What the Bible Says About Salvation – Part 5

Randy Thompson
Valley Bible Church

Review / Introduction

Lesson 1

We started our study by listing our presuppositions: Scripture over human reason; walk in the Spirit and ask for illumination; and apply a consistently plain, literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic.

We defined salvation as wholly God's work where He saves sinners through Christ from the penalty, power, and one day the presence of sin.

We examined the state of all people apart from God's saving work. All 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**. 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 only solution for sin is salvation.

Lesson 2

The atonement is the work that Christ did in his death to pay the penalty for sin. God's love, holiness, wrath, and justice moved Him to send Jesus to be the sacrifice for sin. The Scriptures 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' 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 value and 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 all underserving humanity of all time, God chose those on whom He would bestow His love, grace, and mercy according to the kind intention of 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.

Lesson 4

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

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, God performs a long list of supernatural acts (items 4) 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

Baptizing

This kind of baptism has nothing to do with water. The word for baptize means to dip or place into. "Baptize" was used to describe the action of a blacksmith tempering hot iron by dipping it in water or a dyer placing a cloth into dye in order to color the fabric.

In water baptism the believer is dipped or placed into water. Water baptism identifies the believer with Christ. It is only a symbol on the outside of what God supernaturally has already done on the inside. Instead of dipping you into water, Spirit baptism "places" you into Christ. There are two aspects of Spirit baptism. Both have to do with Christ's body.

Union with Christ

Spirit baptism is where the Holy Spirit places you into union with Christ's body in His death and resurrection (Rom 6:3-5; Gal 3:27-28).

> [3]Or do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death**? [4]Therefore we have been **buried with Him through baptism into death**, so that **as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life**. [5]For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, (Rom 6:3-5)

> [27]For **all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ**. (Gal 3:27)

At the moment you repented and trusted Christ for salvation from sin, you died with Christ and were raised to new life resulting in freedom from enslavement to sin but enslavement to God.

Romans 6 describes spiritual baptism in detail. The believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection is the basis of deliverance from sin and that union affects your progressive sanctification. The believer is "freed from sin and enslaved to God (Rom 6:22)." You have changed masters. Positionally, you *were* slaves to sin, now you *are* slaves to God. You must now present yourself to God as those alive from the dead and your body as instruments of righteousness to God.

The practical implication for your life is that you are freed from slavery to and the power of sin. This enables you in the power of the Spirit to put off sin and put on righteousness; to make righteous choices, to become more like Jesus, to progress in sanctification. The believer should never say, "I couldn't help myself." or "You made me do it." or "So-and-so makes me so ____." or "That's just the way I am." when describing the sin that they battle. Sin and righteousness are now choices.

❖ **In what ways do you see yourself freed from sin or maybe not freed from sin?**

<u>Union in the Body</u>

The second aspect of Spirit baptism also has to do with Christ's body. At the moment of salvation, you were placed into Christ's body, the church, and into union with other believers in the body (1 Cor 12:12-13). We are united with Christ, but we are also in union with one another.

> [12]For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and **all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ**. [13]For **by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:12-13)
>
> [27]Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. (1 Cor 12:27)

Not only are you a member of Christ's body, but we are members of one another (Rom 12:5)

> [4]For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, [5]so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and **<u>individually members one of another</u>**. (Rom 12:4-5)
>
> [28]There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; **for you are all one in Christ Jesus**. (Gal 3:27-28)

We can think of Christ's body as the universal church of all believers of all time, or we can also think of it as a local group of believers (1 Cor 12:27). A local church. Think of this here at VBC, there is not this body or that body. There is one body, and it includes all of us – it has many members (or parts). And just to drive it home, Paul says that "all the members of the body, though many, are one body" (1 Cor 12:12).

The metaphor of Christ's body illustrates the diverse unity and interdependence that is present in the church. The body is made up of unique individuals who are united by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

The body term describes the love and care members of the body are to have for one another. It pictures unity, a bond, and strength of relationship. This is literally in a new relationship with one another. We are together a part of God's family, and we are described as "brethren", "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ (see James 2:14-16).

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

As one body, we are connected to one another in a bond that is beyond the earthly bond that may exist with family or friends. Salvation brings about a new relationship with the family of God. All those who are born again are united in one spiritual group. This united group, the body of Christ, gathers together in local bodies to live together in shared life.

This shared life is called fellowship. The Greek word that we translate as "fellowship" means to have something in common; to share things in common with others. It describes a close association involving mutual interests and sharing. It denotes an active, joint participation, cooperation, and sharing in a common interest or activity.

So, what do we share? We share the same Lord, Jesus Christ. We share the same blessings of salvation. We share the same Holy Spirit and access to His power to live abundantly. We share the same love and affection for Jesus. We share the same Scriptures. We share the same worship of God. We share the same means of victory over sin. We share the same purpose – to glorify God. We share the same mission – to make disciples.

We may not like the same activities or hobbies. We do not have the same employment skill sets. And we do not think the same about everything. But in every way that is truly important, we are in fellowship with one another – in active, joint participation, and sharing in a common interest.

We have the most important shared experience and interests. Much more than hobbies or activities or life experiences. We are saved from sin by the same King of kings and Lord of lords. Our purpose, our primary interest, is to glorify God and our mission is to make disciples. We are family – brethren, brothers and sisters in Christ. Our mission is to be used by God to bring others into our family. And once in the family, we are again to be used by God to help our new family members grow into mature followers of Christ.

Your Heavenly Father chose your brothers and sisters for you. God thought in His sovereignty, faithfulness, wisdom, love, and goodness that the best thing for His glory and your sanctifying good was to be in shared life with other former sin-slaves. He thought you needed around you in shared life those who, like you, had been made alive in Christ and freed from slavery to sin. He thought it best that we all became a family – brothers and sisters in Christ. He thought it best that you do not walk the life of faith alone but do it in the context of family. This family is united in Christ, diverse in our differences, and dependent on one another to glorify God and accomplish the mission to make disciples.

We are connected to Christ and one another through Spirit baptism. We are family living together in shared-life, community, and joint participation in the disciple making mission.

- **What would actively participating in shared family life look like? Are you doing that?**

Indwelling

Indwelling is Holy Spirit's act by which He permanently (John 14:16) takes up residence in the believer (1 Cor 6:19; Eph 1:13-14).

> [16]I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper, that He may be with you forever**; (John 14:16)
>
> [19]Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God**, and that you are not your own? (1 Cor 6:19)

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an amazing spiritual blessing. When you exercise saving faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells you. He functions as your helper, teaching and guiding you in your spiritual growth toward Christlikeness, empowering your walk and ministry to those around you.

The practical implication for life is that the indwelling Holy Spirit provides the power to wage war with the flesh.

> [16]But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh**. [17]For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Gal 5:16-17)

At salvation you are born again (John 3:3-8), the power of the sinful nature over you was broken (Rom 6:15-23), and new life was imparted (2 Pet 1:4). But the sinful flesh is not eradicated at salvation.

The flesh and the new nature are now opposed to one another and are at war. You battle the flesh so that you are not carried away and enticed by your own lust (James 1:14) as you are bombarded with and tempted by the lies of Satan that he presents in his world system. In the battle against sin, you have the Scriptures (John 17:17), the intercession of Christ (1 John 2:1), the body (Col 3:9; James 5:16), and the influence of Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16-17). We will talk more about walking in the Spirit when we look at sanctification.

- **Are you consistently engaged in your battle against your sin?**

Sealing

The Spirit's indwelling seals the believer guaranteeing that they belong to God.

> [13]In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise**, [14]**who is given as a pledge of our inheritance**, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13-14)
>
> [30]Do not grieve **the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**. (Eph 4:30)
>
> [5]Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who **gave to us the Spirit as a pledge**. (2 Cor 5:5)
>
> [22]who also **sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge**. (2 Cor 1:22)

"Seal" means to enclose with a seal, to set a seal upon, or to mark with a seal. A seal made something secure and indicated authenticity, ownership, and protection.

The Holy Spirit is God's identifying mark that we belong to Him. The work of the Spirit in your life provides the evidence of God's seal to yourself, other believers, and the world.

The Holy Spirit is also a pledge. "Pledge" is a down payment or earnest money or a deposit that guarantees the full payment. The fact that you have been indwelt with the Spirit guarantees that there is more to come in glory. The life of faith, walking in the Holy Spirit produces in you the foretaste of the experience of glory when you will be perfectly free from sin.

❖ **What are some foretastes of glory? Do you see those in your life?**

<u>Bestowing of Spiritual Gifts</u>

At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit gives a unique spiritual gifting to each believer to be used to serve the body of Christ for the glory of God.

There are several Greek terms used in 1 Corinthians 12:1-7 that refer to spiritual gifts, either the gifts themselves or the characteristics of the gifts.

> [1]Now concerning **spiritual gifts**, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. [2]You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led. [3]Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. [4]Now there are varieties of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. [5]And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord. [6]There are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons. [7]But to each one is given the **manifestation** of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor 12:1-7)

1. Spiritual gifts [pneumatikon] (**1 Cor 12:1**, 14:1) – The term means, "things pertaining to the Spirit". The word "gifts" is absent in the text in 1 Cor 12:1 but is given by the context. This speaks of the spiritual ability/giftedness given to believers.

2. Gifts [charisma] (Rom 12:6; **1 Cor 12:4**, 9, 28, 30, 31; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10) – This term means, "grace gifts". It is simply translated "gifts" but is built off the Greek term for "grace" meaning unmerited, undeserved favor. If it is a grace-gift, then it is something that cannot be earned or deserved, just freely bestowed.

3. Ministries [diakonia] (1 Cor 12:5) – The root of this term speaks of service. It is the same basic Greek term as serve, servant, and the office of deacon (one who serves). In this context, it highlights that spiritual gifts are service-oriented.

4. Effects [energeima] (**1 Cor 12:6**, 10) – This term means, "what is worked out or energized". It emphasizes that the one who gives the gifts provides the energy or power to make the gift effective.

5. Manifestation [phanerosis] (1 Cor 12:7) – This term has the basic idea of making known, clear, or evident. Spiritual gifts are not hidden or private. Rather they are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. They put Him on display as He works through the believer's life.

A spiritual gift then is a unique, grace-bestowed spiritual ability given to believers energized by the Holy Spirit manifesting His power for the purpose of service to the body of Christ for the glory of God.

Spiritual gifts are not natural talents but are special Spirit-empowered abilities for service to the body of Christ. Talents are abilities that God has given each person as a result of general grace poured out on humanity (c.f. Matt 5:45). Talents may or may not be used to serve the body but are not specifically Spirit empowered (other than through general Spirit-filling). Here is a comparison of talents and spiritual gifts.

Talents	Spiritual Gifts
Given by God through our parents	Given by God independent of parents
Given at birth	Given at spiritual birth
To benefit oneself or mankind generally	To benefit the body (church) particularly

Spiritual gifts are a New Testament phenomenon (just like permanent indwelling) that have been given to each believer since Pentecost (see Eph 4:7-8) and are not related to Old Testament Spirit empowerment for a specific task (e.g., Ex 35:30-36:2).

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts supernaturally and sovereignly (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:3-4) distributing spiritual gifts to each believer (Rom 8:9) individually just as He wills.

> [11]But one and the same Spirit works all these things**, distributing to each one individually just as He wills**. (1 Cor 12:11)

> [2]For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, [3]how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, [4]God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and **by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will**. (Heb 2:2-4)

> [9]However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. (Rom 8:9)

Spiritual gifts are to be employed to serve and equip your fellow believers as a good steward of God's grace (1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10).

> [10]As each one has received a special gift**, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God**. [11]Whoever speaks, do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; **so that in all things God may be glorified** through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet 4:10-11)

> [7]But **to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift**. … He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, [12]**for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ**; (Eph 4:7, 11-12)

> [7]But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the **common good**. (1 Cor 12:7)

> [12]So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, **seek to abound for the edification of the church**. (1 Cor 14:12)

There are "varieties" of grace gifts, ministries, energizings, and visible manifestations.

> [4]Now there are **varieties of gifts**, but the same Spirit. [5]And there are **varieties** of ministries, and the same Lord. [6]There are **varieties** of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. [7]But to each one is given **the manifestation of the Spirit** for the common good. (1 Cor 12:4-7)

"Varieties" means apportionments, allotments, or distributions. There is no reason to believe that each believer has only one gift but instead has an apportionment of gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit. A way to think of this is each of us have a unique percentage of multiple gifts that makes our contribution to the body of Christ unique.

There are multiple lists of gifts given (e.g. 1 Cor 12; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30; Eph 4:11, and 1 Pet 4:10-11). Since there are "varieties" of gifts there is no reason to believe that the lists given are compete (similar to the elder character qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) but are characteristic of the types of gifts.

There are tests available that supposedly determine your spiritual giftedness. The problem with tests like that is that people are generally poor evaluators of themselves. We most often think of ourselves as better than we actually are. And with tests like this, we often rate ourselves on what we would like to do/be instead of what we actually are. So, how do we discover our spiritual gifting?

1. Walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25; Eph 5:18+; Col 3:16+). Since the Spirit energizes the use of spiritual gifts, as you are walking in the Spirit you have access to that energizing power. So, if you are walking in the Spirit, your giftedness will bubble to the top.
2. Be a faithful member of your local body and get busy serving (1 Pet 4:10). As you are active in serving and walking in the Spirit, your Spirit giftedness will bubble to the top.
3. Seek the counsel of your church's elders. Assuming you are doing numbers one and two above, your giftedness should be observable by godly, wise, Spirit-walking men. They will observe your ministry involvement and giftedness and be able to direct you to serve in areas that best suit your gifts.

There is a lot more we could study about spiritual gifts. For a deeper study see the Adult Education page of the website, Ecclesiology, Semester 2, Topic 5 - Spiritual Gifts.

You have a unique gifting for the purpose of serving the brethren for the glory of God.

- **In what ways are you serving the body?**

Conclusion

At the moment of conversion, God performs supernatural acts in the life of His elect. They are His gracious acts that them forever and cannot be undone. You are spiritually baptized where you are united to Christ's body in his death and resurrection and with his body the church. You are permanently indwelt with the Holy Spirit who helps, guides, teaches, and empowers your walk with Christ. You are sealed with the Holy Spirit, you are owned by God and given a foretasted (pledge) of glory. And you are uniquely gifted to serve your spiritual family, the body of Christ.