

WHAT DID GOD SAY ABOUT SALVATION?

Hebrews 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:8-11

Intro: Hebrews 1, verses 1 through 3, has been the basis for this present series of messages on the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this world. Let me read this to you once again that all of us might be reminded as to the way in which this great NT epistle begins. This is what the writer had to say:

- 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
- 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
- 3 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 (Heb. 1:1-3).

Verse 1 describes how God spoke in OT times. (Read.) Verses 2 and 3 tell us how the Lord has spoken in NT times which is called “these last days,” which began with the birth of Christ, and continued until the last book of the NT was written. In both parts of this text the key word is the verb *speak*! God “spake,” or we would say today, *spoke*, “in time past.” But “in these last days” He has “spoken unto us by His Son.”

We might even say that in OT times God spoke *about His Son*, but now, since Christ came into the world, God has spoken to us *in* or *by* His Son. In other words Christ is the main subject in both the OT and the NT, but in the NT *Christ Himself is the message!*

We have seen that He came to speak of God. He revealed God in Who He was. He revealed God in what He did, in the miracles He performed. He revealed God in what He taught.

We have seen that He came as a Man because He had a mission to perform for men, for all people. He came to do for human beings what they could never have done for themselves. He came to atone for the sins of all who would ever believe on Him. And so He came to tell us more about the awfulness of sin. He came as a Savior from sin – from sin’s penalty, from sin’s dominion, and ultimately from sin itself. And we saw last week that the Lord Jesus Christ is a Perfect Savior. He did all that God required in order for us to be justified in His sight. He left nothing

for us to add to the work of salvation – no money to pay, no works to do, no rituals to observe. As our text says, “when He had by Himself purged our sins,” He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” His work was finished, and it was accepted. Four times in the epistle to the Hebrews we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. In addition to Heb. 1:3, see Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. And we can add to that Heb. 7:25,

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

He is seated at the Father’s right hand where “He ever liveth to make intercession for” us.

Today I want us to consider what the Lord Jesus had to tell us about salvation itself.

There is a major problem here concerning mankind, and that is that even though our Lord came to save sinners, man by nature is not interested in salvation, does not believe that he needs to be saved, and rejects all attempts to get him to even listen to the Gospel message. So let us spend a few minutes considering:

I. WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT MAN.

And when I speak about Man, what I am about to point out from Scripture about men, applies equally to women. It applies to everyone who has ever lived on earth with the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Exception!

Let me call your attention to what the Apostle Paul said about:

A. “The natural man.”

By “the natural man” the Apostle Paul was speaking of man as he is born into this world. He was born a sinner, and because he is a sinner, or I should make this more personal, because we are all born sinners, this is true of us. I am reading 1 Cor. 2:14:

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Man is naturally antagonistic to the Gospel, toward sin, and toward any talk of salvation. He does not accept it. It is all a lot of foolishness to

him. And look, he does not even have the capacity in himself to understand the Gospel. We were all born in rebellion against God.

I will get around to explaining what has happened to us that the time came in our lives when we wanted to be saved, and we understood that we needed to be saved, and we were saved. It all made real sense to us. But by nature, by birth, there was no way that we were going to listen to a message about a Man Who lived two thousand years ago as though He had anything to do with us today.

But let me point out another truth that adds to the problem.

B. Man is spiritually blind.

And here I would call your attention to 2 Corinthians 4, verses 3 and 4:

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Remember that God gave His Word, and sent His Son, so that we would understand some things that even the most intelligent people in the world consider to be total foolishness. Here is another problem. Paul said two things about man that man can do nothing about, and he doesn't really believe either one of them. First, he is lost. This means more than that he doesn't know where he is, and doesn't know how to get where he should want to go, but the Devil has blinded him. The Devil is "the god of this world," and he has blinded every person in his mind to the truth of the Gospel. The Gospel is true. Every person needs to be saved. But the Devil has done a terrific job in blinding people's minds to the truth of the Gospel. If you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior today, you need to know that you are blinded to the most important truth you will ever hear – that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. You will find that in 1 Tim. 1:15.

And the fact that you are "lost" means that you are separated from God and under divine judgment. And if you don't find your way to God, you will spend eternity in hell. Ask anybody if they want to spend eternity in heaven or hell, and they will tell you heaven. But, at the same time, they won't listen to the Gospel which tells us the only way we can get to heaven. But the Bible tells us in Eph. 2:3 that we are "by nature the

Heb. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:8-11 (4)

children of wrath, even as others.” We don’t have to do anything to be “lost” and under the wrath of God. That is where we are by nature.

But let me give you one more fact about people that is not generally known. It is this:

C. Man is spiritually dead.

The Apostle Paul, writing to Christians in Ephesus told them that formerly they were “dead in trespasses and sins.” You will find that in Eph. 2:1.

We all know what it means for a person to be physically dead. He can’t hear. He can’t see. He can’t understand. He can’t speak. He can’t do anything. As far as man’s relationship to God is concerned, that is exactly where he is. Man’s condition is absolutely hopeless. And when we consider what we all are by nature, humanly speaking there is no possibility that anyone would ever be saved. Man has a will, and he exercises it all of the time, but his will is in bondage to his sin, so, on our own, we will never turn to Christ that we might be saved.

So you see, when we consider what man is by nature, it was very possible that Christ would die for sinners, and yet no sinner would be saved because no sinner could be saved. From a human standpoint the preaching of the Gospel is the most impossible job that there is. And yet we are told in Scripture that the Lord wants us to preach the Gospel to every creature. What is our hope that anyone will be saved? How did you and I get saved?

In an important passage in the NT where the actual words of the Lord Jesus are recorded, He recognized the difficulty, but mentioned the solution to the problem. Let me call it:

II. THE INTERVENTION OF GOD.

The verse I have in mind is John 6:44:

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Lord Jesus here indicated that it is not within the power of what man can do on his own to come to Him. But the way people are saved is by the drawing power of the heavenly Father. Nobody has ever brought himself, or herself, to Christ. We have been saved because the Father has

drawn us to His Son.

Earlier in that same chapter the Lord made another statement that throws light upon who the Father draws to Christ. The reference is John 6:37:

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

The Father actually had given to His Son those who were to be saved. And our Lord recognized that they would come to Him, not of their own accord, not of their own will, but because the Father had given them to Him. And when the Lord said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,” He was not only assuring that those who were given to Him by the Father would be saved, but that they would be saved eternally! These are the people called elsewhere in Scripture, the elect. We read in Eph. 1:4 that “He,” referring to the Father, “hath chosen us in Him,” referring to Christ, “before the foundation of the world.”

As the Lord began His great prayer which is recorded for us in John 17, this is what He said,

1b Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him (John 17:1b-2).

We were chosen by God for salvation even before creation, given to the Son, and when the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, He died to secure the salvation of all those whom the Father had chosen. Now you can see why we say that salvation is of the Lord – it is all a sovereign work of the Three Persons of the Godhead because it is the Holy Spirit Who has convicted us of our sinful state, and through Him we have been born from above.

I want to share with you a precious truth that I came upon in my study of Heb. 1:3. I am referring to the statement, “when He by Himself purged our sins.” The words “by Himself,” referring to Christ, are not in the original text. And yet it is. The KJ translators showed that they understood the Greek. Actually that statement should read, *when, He having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of God.* The words *having made* are a participle in the middle voice. And that is where the KJ translators got their authority for the two words, “by Himself.” By definition the middle voice in Greek means that the Lord was not only acting “by Himself,” but *for Himself*. And this means that the Lord’s

primary purpose in saving us was for His own glory, and the glory of the Father. So this means that if I were to have any part in obtaining my salvation, or you were to have any part in your salvation, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit would have to share the glory with us – *and such a thought amounts to blasphemy! The Members of the Godhead take the full glory in your salvation and mine because they chose us, and Christ died for us, and They drew us, and redeemed us, and They will keep us as their very own for all eternity.*

But someone is quick to ask, “Isn’t our faith the contribution that we make toward our salvation?” It is true that we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but even our faith is a gift from God. It may be that some here this morning was not a Christian when they came into this room, but as you have been listening to the Word, you suddenly realize that you believe the message. We are told in Rom. 10:17 that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” God enables our spiritually deaf ears to hear the Gospel, and we are saved. Everything about our salvation is a gift from God. (Quote Eph. 2:8-9.)

Now before I close, please turn to one more passage of Scripture: 2 Tim. 1:8-11. This is just one of several passages we could look at in confirmation of what I have been saying this morning. Please turn to this passage, and follow the words as I read them to you.

(Read 2 Tim. 1:8-11.)

You see in verse 9 that salvation comes first, then we are called because we can’t hear the call until we have the gift of eternal life. God is not waiting and wondering who is going to be saved. He knows because He has chosen us. Christ died for us, putting away our sins. And the Spirit of God draws us. And when He draws us, we come to Christ. And when we are saved we know that all of the glory belongs to God.

Concl: There is a wonderful illustration of the Gospel and salvation in John 11 where we have the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. You will remember that Lazarus had been dead for four days before the Lord came to the tomb where his body was buried. When He told those who were there to take the stone away from the entrance to the tomb, Martha, Lazarus’ sister objected. But the Lord reminded her that if she would believe she would see the glory of God. Then after a brief prayer, the Lord said, “Lazarus, come forth.” And he came forth bound

hand and foot with the grave clothes. But we must realize this: Before he could hear and come out, he had to have life. So his coming out was evidence that he had been resurrected to life before he could hear and before he could come out of the tomb.

In the same way, when you and I hear the Gospel and believe, it is evidence that God has already saved us, and our faith confirms that although we were dead, now we have life, and the purpose of it all is that God may be glorified.

This is what God has to say about salvation. It is all His work. It comes to us as a gift, all of it, and the glory belongs only to Him. If God has been dealing with you today, you will know it. Turn to Him with all your heart, and make sure that your faith is in Him, and Him alone. If you truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved.