and yet He chose to extend mercy where judgment was due. *He loved us with a great love:* Agape love, God's love, that which is given without merit and is unlimited, offered without bounds or prejudice. *It is God doing what is best for man, even when it isn't what man desires.*

- We discover that God extended mercy, loving us with His love, even when we were dead in sins. Long before anyone ever recognizes their sin and their need for God, He extends mercy and love. That utterly amazes me! God would have been just to have left us in our sin, being forced to face His righteous judgment, but He chose to love us and provide a means for our salvation even while we were dead in sin with no regard or desire for Him!

**C. The Awakening** (5) – *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* Man in sin is dead spiritually; he has no means of improving his condition or standing with God. He is separated and condemned because of sin, hopeless. God, in mercy, came to us while we were yet dead in sin, offering salvation through His abundant grace, and quickened our dead spirit. He literally “*made us alive.*” This has the idea of “*being raised from death unto life with Christ.*”

- Isn't that wonderful? A dead man can do nothing about his condition. In fact, once dead, we have even lost the desire to live. Physically we are no longer cognizant about our condition. God came to us in that condition and made us alive in Him. We were resurrected a new creature in Christ! *2 Cor.5:17 – Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

## **I. The Gift of Salvation** (4-5)

### **II. The Glory of Salvation** (6-7)

**A. The Power in Salvation** (6) – *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:* We have discussed the awakening involved in salvation, and here we discover the power in salvation. Those who were dead in trespasses and sin are made alive in

Christ, raised up of His miraculous power. He alone can take a heart that is dead spiritually, black with sin, having no desire for holiness, and make it alive in Him. We find several accounts of Jesus raising the dead in Scripture, but the greatest resurrection is that of a sinner, lost and undone, being raised to new life in Christ! [Rom.6:4 – Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.](#)

**B. The Position in Salvation** (6b) – [And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus](#): Consider where we were before Christ: we were dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world. We lived condemned of God, without hope. Our association was with the wicked and sinful. We had no hope of life beyond the grave.

- But after salvation, we have been resurrected in Christ, seated together in heavenly places. There is a home in heaven reserved for all the saved. We are as good as there, just waiting on the call to come home. We are just pilgrims and strangers in this life, separated from our eternal home, but through Christ we become heirs of God and all that heaven affords!

**C. The Promise in Salvation** (7) – [That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus](#). The saved have been resurrected from spiritual death unto eternal life, positioned in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We can rejoice for the pardon we have received, but there is a wonderful promise that we can also claim. Our salvation is not limited by time. Our fellowship with the Lord and the blessedness of His presence are not limited to this life alone. All of the saved will enter the presence of the Lord when we leave this life.

- For the lost, this world is all they have to look forward to, but the saved have an eternal home waiting. At the end of the age, the New Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven, and we will enter that blessed home of the redeemed, never to leave. [Rev.21:2-3 – And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. \[3\] And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.](#) Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. We will enjoy the abundance of the Lord as eternity continues.

**D. The Perfection in Salvation** (5-7) – As we consider these verses, we discover the perfection in salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been [quickenened with Christ, V.5](#); [seated in Christ, V.6](#); and [promised eternity with God through Christ, V.7](#). Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, made our salvation possible. Were it not for His gracious sacrifice for our sin, we would yet be without hope.

- Our eternal destiny rests in what we do with Christ in this life. He is either received or rejected, but choose we must. The saved will enter heaven having the righteousness of Christ imputed to their account, accepted of God, all because of what Jesus did for us. He is our salvation!

### **I. The Gift of Salvation** (4-5)

### **II. The Glory of Salvation** (6-7)

### **III. The Grace of Salvation** (8-10)

**A. The Means of Salvation** (8a) – *For by grace are ye saved through faith;* God provided the glorious gift of salvation according to His grace toward us, and the gracious gift is received through faith. Sin's debt was paid by Jesus upon the cross, providing a way for salvation to be offered to those who are undeserving. His sacrifice was sufficient, fully satisfying the righteous demands of God. Through His shed blood, redemption was secured.

- However, all have not received this gracious gift of salvation because all have not believed in the Lord by faith. Salvation is by the grace of God through our undoubting faith in Him. Grace provided and faith receives.

**B. The Merit of Salvation** (8b-9) – *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:* [9] *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Paul emphasizes the fact that none are deserving of salvation. Works could never earn salvation and none can live good enough to merit salvation. It is a gift given to those who are undeserving.

- Each of us is sinful and defiled. Our righteousness is viewed as filthy rags in the sight of God. We could live the best life that anyone ever lived, giving all that we possessed for the good of others, and still come up short compared to the righteousness of God.

- If you are saved today you ought to rejoice in the Lord, but there is nothing that we can boast of. Apart from grace we would yet be lost and on our way to an endless eternity in hell. All that we are and hope to be is received through the grace of God. Our salvation is based on His grace, apart from our works. In fact, we ought to praise the Lord that our salvation isn't based on works. We ought to be thankful that God doesn't deal with us according to what we deserve or have earned. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ the Lord.

**C. The Majesty in Salvation (10a)** – For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Isn't that wonderful and amazing? We are the workmanship of God. We are the creation of God in Christ His Son. Take just a moment to consider your life before Christ. Now consider all that you have received through Christ. God miraculously lifted you out of the mire of sin, cleansed you in the precious blood of His Son, and placed you within His family with all the rights and privileges of heirs. He took one who was wicked and vile, deserving of hell, and created a masterpiece of grace that will live forever in heaven with Him! We couldn't do that for ourselves, and we certainly didn't deserve it, but God chose to make us anew in Christ.

**D. The Mandate in Salvation (10)** – For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. This is a verse that is often overlooked and seldom mentioned. The preceding verses are quoted frequently, but we fail to emphasize the mandate that accompanies salvation. Modern doctrine has created anemic believers, who are ready to receive heaven, but do little to honor the Lord or serve Him in this life. Salvation affords many blessings and privileges, but it also comes with great responsibility.

- We are obligated and expected to live our lives for the Lord, walking in His ways, and working for His glory and the good of others in this life. I fear that many will stand before the Lord at the Judgment Seat and give account for neglecting this clear mandate in Scripture. Rejoice in your salvation, but never seek to use it for license to sin or laziness in service. If you are saved, you are secure, but you also have obligations to fulfill.

I am blessed and humbled by the gift of grace that our Lord offers in salvation. While in sin I could do nothing to improve my situation. I was lost and without hope. The best I could do would never be enough. I needed a Savior to do for me what I could never accomplish in myself. I rejoice for the day that the Gospel was presented to me and I accepted the gift of grace by faith. I am as saved today as I was then, but I will admit that I am still working on the responsibilities I have following salvation.

I trust that you have understood the glorious provision of salvation. Sin caused separation and condemnation. Sin must be dealt with and judged. God judged the sins of humanity in the body of His Son. Provision was made for our salvation on the cross as Jesus offered Himself the sacrifice for sin.

If you are here today and you have never believed in Christ by faith as your personal Savior, you remain in your sin. Apart from Christ you are accountable to God for that sin. If you leave this world unsaved, you will be judged and condemned of God because of sin. But, you don't have to remain in that sinful state. We are all born in sin, but we can be pardoned and cleansed of sin in Christ. Will you come to Him in salvation? He paid the price for you. Only you can receive the gift of grace by faith.

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<sup>i</sup>Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers*. Garland TX: Bible Communications.