

# **SALVATION**

## **Part 3**

### **The Key Concepts of Salvation**

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**THE AMAZING GRACE OF GOD**  
**Titus 2:11-15**

- I. God's grace teaches us how we should live. 2:11-12
  - 1. God's grace has come to us. 2:11
  - 2. God's grace must change us. 2:12
  
- II. God's grace teaches us where we should look. 2:13
  - 1. We know what to look for: His coming.
  - 2. We know who to look for: Our Savior.
  
- III. God's grace teaches us who is Lord. 2:14
  - 1. Jesus paid for us.
  - 2. Jesus purifies us.
  - 3. Jesus possesses us.
  - 4. Jesus prepares us.
  
- IV. God's grace teaches us what we should learn. 2:15
  - 1. Learn doctrine.
  - 2. Learn duty.
  - 3. Learn discernment.
  - 4. Learn dedication.

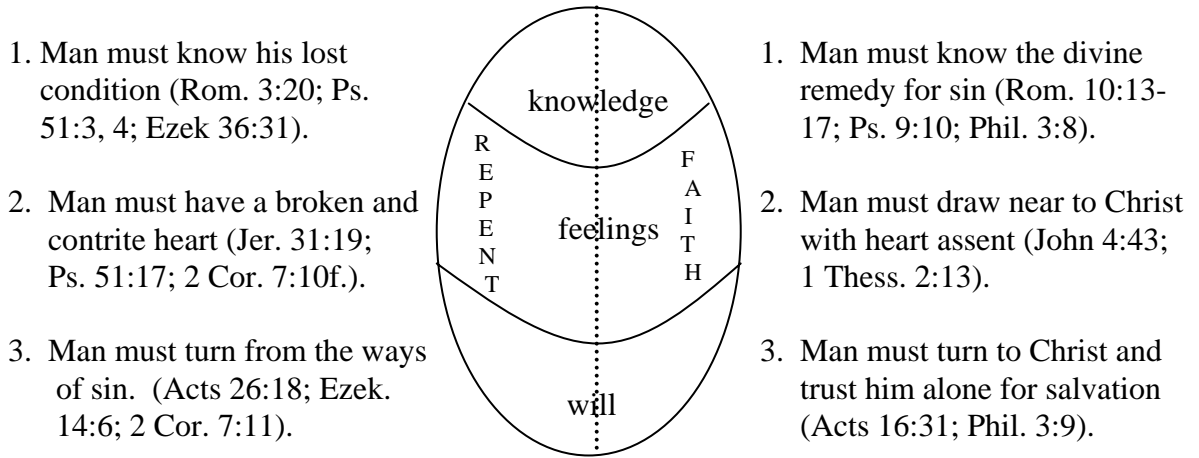
**NEW BIRTH FOR A NEW LIFE**  
**Titus 3:1-8**

- I. We must be ready for good works . 3:1-3
  - 1. In the present we can help others. 3:1-2
    - a. We submit obediently. 3:1
    - b. We serve eagerly. 3:1
    - c. We speak gently. 3:2
    - d. We show humility. 3:2
  - 2. In the past we harmed others. 3:3
    - a. Sin deceives.                      d. Sin detests.
    - b. Sin disobeys.                      e. Sin desires.
    - c. Sin dictates.                      f. Sin destroys.
  
- II. We have been regenerated for good works . 3:4-7
  - 1. God cares for us. 3:4
  - 2. God changes us. 3:5
  - 3. God has come for us. 3:6
  - 4. God comforts us. 3:7
  
- III. We will be rewarded for good works . 3:8
  - 1. We should affirm good works.
  - 2. We should be active in good works.

Key Soteriological (Salvation) Terms: A Summation

1. CONVERSION

Our turning to Christ initiated by God. It is a great and glorious work of God’s power, changing the heart and infusing life into the dead soul (though the Grace that is implanted does more visibly display itself in some than in others). Not all have a Damascus Road experience (eg. Paul, Acts 9). Indeed Acts 16 has three different examples: 1) Lydia, 2) a slave girl of divination (?) and 3) a jailer. However, for all, conversion is a turning away from sin to righteousness that results in service to the world, not withdrawal from it. Conversion does not consist in the alteration of the old nature but in an impartation of a new nature.



(The dotted line indicates that there is no hard and fast break between repentance and faith.)

Karl Barth – (*Dogmatics*, vol. 4, bk. 2, p. 563) says of conversion that the man involved in the act of conversion is no longer the old man, he is not even the corrected and revised edition – he is a NEW MAN.

All believers will be transformed from the way of sin to the way of righteousness (though not everyone will be conscience of the precise moment it occurs – Dockery).

Conversion is a qualitative transformation – it is not merely experiential. Conversion must be differentiated from reformation of character; it is a radical, yet progressive, alternation of our very being.

2. FAITH

Faith includes a full commitment of the whole person to the Lord Jesus, a commitment that involves knowledge, trust and obedience. Faith is not merely an intellectual assent or an emotional response, but a complete inward spiritual change confirmed to

us by the Holy Spirit. Faith is altogether brought about by God and it is altogether the human response bringing about complete enslavement to God and full liberation from the snare of sin.

The object of faith is not just the teaching about Christ, but Christ himself. Though faith is more than doctrinal assent, it must include adherence to doctrine. In our belief in and commitment to Jesus Christ we acknowledge him as Savior from sin and Lord of our lives, even Lord of creation (Romans 10:9). True conversion definitely involves a belief in Christ's person as the God-man and in his work as Savior. We must remember, however, that it is possible to have orthodox understanding of Christ without a living faith in him (cf. James 2:19 ff).

### 3. REPENTANCE

Is the renunciation of sin and a commitment or turning to Christ that leads to a new life (Matt. 3:1-2; 4:17; Acts 2:38). It is not feeling sorry for ourselves, but a forsaking of sin. It involves a change of mind about: 1) Self, 2) Sin and 3) the Savior. At this point it should be pointed out that faith and repentance are complementary aspects of conversion. Indeed, sometimes the scriptures speak only of faith or believing or trust or receiving (the Gospel of John); or only of repentance (Synoptic gospels/Acts); or of both faith and repentance (Acts 20:21). That repentance is a vital aspect of salvation is clear. It is a recognition that I cannot save myself, that Christ can save me, and that sin is the problem which is causing me not to be rightly related to God.

D.L. Moody said repentance is deeper than feeling-it is action, it is a turning right about and God demands everyone to turn.

### 4. REGENERATION

A spiritual change by which the Holy Spirit brings about a new life and Spiritual vitality. (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:28-29)

A key question debated by theologians:

Is our heart changed to believe, or does it change after we believe; i.e., cause or result?

Are we regenerated to believe or are we regenerated because we believe? It would seem to be simultaneous in a temporal sense. Logically, the issue is outside biblical categories (The Bible does not address it).

Regeneration is the most frequently discussed term within popular Christianity. It is a spiritual change by which the Holy Spirit imparts divine life. The idea is present in the writings of John, Peter, and Paul and is not without Old Testament precedent. The classic presentation is found in John 3:3-8 (see also 1 Pet. 1:23; Titus 3:5-7). From John 3 comes the popular term "born again" which may be better translated as "born

form above”, whereby God imparts a new nature to us. It is the experiential picture of our entrance into God’s family, whereas adoption refers to our position in this family. Regeneration looks Godward. Conversion looks manward.

5. JUSTIFICATION

Predominantly a Pauline term – it means “to be declared righteous.” (Rom. 3:21-26; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Justification is predominantly a Pauline concept though it is found in other biblical writers, especially Luke. Justification is: 1) accomplished at the cross of Christ (Romans 5:10), 2) guaranteed by his resurrection (Romans 4:24-25) and 3) applied to us when we believe (Romans 5:1). While regeneration pictures an experiential impartation of new life or righteousness, justification is an eschatological declaration of our righteousness. Experientially we still sin, but God views us as totally righteous clothed in the robe of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 4:1-8). Because of Christ’s sacrifice, God no longer counts our sins against us (2 Corinthians 5:19-21). Justification is more than pardon, it is a granting of positive favor in God’s sight. We now have peace with our God (Romans 5:1 ff).

In justifying men and women, God also justified himself. Sin challenged God’s holiness and by taking a position against sin and evil, God vindicated himself and is thereby both just and the justifier (Romans 3:21-26). Justification reveals God as a God of holy love and merciful righteousness. Justification is declared by God, accomplished by Christ, received by faith and evidenced by works.

6. FORGIVENESS – sin and its penalty is done away with.

- 1) (apoluein, Gk.) – put away Lk. 6:37
- 2) (charizestai, Gk.) – a gracious forgetting Eph. 4:32
- 3) (aphesis, Gk.) – send away Mt. 26:28
- 4) (paresis, Gk.) – putting aside or disregard Rom. 3:25

The putting away of sin and its penalty is forgiveness. It includes a gracious forgetting (Ephesians 4:32), a sending away of our sins (Matthew 26:28) and a putting aside or disregarding of all sin (Romans 3:25). The Bible is the only religious book that emphasizes total and complete forgiveness (Hebrews 10:17) as pictured in the account of the wayward son (Luke 15:11-32). Scripture presents the bases of forgiveness as the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22-26) and our faith and repentance (Luke 17:3-10).

7. ADOPTION – strictly Pauline

Rom. 8:15-23, 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5, 14

A legal term – has the idea of granting us the rights, privileges and responsibilities of belonging to God’s family. We are adopted as full grown children, no longer a slave or child – with the rights and privileges of adulthood; we do not need the law any longer as a schoolmaster. It is something hoped for and already possessed.

This is a Pauline picture and like other elements of Paul’s thought, it is mainly a legal term with existential and eschatological significance. It carries the idea of receiving the position of full grown children of God, adopted into God’s family with all the corresponding rights, privileges and duties (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:1-5; Ephesians 1:5, 14, 15). Adoption is not entirely a past event, for the consummation of our adoption awaits the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23), something hoped for as well as something already possessed.

8. SANCTIFICATION – process of becoming more righteous – usually discussed in the experiential sense.

Sanctification involves different aspects of our salvation and is in some sense an umbrella term. The Bible speaks of: 1) positional sanctification (1Corinthians 6:11), 2) progressive sanctification (Romans 6:14-7:25) and ultimate or prospective sanctification (1 John 3:1-3). It is a work of the Father (John 17:17) and the Son (Galatians 2:20), but primarily of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Yet it is also a work of the believer (Romans 12:1-2). The Bible does not teach a “letting go and letting God” approach to sanctification; rather we are to strive after holiness, working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12 ff). This is accomplished through the Bible’s transforming effects in our lives (1 Peter 2:2), prayer (Colossians 4:2), fellowship and worship (Hebrews 10:19-25) and the providence of God in our life (Romans 8:28).

9. GLORIFICATION – Arrival of absolute righteousness and realization of glorified or sinless humanity.

While the certainty of our glorification is grounded in the objective work of Christ in history, our assurance respecting this truth is grounded in certain factors arising out of the work of Christ as applied to believers.

- a. Our salvation is called a *promise* (Titus 1:2, 1 John 2:25). The concept of promise looks forward to a future fulfillment (Eph. 1:13; Heb. 11:13, 39; James 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:4).
- b. Christ is the *firstfruits* of our salvation (1 Cor. 15:20, 23); so also is the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:23). Firstfruits are but the beginning of that which shall eventually become a great harvest.
- c. The Holy Spirit is the *earnest* of our salvation, our inheritance (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). An earnest is a down payment, a first installment, a pledge or guarantee of an eventual final payment and total possession.

- d. Our salvation is *sealed* (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). The seal marks ownership, quality, security. Again we should clearly understand that it is the Spirit Himself who seals us unto the final day of redemption.
- e. Our salvation is called an *inheritance* (Eph. 1:14, 18; 5:5; Col. 3:24; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:3-4). This is clearly something in the future, which shall be delivered at the set time of inheritance.

These five biblical terms describe our salvation as eschatological in character. Our present redeemed state is only a beginning of what will be accomplished in the age to come. Our glorification will occur at the return of Christ.

- 10. UNION WITH CHRIST. The result of the concepts of adoption, forgiveness and justification is pictured as the believer's new sphere of union with Christ (John 15; Romans 6:1-11; Ephesians 1:3-14). Positionally our union with Christ presents us in a new position before God. Experientially the union of believers with God is one of the most tender concepts expressed in Scripture. It is invisible and imperceptible to the senses and it is unfathomable escaping all inward vision, yet this mystery (Colossians 1:27-28) cannot be dissected or denied.
- 11. ASSURANCE/ETERNAL SECURITY/PERSEVERANCE. God is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Salvation is from sin, for the world has primarily a need of a sin bearer (John 1:29). This involves disarming believers from the rulers and authorities of this world (Colossians 2:14-15). Salvation is only in Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), is imperishable (1 Peter 1:4) and is the source of all spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3).

Our salvation is secured in Christ and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:31-39). Yet our response to this truth brings our assurance. Eternal security is an objective truth, but our response to it is experiential and subjective. It is based on the work of Christ (Hebrews 7:25), the witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:14-17) and our obedience (1 John 5:11-13). God has promised to keep us from stumbling (Jude 24-25), having sealed us until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). Thus we are responsible to persevere and hold on to God, but ultimately our security in Christ comes because he has a hold on us (John 10:28-30).

## CONCLUSION

We affirm that God has created men and women in the image of God. Humans have sinned and are alienated from God apart from saving grace. In grace, God takes the initiative in bringing sinners to Christ through the proclamation of the gospel and the human response of faith and repentance. As a result of God's grace, believers experience salvation from sin which involves conversion to God. All of salvation is of God, yet we respond in faith, repentance and commitment. The Bible expresses these truths in various metaphors and underscores throughout that God is the author and finisher of our salvation (Hebrews 12:1-3).