



Soteriology, God's Plan of Salvation

"You are worse than you think, but God has a plan"

Ephesians 1:3-8

Charles Ryrie wrote: Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, must be the grandest theme in the Scriptures. It embraces all of time as well as eternity past and future. It relates in one way or another to all of mankind, without exception. It even has ramifications in the sphere of the angels. It is the theme of both the Old and New Testaments. It is personal, national, and cosmic. And it centers on the greatest Person, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation is an event and a process in which people are brought into a right relationship with God.

Salvation in Christ Jesus, which begins in eternity past according to the predetermined plan of God and extends into the eternal future, has three observable phases in the Scripture.

Phase I. This is the past tense of salvation—we are saved from sin's penalty.

Scripture speaks of salvation as wholly past, or as accomplished and completed for the one who has believed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This aspect views the believer as delivered once and for all from sin's penalty and spiritual death. (Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1:9)

This first phase involves the doctrines of:

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| 1. Reconciliation | 4. Substitution | 7. Justification |
| 2. Propitiation | 5. Regeneration | 8. Imputation |
| 3. Redemption | 6. Justification | |

So complete and perfect is this work of God in Christ that the believer is declared permanently saved and safe forever. (John 5:24)

Phase II. This is the present tense of salvation—saved from sin's power

Phase II has to do with present deliverance over the reigning power of sin or the old nature's power in the lives of believers (Rom. 6:1-23; 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:1-26; Phil. 1:19; 2:12-13).

9. Sanctification (Gal.2:20; 2 Thess. 2:13)
10. Preservation

This phase of salvation in Christ is accomplished through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit, but it is based on the work of Christ and the believer's union and co-identification with Christ in that work.

Phase III. This is the future tense of salvation—saved for perfection.

The future tense of salvation refers to the future deliverance all believers in Christ will experience through a glorified resurrected body. It contemplates that, though once and for all saved from the penalty of sin and while now being delivered from the power of sin, the believer in Christ will yet be saved into full perfection as they are brought into full conformity to Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29; 13:11; 1 Pet. 1:5; 1 John 3:2).

11. Glorification. - The final stage of salvation in which the sin nature of a Christian is completely removed, and his/her sanctification is completed. This will not happen until the Christian is with the Lord.

These three Phases of Salvation are Totally the Work of God

Salvation is A Finished work of Christ

The last words uttered by the Savior just before He died on the cross were, "It is finished." He was not referring to the end of His life or ministry, but of His substitutionary sufferings on the cross which He would complete by His death which occurred immediately following His shout, "It is finished."

To really understand and appreciate what is involved in our salvation, we need to be acquainted with some of the underlying doctrines associated with Soteriology.

1. **RECONCILIATION** is the work of God in Christ by which man is brought from the place of hostility to place of harmony or peace with God (Rom. 5:1; Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:10; Col. 1:20).
2. **PROPITIATION** removes the Barrier of God's Holiness. The person and death of Jesus Christ appeased or turned away God's wrath and satisfied His holiness, thus meeting God's righteous demands so that the sinner can be reconciled into God's holy presence.
3. **SUBSTITUTION** - By the substitutionary death of Christ, we mean that Christ, as the innocent Lamb of God, died and suffered the penalty of death in the place of the sinner, the actual guilty party. This means He took our place and bore the penalty of God's judgment which we rightly deserve (Isa. 53:4-11; Rom. 5:8; Heb. 2:9).
4. **REDEMPTION** deals specifically with the problem of man's sin and with the fact that man is viewed in Scripture as imprisoned or enslaved because of sin (Gal. 4:3-8; 3:22).
 - It literally means "to purchase, to buy from the marketplace." In ancient times slaves were brought to the marketplace, put on the slave block, and then traded or sold to the highest bidder.
 - The Lord Jesus Christ who, in His sinless person and by His death on the cross, purchased our redemption (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Rom. 3:24).
5. **REGENERATION** is the supernatural act of God whereby the spiritual and eternal life of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is imparted to the individual through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Regeneration is that part of the reconciling work of Christ which deals with man's spiritual death. It deals with man's need of spiritual life or the new birth (John 3:3-6; Eph. 2:1-4).

In Scripture we see three pictures of Regeneration:

 1. The New Birth (Gal. 3:26; John 1:12; 3:3-6).
 2. Spiritual Resurrection (Rom. 6:5, 13; Eph. 2:5-10; John 5:21-23). The emphasis here is on a new kind and quality of life.
 3. A New Creation (Rom. 6:4-14; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10).
6. **JUSTIFICATION** is a forensic declaration in which a sinner is declared righteous while still in a sinning state. It is a justification in standing, not in nature, that occurs at salvation.
7. **IMPUTATION** is the "charging to the account" of one what properly belongs to the account of another. Because of the person and work of Christ, God imputes or credits our sin to the person of Jesus Christ and imputes His righteousness to our account through faith in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21)
8. **SANCTIFICATION** - Sanctify means to "set apart." Sanctification has three aspects: positional (unchangeable) at the time of salvation, experiential (progressive), and ultimate (complete: when in God's presence).

A Personal Application

1 John 5:11-12 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

We have seen God's great provision whereby mankind can be saved. In His grace and mercy, God has removed those things that separated us from Himself. Yet, while God has done this, there remains another barrier. This is the barrier of

Christ Himself and His work on the cross. For unless one personally trusts in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross as the sole solution for his sin, he remains cut off and separated from God.

There is only one sin today which can keep a person separated from God and lost, the sin of rejecting Christ or unbelief in Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Note carefully, the following verses of Scripture which illustrate this fact. (John 3:17-18; John 3:36; John 12:48; Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:8-9)

If you have never put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, I invite you to do so today. He has removed the barrier that separates you from God and an abundant life as a child of God, but you must personally receive Jesus Christ by faith.