

Salvation in Scripture, O.T., N.T.

All the ramifications of the different issues raised in this article are addressed in several of my books, mainly in three books: "From Acts to the Epistles," "Signs in John's Gospel," and "God's Firstborn Sons."

All three of these books, written some years back, have been revised during the past couple of years. The three books presently in print are from printings before the revision work was done. The revisions for all three though are on my web site and can be downloaded into a reader from there.

Covenants

On the salvation issue in Scripture, first of all it would probably be best to forget the two divisions of Scripture as man has designated them (O.T. & N.T.) and see the whole of Scripture as one continuous book. "Testament" is simply a synonym for, another way of saying, "covenant" (Heb. *Berith* [translated almost exclusively "covenant" in the O.T., KJV]; Gk. *diatheke* [translated both "testament" and "covenant" in the N.T., KJV]); and Scripture is not a covenant per se. Rather, *the whole of Scripture is a revelation from God to man.*

Thus, *Scripture* is one thing, *covenants* are another. Covenants, rather than being used to refer to Scripture (O.T., N.T. [*i.e.*, Old Covenant, New Covenant]), form a vital part of Scripture and are among the subjects that can be found in Scripture.

(Scripture is often referred to different ways in various passages — e.g., in Isa. 8:20, the whole of Scripture is referenced two different ways [“Law” and “Testimony”]; or, in Luke 24:27, the whole of Scripture is referenced through “Moses and all the Prophets” [then, note the same thing through the reference to Moses (Law) and Elijah (Prophets) in Mal. 4:4, 5].

And since “the Law” is *the Old Covenant*, there could be some precedent for calling the section of Scripture from Genesis to Malachi “The Old Testament.” But a similar precedent would not exist for calling the remainder of Scripture “The New Testament.”)

Aside from the preceding, beyond Genesis chapter twelve, covenants are made with Israel (Rom 9:4). No covenant has been made or ever will be made with the Church. Thus, to see that part of Scripture beginning with Matthew’s gospel called “The New Testament [‘The New Covenant’],” with numerous books dealing directly with the Church, appears rather strange.

The Old Covenant (Mosaic, inseparably associated with the Abrahamic) was made with Israel; and the New Covenant, one day replacing the Old, will be made with Israel. Both have to do with *the theocracy*, as do all covenants made or to be made with Israel (Davidic, Palestinian, New).

None of the covenants have anything to do with eternal salvation. All since Abraham’s day were made with a people already saved, or will be saved when the New Covenant replaces the Old. All were made/will be made with *the people comprising the only nation with a God*.

And, in reality, all could be classed as “The Magna Charta for the Kingdom,” with the Mosaic, and evidently the New, since it will replace the Old, having to do with *the rules and regulations governing the people of God in the theocracy*.

Creations, Sonship

Nor do “creations” — *the Adamic* (Gen. 1:26-28), *the old creation in Jacob* (new at the time [Isa. 43:1]), or *the new creation in Christ* (II Cor. 5:17) — have anything to do with salvation. Nor does “sonship” have anything to do with salvation.

(*Sonship* has to do with “creation.” Adam was God’s *son* because of “creation” [Luke 3:38]. This status did not change following the fall. Israel is God’s *son* because of “creation” [God’s *firstborn son* because of a *subsequent adoption*] and remains God’s *son* today [God’s *firstborn son*], even though in an unsaved state.

And Christians are God’s *sons* because of “creation” as well [*new creations* “in Christ,” still separate from salvation (nothing about *death and shed blood* in “creation” itself), though occurring at the same time, with “creation” occurring *because of an individual availing himself of that made possible through Christ’s death and shed blood*].

To further illustrate the point in relation to *salvation*, note that all angels are God’s *sons* because of their individual “creation,” and that position remained unchanged in relation to Satan and his angels following their fall [Gen. 6:2]. All angels remain God’s *sons* today — fallen or unfallen, for all are “created” beings.)

In the first two creations (Jew and Gentile), a person cannot move from one creation to the other. That is, a Gentile cannot become a Jew (he can do no more than become a proselyte); nor can a Jew become a Gentile. And the reason for that is simple: Both have to do with *the physical man*. That which is physical simply cannot be changed.

The third creation, of course, is formed from the first two. A Jew or a Gentile becomes a *new creation in Christ* through “belief.” And a person can move from one creation to the other in this respect because *the spiritual man* rather than the physical man is involved.

Believing Jews or believing Gentiles remain in their respective creations *physically* (that cannot change; again, because it is *physical*), but both can become *new creations* “in Christ” — Christians — a *spiritual* rather than a physical change.

As well, since *the physical* is involved with Jews and Gentiles, the creation can be passed from father to son through procreation.

But such cannot occur at all for Christians, for *the spiritual* is involved — a realm where man cannot operate, a realm which has nothing to do with natural procreation.

Salvation in One Book

Now, with all of that in mind, let's look at the salvation issue in one Book, not two Testaments, for *the salvation issue never changes throughout Scripture*.

The whole of the matter is set forth and established in an unchangeable manner in the opening chapters of Genesis. The manner in which God would restore ruined man, a ruined creation, was set forth at this opening point in Scripture; *and no change can ever occur, for the matter was established perfect in the beginning*.

The first thing we read relative to the restoration of a ruined creation is: *The Spirit of God moved, God spoke, light came into existence, and God formed a division between the newly existing light and the remaining darkness* (Gen. 1:2b-5):

“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

And *the remaining darkness* would reveal that God had not finished with His restoration work at the end of day one. Five more days of work remained, completing six days, with a view to the seventh day).

Thus, in relation to fallen man (a subsequent ruined creation, in need of restoration), the Divine work seen on day one can only foreshadow God's initial work pertaining to man, having to do with his eternal salvation (*a beginning work to restore the ruined creation*).

And the Divine work seen beyond this, seen in days two through six, can only foreshadow God's continued dealings with saved man (*a continued work to restore the ruined creation*). And the Divine work seen throughout all six days is with a view to that foreshadowed by the seventh day, which Scripture later reveals is related to the salvation or loss of the soul, the life, of a man who has passed from death unto life.

But, let's stay mainly with the work on day one. Note something though in passing. Once God had finished with His work on the first day, He didn't go back and re-deal with anything from this day. Rather He began to deal with that remaining, as it pertained to the complete restoration of the ruined creation seen in that foreshadowed by God's work during the subsequent five days.

Thus, exactly as in the type, God does not go back and re-deal with saved man relative to anything having occurred in his passing from death unto life. Rather, He now deals with man *on the basis of* that which has occurred (but not *relative to* that which has occurred), having to do with *life in association with the light shining out of darkness* (John 1:4, 5; II Cor. 4:6), with a view to the seventh day.

Now, moving from this initial information to Genesis chapters three and four, we see several things pertaining to that initially occurring on day one in Gen. 1:2b-5. Chapter three relates man's fall, resulting in a subsequent ruined creation. And how does God restore a ruined creation? The answer, of course, along with the purpose for restoration — all as previously dealt with — is seen back in the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis.

Then, additional information relative to the matter at hand begins to be revealed in chapter three.

In this chapter, a man acts (Adam, typifying Christ 4,000 years later), partook of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, bringing about the fall. But, remaining in complete conformity to Christ's work at Calvary, *Adam, who had not been deceived (I Tim. 2:14), partook of the fruit from the tree willingly and for a purpose.*

In effect, once Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, *Adam was left without a choice.* He found his bride in a fallen state (though the fall didn't actually occur in all its completeness until Adam, as the federal head, ate of the fruit himself). But the only way Adam could effect *Eve's redemption*, with a view to both one day partaking of the tree of life together and realizing the purpose for their very existence (*Adam partaking of the tree as a complete*

being, which necessitated Eve's presence with him), was to partake of the forbidden fruit himself, which he did. And this, as previously stated, was with a view to *redemption*.

Note how this is clearly seen in the antitype:

Christ, in complete conformity to the type, found His bride in a fallen state. And He Who knew no sin became sin (II Cor. 5:21). And this was with a view to *redemption*, in order that both Christ and His bride might one day partake of the tree of life together and realize the purpose for man's existence (*Christ partaking of the tree as a complete being, which will necessitate His bride — bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh* (cf. Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:30) — *being present with Him*).

Then a clear inference to death and shed blood are introduced later in the chapter through God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins (they had lost the covering of Glory at the time of the fall).

(Note again that man at this point is not placed completely back into the position which he had occupied before the fall [a restoration of the covering of Glory, which, in subsequent Scripture, is seen restored only on the seventh day].

There was a restoration of the Glory, after a fashion, during Moses' day at Mt. Sinai when the Glory filled the tabernacle [Ex. 40:1ff]. And this may be what is being referenced, or at least is in view, in Rom. 5:14 — "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses..." — but man being brought completely back into the position from which he fell will require a restoration of the Glory after the same fashion seen prior to Adam's fall. Such a restoration will require man to, once again, be enswathed in Glory.)

Then in chapter four, more information is added. Man, seen acting in the previous chapter, would be the one to die and shed his blood (Cain slaying Abel, Israel slaying Christ). And putting all of this together from these four chapters, the complete salvation picture is seen, a picture which never changes.

Eternal salvation is a Divine work, performed by a Man (Who has to be God), with death and shed blood involved. All fallen man can do is simply receive that which has been done on his behalf. Nothing more can enter into the matter.

And note again that once man has passed from death unto life, God's dealings with man then move to that which lies out ahead. God never again deals with man relative to the salvation which he presently possesses.

In that respect, note the absurdity of saying that a saved man can lose his salvation. How could he lose something which he had nothing to do with obtaining, particularly since God is no longer dealing with him relative to the matter?

Now, a lot of time has been spent on this overall salvation issue from the first four chapters of Genesis for the simple reason that these foundational truths pertaining to salvation are needed to understand the subject at hand — salvation as seen later in Scripture, particularly as it is seen in the camp of Israel on both sides of Calvary.

(Note the importance of beginning where God began and studying Scripture after the manner in which God structured His Word.

Understand how the subject is set forth in its foundational respect at the beginning of Scripture, and you will know how to handle the same subject matter when it appears later in Scripture, though perhaps dealt with from different perspectives at times.)

Events in Genesis chapter twenty-two or chapter thirty-seven further illustrate and provide additional information for that seen in the opening four chapters of Genesis, but let's move on to Exodus chapter twelve.

In this chapter we have that previously illustrated from several types in Genesis brought together in the institution of the Passover. A lamb from the flock was to die in a vicarious manner in the stead of the firstborn in the family. And a lamb dying in this manner, with the blood caught and properly applied — in line with the way that the sacrifices or other types were seen back in Genesis — pointed to the Paschal Lamb dying at Calvary, shedding His blood.

Now, the question: Did God recognize death and shed blood, in relation to man's eternal salvation, in all these sacrifices throughout man's 4,000-year history preceding the events of Calvary? Cer-

tainly He did! After all, He is the One having instituted them, with man only carrying out that which God had previously instituted.

All of these sacrifices were inseparably associated with the One actually slain before man even fell, or before one sacrifice was ever even offered. Christ was “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), which takes matters back to the beginning of the restoration of the ruined earth, preceding man’s creation, in Gen. 1:2b. In reality, all of the O.T. sacrifices foreshadowed an event which God looked upon as having already occurred (Eccl. 3:14, 15; Isa. 48:3ff).

At the time Christ was here on earth, the Jewish people were still sacrificing the Passover lamb. In this respect, with death and shed blood involved, the Jewish people at Christ’s first coming could only have been just as saved as the Israelites during Moses’ day or any others who had availed themselves of God’s provision during succeeding years or during the preceding 2,500 years of human history.

Or, we can move matters to anytime during the 2,000 years this side of Calvary and say that saved individuals throughout this time were no more or no less saved than individuals who were saved throughout the 4,000-year history of the human race preceding Calvary. It matters not where you view salvation by grace — during Adam’s day immediately following the fall, or today 6,000 years later — it’s the same, by death and shed blood.

These Jews in view at Christ’s first coming would have been individuals who were having a part in the sacrifice of the paschal lambs year after year (which could only have been *the nation at large*, else Christ could not have come to this nation and dealt with them relative to spiritual values, offering to the Jewish nation the kingdom of the heavens).

Salvation on Both Sides of Calvary

Now let’s look at both sides of Calvary and the reoffer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel after Christ’s ascension. Again, bear in mind that which is stated in Rev. 13:8.

(But, note something about events in John chapter eight first. In this chapter, Christ, during His earthly ministry, referred to Jews who had believed in Him [v. 31] as being “of your father the devil” [v. 44].

Don't try to read *saved-unsaved issues* into this chapter. Christ was dealing with saved Jews being brought forth from below rather than from above, doing the work of Satan rather than the work of God.

The issue in this chapter, as the central issue in the book as a whole, is not eternal salvation. Rather, the issue has to do with the message being proclaimed to Israel at that time, which pertained to *the kingdom*.)

Question: Jews rejecting Christ, responsible for the events of Calvary, were they saved or unsaved?

Then another question: If saved — which they, of course, were — did that status change once the Paschal Lamb had died, with God then no longer recognizing animal sacrifices as before, nullifying their salvation?

How could a status in their salvation possibly change? God had previously established and recognized animal sacrifices in this respect; and, according to the original type in the opening two chapters of Genesis, or any other type, once a man had passed from death unto life, God never again dealt with the person on that basis again. All of God's dealings with the person, beyond availing himself of the blood sacrifice, were now focused on that which lay ahead, never on that lying behind.

Had not the status of these Jews remained the same (*i.e.*, just as saved following Calvary as they had been before Calvary), there could have been no reoffer of the kingdom to Israel, as seen throughout the Book of Acts. And had God continued to recognize animal sacrifices beyond Calvary, the reoffer of the kingdom could conceivably have continued indefinitely (as long as Israel remained in a position to and continued to sacrifice the paschal lambs year after year).

But, following Calvary, God recognized only the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, not sacrifices of paschal lambs as before. And, on the basis of Rev. 13:8, one might say that God, in reality, had recognized only the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb since before man fell, though seen and foreshadowed in all the other paschal

lambs slain up to Calvary.

Thus, the reoffer of the kingdom could remain open as long as a saved generation of Jews remained on the scene (not Christians, but saved Jews [individuals still rejecting Christ; thus, they could not have been *new creations* “in Christ”]). But once this generation had passed off the scene, there could be no continued reoffer of the kingdom.

The preceding is why the reoffer ceased after some thirty years (from 33 AD to about 62 AD). The saved generation of Jews was rapidly passing off the scene, leaving unsaved Jews to replace them. *And that having spiritual values could not have been offered to individuals separated from spiritual values.*

And, aside from the preceding, a new entity had been brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected.

(By way of summation, note the Jews saved on the day of Pentecost, or Paul saved enroute to Damascus. Neither account should be thought of with respect to eternal verities. Along with Jews reached throughout the Book of Acts, both should be thought of in the sense of the conversion of individuals already saved, *i.e.*, saving the saved [like past and present aspects of salvation, with a view to the future, seen in the lives of Christians today].

The preceding is evident from that stated in Acts 2:38 on the day of Pentecost. And it would be somewhat absurd to think of Paul, a zealous Pharisee, not having previously availed himself of God’s sacrificial provision — *i.e.*, not having previously observed the Passover.

Also, on another note, unsaved Jews today [and it has been this way for over 1,900 years] are looked upon exactly as unsaved Gentiles relative to eternal salvation. Both have to be saved exactly the same way — through faith in the Paschal Lamb who died — not through faith in some unknown coming messiah, etc. The matter is exactly as stated in Acts 4:12:

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

In this respect, there are only two types of people in the world today — *Saved* [Christians] and *Unsaved* [Jews and Gentiles].)