

Salvation: God's Love Forever

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, October 20, 2013

A Salvation to Be Declared . . .

We have been considering the various “wonders” of the doctrine of salvation--precious truths the Bible tells us that don’t necessarily fit in to the typical presentation of the doctrine of salvation, but that are nevertheless very much worth talking about. And what we consider today perhaps isn’t so much a ‘wonder’ of salvation as it is a response to how wonderful it is--and that is that this is a salvation to be declared to all.

Salvation is meant to be declared. When our Lord was born, the angels of heaven burst through heaven, as it were, and declared it upon earth; as the angel told the shepherds, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).¹ And if God’s angelic hosts would be so eager to proclaim to earth--those who are not participants in our salvation, but are only eager observers of it (1 Peter 1:12), and who will be taught the glory of God forever by it (Ephesians 3:10)--shouldn’t we be even more eager? How wrong it would be not to declare to the world that we have been redeemed! As Psalm 107:2 puts it, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so . . .”

I. OUR SAVIOR COMMANDED THAT IT BE DECLARED.

- A. In Isaiah 61:1-2, the prophet declared, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord . . .” You’ll notice that the translators capitalized the first person pronoun in that version. This is out of recognition that these words were meant to be understood as the prophetic utterance of our Lord. He Himself quoted this passage in the synagogue in Luke 4; and ended His reading of it by saying, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).
- B. He Himself set the example. We’re told that He went about “preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23; 9:35). “The gospel” is “good tidings”. He likewise promised that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations” (Matthew 24:14). When He accepted the outpouring of fragrant oil on Himself in preparation for His burial, He said that her deed would also be told as a memorial to her “wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world” (Matthew 26:13). In Mark 16:15, we’re told that Jesus told His followers, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” This, of course, is in the last half of Mark’s Gospel--the authenticity of which is questioned by some biblical scholars; but Matthew 28:18-20 is clearly authentic, and contains the marching orders we have received from our Lord: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” A full obedience to our Lord’s commission obviously *must* include the declaration of our salvation. As Paul said, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it

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is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’” (here quoting from Isaiah 57:2).

II. OUR WORSHIP IS TO INVOLVE ITS DECLARATION.

- A. Sometimes, in our great Old Testament instruction book on worship--the Book of The Psalms--this flows naturally from personal experience. “Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness” (Psalm 51:14). “God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations” (Psalm 67:1-2). “My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits” (Psalm 71:15).
- B. Sometimes it is exhorted that salvation be declared by the redeemed: “Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, ‘The Lord be magnified!’” (Psalm 40:16; see also 70:4). “Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day” (Psalm 96:2).
- C. Sometimes the declaration of salvation takes on the feel of congregational ‘testimony-time’: “This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles” (Psalm 34:6). “Come and hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul” (Psalm 66:16).
- D. Sometimes the worship comes as a resolve to not be silent, but to make a declaration of salvation in the places where it would not ordinarily be accepted: “I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly” (Psalm 40:10).

III. THE DECLARATION OF IT IS MEANT TO REACH THE NATIONS.

- A. In King David’s song in 1 Chronicles 16--written when the ark was placed in the tabernacle; and much of which is also found in Psalm 105--David writes; “Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day” (1 Chronicles 16:23). It’s perhaps not typically meant to be used as a form of ‘gloating’; but Hanna--the mother of Samuel--*did* declare her salvation when she said, “My heart rejoices in the Lord; My horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation” (1 Samuel 2:1). Isaiah 62:11 says, “Indeed the Lord has proclaimed To the end of the world: ‘Say to the daughter of Zion, “Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.”””
- B. Ordinarily, angelic spirits are not given the privilege of declaring salvation. We saw this, of course, at the birth of our Lord--but that was to a small group of shepherds. Revelation 14:6-7, however, tells us that just before the outpouring of the bowl judgments, John writes, “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people --saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’” And of course we can’t leave this discussion without considering one of the most remarkable declarations of salvation of all with respect to the nations--the one told to us in Revelation 7:9-12; where we read, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with

white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.'"

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God doesn't save us in Christ in order that we might hide our light under a bushel, but rather that we might let it shine. As the apostle Peter puts it in 1 Peter 2:9-10; "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

May God help us--as His redeemed people--to faithfully proclaim the praises of our Redeemer wherever He places us!

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc.