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SALVATION FROM BEGINNING TO END

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Introduction: Sin has wrought terrible ruin to man. It has warped and twisted the mind, defiled the heart and diseased the body. It has exposed man to the wrath of God, and caused the mind to hate God. Sin has made hell a necessity.

Salvation is a recovery from the ruin sin has wrought. It is a deliverance from danger that rebels face. It is the rescue from all the evil and harm sin has caused.

Sin has darkened the understanding and ruined the affections; regeneration is that aspect of salvation that causes men to hate sin and trust the Savior. Sin has brought condemnation from divine justice, justification is that aspect of salvation that removes this condemnation and declares the sinner to be righteous on the ground of imputed righteousness of Christ. Sin has made man a child of the devil; adoption is that aspect of salvation in which the devil's child is legally made a son of God. Sin has made man morally filthy in the sight of God--so filthy that man stinks to high heaven; sanctification is that aspect of salvation in which the sinner is made holy. Sin has brought disease and shame to man; glorification is that aspect of salvation in which the sinner is made glorious.

We are told that angels are interested in human salvation. They want to know the meaning of blood. They attend our meetings that they might know the wisdom of God in human redemption. Let us take an angel's view of our salvation. I do not know whether angels have a Bible or not, but let us suppose they do. Let us follow an angel with an open Bible and see what it says about our salvation. We learn that salvation is an eternal project; that it

was conceived in the mind of God in eternity; that all plans were made before the stars were made to march to the music of time; and that all that takes place in time is but the execution of an eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ. Tracing salvation from beginning to end, we divide it into four parts or periods: 1. **decretively**; 2. **historically**; 3. **experientially**; and 4. **prophetically**.

SALVATION DECRETIVELY.

This means that my salvation was decreed or purposed from all eternity. Back in eternity God chose His people in Christ and decreed their ultimate glorification. When this stupendous universe was yet unborn, Christ stood as a lamb to be sacrificed that sinners of a coming race might escape the just desserts of their rebellion against their Maker. In developing this thought, we will use scripture that speaks of salvation in all its parts as in the past, and then use scripture to show that in actual salvation, all was done according to this eternal purpose.

Romans 8:30 speaks of salvation in the past tense. This could not be actual salvation, but salvation purposed. *"Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."*

Some scriptures that show that actual salvation was the execution of this eternal purpose are: II Timothy 1:9, *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world*

began;" John 6:40, *"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day;"* Acts 13:48, *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;"* Ephesians 1:3, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."*

SALVATION HISTORICALLY.

By this we mean the time when salvation was wrought out or provided for us. This was at Calvary, where and when Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This was where Christ performed His suretyship engagement. Back in eternity He promised to be the Surety for His people and at the cross He was fulfilling His promise. A surety is one who voluntarily assumes the responsibility of another, agreeing to become legally liable for the debt and bad behavior of sinners.

This is why Christ and Him crucified must be the object of saving faith. Faith must be in that which saves. If the church saves, then saving faith must be in the church. If an ordinance saves, then faith must be in that ordinance. If Christ saves, then faith must be in Christ. It is the very tenor of scripture that faith must be in Christ.

SALVATION EXPERIENTIALLY.

This refers to the possession of salvation. This is actual and personal salvation. The salvation I have was provided at Calvary but it was not mine

until I trusted Christ. Salvation decreed and provided would be no good if never experienced. Salvation from beginning to end is of the Lord and He will see to it that it is experienced. God not only makes a plan of salvation, He works the plan. He who predestinated back in eternity also calls the one predestinated. There are no salvation packages left unclaimed in the depot of predestination.

SALVATION PROPHETICALLY.

This is the salvation we wait for. This part of salvation is a matter of promise and hope. Romans 13:11, *"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."*

*Ten thousand times ten thousand,
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steeps of light:
'Tis finished, all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin;
Fling open wide the golden gates,
And let the victors in.*

*What rush of hallelujahs
Fills all the earth and sky!
What ringing of a thousand harps
Bespeaks the triumph nigh!
O day, for which creation
And all its tribes were made!
O joy, for all its former woes
A thousand fold repaid!*

*O then what raptured greetings
On Canaan's happy shore!
What knitting severed friendships up,
Where partings are no more!
Then eyes with joy shall sparkle,
That brimmed with tears of late,
Orphans no longer fatherless,
Nor widows desolate."*

--Henry Alford, 1856

THE PERFECTION OF THE SAINTS

BY: C. D. COLE

"For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified," Hebrews 10:14.

Introduction: Our text is an affirmation--it affirms the perfection of the saints. And every believer is a saint or sanctified person. We are sanctified just like we are justified--by faith. And we are sanctified at the same time we are justified. Acts 26:18, *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."* Justification has to do with our position before God: we are brought to Him and into His favor; sanctification has to do with our position before the world: we are separated from it and are not in its favor. The blood of Christ brings us to God and separates us from the world.

The saints have been made perfect. If you are a saint, you can rejoice in a present perfection. And this perfection is in God's sight.

We are made perfect by Him. He hath perfected us. We did not make ourselves perfect; we were made perfect. According to grammar it is past tense and passive voice.

And our joy may increase as we see this perfection is forever. He hath perfected forever.

Things that are seen--material blessings--are temporal. Here today and gone tomorrow, however much we may struggle to hold on to them. Men live in constant fear of losing things--politician, merchant, laborer. Bryan once said: "Those who live for money spend the first half of their lives getting all they can from everybody else and the last half trying to keep everybody else from getting what they have got away from them, and they find no pleasure in either half." When Rockefeller was asked how much money it takes to sat-

isfy a man, replied, "just a little more."

But the blessings we have in Christ are forever. The liberty we have in him is in no danger of a dictator. The inheritance we have in Him is forever from moth and rust and thief. The mansion he has gone to prepare will never need repair, no shall we ever have to move out. We who have to rent can exult here.

We shall study this text under four headings: 1. **Meaning of Perfection;** 2. **Means of Perfection;** 3. **Duration of Perfection;** 4. **Subjects of Perfection.**

THE MEANING OF PERFECTION.

The word "perfect" has two distinct meanings. It is used of a mature or full grown Christian. I Corinthians 2:6, *"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought."* Philippians 3:15, *"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."* The Christian who is perfect, that is, who is advanced in the truth--the Christian who know his Bible--will never think that he has reached perfection of character in this life. I John 1:8, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

The other use of the word "perfect" relates to our position or standing before the law of God; the perfection of justification in which there is no condemnation. This is the use of the word in our text. It is a judicial and objective perfection; not a subjective and experiential perfection. It is the perfection pronounced by the court and not the perfection announced by the Father. It speaks of release from the debt of sin, not the praise of the believer's conduct. It is the perfection of justification, not the perfection of glorification. The be-

liever is perfectly justified, but not perfectly glorified.

The perfection of our text is not the perfection of character or disposition. The saint has a nature in him that is sinful, and this nature leads him to do wrong, so that he is in continual need of confessing and forsaking his sins. The fleshly nature in us is not annihilated nor improved. Romans 7:18, "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*" Philippians 3:3, "*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*"

The perfection is the perfection of position. The believer is in Christ and the law sees the obedience of Christ rather than the disobedience of the believer. He has Christ's righteousness, therefore the law can find no fault with him. Romans 8:33, "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*"

THE MEANS OF PERFECTION.

We are made perfect by an offering--by an offering made for us--on our behalf, and not by something done in us. We will be made perfect by a work done in us, for he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ. But this is a present perfection.

Under the ceremonial law, the blood of bulls and goats could not actually take away sin and therefore could not make the one who offered them perfect before God. They could neither satisfy the law of God nor the conscience of the worshipper. That is why those sacrifices were repeated. The guilt of sin kept bobbing up until an offering was made that can take away guilt by satisfying the demands of the law.

This offering that makes us perfect was made by Christ. Our perfect standing before God is on the ground of Calvary.

There is a story of a man who committed murder, but he went free because the indictment was written in fading ink.

THE DURATION OF THIS PERFECTION.

The believer is perfect forever. Our position before the law of God never changes. This is because our standing is on the ground of Christ's perfect offering. He offered Himself without spot to God.

I like to think of the law as a discharged weapon with nothing but empty shells, because on the cross every bullet was fired by the hand of justice into the precious body of Christ. He suffered until justice cried "enough."

*"Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all."*

THE SUBJECTS OF PERFECTION.

They are the sanctified. The greek has the participle form with the definite article and literal rendering is, "Them that are being sanctified." The same phraseology is used in Acts 2:47, "*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*"

The thought of the text is that Christ, by one offering on the cross, made perfect the ones who are being sanctified. The obedience that made them perfect was made for all at the cross; but the sanctifying work has been going on progressively ever since. So many are sanctified today and so many tomorrow and on and on, until the last one for whom Christ died has been saved.

Sanctification is a big subject in itself and we can not enter fully into it here and now. The primary meaning of the word is "to set apart." This is illustrated by cross referencing Exodus 13:2 and Exodus 13:12. Each person of the Trinity is said to sanctify: Father, Son and Spirit. But each of them sanctifies in a distinct sense and their work of sanctification must not be confused.

A. Sanctification by the Father. Jude 1. This took place in eternity past when He set apart a people for Himself and gave them to His Son in covenant engagement. Sanctification in purpose.

B. Sanctification by the Son. Hebrews 10:10, "*By the which will we are sanctified through the offer-*

ing of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Sanctification by purchase. Christ set us apart for Himself in his death.

C. Sanctification by the Spirit. II Thessalonians 2:13, "*But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*" This is the sanctification of our text. Those made perfect by the death of Christ in a legal and judicial sense are sanctified or converted by the Spirit. This is sanctification by possession. Through the sanctifying or separating work of the Spirit, the ones made perfect by Christ actually become the possession of Christ. Christ purchased us before he possessed us. He purchased us on the cross; He possesses us when we are converted. Sanctification by the Spirit is always associated with faith on our part. If you are trusting Jesus of Nazareth as Savior and Lord, you may be assured that you have been sanctified by the Spirit. And if you are sanctified by the Spirit, you may be assured that Christ made you perfect by His offering on Calvary.

*"Jesus I will trust thee, trust thee with my soul;
Guilty, lost and helpless, Thou canst make me whole.
There is none in heaven or on earth like Thee:
Thou hast died for sinners--therefore, Lord for me.*

*Jesus, I can trust Thee, trust Thy written word,
Since Thy voice of mercy I have often heard,
When thy Spirit teacheth, to my taste how sweet--
Only may I hearken, sitting at Thy feet.*

*Jesus, I do trust Thee, Trust Thee without doubt:
Whosoever cometh, Thou wilt not cast out,
Faithful is Thy promise, precious is Thy blood."*