



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: LESSON 113

Salvation – Having completed the study of Christology, with respect to the person and attributes of Jesus Christ, we now come to the study of the work of Christ. This work was explicitly identified by the angel who announced the conception of Christ, who was to be named “Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21; also see Luke 2:11; 30). In reality, the central and continual theme of the Bible is the theme of salvation, which was revealed by God right from the beginning in Genesis 3:15, the first Gospel, and continues all the way to the end of the book of Revelation. The Bible is replete with the words “savior,” “save” and “salvation.”

Saved from what? The most natural question regarding this is, “Saved from what?” Majority of people in the world agree that they need salvation, that they need to be delivered from many things, such as: from boring or sad lives; poverty; low paying jobs; sickness and suffering; all kinds of relationship problems; annoying people; enemies; addictions; and from many other miseries and afflictions. Even in the church, though all agree that we need Jesus, the salvation that is preached and offered by many is again from these same things. Such teaching is unbiblical and fraught with dangers. If this is the church's message of salvation, then for people whose issues are not solved or do not have such problems, Christ and His message of salvation become doubtful, irrelevant, unnecessary, useless and even strange.

So what is the Biblical message of salvation? When we search the Scriptures we soon realize that the word “salvation” is used in a variety of ways. It means to be rescued or delivered from difficulty, danger, war and disease. However there is also the ultimate meaning of the word or concept. We see this in passages such as Zephaniah 1:14-18 and Amos 5:18-20, where the immediate context of both passages was the Lord's imminent judgment upon Judah and Israel, for their persistent and impenitent disobedience. However, their ultimate reference was the final day of the Lord, represented with graphic and frightful imagery of doom and gloom, the universal judgment of God on all mankind.

The message of divine judgment is also present in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:6; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 14:10-11). Scripture paints a devastating picture of this day, when God will pour out His unbridled wrath upon sinners of all times (Matthew 8:12; 25:41; Mark 9:48; Revelation 20:11-15).

Having looked at the doctrine of God, it was explained that God is eternally holy, righteous and just, and does not nor can overlook sin, but hates and judges it. Also in the study of the doctrine of man, it was seen that as a result of their sin, Adam and Eve fell away from God into corruption, and as a result all human beings come into the world as sinners, with a sinful and corrupt nature, and at enmity with God, and thus right from birth find themselves under the wrath and condemnation of a holy and just God.

Given these, it is obvious that when we talk about man's salvation, in the ultimate sense, it certainly isn't from boring lives, bad jobs, family issues, sickness, troubles, or even enemies. Man's situation and problem is far graver and vastly more serious than any of these, even combined. The Bible is clear that, in the ultimate sense, sinful man's greatest enemy is the holy and almighty God, and therefore man needs salvation from God and His awesome judgment. We need rescue from the coming, dreadful wrath and fury of God against sin and sinners, which all human beings are right from birth.

Not many Christians are aware of this, because they have an incomplete picture of who God is, and also an incomplete picture of who man is, as revealed in Scripture. And in reality, this is the main reason why many have a shallow and incomplete understanding of the nature and extent of salvation.

Praise God, the Bible is also clear that there is salvation for sinful man. And in this series, we will look at and examine what the Bible teaches about salvation, its nature, accomplishment, efficacy and extent.