

ETERNAL SALVATION

WITHOUT COST, WITHOUT PRICE
FOR YOU, BUT IT COST SOMEONE PLENTY
(8)

By Arlen L. Chitwood

Eternal life is the *free* “gift of God,” obtained completely apart from works. *Nothing* which man does — *not one single act*, either before or after he becomes a recipient of this life — can have anything at all to do with the fact that this life becomes the present possession of an individual *solely by grace* (that which God is able to do entirely apart from human merit) *through faith* (through *believing* on God’s Son [Eph. 2:8, 9]).

Christ’s *finished work at Calvary* provides a *salvation* which fallen man can avail himself of *only by receiving that which has already been accomplished on his behalf* — *through believing*.

“For by grace are ye saved [*lit.*, ‘you have been saved’] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...” (Titus 3:5a).

Unredeemed man is totally incapable of effecting any part of his salvation. He is *spiritually dead*. He is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). And being *spiritually dead*, unredeemed man, before he can act in the spiritual realm, *MUST* come into possession of *spiritual life*, which can come only from God (Gen. 2:7). *Everything* surrounding his passing from death unto life *MUST* be accomplished on his behalf.

Thus, unredeemed man can only be *completely passive* in the matter. The *total inability* of fallen, ruined man to act in the realm of redemption has forever been foreshadowed in Scripture at the very beginning by a prior ruin — the ruin of the material creation in Gen. 1:2a.

The material creation, as man, was brought into a ruined state through an act of Satan; and the material creation

in this ruined state, as man, could undergo no change in and of itself. This is the reason why the first thing we read in Gen. 1:2b, 3 concerning the restoration of the material creation is:

“...And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

This act of restoration was accomplished, in its entirety, through Divine intervention. And so it is with unredeemed man. The Spirit of God performs a work in the individual, based upon Christ’s past, finished work. *The Spirit of God moves, God speaks, and light comes into existence.*

Man passes “from death unto life” — a *spiritual birth* “from above” occurs (John 3:3) — and it is all based on *the finished work of God’s Son at Calvary.*

Salvation for fallen man is both *free* and *apart from works*, but the procurement of this salvation by God’s Son was by no means *free* and *apart from works*. God’s Son provided this salvation through a vicarious sacrifice — the sacrifice of Himself; and fallen man can do no more than simply receive that which God’s Son has provided.

Fallen man is no more in a position to bring himself out of his ruined state than was the ruined material creation. Divine intervention was/is required in both instances.

The former restoration sets the pattern for the latter restoration. *It is God's unchangeable pattern, forever established in the opening verses of Genesis.* Man, a subsequent ruined creation of God, *MUST* be restored *in exact accord with the established pattern.*

Note the words “not of yourselves” and “which we have done” in Eph. 2:8 and Titus 3:5. Both refer to the necessity of the *complete absence of works* on man's part in relation to eternal salvation. *The work has already been accomplished; the price has already been paid.* When Christ cried out on the Cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30), He announced the *completion* of a redemptive work which *He alone* could, and did, perform.

The words, “It is finished,” in John 19:30 are the translation of one word in the Greek text — *Tetelestai*. This word is in the perfect tense and could be better translated, “It has been finished.” That is, at this point, *everything* relating to the work of redemption had been accomplished. *Nothing more* remained to be

done. Accordingly, immediately after Christ cried out, *Tetelestai*, “he bowed his head and gave up the spirit.”

The perfect tense in the Greek text calls attention to a work *completed* in past time, with *the results* of this work extending into present time and existing in a *finished state*. This is the same verb tense used in Eph. 2:8 relative to the present state of redeemed man (“are ye saved”; *lit.*, “you have been saved” — saved during past time, with the results of the work surrounding salvation extending into and existing during present time in a finished state).

Redeemed man is in possession of a salvation (present) wherein *everything* has already been accomplished (past) on his behalf. The Holy Spirit has performed a work in unsaved man. The Spirit has *breathed life into the one previously having no life*, and the Spirit has performed this work on one basis alone — *Christ's past, finished work at Calvary.*

Thus, redeemed man is presently in possession of a salvation wherein *everything* was accomplished in past time through Divine intervention, with *everything* extending into and existing during present time in a finished state. And this work completed in past time

through Divine intervention — whether Christ's finished work at Calvary or the Spirit breathing life into the one having no life — is not only something which unsaved man cannot have a part in but it is also something which saved man cannot change, add to, or take from.

Man is *powerless* to act in this complete realm. The matter is as Jonah stated immediately prior to his deliverance from the sea:

“Salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9b).

Man can do no more than *simply receive that which has already been done.* That's why Scripture states,

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ [put your trust, reliance, in the One Who has accomplished everything on your behalf], and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).