

So Great Salvation

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Chapter Two

SO GREAT SALVATION

It is well, at the very beginning, to come to a clear understanding of the term salvation as here used. Webster defines salvation as

1. the *Act of saving or delivering*; -- preservation from destruction or calamity.
2. Theological. *Liberation from the bondage and results of sin*; deliverance from sin and eternal death."

Salvation, then, is a liberation from sin and all its consequences. It is a preservation from destruction or calamity. Because it is a preservation, salvation cannot be a mere temporary experience. It is something that endures.

But salvation may include more than liberation from the bondage and results of sin and preservation from destruction. It also includes that which GOD does to bring man into a perfect state, a state which He has purposed for all who have been saved from the consequences of sin.

From a careful reading of the Bible it is evident that salvation does not include the same things in every age. In all ages, salvation from the consequences of sin and deliverance from everlasting death are the same. In no age does GOD temporarily save man and allow him to lapse back into his former lost condition. But it is in the matter of GOD's objective with those who are saved that there is a vast

difference in salvation in the different ages.

At a time still in the future ". . . **all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob**" (Romans 11:26) and "**And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God . . . For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.**"

In that salvation every Israelite, the whole nation, becomes saved and enters into an earthly kingdom over which the Prince of Peace shall rule. No heavenly position is in view in that salvation, for Israel remains an earthly people.

Another group shall be saved out of a seven year period following the present age and preceding the establishment of the kingdom mentioned above. At least half of this period shall be a time of ". . . **great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor shall ever be**" (Matthew 24:21). During that period "**a great multitude . . . of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,**" shall be saved. Their destiny is to be ". . . **before the throne of God, and (they shall) serve him day and night in his temple**" (Revelation 7:9-17). In GOD's purpose the saved of that time shall be a heavenly people, but they shall be *servants in His temple*.

John the Baptist spoke of himself as the friend of the Bridegroom (John 3:29). Because he was the last of the Old Testament prophets, this suggests that the position of the Old Testament saints, in their relation to CHRIST, shall be as the friend of the Bridegroom.

Those who are saved out of the present age of grace (which began

after the death, resurrection and ascension of JESUS CHRIST and will close just before the tribulation period begins) are said to **be predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God**" (Romans 8:29). They are called the body of CHRIST (Colossians 1:24), His Church, (Ephesians 5:25-32). They are to become one with GOD the FATHER even as He and the Son are one (John 17:21). This is the most exalted position to which any of GOD's creatures shall ever be elevated.

The term salvation, as applied to this age includes, then, all that GOD does for man in delivering him from the consequences of sin, conforming him into a perfect union with Himself and His SON. This salvation is the greatest concept that has ever been written or has ever passed over human lips. No wonder that the Bible calls it "so *great salvation*" (Hebrews 2:3).

It is salvation in this its greatest sense, as applying to the present age, and offered to those who are now living, that is considered in the following pages.

So Great Because of What it includes

In order to place the one that He saves in this highly exalted position, GOD does many things for and with him. Some of these are enumerated. They are explained in later chapters.

First, there is deliverance from the reign of Satan, called the power of darkness.

Second, there is redemption from the curse or penalty of GOD's holy law.

Third, all trespasses are forgiven.

Fourth, he who is saved becomes reconciled to GOD and is brought into a state of peace with Him.

Fifth, he is born again of GOD with an eternal life.

Sixth, he is made part of a new creation in CHRIST JESUS.

Seventh, the HOLY SPIRIT is given to dwell within him forever.

Eighth, he is also sealed by the same SPIRIT.

Ninth, he is given a perfect standing before GOD because of the merits of JESUS CHRIST and is placed under the keeping and providing care of GOD for all his spiritual needs.

Tenth, Provision is made for deliverance from sin in his earthly life.

Eleventh, He becomes the object of the intercession and advocacy of the Son of GOD before His FATHER.

Twelfth, there shall be deliverance for him from sin in his earthly life.

Thirteenth, He shall be conformed to the image of the Son of GOD and made one with GOD, the FATHER and GOD the SON.

Fourteenth, He shall be before GOD in love throughout all eternity.

All of these things belong to GOD's salvation which He has prepared for, and offers freely to man in this age. In these is a greatness that cannot be fathomed by the human mind, but all may be possessed by the mere acceptance thereof.

So Great Because Available to All Men

While salvation is not the same for all ages, in some form or other salvation has been accomplished for all mankind and has been made available to every member of the human race. The following passages show that salvation is for all men.

"Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (mankind)" (John 1:29)

"For God so loved the world (all mankind) , that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)

"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth live unto the world" (John 6:33)

"And I (JESUS) , if I be lifted up from the earth (on the cross) will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32)

". . . by the righteousness of one (JESUS CHRIST) *the free gift* came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18)

"God was in Christ, (on the cross) reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing (counting) their trespasses unto them" (II Corinthians 5:19)

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4)

"Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Timothy 2:6)

". . . we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (I Timothy 4:10)

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11)

"Jesus . . . was made a little lower than the angels . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9)

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also *for the sins* of the whole world" (I John 2:2)

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (I John 4:14)

All these passages teach the availability of salvation to every member of the human race. They do not, however, teach that all man shall be saved. It is tragically possible to reject and even neglect so great salvation and be lost forever (see Chapter 20).

So Great Because of What Was Required to Accomplish It

The greatness of salvation is also seen in comparing that which GOD did in creating the universe with that which He had to do in saving man. When GOD created the heaven and the earth He spake and they came into existence. **"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6). ". . . by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water" (II Peter 3:5).** Seven times in the first chapter of Genesis are found these words or their equivalent; **"And God said, Let there be . . .,"** and in each case that which He commanded was brought about.

GOD did not only create the heavens and the earth by the power of His word; He also upholds all things by that same power **"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"** (Hebrews 1:3). All that man can see of the earth and all the life which is upon it, all the forces of nature and all the stars of heaven, in their respective courses, are upheld by the power of GOD's word. All of this reflects Him omnipotence.

But GOD could not -- and this is said reverently -- by the word of His power alone bring about the salvation of man. It is true that man is born again by incorruptible seed, by the Word of GOD (I Peter 1:23), but that is possible only because of an infinite sacrificial work of GOD which was prompted by His love. Apart from the giving of the "only begotten Son" men would perish and could not receive eternal life.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had (past tense) the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15). It was through the death of JESUS CHRIST that the works of the devil were destroyed and man was delivered from the fear of death.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). If CHRIST had not been put to death He could not have brought man to GOD.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Only as man's sins have been charged to CHRIST and paid for by His death can GOD reckon sinful man as righteous.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13-14). CHRIST being made a curse for man is the condition for receiving the SPIRIT through faith.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Apart from the death of CHRIST there can

be none who do good works as GOD sees them.

". . . by the obedience of one (JESUS CHRIST) shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). This obedience is expressed in the following: **"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"** (Philippians 2:6-8)

The above passages declare in unmistakable terms that salvation could not have been accomplished apart from the Son of GOD giving His life in death.

From His exalted position in glory the Son of GOD spake and the heavens and the earth came into existence. When a rebellious and lost human race was to be saved, He Who had made the universe left His position in glory. He took upon Himself the form of sinful man and gave His life out in death upon Calvary's Cross to deliver man from the power of Satan and redeem him from the curse (penalty) of the broken law that GOD might in grace save man unto Himself.

Apart from the infinite love of GOD as expressed in the death of His SON there can be no salvation.

But salvation is not only by the love of GOD as expressed in the gift of His SON. It is also by His power. Paul in writing to the Christians in Ephesus said that GOD exercises a power on behalf of all who believe. This power is the same as that which He exercised in raising Christ from the dead and in setting Him on His Own right hand **"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"** (Ephesians 1:19-21). Nowhere is found a greater description of GOD's power than this.

That which demanded the death of the Son of GOD and requires the fullest exercise of GOD's infinite power for its accomplishment, can be nothing less than "SO GREAT SALVATION."

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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