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The Scriptural Toolbox for Kick-starting a Life of Salvation in Christian Faith

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Abstract

Starting a life of salvation in the Christian faith is pivotal to having a relationship with God and experiencing bliss in spiritual formation. Many denominations, creeds and doctrines have taught some unbelievers and believers that salvation is a free commodity that is given once and will last forever—with the mindset and doctrine that supports 'One saved, forever saved' and this has become a doctrinal imbalance in the Body of Christ heralded by some theologians and preachers of the gospel. This paper gives scriptural sources and answers to how what and where an unbeliever can start his or her salvific journey into Christ. Furthermore, this work provides some scriptural shreds of evidence on salvation, justification, conversion, baptism and new birth—as steps to be taken for a true salvific experience in the Christian faith. The study of salvation must have these topical issues to efficaciously deliver its full potential and blessed assurance in Christ Jesus. This paper concludes that the path of salvation highlighted in the study when followed, will not only systematically inform the minds of converts and the body of Christ, it will also eliminate the doctrine of permanent salvation in Christ Jesus.

Keywords: repentance, salvation, justification, conversion, baptism, reconciliation

Introduction

In the study of world and comparative religion, many creeds have built all kinds of doctrine around their belief and what they feel can promote their faith spiritually, bodily, and physically. However, in Christianity, God created all things beautifully, before He created Adam, in His image and likeness to subdue the earth, rule, and dominate it. The man (Adam and Eve), disobeyed the order of God and caused them to fall away from glory. Up until now, God introduced another system of reconciling the fallen man to Himself and this system is hidden in the passion of Christ—the death, burial and resurrection of His begotten Son, Jesus Christ and anyone that fulfils some basic requirements through the systematic rituals will be saved provided his or her faith is in Christ Jesus to follow His teachings and obey the godheads until the coming of the King, Jesus Christ.

The salvific journey requires that a person must genuinely look inward to discover who he or she is in God,

what her problems are in life and how to come to peace with the world (Ps 139:23–24). On the other hand, a new beginning awaits anyone willing and wanting to make Jesus Christ the lord of their life. Apostle Paul contended, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17, English Standard Version[1]). Furthermore, a spiritual beginning starts from the point of repentance. For a man to get himself united with God, he must begin his journey back into God from the starting point of repentance. When Jesus began his ministry, the first thing he preached was the doctrine of repentance, calling people out of sin to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand (Matt 4:17).

Kick-starting a Salvific Journey

Jumpstarting one's salvation through the finished work of Jesus Christ is fundamental to eternal assurance of reigning with Him and other saints. However, to continuously work with God, build one's faith and obtain the seal of sonship will demand some work from any believer. After the fall of man (Adam and Eve), they lost fellowship with God, the garment of glory that was on man and the ever presence of God a man enjoyed were lost. More so, man lost his dominion and authority over the earthly realm, but God again in His infinite love towards man as His creative creation found another means of restoring man to Himself again by giving His only begotten son Jesus Christ to die for mankind. Through Jesus' death, man can again be restored to that glory he lost, but at this point, he was to undergo some process set up in God for him to attain restitution. Man has to be born again (with the spirit of God) and it has to be through a process. This time, man has to repent and get born again (the new birth) and be baptised of water and God's spirit to be able to fellowship with divinity again

When a sinner feels the spirit of God convicting his or her heart of sin repentance is the first step that the sinner takes towards God. A heart looking towards repentance is required for the sinner to even start an approach towards the saviour, so it only makes sense that John the Baptist would require full repentance of those who come to him to be baptized (Luke 3:3) People have a strong tendency to trust in their upbringing, or that they were baptized as a child or as an adult or that they were raised in a good church family, but none of those things will replace the fact that the individual must completely repent of all sins before they would be saved and it was to this light that John the Baptist strongly instructed the people not to trust in anything else but that they must completely repent their sins and show this by the fruit of their free sin life that they are now endeavouring to live (Luke 3:8). To repent is to feel self-reproach compunction or contrition for past conduct; to feel regret or change one's mind with regards to past action in consequences of dissatisfaction with it's or it's fruit.

Jesus taught, "And saying, the time is at fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand repent you and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The Apostles, followers of Jesus Christ commanded sinners to repent (Acts 2:23, cf., Acts 3:19, 17:30). Heaven archived repentance so that the unbelieving, the lost and unsaved can now embrace salvation through Jesus Christ. The missional voyage of Jesus to earth is to bring salvation to humanity and reconcile humanity back to God through interpersonal relationships with the heavenly Father (God Almighty). Jesus uttered, "For the son of man is come to seek and to have that which was lost" (Luke 19:10, Cf., John 14:23; 1 Tim 1:15).

Salvation

Jesus is the epitome of salvific grace, meaning that He is committed to saving and delivering people and lives from the power of sin and death (Matt 1:21; cf., John 3:5–10). When Christ saves a man, He delivers him from the paws of eternal death. It suffices to ask—can one be completely saved from the sting of sin? Yes, one can be free provided he 'draws near to the person of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor 5:17–18; Heb 7:25). However, salvation through the passion of Christ—His death, burial and resurrection can be jettisoned (Phil 2:12; cf., Heb 2:3). The salvific commodity won and distributed by Jesus Christ is a tangible commodity in the hands of those that have subscribed to it and have fully given their heart to keep the sacredness (Acts 16:30–31; Rom 10:1; 2 Cor 6:2). In the study of systematic theology, some theologian, have argued that soteriology[2]—being the doctrine and the study of salvation has captured biblical references on a few salvation motifs: justification, conversion baptism and the new birth which are briefly stated in the following.

[1] The English Standard Version (ESV) Bible is the translation that will be used throughout this work.

[2] The term soteriology refers to religious ideas and doctrines surrounding salvation, as well as the study of the subject.

Justification

The love of God demonstrated towards humanity by giving His only beloved Son to die for mankind is one of the greatest sacrificial gifts that the earth realm has received for mankind to come into the union and fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (John 3:16, cf., Rom 3:23). Justification is a legal aspect of salvation where guilt, shame and debts are absolved by the Father through the finished works of His Son to present a man blameless, guiltless and acquitted before the throne of God. The racket of interplaying with justified salvation is "Grace as a gift from Jesus for those who believe in Him as the ultimate saviour redeemer" (Rom 3:24). Jesus Christ became a sinner for humanity to be righteous. Prophet Isaiah revealed, like a lamp that was led to be slaughtered or like a sheep before its shearers—He paid the debts of mankind so He could pay the ransom owed by the fallen man (Is 53:7). This justification embedded in salvation must be taken by faith in Christ Jesus and His finished work on the cross of Calvary (Rom 3:25–28).

Conversion

Christianity is not just a world religion that promotes the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, it is the tangibility of the potency, provisions and unfailing love that is enshrined in the person of Christ in the life of believers who have given their hearts to the Lord's guidance and leadership. Saul of Tarsus that later became one of the well-educated, apostles and followers of Jesus Christ, at a point in his wiles, persecuted the Church and hindered the work of God in various places in his days. He was myopic to the true nature and potency of the gospel of Jesus Christ until Jesus Himself appeared to Him on his way to Damascus to persecute believers in their synagogues until he was arrested by the vividness of the light—the presence and appearance of the Lord blinded him (Acts 9:1–22). Hence, a meeting with the person and divinity of Jesus Christ, coupled with His finished work on the cross of Calvary, is a testament that salvation and deliverance have come to whoever permits Him into his or her life (Luke 19:9–10). Additionally, if Saul can encounter true divinity during his pilgrimage to tear apart the body of Christ, this is a sign that the light of righteousness found in Christ can turn a sinner into a saint, martyr and herald of the good news and the Kingdom of God (Phil. 1:21, cf. 3:7–11).

Baptism

Baptism is one of the vital ceremonies or rituals in the Christian faith that symbolizes the inward phenomenon of coming to and accepting Jesus Christi as real, as God incarnate, as the sacrificial means by which those who believe in Him can be forever reconciled to God. Baptism serves as a physical manifestation of our devotion to Christ. It is the first step towards becoming a disciple. (Acts 8:26–39; cf., Rom 10:20). The Greek word for "baptism" is "βαπτιζω."[3] The English letters look like this: "baptidzo."[4] The Greek word "baptidzo" literally means to "dip" or to "immerse". Additionally, the symbolism of baptism is that the individual being baptised is submerged under water (whether literally or metaphorically), just as Christ died and was buried. And just as Christ rose from the earth again, so too does the individual who has been baptised. The believer's old, lifeless, weighty, and suffocating life is beneath the sea (Col 2:12–15). The believer's brand-new, purposeful existence emerges from the water after being washed clean by the blood of Christ. (1 Pet 3:21). Clearly, the essence of baptism is not to join the pew publicly to garner the attention that shows one is part of the body of Christ. However, to bask in the baptism both of water and of the spirit, confession of sins, genuine repentance of sins and forsaking them are far more valuable than the immersion ceremonially (Matt 3:2–8; cf., Acts 2:27–28).

Then again, the baptism is not only of water immersion but of the Spirit as well. This is consistent with the new covenant, as a gift and promise of the Father to whoever the Father has called to know His Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38–39). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the driving force in a believer who has received it and it propels that individual to act somewhat supernatural and extraordinary (Acts 2:41, cf. 10:37–38). The event of Holy Spirit baptism at the house of Cornelius is a vivid testament that the Father's will prevails through His Spirit—pouring out His Spirit upon whoever He wills, as this was the incident that happened in the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48). God knows the reins of people's hearts and He decides to move in His mightiness to install the Holy Spirit in them whether slave or free. There was no dichotomy when

[3] This is the ancient Greek word and meaning for "to immerse" or "soak in."

[4] This is the English letter for the Greek word "βαπτιζω" which means "to immerse" or "soak in" or "dip in water."

Peter declared "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (Acts 10:47). From the historical and biblical perspective, water baptism ceased after Jesus—the way, the truth and life ascended into heaven and gave gifts to men, which the Holy Spirit baptism is one of them (Eph 4:8). This was possible because the baptism of water during John the Baptist's ministry was to identify the true Son of the living God, Jesus Christ, who would take the sins of the world away and also for repentance or forgiveness of sins (Matt 3:13–15; cf., Rom 12:1–2). Despite all that, one of the works of the Holy Spirit is to teach all things including how to shirk, forsake sinful life and live righteously unto God.

The New Birth

One of the keys in the toolbox for Christian and spiritual life is the newness of the Spirit of God in us. The moralists and philanthropists cannot bask in this new birth irrespective of their alms-giving and chaste characters and behaviours—they will need to find the giver of life (1 John 5:1). The inner man is naturally evil, and there has to be a perfect and pure Spirit living inside of a man. Without this new Spirit, regenerating and configuring the inner man, there will not be anything called or known as a new birth (Rom 8:11; Eph 2:1–2). Consequently, baptism of the Holy Spirit can kick-start the birth of new things of the Spirit and cause an alignment that follows the will of God (John 5:24). More so, some believers and theologians have contended that this new birth is a "Born again" follower of God, a brand new person (John 3:3). In contrast, all the ceremonial rites, infant baptism, giving to the church and going to many religious altars cannot replace the new birth until genuine repentance is furnished and impressed upon the heart by the Holy Spirit. The new birth in Christ is a salvific trademark, indicating that a person belongs to God and his being and activities are ordered by the Spirit of God in them (Rom 8:12–16).

Call for Believer's Action

To be able to jumpstart your salvific experience, one must look inward and examine the ingredients and recipes that belong to the devil and totally confess them and prayerfully forsake them. The accuser of the brethren likes to hide in the dark to commit havoc, and when a man toll that path, he becomes entangled with Satan. Repentance must be genuine because Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith. On the other hand, salvation is free, because Jesus has paid the ultimate price so we can reunite with the Father through Christ Jesus. Salvation in Christ brings deliverance from the shackles of sin and death to give us a fresh start with God. In the Old Testament, access was limited to God until Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay our debts. We have been given an open check to write the codes of our security in Christ Jesus. Christians are now justified by the grace of our Lord, through faith in Jesus Christ. God is still in the business of converting perishing souls to embrace the very way, truth and life Jesus has to offer the world (Rev 3:20). Then again, baptism of water is for repentance while baptism of the Holy Spirit helps to forge Christians into the culture and traditions of the Kingdom of God after the similitude of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 11:1–2).

The call of God unto every man cannot be neglected, it's only in God that man can find rest, it is only in God that man can recover his lost glory, authority and fellowship he sold to Satan years ago. Believe in Jesus, confess his Lordship over your life and be born again. This is the only key to experiencing another episode of newness and bliss that can only be given by God—the giver of life, peace and prosperity.

Conclusion

This study scripturally examines why salvation is important and for whom is the salvation meant. The need for salvation came through the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and how God prepared His only begotten Son to provide redemption for mankind with His precious and sinless blood by dying on the cross of Calvary. Some biblical definitions were stated on major salvific topics like salvation, justification, conversion, baptism and the new birth to further establish the systematic steps for full salvation in Christ Jesus. Throughout the work, biblical and critical analyses were carried out to show the significance of salvation, the rituals to be done and to present the person of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of the world legally and victoriously standing to offer salvation to any man who comes to Him so he can reign with Him. The biblical findings of full salvation scripturally littered in the Bible are not a one-time ticket to heaven, but a continuous working of salvation to meet certain criteria that position us blameless, spotless and without wrinkles before the Father. The scriptural piece of work contends that the way of salvation is systematic and all must be carried out to bask in the full measure of salvific grace and

the finished work of Christ. The work encourages converts and believers to keep building their faith in the Lord, by examining their way of life if it is consistent with the life of Jesus Christ and His word. The study is valuable to Kingdom education on the motif of Soteriology and Systematic Theology as a discipline.

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