

What the Bible Says About Salvation – Part 4

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Review / Introduction

Lesson 1

Our presuppositions are Scripture not logic; walk in the Spirit and ask for illumination; and apply a consistently normal or plain, literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic.

Salvation is wholly God's work where He saves sinners through Christ from the penalty, power, and one day the presence of sin.

All people apart from God's saving work are sinners with a sin nature – wicked, dead, blind, captive, darkness-loving, alienated-from and hostile-to-God, sin-slaves walking according to Satan's anti-God world system. Due to the corruption of sin all are totally depraved, separated from God, completely unable to move towards Him on their own, destined for wrath, helplessness and hopelessness before Him. God, in His grace, must intervene. The solution for sin which separates people from God is salvation.

Lesson 2

The atonement is the work that Christ did in his death to pay the penalty for sin. God's perfect, intrinsic, character moved Him out of love, holiness, and wrath and in justice to have the only One possible, Jesus, be the sacrifice for sin. The Scriptures clearly and consistently describe His sacrifice as a penal substitutionary atonement. The guilt of sin demanded the penalty of death and Christ was the vicarious sacrifice for that sin penalty. Christ's sacrifice was propitious – it satisfied the demands of God's holiness and wrath toward sin. Sin placed us in alienation from and enmity with God and Christ's death reconciled us to God. Christ's death was the ransom price to the Father to redeem us from slavery to sin and the Law. Sin, death, and Satan were defeated by the atonement.

Christ's sacrifice is of infinite worth but is only applied to the elect.

Lesson 3

All of humanity due to their own choice has rebelled against God and are therefore without hope in this life and destined for hell in the next. In eternity past, out of underserving humanity of all time, God chose those on whom He would bestow His love, grace, and mercy according to His own will and for His maximum glory.

At God's perfect time, He brings the gospel to His elect, draws them to Himself convicting them of sin and the need for salvation and a Savior, and gives them the gift of saving faith.

In our order of salvation, at the moment one exercises the gift of saving faith (item 2), a supernatural conversion occurs (item 3). At that moment, a long list of supernatural acts (items 4) that God performs occur in the life of the converted. Some items in this list are unique, others are connected. But all, taken together paint a glorious picture of what God does supernaturally in the life of His elect.

1. Election
2. The gospel call, draw, and the gift of saving faith
3. Conversion
- 4a. Regeneration**
- 4b. Justification**
- 4c. Forgiveness**
- 4d. Adoption**
- 4e. Baptizing
- 4f. Indwelling
- 4g. Sealing
- 4h. Bestowing spiritual gifts
- 4i. Sanctification
5. Perseverance (or preservation)
6. Death
7. Glorification

Regeneration

The word “regeneration” is only used two times in the New Testament. It means literally a birth again or to be born again or make new. The first usage is in Matthew.

²⁷Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” ²⁸And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, **in the regeneration** when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. (Matt 19:27-29)

Here Jesus is talking about the changed life on earth and the change of the earth itself during the Millennial Kingdom. The Scriptures indicate that the curse of Genesis 3 will be partially reversed during the reign of Jesus on the earth – there will be peace among animals (Isa 9:6-7; 32:18-20), there will be peace between people and animals (Isa 11:6-8; Ezek 34:23-28), the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord (Isa 11:9), vegetation will flourish (Isa 30:23-25; 35:1-7; Jer 31:2-14; Joel 3:18; Ezek 34:26-27), believers will have long lives (Isa 65:19-20, 22), etc. As an example...

⁶And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them.

⁷Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. (Isa 11:6-9)

Yet this is not the final state (2 Pet 3:8-13; Rev 21). So “regeneration” has to do with renewal, not re-making. This is the same usage for people.

⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of **regeneration** and renewing by the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)

While not the same Greek word, the same idea is seen clearly in the phrase “born again”.

³Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:3-8)

²³for you have been **born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Pet 1:23)

The idea further described by being a “new creature” in Christ.

¹⁷Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** ¹⁸Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, (2 Cor 5:17-18)

While some reformed theologians believe that regeneration (being born again) occurs prior to conversion, it seems best to place regeneration after conversion.

⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—**our faith.** (1 John 5:4)

The one who is regenerate is “created in Christ Jesus” and will therefore bring about fruit in keeping with repentance. Regeneration, along with all the supernatural changes that God performs at salvation, is the basis for perseverance (item 5).

¹⁰For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Eph 2:10)

⁸Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; (Matt 3:8)

²⁹If you know that He is righteous, you know that **everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.** (1 John 2:29)

⁹No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** (1 John 3:9)

Regeneration imparts new, changed life resulting in a changed lifestyle.

❖ **As you compare your life to your pre-faith life, do you see how God has changed you?**

Justification

Justification is the work of God (Rom 8:33) where He graciously and instantaneously declares the repentant, believing sinner righteous. God pronounces the sinner right with Himself and views them as if they possess the righteousness of Jesus.

Justification is by grace. It is a free gift. It is based on absolutely no effort on your part.

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴**being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;** ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that **He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** (Rom 3:23-26)

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰**because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight;** for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin. (Rom 3:19-21)

It is God who justifies the ungodly.

⁴Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵But to the one who does not work, **but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,** (Rom 4:4-5)

Justification is by faith alone.

¹Therefore, **having been justified by faith,** we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Rom 5:1)

Justification is by the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus.

⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood,** we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him. (Rom 5:8-9)

Our sins are place on Jesus (1 Pet 2:24) and Jesus' righteousness is placed on us (2 Cor 5:21).

²⁴and **He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,** so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

²¹He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor 5:21)

This is really a declaration by God, but since He alone has the power to make this declaration, we can view this as supernatural.

❖ **How does God seeing you as if you were always righteous encourage you to life worthy of your calling?**

Forgiveness

God has dealt with our sin through Jesus and removed the charges that were held against us. It is a cancellation of the debt of the punishment for your sin through Christ's substitutionary sacrifice.

There are primarily two Greek words that are translated "to forgive" in the NT. The gospel writers most often used the Greek word "aphiemi" (Matt 26:28; Luke 1:77; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:22; 10:18). "Aphiemi" literally means to "hurl away" or "let go" or "give up a debt." This paints a vivid word picture of forgiveness as sending the sin away. This word was also used in secular Greek to mean "canceling a debt

⁴⁵Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name** to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24:45-47)

⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, **the forgiveness of our trespasses**, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He lavished on us. (Eph 1:7-8a)

¹³For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, **the forgiveness of sins**. (Col 1:13-14)

The other Greek word, "charizomai," was used primarily in Paul's epistles (e.g., 2 Cor 2:7-10; 12:13; Eph 4:32; Col 2:13; 3:13). "Charizomai" comes from the word for "grace" meaning "unmerited favor". It means "to give freely and unconditionally" or "to bestow as a gift of grace and then to remit a debt". The ideas of unconditionally and completely are conveyed.

³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as **God in Christ also has forgiven you**. (Eph 4:32)

¹³When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**, ¹⁴**having canceled out the certificate of debt** consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col 2:13-14)

¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; **just as the Lord forgave you**, so also should you. (Col 3:13)

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to **forgive us our sins** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

When God forgives your sin, He does not deal with you according to your sin (i.e. the way you deserve) and He removes the sin far from you.

¹⁰**He has not dealt with us according to our sins**, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. ¹²**As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us**. (Psa 103:10-12)

Your forgiveness is for God's sake, not yours, for His own glory. God is God and He cannot "forget" sin. In forgiveness, God makes a conscious choice to not bring your sin to memory or judgment.

²⁵"I, even I, am the one who **wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.** (Isa 43:25 see also Jer 31:33-34)

In forgiveness, God chooses to not count your sins against you.

¹⁸Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, **not counting their trespasses against them**, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:18-20)

Jesus's last words on the cross indicate the debt of sin had been paid in full. The debt was forgiven.

³⁰Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "**It is finished!**" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. (John 19:30)

The unconditional forgiveness that God once for all grants to His children is the example for how we should forgive one another.

❖ **What does understanding God's forgiveness produce in you? (Luke 7:46-48)**

Adoption

Adoption is God's work in making the elect a permanent part of His family in a privileged place of inheritance.

The New Testament pulls from cultural experiences when viewing adoption. In ancient Rome, adoption was a common practice for families without a son to whom to pass on their wealth and property or if they had a son who was unfaithful or unworthy. This wasn't necessarily infant adoption but could be older children or even adults. On adoption the adoptee would have all his debts cancelled and would receive the new name of the father. The adoptee would be the legal son of the adoptive father and entitled to all the rights and benefits of a natural-born son. A father could disown his natural-born son, but an adoption was irreversible.

For believers, our debts are cancelled, we become a member of God's family, and we are given an inheritance. The difference is that we are not a worthy choice as an heir, but unworthy chosen by grace.

The idea of being a "son" of God has connotations that have nothing to do with being male or female. All believers are "sons" of God through faith in Christ. We have a place of closeness with God through Christ. We are a member of God's family as children.

¹²But as many as received Him, to them **He gave the right to become children of God**, to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12)

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household**, (Eph 2:19)

¹⁴For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but **you have received a spirit of adoption as sons** by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” (Rom 8:14-15)

⁴But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, **that we might receive the adoption as sons**. ⁶Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (Gal 4:4-6)

God loves us therefore makes us His children.

¹See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1)

Adoption is by grace through faith

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:26)

⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Eph 1:5-6)

Adoption ensures that God deals with us as lovingly as sons

⁷It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (Heb 12:7-8)

❖ **How does it make you feel that God chose you to be His son?**

Conclusion

At the moment of conversion, God performs supernatural acts in the life of His elect. They are His gracious acts that change His elect forever and cannot be undone. God brings new life to the believing sinner through regeneration. God declares the believing sinner righteous placing their sin on Jesus and Jesus' righteousness on them. God forgives the believer's sin removing the charges against them, cancelling the debt of the punishment for your sin. God adopts the believer making them a part of His family with all the rights and privileges (and responsibilities) of an heir.