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What Is Salvation? Part 3

Are you saved?

Picture the following scenario; remember that we'll be resurrected in the end, those for Life eternal and the others for eternal damnation. So when your turn comes and you are finally resurrected and facing God's throne awaiting his judgment I ask; are you saved?

I know what my answer will be. I trust God the Father and his words.

Let's read Isaiah. 28:16; (One New Man (ONM))

Therefore thus says Adonai, the LORD, Behold, I lay for a foundation in Zion a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.*

He who believes will not make haste.

In the LXX (Septuagint) it reads: "*He that believeth shall not be ashamed*" or "*confounded*" and the apostle Paul follows this rendering in Romans 9:33. (Tree of Life Version (TLV))

33 just as it is written, " Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and whoever believes in Him shall not be put to shame."

God will not allow us who believe in his Son to be ashamed, or confounded in our blessed hope. Our salvation is solid as the Rock it is standing on, Jesus.

In the book of John, it is written that Jesus presented the kingdom of God and salvation to Nicodemus, the chief teacher in the Sanhedrin. He came during the night so no one from the Sanhedrin would see him, and accuse him.

Let's read what Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:13-16; (New Living Translation (NLT))

13 *No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.*

Jesus declares he's from up and above. That he's from a place we call heaven. As you know, the heavens are visible to all who look up. As the heavens, Jesus can be seen by anyone who seek him, those who look up, and not just those with a telescope, but everyone without distinction, everyone who believes in him, will be saved.

14 *And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*

Here is the power of his blood spilled at the cross, with Jesus lifted up where everyone could see him. Salvation is for everyone who looks up at Jesus and believes!

Salvation is not predestined for those who God preordains, for those he chooses beforehand.

In these verses Jesus explains his death and resurrection, how he fulfills his fathers will; *so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*

16 *“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*

This verse reveals Gods heart for us. It reveals his intentions since the foundation of the world. When Adam sinned he brought death upon himself and to all men. But creation was not his to give away, we belong to the Father, he's the rightful owner. He's the one able to redeem us from the bondage of sin and death.

Jesus is our next of kin, our kinsman redeemer.

As the law of redemption requires, (Leviticus 25:25-28), he's the only one by the Law of Moses that could redeem us and pay our debt as the sacrificial Lamb of God. A one time payment for all our sins, once and for all who believe in him. Not for some that were predestined by the sovereign will of God beforehand, but as the Fiery Serpent was lifted up by Moses on a pole, a standard , so everyone could see their sin lifted up in the form of a serpent, so is Jesus salvation for everyone who looks at him, for everyone who believes in him.

Let's read Psalm 34:5; (King James Version (KJV))

5 *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*

Also, Zechariah 12:10; (American Standard Version (ASV)

10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

In both verses "look" upon me is the Hebrew word *Nabat* נָבַט (Strong's concordance number H5027).

It means: to literally look, to behold, to look around.

The father did something extraordinary; he "lifted up" his only begotten son on a high wooden pole or tree, making it easy for any passer by to "see" him. Jesus was lifted up at the cross so everybody and I must emphasize this, so that everyone could see his sacrifice, look up, and believe!

It was not something that a predetermined few could only see. NO, it was a spectacle that everybody saw, and that today when we hear his words and retain them in our hearts, we are saved! Amen and Amen!

When we believe Jesus, God the Father has said that we will not perish but have eternal life.

Let's read where Paul cites the prophet Isaiah; in Romans 9:33; (Tree of Life Version (TLV)

33 just as it is written, " Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and whoever believes in Him shall not be put to shame. "

Again and again the scripture is confirming that salvation is for *whoever believes in Him shall not be put to shame*. It does not say for those who were predetermined, for those who God chose because they could not make any kind of decision on their own. The scripture is placing on us the choice of believing in Jesus. When we hear the word of God, we either respond or not.

Let's continue reading John 3:17-21; (New Living Translation (NLT)

17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. 18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants. "

John refers to the final judgment of God that will take place in our resurrection.

We have the choice of doing what's right, be saved through Jesus. If we refuse to return to God, or as John writes it, *all who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed*, those that make the wrong choice will be judged and be separated from God for ever.

Again, as you read the following terms "Anyone who believes in him", "All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near", "But those who do what is right", you see that the person must make his mind (repent) and choose life. There is a process of decision making in our salvation. It's our call to believe. It is not a choice forced upon us by the "irresistible grace of God". To say this, is to say that we are not capable of loving God on our own, which in itself is the pivotal accusation that Satan threw at God in the book of Job.

Let's read Job 1:8-11; (**One New Man (ONM)**)

8. And the LORD said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job, that there is no one like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one who reveres God and turns away from bad? 9. Then Satan answered the LORD* and said, Does Job revere God for no reason? 10. Have You not made a hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land, 11. but put out Your hand now and touch all that he has and he will curse You to Your face.* (Rev. 12:10)

Allow me to emphasize the accusation made; *Then Satan answered the LORD* and said, Does Job revere God for no reason?* Here Satan appears to be a 5 point Calvinist. He is accusing God the Father of rigging the dice throw, of blessing Job in a manner of manipulation. That Job is revering God because of the benefits he obtains, but if those blessings are taken away, Job will simply curse God to his face. That Job is incapable of loving God on his own. It was never his choice. Job has a sinful nature that makes him unable to show genuine love towards God. Job simply did what was preordained By God in his behalf, beforehand.

This is not the God that John 3:16 glorifies. This Calvinistic theology of predestination is a deception from the pits of hell.

God gave his only begotten son for our ransom. Do you understand the magnitude of his love for us? Can you really get it? Father God surrounded us with Unmerited favor and Overabounding Grace!

God answers for his actions to no one, but he chooses to do right. There is no one higher or more powerful than him, and still he sends his most precious possession; his only begotten son in the form of a servant, to die the most humiliating death a prince would have. God is Righteous!

His will is that no one should perish, but for all to return UNTO HIM!

Let's read 2 Peter 3:9; (King James Version (KJV))

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

His will is for every one who believes to be saved, not some privileged, predestined chosen ones, but for whosoever look up for Jesus at the cross and Believes.

Zechariah 1:3

3 "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return to Me," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of hosts.

So much more can be said about the manifold wisdom of God in his plan of redemption for man. We are his. We were made in his image. And he wants us back in his House.

The parables in Luke 15 show God's heart and his call to salvation. Let's read them:

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP: (New Living Translation (NLT))

Jesus puts one question on the table to the tax collectors and other sinners as he taught.

4 "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. 6 When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' 7 In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

There is Joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God!

To repent is to change you mind, to renew your mind. And it is your choice to return to God. As Job chose to trust God and wait for his salvation, even after loosing everything, he said;

Job 19:25 "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. 26 And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! 27 I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!

PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN: (New Living Translation (NLT))

8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.' 10 In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."

God the Father lit a lamp and is sweeping the entire world, searching carefully for all the lost sinners. This light is Jesus, and we are the coins, and *there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.*

In these two parables God is the owner of the sheep as well as the coins. We are his possession, and he is calling us to return to him. God has sent his salvation TO ALL who believe in Jesus. He will leave all the flock and search for the sake of one.

PARABLE OF THE LOST SON: (New Living Translation (NLT))

11 *To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons.*

What point is Jesus illustrating further?

A father's love for his own, for his sons.

The depth of his love, bringing on himself the humiliation caused by their sins.

His commitment to see them safe from the harm and suffering they brought on themselves.

His nature. God Is Love.

The Joy in heaven for the sinner who repents, found in the preceding two parables were he says; *there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!*

And also: *In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."*

The main object in these parables is God's love over us. We are his, and he is calling us to return unto him.

In the parable of the shepherd, he left the 99 (sheep) and went looking for the one that was lost.

He wants all of us that believe, those who retain Yeshua's words to return to him. These parables show the father's heart, his love for the lost and now found. As God spoke through the prophet Zechariah 1:3, let's read;

3 *"Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return to Me," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of hosts.*

The message that Jesus came to deliver is that the Father wants us to return home. So he continually says *"Return to Me"*, which means repent.

Repentance is a change of mind; is a choice we make by our own will. To say that he's the one that makes our heart change, and repent, is to say that we have no say or choice, but to do whatever he beforehand setup for us to do, because we are unable to do it ourselves.

And this is the Calvinistic definition of Gods love; that we can not love him on our own desire but only because God prepared everything around us so we had no choice but to love him. There is a place in the scripture where this accusation was made to God.

Let's read Job 1:9-11; (Good News Translation (GNT))

9 Satan replied, "Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it? 10 You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns. You bless everything he does, and you have given him enough cattle to fill the whole country. 11 But now suppose you take away everything he has—he will curse you to your face!"

Just as Satan challenged God about Job's love for God, Calvin has made the same claim that Satan made; that we cannot love God by our own choice, by trusting him as we retain his words, in Jesus.

Now, let's continue reading the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:12-32; (New Living Translation (NLT))

12 The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

When you read this in the Jewish context of an ancient patriarchal society, this request was a terrible offense made public to the father's house and the community. Jewish cultural context of the era puts the sons request in the category of a mayor disrespect and offense to the Father. He is literally saying publicly to his Father that he wishes him dead.

There is an ancient Jewish heritage custom written in the extant book of Sirach, a book written by a Jewish scribe who lived in Jerusalem in the early third century BC. His name was Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach. He is often called simply "Ben Sira."

Let's read from Sirach 33:19-24 (New Jerusalem Bible (NJB))

19 Listen to me, important public figures, presidents of the assembly, give ear! 20 Neither to son nor wife, brother nor friend, give power over yourself during your own lifetime. And do not give your property to anyone else, in case you regret it and have to ask for it back.

21 As long as you live and there is breath in your body, do not yield power over yourself to anyone; 22 better for your children to come begging to you, than for you to have to go begging to them. 23 In all you do be the master, and leave a reputation unstained. 24 The day your life draws to a close, at the hour of death, then distribute your heritage.

There are serious implications for the family because of the untimely distribution of the father's wealth. Let's read Deuteronomy 21:17 (New Living Translation (NLT))

17 He must recognize the rights of his oldest son, the son of the wife he does not love, by giving him a double portion. He is the first son of his father's virility, and the rights of the firstborn belong to him.

In the Jewish tradition and under the Law of Moses, the elder son had the right to a double portion of his father's wealth. The wealth of the family was needed to run the daily affairs of the land and animals and because of the demand of the younger son; the livelihood of the clan could be compromised.

Still the father agrees to his younger son's demand, and the story goes on with the young son's hardship away from the Father's house, as we continue on reading the rest of the parable in Luke 15.

Let's go back to Luke 15 and read verses 17-19 (New Living Translation (NLT)) I'll focus on the matter of salvation and repentance.

17 "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."

Here's the moment of repentance, the 180 degree about face of the younger son, where he realizes his sin and decides to go back and ask forgiveness for his sin. The prodigal son wants to "Earn" his way back to the father's house and its benefits.

But that strategy will not get him back in the father's house, because of his condition, when he said "*I have sinned against both heaven and you*". Under the old covenant of Law, he was guilty and had to pay the penalty of death. That's why the father later on says "he was dead". In the context of the parable, death is the opposite of "saved".

The father had always kept watch over the walls of the city, waiting for him. He loved him so dearly, that when he saw him at the distance he humiliated himself in front of everyone and ran to him, embraced his neck, so that no one could hurt him with a knife or sword in retribution.

He showed his love for his son publicly by kissing him again and again. This was a sign of total forgiveness and a picture of Salvation, of the father's unmerited favor and love for ALL OF US, as it's written in John 3:16.

The father fully restored his son into his house, no questions asked.

But just as any law abiding self righteous Pharisee would challenge Jesus during his ministry, the elder son was complaining about the restoration. The elder son argued that he was the one that had worked all his life, that he had earned the right and he was the one that deserved the killing of the fattened calf and all the of the rewards and celebration. He is claiming his righteousness by the works he had done. He was telling the father that his brother had no right to be "saved", restored. That his younger brother had not earned his salvation. The elder Son did not want to enter the Feast. Please note that the Father begged him to participate.

Let's read the verses 28-30; (New Living Translation (NLT))

28 “The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, **29** but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. **30** Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’

As we finish reading the parable, salvation is clearly defined by the Father's words to his elder son.

Let's read the verses 31-32; (New Living Translation (NLT))

31 “His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. **32** We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’”

I now ask of you; who was saved in this parable?

What did they do to get saved?

Is salvation for some only or for all who believe and retain the words Jesus has given us?

I must answer that salvation is all about the love that God the Father has for all of us. Just as is written in John 3:16; (King James Version (KJV))

16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Both sons had been saved; both sons were beloved of God. None could do anything to deserve salvation, but God' love saved them from death, as we all are saved IN JESUS. Not just the Calvinistic church, but all of those who retain the words of Jesus and Believe till he returns.

I'll finish with the good news that the Apostle Paul proclaimed to the Corinthians about the Gospel of Salvation:

1 Corinthians 15: 1-11; (Amplified Bible (AMP))

The Fact of Christ's Resurrection

1 Now brothers and sisters, let me remind you [once again] of the good news [of salvation] which I preached to you, which you welcomed and accepted and on which you stand [by faith]. **2** By this faith you are saved [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose], if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain [just superficially and without complete commitment]. **3** For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold], **4** and that He was buried, and that He was [bodily] raised on the third day according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold], **5** and that He appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the Twelve. **6** After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, the majority of whom are still alive, but some have fallen asleep [in death]. **7** Then He was seen by James, then by all the apostles, **8** and last of all, as to one untimely (prematurely, traumatically) born, He appeared to me also. **9** For I am the least [worthy] of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I [at one time] fiercely oppressed and violently persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the [remarkable] grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not without effect. In fact, I worked harder than all of the apostles, though it was not I, but the grace of God [His unmerited favor and blessing which was] with me. **11** So whether it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed and trusted in and relied on with confidence.

End of Word Study!

May the name of Jesus be glorified for ever and ever; AMEN!



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