

A LOOK AT GOD'S SALVATION

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

^{2:13} **But we are bound to give thanks alway 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:**

¹⁴ **Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

¹⁵ **Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.**

¹⁶ **Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,**

¹⁷ **Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.**

In all the world, there are two types of persons, irregardless of race, creed, or color. There are those who are true believers in Jesus Christ, and there are those that are lost, apart from Christ in their relationship. Paul paints a sobering picture of all that have rejected Christ in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. The utter reality of all who follow the Antichrist... is the reality that they have rejected the most wonderful Christ that would have saved them from sin, self, and an eternity of hell. But because of sin, and the desire for self, and the things of the flesh, massive numbers will follow the Antichrist. As Paul looks at the backdrop of the coming Antichrist, he is bound to "give thanks" to God for His wonderful salvation. It is totally possible to "take for granted" the wonderful salvation" of God. Therefore this passage is a call to "rethink" what God has done in the lives of those whom He has redeemed.

1. TRUE BELIEVERS CANNOT BE DAMNED. The mark of all who follow the Antichrist is that they will be doomed and they will be damned, because the believe not "THE TRUTH". Yet, for those that follow Christ, they are saved from "eternal damnation". Salvation is not the doing of man, but the complete doing of God. Believers have responded to the "truth" of God's Word. They have "believed in" the one true Christ. They have "believed" that Jesus is the only way of salvation, and therefore they are "beloved" by the Lord God Almighty for receiving His Son into their lives. True believers live a different quality of life that an unbeliever, because he or she truly are aware of "the One" they have believed in. While a believer and unbeliever live on this same earth, the end of their lives are of stark contrast. The unbeliever is "damned" by the Lord Jesus Christ and eternally sentenced to a hellish torment for the eternity of their lives. The believer is "taken to paradise" at death, and is given the "joys" of paradise for all eternity, for allowing the Son of God into his or her life. The contrast is of eternal proportion. The believer will never experience eternal pain, torment, and punishment for his trust in Jesus Christ. *Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* The human mind cannot comprehend the grave consequences a person makes when they take lightly the salvation of God. To be "damned" is to suffer eternally, for the rejection of God's precious Son.

2. THE ORIGIN OF SALVATION. Scripture makes it clear that "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation..." It is the heart's desire of God that His creation be saved. God does not want us to be judged, doomed, and separated from Him. The word "chosen" used in this verse is the only time it is used in the New Testament. This word is unique in this sense...it is one of the words that is used when God chose Israel to be his people in the Old Testament. *"And the Lord hat avouched "chosen" thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments."* (Deut. 26:18).

The significant point is this...God has chosen believers in the very same sense in which He chose Israel. Believers are as chosen by God as Israel was chosen by God in the Old Testament. Salvation is secure because it is based upon His having "chosen" us.

First...God has chosen believers to be saved "from the beginning"...that is before the foundation of the world. He chose us to be saved before the creation of the world. Jesus declares this truth, *"And I give unto*

them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (Jn. 10:28-29). Ultimate security is found in the fact that we have been "chosen" by God.

Second...God has chosen believers to be separated unto God. Believers are set apart by God for His work in His world. If a person can claim to be a believer and have no interest in the agenda of God, something is desperately wrong in the love relationship.

Third...God and man both have a part in salvation. The natural man always prefers self, therefore it is God that draws man by His Holy Spirit to a saving relationship. How does the Holy Spirit do this? 1) The Holy Spirit quickens our spirit with the gospel to the point that a man sees it as he has never seen it before, in relation to his own life. 2) It is the role and the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to convict man of sin, righteousness and judgment. "*And when he (the Holy Spirit is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*" (Jn. 16:8) Therefore there is no salvation apart from the Spirit of God. 3) The Holy Spirit attracts people to the cross, revealing to them that Jesus was their sin payment on the cross for the totality of sin. 4) It is the Holy Spirit that stirs in the heart of man to respond to Christ. "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* (Rev. 22:17)

Fourth...God has chosen believers through "belief in the truth"...that is through believing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in the very heart of every believer, the belief in the risen Christ for their sins. They are all marked with the belief that they are sinners before a holy God, and that Christ has taken their penalty of sin upon him. It is believing the truth that brings a person genuine salvation. There can be no salvation apart from believing the truth with all the heart, soul and spirit. The moving of the Spirit causes conviction, yet the part in mankind is "to respond in honesty" to the conviction of the Spirit of God. God gives a person the ability to believe. However, a person can reject believing in Jesus, yet it will be to his own doom and demise. "*Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto the, This is the work of God, THAT YE BELIEVE ON HIM WHOM HE HATH SENT.*" (Jn. 6:28-29)

3. THE PURPOSE OF SALVATION. Have you ever asked, "Why did the Lord desire to save me?" While the reasons are many, ultimately He saved us out of the overflow of His love. Also He saved us to gain the glory of Christ. The Living Bible puts v.14 this way, "Through us he told you the Good News. Through us he called you to share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. But what is that glory? The very word glory literally means "brightness". Because we are in a sin torn world, we are under the curse of sin, as long as we are here. But the desire of Jesus is that we be all "God has purposed". And that purpose involves our "eternal being" and "eternal glory and brightness" like that of Jesus. It is the desire of Jesus that each person saved, share in the glory of Christ. He yearns to change these vile bodies into wonderful eternal bodies equipped for all eternity. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. 3:21) The fact that Jesus wants to glorify us is evident. "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*" (Col 3:4) Salvation, is not so much a salvation from hell as it is a "salvation unto glorification".

There will come a time in which we will receive a glorious nature just like that of Christ, where we will no longer be under the curse of sin. "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed IN US.*" (Rom. 8:18) Because of the position that God has given every saint of God, we will actually reign and rule with God forever and ever over a real world according to His plan. And remember "to rule", there must be "a world" to rule over. "*...For the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.*" (Rev. 22:5)

4. THE DUTY IN SALVATION. Since we are called to salvation, God cautions us to "stand fast" and "cling" to His Word. It is the call of every believer not to allow any external force, lure us away from the divine truth of God's salvation. There will come a real time, when we will be changed for all eternity, to be all for God for all eternity, to enjoy Him, rejoice in Him, and work for Him by ruling the universe for all eternity. Our call is to "stand firm" and "stand strong".

