

Salvation is Final

When a sinner falls before the Lord Jesus Christ in humble repentance, that individual takes responsibility for his or her own depravity and sin and accepts the atoning work of Christ as the only means to reconciliation with God. At that moment something amazing happens: salvation. We know that because that is what God's word tells us. Paul told the despondent jailor in Acts 17: 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I have used that verse many times, and will continue to do so, because it is one of the simplest and yet most profound statements found in the Bible, indeed all the books of history combined.

There is no waiting period, no probation, and no penance to pay—it is immediate and complete. However, it is not a reconstitution or rehabilitation of the sinner—that individual in fact receives an entirely NEW nature. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor 5:17)

Our old nature, sad to say, continues to live and we must continually reckon that nature to be in the place of death because he cannot be rehabilitated. He is a sinner by nature and practice. "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom 6:6) We should not serve sin, but sometimes we allow our old nature to wreak havoc in our lives. That is why a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can still commit sin. "The evil which I would not, that I do." (Rom 7:19) That is also why John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8)

However, the "new creature" in a believer CANNOT sin. That is why John makes a seemingly contradictory statement in the same epistle. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3:9) This is entirely the result of God's grace working in us. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph 1:6)

We are accepted by God in Christ! "Where is boasting then? It is excluded." (Rom 3:27) It is all because of the work of Christ on the cross at Calvary. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor 5:21)

All believers in the Lord Jesus are made as the righteousness of God! Unbelievable! God is perfect, holy, without spot or blemish. "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be...even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." (Rev 16:5,7) We, on the other hand "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph 2:3)

How is this change possible? "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." (Tit 3:5) That is such good news because "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Is 64:6)

The last thing the Lord of Glory uttered as he died at Golgotha was, "It is finished!" (Jn 19:30) The Greek is actually one word that means paid in full. We know from Luke 23:46 that this was uttered "with a loud voice," and that statement should resound loudly in the heart of every believer.

This should enable all of us who have put our trust in the Lord Jesus should echo the words of Paul in his epistle to the Galatians. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal 5:16)

The verses just quoted, and many more, also prove that one who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ can never lose their salvation. If it is God's work and he has declared it as finished there is nothing we can add to or take away from the salvation that he offers. If we accept that offer we become one of his sheep, and he our shepherd. (John 10)

In that same passage the Lord himself assures us that "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (John 10:27-30)

Andrew Scharf, Adapted 2012