

The Great Salvation

Justification, Sanctification and Glorification

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Tripartite Man

There are three parts to salvation: Justification, Sanctification and Glorification. There are three parts to *tripartite* man: There is the spirit, the soul and the body. There are three phases to salvation: We have *been* saved, we are *being* saved and we *will be* saved.

Justification

Justification is the quickening of the dead spirit. It has to do with the judicial aspect of sin and condemnation. When a non-Christian repents and turns of God and calls upon Christ for salvation, the dead spirit is quickened and made alive. The judicial aspect of the guilt of sin is canceled by the Cross. He is Justified; he is acquitted; he is tried and he is found innocent. This aspect of salvation has to do with the original birth into the family of God. Being born again, said St. Peter, with incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. Since it has to do with a singular and unique work of Christ on the Cross (in which no man can participate), and since it deals with the past, it is final and forever. You are not a member of the family of your father because of your deeds. You are a member of that family because of your mother and father's deeds and by birth.

Who were *born*, said St. John the apostle in the first chapter of his gospel. **“To as many as received Him to them He gave them power to become the sons of God who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12)**

Born into the family of God! The judicial penalty of sin taken away, tried and found innocence, Justified, the spirit quickened and made alive — think of it!

Glorification

Then there is Glorification: Salvation from the presence of sin. There is no other accurate and complete way to describe the three aspects of the Great Salvation: salvation is from the penalty of sin in Justification, and it is from the presence of sin in Glorification. This great salvation which has to do with the ever-present Christian principle of death, burial, resurrection and new life, will take place at the physical resurrection when Christ returns. A child of God, having died physically, is reborn in immortality. This mortal must put on immortality, said St. Paul to the great philosophers in I Corinthians 15:53. There is a spiritual body — and we shall have it. Just as there is a mortal body, the image of Adam which we have now, so we shall have that image of Christ, the spiritual body. That will be on the day of Christ's second coming when we are reborn physically and delivered forever from the presence of sin. That is the final part of salvation.

Sanctification

But the third aspect of the Great Salvation (which is the second in the Bible and in our experiences, but it is the third in the way we have organized this article) is Sanctification. Sanctification is the present salvation and it is from the power of sin. Sin brings death everywhere it appears and it will destroy our lives and rob us of our reward if we do not use the provisions that Christ has made for us to save them. This is the salvation that is relevant to the Christian today. Sanctification is the theme of the book of Hebrews and what most what most of the Scripture is about. In the letters to the churches, when the word salvation is used, it is almost always about Sanctification.

The Saving of the Life (Soul)

Salvation from the power of sin: the salvation of the soul. The word soul, is confusing to many. That is unfortunate because it need not be and should not be. The soul is the life. It is the identical word. You can use them

interchangeably in the Bible. In fact, they are used interchangeably by the translators of the King James Bible. Jesus said: He that seeks to save his life shall lose it. It is the same word as soul. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul, or what shall he give in exchange for his life?

From time to time we find people with various theological prescriptions who find this a bit demeaning and out of the mainstream. What an unmitigated hypocrisy. What a falsehood. The principle concern that occupies the center ground of every person in this world is his life.

Is it important? Is it worthwhile? Am I doing something with it that is meaningful? Am I laying up for myself anything against the future? Does anybody care what I am doing? Am I getting anywhere?

How important is your life? It was important enough to God to set in motion that part of the great salvation that has to do with your life — Sanctification.

When we talk about Sanctification we are not involving Justification in any way except the obvious. If you are not already Justified, you have no issue of Sanctification with which to be concerned. But Justification is not tied to Sanctification and the fact that you are Justified does not mean — it does not mean — you will live a Sanctified life. It is here that God has placed human responsibility, and it is here that we can make the choice to participate in the works of the Kingdom. God has arranged it so that it will be our works and we will justly receive a reward for them. We have to deny ourselves and go through suffering in order to get this reward of faithful service. With this privilege comes responsibility and consequences for dereliction.

But we must keep the doctrine separate from Justification in how it is obtained and what the consequences are. Justification is a work in which we cannot become involved. We can only be the beneficiaries of it. A father may say to a child, “If you don’t start doing what you’re told, there’s going to be

trouble around here.” He is not raising any question about his progeny. He is not telling the child that maybe he not his child. The father is not suggesting that maybe the child does not really exist — maybe the child is only a mythological apparition. That is not the nature of the discussion. The father is talking about life in the family and he is saying to the child, “There are things implied in being a member in this family. There are responsibilities here; you better starting learning to live up to them because that is the way it works.” And that is just how it is in the family of God.

Sanctification is the Redemption of Mortality

God has provided a way that we can redeem back these lives from the evil shops of pawn where they had been sold. That loss of life can take many forms as a result of the curse. Boredom, disinterest, disillusionment, depression, disappointment, gloom, broken plans, broken homes, growing old and dying, feeling frustrated and feeling like we have spun our wheels all of our lives — these are all things that are common to mortals that travel this road who do not know Christ and the great salvation. But, God has provided a way for his children to save our lives — to lay hold, as St. Paul said to Timothy, on eternal life. You must know that St. Paul was not telling the young evangelist, Timothy (whom he called the only man who has the true spirit of Christ concerning the ministry), that he was not Justified. Of course, he was not telling him that. He was saying rather that there are two paths in this world for the Christian, instead of only one for the unbeliever. There is the eternal road and there is the mortal road. One is under the curse and the other is in the Kingdom of God. The latter is part of the new creation; that is eternal and enduring. “Timothy,” St. Paul said, “We are permitted to do that and we are called to do that, so lay hold upon that, lay hold upon eternal life and do not waste you time traveling the low road to nowhere.”