

THE SON'S PART IN SALVATION (Where Does Salvation Reside?)

INTRODUCTION

The general fact of Christ's death as a necessity for salvation is held by all evangelicals. However, when it comes down to specifics concerning the Cross, it is amazing how little many evangelicals really grasp.

Each member of the Trinity has His part in salvation. The Father plans salvation, the Son procures (secures) salvation, and the Holy Spirit applies salvation.

Salvation resides in Jesus Christ and apart from the person and work of Christ, no one can be saved.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS ON ATONEMENT

Definition: The atonement involves everything accomplished by Christ through His complete and perfect work upon the Cross.

Basis. God's love is the basis of the atonement in that He sent His Son as the supreme sacrifice for sin (John 3:16).

Necessity. Since man is totally depraved in his unsaved state, he is in a hopeless and helpless spiritual condition. The world is lost, sinful, under God's wrath, enemies of God, haters of spiritual things and rebellious. NOTE: Except God find a way to forgive man's sin, there is no hope for him. God has found a way through the work of Christ.

Atonement for sin could only be made by means of the shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22-28), and there is no atonement apart from the death of Christ, who shed His perfect, sinless blood for sin. (Rom. 5:9-10; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:12-14). NOTE: Take the blood out of Christianity and you have no Christianity.

Objects of the Atonement:

1. Sins (1 Cor. 15:2; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 1:3). Jesus died for every act of sin ever done; past, present and future, for those who believe on Christ.
2. Sin (Rom. 6:1-13). At the Cross, Christ positionally judged the sin nature and broke its reigning power over all those who believe on Him.
3. Sinners (Rom. 5:8; 8:32; 1 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 9:15). Jesus Christ not only died for acts of sin and the sin nature but He died for the sinner. Christ died for all who believe on Him. Therefore salvation is personal and particular.

Act of the Atonement: When it says that Christ died for sin or sinners, it means that Christ died in place of or instead of or in behalf of the sinner and his sin. Christ was the substitute for the sinner and his sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 12:24; Mark 10:45; Heb. 9:29; Rom. 5:8; 8:32).

PROPITIATION (Godward)

Meaning. Propitiation means to appease or satisfy.

Definition. Propitiation is that past work of God at the Cross whereby He set forth His Son as a sacrifice to appease His (Father's) wrath against sin. Christ, through His death, satisfied the Father's holy and righteous demands against sin.

Object. Propitiation is towards God (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:1-2). God's wrath is satisfied so His love can go forth to men.

Means. The redemptive sacrifice of Christ.

Purpose. The purpose of propitiation is that God might be just and justifier of them that believe. Now God, because He is absolute justice, must still judge sin and the sinner, but God also, through the Cross, has provided a way in which He may justify men without pouring wrath out on them (Rom. 3:26).

REDEMPTION (Sinward)

Meaning. Redemption means to buy, as a slave, out of the slave market, and set free by the paying of a ransom price.

Definition. Redemption is that work of God whereby, through the cross, He purchases and sets free, by the ransom price of Christ's precious blood, those who are in the slave market of sin (Tit. 2:14; 1 Tim. 2:6; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30).

Objects. Sin (Eph. 1:7); sinner (Heb. 9:15), and the body (Rom. 8:23).

Means. The blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:19).

Results. Redeemed from sin (Tit. 2:13; Eph. 1:13), from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4) and from the curse of the Mosaic Law (Gal. 3:13).

Duration. Redemption is eternal in nature; therefore a person can only be redeemed once (Heb. 9:12).

RECONCILIATION (Manward)

Meaning. Reconciliation means to change completely from an enemy to a friend.

Definition. Reconciliation is a finished work of God whereby one who believes on Christ is brought from an attitude and position of enmity to an attitude and position of friendship (Rom. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 2:14-18).

Objects. The object of reconciliation is man. God does not need to be reconciled. God is the reconciler and man is the one reconciled.

Means. The death of Christ for sin (Rom. 5:10).

EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT: LIMITED OR UNLIMITED?

The Issue. Did God, by the death of Christ, purpose to save the elect only, or did He purpose to provide a salvation for all men to be applied to the elect?

1. The extent of the atonement for limited atonement view is to the elect. The extent of the atonement for the unlimited atonement view is for the whole world but applied only to the elect. One view holds strict limited atonement; the other a limited application of the atonement.
2. Limited atonement guarantees the salvation of the elect. Unlimited atonement renders all men in a savable position but as actual for the elect with no saving benefit for the non-elect. Unlimited atonement sees the atonement as actual for the elect and potential or provisional for the non-elect.
3. Both viewpoints have good arguments for their respective positions. Neither viewpoint is threatened if one believes in unconditional election.
4. The extent of the atonement is an issue among sovereign election exponents alone. The extent of the atonement is not an issue as great in magnitude as freewill (Arminianism) and sovereignty (Calvinism). POINT: The doctrine of the extent of the atonement should never divide Christians.

Limiting the Atonement. Strict unlimited atonement would issue in universalism. Historically many supposedly evangelical groups have gone liberal because they believed that a loving God died for all men; therefore all men are saved. Arminians (freewillers) limit the effect of the atonement to those who believe. Modified Calvinists (those who believe in sovereign election but accept an unlimited atonement) say the atonement is sufficient for all but efficient only for the elect. Strict Calvinists believe the atonement is only for the elect; that is that Christ's death actually saves all those that believe. POINT: It is very important to understand that all evangelicals limit the atonement in some way. The atonement only works or is effective for those who believe. Only those that truly trust in Christ are redeemed and reconciled to God.

Preaching the Gospel. Actually what a person holds concerning the extent of the atonement has no bearing on the context of the gospel message. *The issue, when dealing with the unsaved, is not that Christ died for the sins of the world or that Christ died for the sins of the elect, but that Christ died for sinners and He will save any sinner who believes that Jesus Christ is his Lord and Savior.*

J. I. Packer says,

The fact is that the New Testament never calls on any man to repent on the ground that Christ died specifically and particularly for him. The basis on which the New Testament invites sinners to put faith in Christ is simply that they need Him, and that he offers Himself to them, and that those who receive Him are promised all the benefits that His death secured for His people. What is universal

and all-inclusive in the New Testament is the invitation to faith, and the promise of salvation to all who believe (*Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*).

THE PRACTICALITY OF THE SON'S WORK IN SALVATION

Makes Christ All Important. Salvation resides (is located) in Christ; that is, in His death and resurrection (Rom. 4:25). The Christ of the gospel is central to Christianity. Christianity is Christ and His work.

Puts the Emphasis On Christ. No sinner is saved until the death of Christ is applied to him by the Holy Spirit. NOTE: Salvation is not in church, baptism, good works, religion, walking an aisle, having a religious experience, etc., but in Christ (John 14:6). POINT: The task of the witness is to tell the message of Christ and to bring the person to Christ.

Gets the Issue Straight. Salvation is not in one's faith but in Christ. Men are saved by grace through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8). Faith never saved anyone but Christ saves all that come to Him through faith. NOTE: Saving faith must take an object and that object is the person and work of Christ. Salvation is found in a person, not a doctrine or creed (Acts 16:31).

Gives A Positive Message. The Christian really has good news for the unsaved world. The gospel is that Christ saves all that come to Him through faith. The sinner can change from an object of God's wrath to an object of God's love, from a slave in bondage to a man set free from the bondage of sin, and from an enemy to a friend of God. How? Through Christ's work of propitiation, redemption and reconciliation for all that will believe.

Read: John 10:1-42