

The Cross – The Work of Jesus Christ

Salvation, Sanctification, Glorification

Distinctions in the process of Salvation

When we use the word “*salvation*” in the biblical sense, we speak of the whole scope of Christ’s saving work, from first to last, as it applies to the believer. This salvation was planned and promised by the Father, wrought and purchased by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit to all whom God has intended to save. The nature of salvation however, even though it is an eternal work, is much like a process that is worked out in time and space, which culminates in eternal glory in the presence of God in the eternal state. Thus, the Bible makes a distinction in the different stages of this process. These stages are referred to as “*Salvation, Sanctification and Glorification.*” Although the term “*salvation*” can be used to speak of the whole scope of these stages, it can also be distinguished from them. This is because salvation is described in three tenses, past, present and future. We were saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. NASB

However we are being saved even now.

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. NASB

We will also be saved in a yet future sense at the return of Christ (Heb 9:28). At this time we will be completely delivered from the power and presence of sin and enter into the glorious presence of God.

Romans 8:23-25 - 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body**. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, **with perseverance we wait eagerly for it**. NASB

Therefore in order to understand this great salvation we possess, it is important to grasp these different stages which are expressed in the Bible.

Salvation

The idea or concept of salvation is necessary from the fact that mankind has been alienated from God because of sin. Mankind has fallen under the darkness and power of sin, through the destructive work of Satan, and now exists in a world hopelessly destined to perish under the wrath of Almighty God.

Ephesians 2:1-3 - And **you were dead in your trespasses and sins**, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest**. NASB

Sin has *personally* alienated mankind from God and caused us to be the objects of His wrath, that is, the manifestation of His holy moral judgment against it. This wrath is culminated in death, *eternal* separation from God’s good presence to bless.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 - dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And **these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power**. 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. NASB

Therefore being saved, or the idea of salvation, is to be saved from sin and death, so that we are delivered from its power and transformed into a new creation of God. But this deliverance from

sin and death is really only secondary. It is important to note that in a *primary* sense we are really being saved from God Himself. God is the One who is personally offended by sin, and unless we are reconciled to Him, having our relationship restored and His holy wrath because of sin satisfied, we will perish under the just consequences due to us because of sin. This wrath is God's wrath, His personal outrage toward sin, and the persons who perpetrate it.

Romans 1:18-19 - 18 For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. NASB

We are saved then from the being of God Himself, who is governing the universe by His Providence, and is Himself the avenger of sin. God will make sure that every unrepentant sinner receives the just recompense for their sins and is destroyed in hell forever.

Psalms 145:20 - 20 The LORD keeps all who love Him; **But all the wicked, He will destroy.** NASB

Romans 2:5-9 - 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart **you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God**, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **wrath and indignation.** 9 **There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.** NASB

It is God who has been offended by sin, and it is God who will inflict His wrath upon those who continue in sin and do not believe the Gospel. Dear reader, if we do not believe the Gospel, we will fall hopelessly under the judgment of Almighty God. Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved from the wrath of God, which is coming upon every person who has not taken refuge in Him. This we should greatly fear. You or I cannot imagine the severity of these words! They are very severe indeed. Let us be careful to heed the warnings of God in the Scripture.

Hebrews 10:26-31 - 26 For **if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.** 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31 **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** NASB

Reconciliation to God then is absolutely necessary in order to be saved. This reconciliation not only requires our *negative* guilt to be removed (expiated), but also a *positive* righteousness credited (imputation) to us. This salvation from the wrath of God then, is exactly what the Gospel declares is available to all who will by faith trust in the finished work of Jesus the Christ.

Romans 5:9 - 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** NASB

Through Jesus and the finished work offered in the Atonement, we can be fully reconciled to God and saved from the wrath of God, and the power of sin. This salvation is pictured in many ways in the Old Testament, but its most *vivid* picture is that of the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. That deliverance brought them from tyranny in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. In this, the mighty saving power of God was demonstrated dramatically as the Israelites formed a holy nation of priestly servants of the Lord. In the Exodus we have a pattern (or *type, shadow, analogue*) of the reality of salvation which has now come to us in our Lord Jesus Christ who is Himself, the Savior, the promised One who fulfills all of the types and shadows of the Old Testament.

Hebrews 10:1 - For **the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things**, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. NASB

Colossians 2:16-17 - 16 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — 17 **things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.** NASB

The New testament then is the account of how Jesus the Christ did come and actually bring the fulfillment of all of the promises of God to save His chosen people from the bondage of sin and its destructive consequences of wrath and death. Now we read of the realities of Salvation which **“have been”** accomplished already by Christ, and we now eagerly await the fulfillment of all that He has worked as the stages of that Salvation are being brought to pass in time and space which will all culminate in the eternal state. This will happen when Jesus returns and brings all earthly rule and power under His dominion and destroys all His enemies, including death itself.

1 Corinthians 15:22-26 - 22 For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all shall be made alive.** 23 **But each in his own order:** Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 **For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.** 26 **The last enemy that will be abolished is death.** NASB

We are now in that stage of fulfillment where we eagerly await His second coming. During these **“last days”** (*gk. eschaton*), this Salvation is now being applied by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to all the elect people of God, during **“this age,”** as we await the future fulfillment of **“the age to come”** when Christ will consummate the ages.

Sanctification

It is no small thing that God has **“sanctified”** those who are in Christ. Indeed for those who have come to Him, they are reckoned as **“holy and without blemish”** in **POSITION** before God. ***The sacrifice of Christ has completely covered over the sin of His people and His sinless life of perfect righteousness has been imputed to their account.*** Christ Jesus is a perfect priest who accomplished a perfect mediation between God and man. We can have confidence and assurance before God because of what Christ has done. Jesus has merited for us eternal salvation by His broken body and shed blood. The debt of our sins has been paid in full (redemption), our guilt has been removed (expiated), and the wrath of God on our behalf has been satisfied (propitiated).

Hebrews 10:10, 14 - 10 By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**.... 14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.** NASB

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Colossians 1:21-22 - 22 But now he has reconciled you **by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-** NASB

1 Corinthians 6:11 - 11 And such were some of you; **but you were washed, but you were sanctified,** but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB

Indeed it is true that Christ Jesus died to sanctify and cleanse us from our sins and that through Him we have been justified (declared righteous). ***Although we have been sanctified in POSITION before God, the Lord is actively sanctifying us in our conduct and PRACTICE.*** The work of salvation is continuing in those of us who are actually being saved. God is the *primary* agent in this process. We as humans are no more capable of sanctifying ourselves as we are of saving ourselves. Without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we would be powerless against temptation and sin, continuing to trample the grace of God under our feet. This practical aspect of salvation will not be completed until the resurrection of our bodies.

Philippians 1:6 - 6 *For I am confident of this very thing,* **that He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus. NASB

John 17:17,19 - 17 **"Sanctify them in the truth;** Thy word is truth....19 **"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.** NASB

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - 23 Now **may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely**; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 **Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.** NASB

1 Corinthians 1:7-8 - 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 **who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

Although it true that in Christ we have been justified (declared righteous), and also that God is the One who continues to sanctify us by His Spirit, nevertheless we are commanded to pursue righteousness and holiness in our conduct. We are admonished again and again to be holy and to purify ourselves by remaining in repentance. This is the practical aspect of salvation. We are to pursue Christ in our behavior and to bring honor to His name by our holy and righteous conduct. ***Therefore, sanctification is a progressive work of God in which we cooperate with God to become free from the practice of sin and progressively practice righteousness in our conduct.*** In this sense, sanctification is the work of God and the work of the believer.

Leviticus 20:26 - 26 Thus **you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy**; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine. NASB

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.** NASB

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - 3 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,** 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 **For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.** 8 Consequently, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. NASB

2 Peter 1:5-10 - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply** moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness; 7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. 8 **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be **all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you**; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; NASB

2 Peter 3:14 - 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, **be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.** NASB

1 John 3:3 - 3 And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him **purifies himself, just as He is pure.** NASB

Further, this progressive work of sanctification begins at regeneration (the moment in time when we were born again), and increases throughout our lives so that there is a decreasing practice of sinful conduct and an increasing practice of righteous conduct. We are being transformed progressively into the character and likeness (image) of Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory,** just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB

Romans 6:19 - 19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For **just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.** NASB

Romans 8:29 - 29 For **whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,** that He might be the first-born among many brethren; NASB

Colossians 3:9-10 - 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, 10 and have put on **the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him** NASB

This progressive sanctification continues until death, or the resurrection (whichever happens first). At that time we will be resurrected into a completed and glorified body which is no longer subject to the corruption of sin. This is called "***Glorification.***" Sanctification continues until we die at which time we are glorified.

Glorification

Simply defined, Glorification is that state of perfection and glory into which the believer will be transformed in the resurrection, at the second coming of Christ. Indeed God has called those who are in Christ to share in His glory! This is a profound promise and a tremendous privilege!

1 Peter 5:10 - 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, **who called you to His eternal glory in Christ**, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. NASB

2 Thessalonians 2:14 - 14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, **that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**. NASB

In fact, it will take eternity for us to experience the glorious riches of His kindness as we partake of His glory in Christ.

Ephesians 2:7 - 7 in order that **in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**. NASB

It was promised to us before the beginning of time, the prophets cried out in hope of it, Christ Jesus purchased it for us, it has come to live in us *in part* now through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and we now eagerly await the full manifestation of it when Christ returns.

1 Corinthians 2:7 - 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom*, **which God predestined before the ages to our glory**; NASB

Like other aspects of salvation, **glorification is the work of God**. To this state of glory believers are effectually called, drawn, brought, predestined and foreordained, all by God Himself.

Romans 8:29-30 - 29 For **whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and **whom He called**, these He also justified; and whom He justified, **these He also glorified**. NASB

Hebrews 2:10 - 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory**, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. NASB

God is said to **"make known to us the riches of His glory"** and that He has even **"prepared us beforehand for glory."**

Romans 9:23-24 - 23 And *He did so* in order that **He might make known the riches of His glory** upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called**, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

When Christ returns, we shall be with Him in His presence, as He takes us unto Himself. Even as we speak **Christ is preparing a place for us**, and we will by inheritance receive this glory to which we have been called!

Ephesians 1:18 - 18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, **what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**, NASB

John 14:1-3 - 1 "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for **I go to prepare a place for you**. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and **receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also**. NASB

When we speak of **"glory,"** as it applies to the believer's state at the resurrection, we speak of that quality of life and exceeding joy in the presence of God, **as our entire person is transformed, into a state of immortality and perfection**. This state of glory is the partaking of the divine nature and we will be ultimately conformed into the perfect image and likeness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

1 John 3:2 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is. NASB

Glorification also speaks of the sanctification and moral perfection that we will take on at the resurrection, when Christ appears. **We shall be made like Christ and take on His holiness, perfection and immortality**. The process of sanctification is at work in us now, but moves from one degree of glory to another until it reaches final glory, the eternal state.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB

If you are in Christ, spiritually you have been born again and raised up with Christ from that dead state of sin that you were formerly in. Your mind, will, and emotions have been transformed by the Spirit of God, you have experienced *regeneration*. But you still live in a mortal body, which is subject to sin and temptation, which will shortly die physically. But this physical death for the Christian is the portal by which we enter into glory. ***Here is our great and blessed hope, that our earthly, physical and mortal body will be transformed to be like Christ's heavenly, spiritual and immortal body is!*** Our bodies will no longer be subject to sin and temptation, indeed we will put on immortality and being immortal, we will never again be subject to death or dying or pain.

Philippians 3:20-21 - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. NASB

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 - 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, **it is raised an imperishable *body***; 43 it is sown in dishonor, **it is raised in glory**; it is sown in weakness, **it is raised in power**; 44 it is sown a natural body, **it is raised a spiritual body**. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. NASB

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 - 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, **but we shall all be changed**, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we shall be changed**. **53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality**. NASB

These things will have their fulfillment at the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is at this time that we shall be changed and become like Him! The **Bible plainly declares** that ***at the second coming of Christ, we will participate with Him in His glory and power over death and sin***. These things will happen when He comes in power and glory, when He appears, and we are gathered together with Him, and not a moment before.

Colossians 3:4 - 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then **you also will be revealed with Him in glory**. NASB

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - 15 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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 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. NASB

Matthew 24:29-31 - 29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and **they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other**. NASB

Daniel 12:2-3 - 2 "And **many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt**. 3 "And those who have insight **will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven**, and those who lead the many to righteousness, **like the stars forever and ever**. NASB

Therefore ***with hope we look beyond our present sufferings to that day*** when we will be transformed and come into His presence. The suffering of this present life, is not even worthy to be compared to the surpassing greatness of the future state of glory we will partake of!

Romans 8:18 - 18 For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us**. NASB

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 - 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For **momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**, NASB

Glorification is that sure and firm promise of God, that, He shall deliver us to His presence where sin will be finally eradicated from our lives, and we will be transformed to become like Him. There we shall share in His glory, with gladness and everlasting happiness in his kingdom.