

“SAVED IN HIS LIFE”

THE ORGANIC ASPECT OF GOD’S FULL SALVATION

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In the foregoing articles, we have explored the definition of eternal life as the uncreated life of God Himself, and we have traced the line of this life throughout the Bible. We have seen that this life is not merely a state of being that we will enjoy in the hereafter but, more profoundly, a present reality made available to mankind according to God’s eternal purpose. The preceding articles have already touched briefly on the nature of salvation in light of the life that we have received as children of God. In the present article, we address this matter in a more sustained way. Our basic point, as it will unfold in the pages to come, is that God’s salvation, though it clearly has a judicial aspect, is primarily organic in character. That is to say, God’s salvation is mainly by His divine life.

The Ongoing Salvation of God

“Our Savior God, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4), is both the Author of life (Acts 3:15) and the Author of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). He began His saving work through His sovereign selection, which Paul extolled in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians: “But we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers beloved of the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thes. 2:13; cf. 1 Thes. 1:4; Eph. 1:4). Then, to fulfill this intention, He Himself “became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9) through His coming as the grace that Paul described to Titus: “For the grace of God, bringing salvation to all men, has appeared” (Titus 2:11). This grace was embodied in the person of Christ Jesus, who “came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15; cf. John 1:14, 17, 29).

Thus, everything we experience of salvation is originated and carried out by Him alone, “who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according

to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages” (2 Tim. 1:9). The same thought can be found in Titus 3:5: “Not out of works in righteousness which we did but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.” And it can also be found in Ephesians 2:8-9: “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works that no one should boast.” It is He who “is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them” (Heb. 7:25), and even as Paul charged the Philippians to “work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling,” he recognized that it is “God who operates...both the willing and the working for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13). Hence, at the end of this age the great multitude in heaven will be heard saying, “Hallelujah! The salvation and the glory and the power are of our God” (Rev. 19:1).

Indeed, God’s salvation is the central theme in the New Testament, from the Gospels to the Acts and the Epistles to Revelation (Matt. 1:21; Acts 28:28; Rom. 1:16; Rev. 12:10). The primary purpose of the four Gospels is to present Jesus Christ the Savior so that those who read would believe and receive Him. Accordingly, near its end the Gospel of John says simply: “These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). In Acts, Luke describes the announcing of this gospel to bring human beings to salvation (Acts 5:42), and he records the coming together of these saved ones in the churches (Acts 2:47). Then, in the Epistles, the apostles wrote to the newly saved believers in the early church age to motivate them to progress in their experience of this salvation. Finally, in Revelation we find the consummation of God’s salvation, with the declaration, “Now has come the salvation and the power and the