

# Salvation: God's Love Forever

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, July 21, 2013

## 'Death . . . Swallowed Up in Victory'

THE 'WHY'  
OF  
SALVATION

In this new section of our study together, we'll be considering the "where" of salvation. We'll seek to answer the question, "Where is the final outcome of our salvation experienced?" We'll consider three answers to that question: (1) "in the grave", in that our salvation in Christ conquers death at the Lord's return; (2) "upon the earth", in that our salvation involves reigning with Christ for 1,000 years after His return; and (3) "unto the new Jerusalem", in that our salvation eventuates in our dwelling with Him in new heavens and a new earth.

THE 'WHAT'  
OF  
SALVATION

In this lesson, we'll consider the first of these places in which our salvation is ultimately experienced--that is, the grave.

THE 'HOW'  
OF  
SALVATION

### I. THE BASIS OF OUR VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE.

A. The basis of our victory over the grave is the resurrection of Jesus Christ--and our union with Him in it. Apart from the resurrection of Jesus, there would be no victory over death; and apart from our union with Him in His resurrection, we ourselves would not experience that victory.

THE 'WHO'  
OF  
SALVATION

1. First, note that Jesus' resurrection brings about this victory for us. In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul deals with the fact that there were some in Corinth who were denying the idea that the dead could be raised. He wrote; "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).<sup>1</sup> What a hopeless condition we'd be in if Christ was not bodily raised! But what victory is declared to us when, as Paul then goes on to say--"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (v. 20).

THE 'WHEN'  
OF  
SALVATION

2. And second, note that it is our union with Christ that ensures that this victory over the grave will be our own experience! As Paul wrote in Romans 6:3, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" The "baptism" being spoken of is the spiritual work of the Holy Spirit by which we are united to Christ and permanently identified with Him in His humanity. Paul made this the basis of his call to live a renewed life when He went on to say, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the

THE 'WHERE'  
OF  
SALVATION

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THE 'WONDER'  
OF  
SALVATION

dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him” (vv. 4-9). But this is also the basis of our eventual experience of a literal resurrection from the dead. As Paul wrote in Romans 8:11; “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

- B. Jesus Himself affirmed this. He said to His disciples--in the light of His impending crucifixion--”A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19). He promised that *He* would live--and that stands as the basis of victory. And He promised that *because* He would live, we would *too*--and that stands as the basis of *our* victory!

## II. THE NATURE OF OUR VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE.

- A. Much of the nature of our victory over the grave is told to us in 1 Corinthinans 15:35-49. We're first given a picture from the world of agriculture. Paul writes that "what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body" (vv. 36-38). Just as Jesus said concerning Himself, " Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain" (John 12:24). What's more, Paul points to the animal kingdom and the celestial realms to show that God gives a body appropriate to each. He writes, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory" (vv. 39-41). The material composition of the atomic particles of the created universe is under the sovereign rule of God. If we were to ask how He could constitute a resurrected body for us, we should remember that He who created all things the first time can certainly do this!
- B. Paul goes on to show that these realities in nature parallel the work of resurrection. “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 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” (vv. 42-49). There is a difference in nature between the body sown and the body raised; but there’s also a definite continuity--just as the body of Jesus that was buried is the same body that was raised in glory. And because Jesus is presented as the last Adam, we can be united to Him as the prototype for the resurrection of all the redeemed sons of Adam. As we bore the image of the first, so will we bear the image of the second! We will be raised like Christ in His glory (see 1 John 3:2).

### III. THE PROMISE OF OUR VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE.

- A. This promised victory will be ours at the return of Jesus--"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" (1 Corinthians 15:52). As Paul puts it in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."
- B. This gives meaning to the remarkable words of Jesus in Luke 21:16-18 to His followers; "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake." "Death"? Yes--"But not a hair of your head shall be lost."

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