

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
SOTERIOLOGY
THE STUDY OF SALVATION
PART 5

This morning we are continuing in our series Foundation of Faith and we are in a section called Soteriology or the study of salvation. And to do this we began with The Fall of Man and we have seen that we all have inherited the sin of Adam as well as our own sin and this has separated us from God. There is no way man, by his own efforts can reach up and touch a holy God, have communion or fellowship with Him! That is the problem for man today and yet man tries his hardest to do good, to be a good person so that he might find favor with God. And yet, the Bible says that there truly are none who are good, not even one. The Bible tells us that our righteousness is like filthy rags before a holy and righteous God! Sin has truly separated us from God and thus, The Fall of Man!

And man thinks he can do good works and enter into a relationship with God through them but as I have said, man can't. You see, man has missed the mark of perfection, he is not moving towards God but away from God by doing his good works to enter in. And even if you were perfect all your life and just committed one sin, you still missed the mark of perfection and James tells us that you are guilty of the entire Law of God, all 613 of them!

Think of it like this. Imagine this wooden boat and the hull is almost perfect. Only 1% of the boards are missing, let's say one long board on the hull of the ship is missing. Not a big deal you think, the boat is almost perfect and so you put it into the water and what is going to happen to that boat? It is going to sink because it doesn't matter if 1% or 99% of the boards are missing, water is going to get into the boat and it is going to sink!

The same is true in our own lives. It doesn't matter if you think you can keep 99% of the Law of God, just missing that 1% shows that you missed the mark and you will not make it in. Then what good is the Law? The Law points us to the Savior. You see, the Law shows you who you are, all your shortcomings, all your sin and that is important, for why look for the Savior if you are okay! And once you see that you have failed, that you can't do it, then the Law did what it was suppose to do, as I have said, it will point you to the Savior, it will point you to Jesus!

Here's the thing, God loves us so much that He would never leave us in that condition with no way out so He provided a way out – The Salvation of Man! You see, our salvation is not based upon what we can do or have done; it is based upon what God has done for us. Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”** John 3:16-18.

There is a choice for man. You can receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior and enter into that everlasting life with Him. Or you can reject Jesus and remain condemned in your sin and ultimately be eternally separated from Him in the Lake of Fire. God does not force anyone, it is your choice but there are consequences to each, one is good the other is not! Jesus has been our bridge builder to the Father and thus, in this we see The Salvation of Man!

Now we have broke this section on The Salvation of Man down into three sections as we have looked at what God has done for us in regards to our salvation. That He has freed us from the past penalty of sin, which speaks of our **JUSTIFICATION!** Then we looked at how God has freed us from the present power of sin which speaks of our **SANCTIFICATION!** And this morning we are going to look at how God has freed us from the presence of sin which speaks of **GLORIFICATION!**

Let me share this story with you that will give you a little insight into what we will be talking about this morning, what this glorification is all about. We are told,

Near Cripple Creek Colorado, gold and tellurium occur mixed as tellurite ore. The refining methods of the early mining camps could not separate the two elements, so the ore was thrown into a scrap heap.

One day a miner mistook a lump of ore for coal and tossed it into his stove. Later, while removing ashes from the stove, he found the bottom littered with beads of pure gold. The heat had burned away the tellurium, leaving the gold in a purified state. The discarded ore was reworked and yielded a fortune. People are like tellurite ore. We have gold inside of us, but it often takes some trial in the fiery furnace of life to transform us.

- Brian Cavanaugh, T. O. R., Sower's Seeds

As we will see, God is working on us down here, making us more like Him and that is what the glorification process is all about as we will see this morning. In a sense it is the fulfillment of the sanctification process that begins the moment we get saved! It is what you might call the final step as we go to be with the Lord!

3. FREED FROM THE FUTURE PRESENCE OF SIN – GLORIFICATION

What I find interesting about this topic of glorification is that it is a subject that is not dealt with very often. I am not sure if it is because it speaks of the world to come or what, but it is spoken of often in the Bible and thus, it is a topic we need to deal with!

One writer wrote,

. . . after consulting more than thirty theological books by writers of almost all schools of thought, only found a half dozen or so that mentioned this glorification specifically. Granted, some treated this subject under the topics of ‘heaven’ and others, but we believe that the frequency with which it appears in the Bible warrants more specific treatment than this. Especially so, since this is the end toward which all our ambitions and actions as Christians tend.

. . . Glorification results from justification, as Romans 8:30 . . . shows, and so it is guaranteed by the grace of God, which is the power behind all of God’s dealing with His elect. It also results from God’s eternal election and predestination, which are but two links further back in this chain of grace. Thus, if a man would be sure of his glorification, he must make sure of his calling and election, which alone guarantees his abundant entrance into the Lord’s everlasting kingdom of glory.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: *For so an entrance shall be ministered abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:10-11). . . . It is this assurance of glory to come that enables the believer to bear all that the world may bring upon him: he has a hope that looks beyond this world and its fading glory. Alexander Carson says of the saints:

If their hopes were confined to this world, of all men living they would, indeed, be the most miserable; for, though the temperance, industry and the other virtues of the Christian life exempts them from many of the evils to which others are exposed, yet the peculiar trials to which they are subject would be more than a counterpoise to this. *The greater part of their present happiness consists in the anticipation of their future glory.* - *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, pp. 240-241. Edward H. Fletcher, New York, 1853.

- Davis W. Huckabee, *Studies on Strong Doctrine*, Chapter 14, *The Glorification of the Saints*

Here’s the thing, and this is important. We can clearly see the work that God does for us, He saved us. The work of salvation is His and we receive that by faith. Then there is the work that God does in us and that speaks of this sanctification process. And here this morning we are looking at this finished work of God in our lives, this glorification!

Now why do we need to be glorified? The answer is simple, these bodies of flesh cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, they need to be changed and they will. That is what Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:47-58, **“The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”**

Right now we possess in these bodies the image of Adam in that these bodies are dust! You see, this body of Adam's was the prototype of our natural bodies, whereas Christ's was the prototype of our spiritual bodies. And this just makes sense when you think about it. All the descendants of Adam have natural bodies, and all the descendants of Christ will have spiritual bodies. That means that Christ's resurrection was the prototype of all subsequent resurrection.

And then let's think this through and link it to what Paul is saying here. Paul is speaking of these present bodies, the ones we have now can not inherit the kingdom of God. These bodies of flesh are still corrupt, they have not been changed yet and even though the new bodies that the Lord has for us will be material they will not be flesh and blood! Folks, this is a glorious truth, not that we are all going to die one day, but we will be raised up in glory. It is the hope of ever Christian. We should talk about it!

Now we see this expressed in the epitaph that Benjamin Franklin wrote for himself when he was a young man and I am not sure if he truly believed this before he died or not. But this is what it said and it is true when you think about it. "The body of Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book its contents torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here food for worms. But the work will not be lost, for it will appear once more in a new and more elegant edition, revised and corrected by the Author." Now I don't know if Benjamin Franklin was a believer or not but like I said, what He wrote was and is true, the new edition is going to be far better, it will be eternal. And I don't know about you, but I do not want to live in this body forever, it truly is corrupted and I groan in this body! I can't imagine living 100 years in this body but the new body, what joy that will be!

Now as Paul moves on, in I Corinthians 15:51-58, He is speaking of the bodily resurrection or the translation of the living to glory. That we will be changed, that these bodies will be transformed because in their present state they cannot enter the presence of God!

Now let's read in Romans chapter 8, beginning in verse 18 and see what Paul says here regarding glorification! We are told, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”**

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Romans 8:18-30.

Paul opens up this section of Romans by comparing what we suffer in this life as compared to what glory will be like. And he is telling us if we truly understood this, if we truly appreciated all that God has for us, then these sufferings would seem trivial to us! That is kind of the same thought we saw in I Corinthians chapter 15 in that Paul said not to give up, to press on because the work we are doing for the Lord is not in vain and keep in mind that we are waiting for that day of glorification as God presents you before His holy angels.

Now it is not just man that awaits this day but in verse 19 Paul tells us that all of creation is eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. Now that sounds strange because we are already sons of God, so what is Paul talking about? Yes, we are sons of God now but creation does not recognize that fact, in reality, man tries to destroy it from their sight. But I don't think this anticipation is speaking of men as the creation but all of the creation, the animals and-so-on.

The verb “**eagerly waits**” in the Greek is ADEKDECHOMAI (ap-ok-ar-ad-ok-ee'-ah) and it is used several times in the New Testament to refer to the Lord's return. So this can be translated that all of creation is “on tip toes to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming to their own.” In other words, when we get our glorified bodies!

Now the reason for this is given to us in verses 20-22. You see, when God created the heavens and the earth everything was very good. Animals lived together in harmony; they were not meat eaters but vegetarians. But then sin entered the world through Adam and not only was Adam and all his descendants affected by this, but all of creation was also affected. Paul said in Romans 5:12, **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”** Now creation waits for the day when the Lord will return and release them from the bondage of sin that is in this world and that has affected them as well as man!

Of this time we are told in Isaiah 11:6-9, **“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”**

We also are told in Isaiah 35:1-2, **“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.”**

And lastly we are told in Hosea 2:18, **“In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely.”** Don’t you long for that day when righteousness will fill this land! Sickness and disease will be unheard of. If a child does die he will be around 100 years old, so the longevity of man will return! Can you imagine turning on the news and hearing, “Well, it is 75 degrees today and sunny. No rain again today, no storms anywhere. Jesus had to deal with a rebellious man but that was quick and it is over. Otherwise there is no bad news today!” How awesome that would be!

Now Creation didn’t ask for this, but because of man’s sin they were affected by it. And now they are standing on their tiptoes waiting for the revealing of the sons of God for when that occurs the Lord will return and set up His Kingdom on the earth. This waiting Paul illustrates as a woman in childbirth. Now, how many of you fathers and mothers have pictures of your children when they were born? I bet you have lots of pictures of your newborn child or children because it is a wonderful thing. The labor, well, not so wonderful, but you have to have the labor to have the birth!

Now we have a picture of what the Kingdom Age is going to be like as God has told us, but it is just a glimpse of what it will be like and we can compare it to what we see now, what we might call labor pains and we too wait for the birth of the Kingdom Age, the return of Jesus! It is as Morris tells us, “Creation is not undergoing death pangs . . . but birth pangs.” Why is that? Because it is already dead!

Now some of you who are young may not understand what Paul means when he says that, **“we ourselves groan within ourselves.”** Over the last several years I found out what it means to groan in these bodies of flesh, this body is falling apart. I use to have pain when I exercised a lot, now I have pain because I slept! Go figure but we do groan in these bodies.

But I don't think it is just the physical pain in these bodies that Paul is speaking of here. I believe he is also talking about the sin that is born in these bodies of flesh and the tragic results of that in our lives. And just watch a National Geographic show or some nature show and you will see the results of sin out in the wild. The violence, the death and destruction and this was not a part of this world when God created it. It is a survival of the fittest and man even is involved in that! You see, this all came about after sin entered this world! And thus, we too are standing on our tiptoes awaiting the redemption of our bodies but until that day, we do groan!

Remember what Paul, in II Corinthians 5:1-8 tells us. It is basically what he has said here in Romans. He wrote, **“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”**

Of this Ray Stedman writes: “Our lives consist of groans. We groan because of the ravages that sin makes in our lives, and in the lives of those we love. Also we groan because we see possibilities that are not being captured and employed. And then we groan because we see gifted people who are wasting their lives, and we would love to see something else happening. It is recorded that, as He drew near the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus groaned in His Spirit because He was so burdened by the ravages that sin had made in a believing family. He groaned, even though He knew He would soon raise Lazarus from the dead. So we groan in our spirits – we groan in disappointment, in bereavement, in sorrow. We groan physically in our pain and our limitation. We consist of a great deal of groaning.” So honey, when you hear me groan in this body, I am just being spiritual! I don’t think she believes that.

But the glorious promise, our hope, is that Jesus Christ is coming back and when He does this body of flesh will be redeemed, the Lord will give to us a new body for our spirit and soul to dwell in. We can't see it now but we are standing on our tiptoes waiting for this to occur. And we read of this event in I Corinthians 15:50-58!

And thus, we are waiting for that day, the redemption of our bodies! That word "**perseverance**" in verse 25 of Romans chapter 8, Morris tells us "It is the attitude of the soldier who in the thick of battle is not dismayed but fights on stoutly whatever the difficulties." May we continue to do so – don't lose that hope!

And Paul continues on speaking of the Holy Spirit helping us to pray and that God is working out all things for His purpose, His plans.

What I want to focus on here is verses 29 and 30 of Romans chapter 8 as Paul said, "**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**"

What I want you to notice here is that Paul is showing us that every person who is genuinely saved is eternally saved, they cannot lose their salvation. It is a free gift of God that He does not take back. As you look at these verses you see God working in a person and completing that work and as we are going to see, He already states that we are completed before we are because He is that sure, it will be done!

First of all God foreknew us, which should be no surprise, He knows everyone that has ever been born or ever will be born. We are told of Jeremiah the prophet, “**Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.’**” Jeremiah 1:4-5. Here in Romans Paul is speaking of those who are believers or will be believers He foreknew and He foreknew us with a purpose in mind.

That purpose was to predestine us to be conformed to the image of His Son! Now if we are predestined to be saved, why witness, why do anything, for if you are going to be saved there is nothing you can do to stop it and if you are not going to be saved then there is nothing you can do to be saved! I disagree for I believe that is an unhealthy and unbiblical position to take regarding predestination. I truly believe the Scriptures teach that it is 100% predestination and 100% free choice for us to choose for the Scriptures speak of both and I don’t believe it is 50% of each!

I know, that doesn’t make sense and I have to agree with you on that. But God never said to us that we have to fully understand it with our finite minds but that we would believe it by faith! Think of it like this, I believe it was Ironside who gave this illustration of free will and predestination. When you die you arrive in the afterlife and you see a door, which says, “All who will may enter.” And as you open the door and enter in you see a huge and beautiful banquet table all set for a feast and names at every place setting. Now, to your surprise, as you look at the names on the cards you find your name. As the door begins to close you notice on the inside of the door a sign that says, “Predestined before the foundations of the world.” I think that is the correct perspective of free will and predestination, at least to try to understand it with our human minds!

So as God's plan of redemption continues in our lives predestination leads to our calling. God is calling out to every person but for those that listen and receive Him, God has a plan for each of their lives and as He calls then we are to walk. He has not only prepared the work for us but He has prepared us for the work.

After God calls us, we then are justified by Him, declared innocent before Him. It is as Paul said in Romans 3:24, "**being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**"

Lastly, He not only called us, justified us, but He also glorified us. This is the final step of the sanctification process and it will occur when we go to be with the Lord and yet Paul states this work, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is in the past tense. Why does Paul speak of something that has not happened as if it already did? Because this promise of final glory was not uncertain for Paul, he knew that what the Lord started He would finish! You see, by writing it this way, by putting this idea of glorification in the past tense Paul was saying that everyone that He has justified is eternally secure.

You see that is how sure it is, God will complete the work He started because He foreknew us! It is as Jesus said in John 6:37, "**All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.**" And in John 18:9 we are told by Jesus, ". . . **'Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.'**" If you are His, He will not lose you – it is a promise – you are already seen as glorified in the Father's eyes – that is how certain it is!

Or as Paul put it in Philippians 1:6, “**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.**”

Now you may look at your life and see a lot of unfinished projects and thus, maybe God does not finish what He starts? You may feel that way but you are wrong; God finishes everything that He starts and thus, He will finish the work that He began in each of us! Think of it like this, as the nineteenth-century commentator, F. B. Meyer put it, “We go into the artist’s studio and find there unfinished pictures covering large canvases, and suggesting great designs, but which have been left, either because the genius was not competent to complete the work, or because paralysis laid the hand low in death; but as we go into God’s great workshop we find nothing that bears the mark of haste or insufficiency of power to finish, and we are sure that the work which His grace has begun, the arm of His strength will complete.”

Don’t disbelieve, but believe! God will finish what He has started! The work of glorification will be completed, not because of our great efforts, but because of His great love for us and the promise that He has made to us!

What are we going to be like? Well, we don't have to guess because we are told in I John 3:1-3 as John wrote, **“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”** God is transforming us into the image of His Son, He is working in us and as we said last time, that is the sanctification process. God is removing the garbage from our lives to make us more like Him.

The problem for us now is that we see Christ dimly, as through a mirror as Paul said in I Corinthians 13:10-12, **“But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”** We cannot, in these bodies of flesh, see God face to face and there are examples in the Bible of this. But, when we go to be with Him, when that glorification process is complete, we will be able to see Him face to face because we will be like Him!

Now please understand I am not teaching nor is the Bible saying that we will be God like the cults do. But those attributes that are working in us and through us now will be perfected when we go to be with Him! When Christ comes we shall be like Him and what a day that will be!

Paul made that point in Philippians 3:20-21 when he said, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**

We are a work in progress. I think Stott rightly wrote, “What we are does not now appear to the world; what we shall be does not yet appear to us.” But God is working and He will finish that work one day in our lives!

As I have said, this topic of glorification is one that seems to be ignored or put on the back burner and yet, to me it is very important for us to understand. That God is going to finish this work that He began in us. That God is going to transform us into the image of His Son! Imagine, the future presence of sin will be done away with one day. Those are important subjects for us to understand! Let me share these words from a writer and then I will sum up what we have seen as we have looked at this subject of Soteriology or the study of salvation. J. Hampton Keathley III wrote,

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.” He was declaring He had finished the special work of salvation which the Father had given Him to accomplish. We speak of “the finished work of Christ” because there is nothing left to be done to provide man’s salvation. God has done it all in the person and work of His Son and He raised Him from the dead as the proof of that very fact. The work of God in Christ is a once-and-for-all work of God accomplished in total by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Christ’s death was distinctly a work accomplished for the entire world (John 3:16; Heb. 2:9) and, provisionally speaking, it provided redemption (1 Tim. 2:6), reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19), and propitiation (the appeasement or satisfaction of God’s holiness) (1 John 2:2) for every person in the world.

Salvation is a done proposition. Man’s responsibility is to accept this by faith, faith alone in Christ alone. The finished work of Christ includes not only deliverance from the penalty of sin, but also from the power of sin. Faith in Christ for salvation means coming to Him as the source of salvation from every aspect of sin through trusting in the accomplished work of Christ. When Christ cried out, “It is finished” (Greek, *telesthai*, the perfect tense of *teleo*, “to complete, finish” expressing completed action with continuing results), He was affirming the fact of the finished nature of what He had accomplished on the cross for the world. Regarding Christ’s work as a finished work, Lewis Chafer wrote:

“The fact that Christ died does not in itself save men, but it provides the one and only sufficient ground upon which God in full harmony with His perfect holiness is free to save even the chief of sinners. This is the good news which the Christian is appointed to proclaim to all the world.”

In all the other religions of the world, salvation is a work that man does for God. This is what makes biblical Christianity distinct from all the religions of the world because in the Bible, salvation is of the Lord; it is the work of God for man and Christ’s final shout of victory affirmed this truth.

Since the Christ’s work is finished, it should be clear that salvation is not a work of man for God. When a person comes to Christ, he is acknowledging that he cannot save himself but has now recognized the work of salvation God has wrought for him and which he accepts as God’s gift. Salvation originates in God’s purposes, not in man’s and is forever delivered from any legalistic approach that would elevate human works as a ground for salvation.

In Ephesians 2:14-16 Paul speaks of the barrier of separation which exists between God and man. As long as this barrier exists, there is no possibility of fellowship between God and man. The barrier, or literally the dividing wall mentioned in Ephesians 2:14, referred historically to the dividing wall in the temple in Jerusalem. This wall separated the court of the Gentiles from the rest of the temple and excluded the Gentiles from the inner sanctuaries. But this wall was a picture of the spiritual barrier that stands between God and man which precludes man's access into God's presence. The Jews could go beyond the dividing wall, but this was only because they had access through their God-given sacrificial system which pointed to the person and work of Christ, the Messiah, the One who would make peace and remove the barrier.

- J. Hampton Keathley III,
Soteriology - The Doctrine of
Salvation

As you have seen, this study on this topic of Salvation is very important for if you don't understand this, then you will not understand why you need a Savior! And thus, let me sum things up for you. As we have seen, there is this fall of man, sin entered the world through Adam and thus, all have sinned. This is a huge barrier or gap in the road and we can't get to the other side no matter what we try and do. That is the problem and that is why Job cried out in Job 9:33, "**Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.**"

For Job, he felt that there was a great distance between him and God. He also felt unjustly treated by God as we have seen in our study of Job. But what I want you to notice here is this huge problem for Job. How can he go into heaven, how can he go before God, to God's court, and plead his case? He is a man and there is no one that can bridge that gap, no mediator for him.

That was the reality for Job and for all today, they can't do it and that is the problem. But as I have said, God has provided a way for us to enter in through His Son Jesus Christ. Paul picks up on this in I Timothy 2:5 where he tells us, **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”**

Paul is saying we have an intercessor, we have a bridge builder, we have someone who can restore our fellowship with God and that is Jesus! In Hebrews 7:25 we read, **“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”** There is no one else that can bridge that gap, no priest, no man, not even Mary, only Jesus Christ who, being God, made Himself flesh to die for our sins in order to bring us to God.

That is what I Peter 3:18 tells us, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

Now here's the thing. A mediator is there to end a dispute. The dispute between God and man is that man has sinned and his sin has separated him from God and justice demands death. But here comes our Mediator, Jesus Christ and says to the Father, “There is no more debt due, I have paid it in full!” And guess what? The case is closed; we are set free in Christ! What a wonderful God we serve!

And we have seen that Jesus not only begins the work but He will complete the work that He has started in us. He has freed us from the past penalty of sin and as we saw this speaks of justification. The record of our sin has been wiped clean, paid for by Jesus. Our sins have been cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more! That is justification!

Not only has Jesus set us free from the past penalty of sin, but He has also freed us from the present power of sin in our lives. We are no longer in bondage to sin but have been set free in Christ and this is speaking of the sanctification process! God is molding and shaping our lives down here to fit in up there!

And lastly, we have seen that Jesus has freed us from the presence of sin and this speaks of our glorification and God will finish this work, we will be taken to glory one day! It is summed up for us in Revelation 21:1-4 as John reminds us, **“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’”**

That is what God is going to do. There will be a new heavens and a new earth created and we will dwell with Him forever! Not only that but He will wipe away every tear, there will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying! Sin will be done away with and we will dwell in the presence of God for eternity. That abundant life that Jesus spoke of, which is available to us today, will reach its pinnacle at this time and it will remain there forever! Praise the Lord for what He is going to do!

As I begin to rap this study up let me share this story with you. We are told,

Normally the flight from Nassau to Miami took Walter Wyatt, Jr., only sixty-five minutes. But on December 5, 1986, he attempted it after thieves had looted the navigational equipment in his Beechcraft. With only a compass and a hand-held radio, Walter flew into skies blackened by storm clouds.

When his compass began to gyrate, Walter concluded he was headed in the wrong direction. He flew his plane below the clouds, hoping to spot something, but soon he knew he was lost. He put out a mayday call, which brought a Coast Guard Falcon search plane to lead him to an emergency landing strip only six miles away. Suddenly Wyatt's right engine coughed its last and died. The fuel tank had run dry. Around 8 p.m. Wyatt could do little more than glide the plane into the water.

Wyatt survived the crash, but his plane disappeared quickly, leaving him bobbing on the water in a leaky life vest. With blood on his forehead, Wyatt floated on his back. Suddenly he felt a hard bump against his body. A shark had found him. Wyatt kicked the intruder and wondered if he would survive the night. He managed to stay afloat for the next ten hours. In the morning, Wyatt saw no airplanes, but in the water a dorsal fin was headed for him. Twisting, he felt the hide of a shark brush against him. In a moment, two more bull sharks sliced through the water toward him. Again he kicked the sharks, and they veered away, but he was nearing exhaustion.

Then he heard the sound of a distant aircraft. When it was within a half mile, he waved his orange vest. The pilot radioed the Cape York, which was twelve minutes away: 'Get moving, cutter! There's a shark targeting this guy!' As the Cape York pulled alongside Wyatt, a Jacob's ladder was dropped over the side. Wyatt climbed wearily out of the water and onto the ship, where he fell to his knees and kissed the deck. He'd been saved. He didn't need encouragement or better techniques. Nothing less than outside intervention could have rescued him from sure death. How much we are like Walter Wyatt.

- Peter Michelmore, Reader's Digest, October, 1987

How true that is. We don't need people telling us we are good, when we are not! We do not need people telling us we are okay, nothing is wrong when we are dying in our sins! We don't need people to tell us to hang in there when there is nothing to hang on to in the first place! We don't need people to tell us to think good thoughts when we are dying in our sins!

What we need is for Jacob's ladder to be lowered down to us so that we can reach the hand of God. And when I am speaking of Jacob's ladder I am not talking about a ladder that is lowered down from a ship. When I speak of Jacob's ladder I am speaking of Jesus Christ who was, in a sense, lowered down from heaven and the only way we can be rescued is by reaching out and receiving that gift of life that is found in Him! It is as Peter said in Acts 4:12, "**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**"

You may not agree with it, you may totally reject that, but the reality is, Jesus is the only mediator between God and man and apart from Him you will die in your sins. God has done everything possible for you to come to Him, He paid in full the penalty that was due for you and now He extends this grace gift to you, a gift you receive by faith! Paul put it like this in Ephesians 2:8-9, "**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**"

Let me leave you with this to think about. Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote,
I once came upon a very good illustration of salvation while talking with a member of the board of directors of a small town bank.

When I mentioned a mutual acquaintance who is a member of the same board, my friend told me of the canny shrewdness which had made this man successful. "I don't know the extent of all his deals," he said, "because I am not on the loan committee, but as a member of the examining committee I see enough to know how cleaver and foresighted he is." We discussed the functions of a bank director and then I had my illustration.

God is His own loan committee and He lends every man everything that he is or has. God has loaned you your physique, whatever it may be; God has loaned you your intelligence, whatever quotient; God has loaned you your very breath. (Remember the line of the hymn? "I'll praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath.") But God is also His own examining committee. Furthermore, we are all defaulters and faithless to every trust that God has given us. "There is none righteous, no, not one." Our shortages will show up before Him more surely than the falsifications of a banker could be detected by the examining committee.

I pointed out that Jesus Christ on the cross gave up His life as our bond and security. Then we discussed a case well known in that part of the country, where a young man, thinking that his wealthy father was dying, forged his name for approximately a million dollars. The father got well, discovered the shortage, made it good, and disinherited his son.

But our God, knowing all too well our shortage, made it good in the death of Christ, and instead of disinheriting us, gave us His inheritance. What we must do is admit our guilt, throw ourselves on the mercy provided at the cross, and accept by faith the fact that *God is satisfied with the death of Christ instead of our death*. With acceptance of these great facts comes such a change of life that we should henceforth live a life of gratitude.

Wesley understood this. Knowing that he was a defaulter, and that his case would come before the examining scrutiny of God, he sang,

Arise, my soul; shake off thy guilty fears,
The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears.
Before the throne my surety stands!
My name is written on His hands.

- Donald Grey Barnhouse, Timeless
Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching,
pp.386-387

May we never lose sight of the gift that God has given to us and may we share that gift with others that they too may enter into that everlasting life with Jesus! You see, our names are written in His hands and that life was paid for by His blood!