

Salvation – Part 1

I'm not going to belabor the point, but as a reminder to make sure that we don't forget that we started on this journey to the cross, prepared for it, dealt with the beginning; because remember, the better our revelation is, God is, and God is Holy, and without that revelation, there'll be no power including in the Christian walk in the New Testament life. Then we looked at the fullness of His Holiness, our sin, how we judge God, setting the stage for His judgment of us; then the reality of that judgment to Hell or Heaven and then went through the cross of Christ. Now today, will be the first session as we begin to go forward into the Kingdom of God.

Expressed algebraically, as you all have seen so often, holiness plus sin equals reality of Hell, except we add the cross of Christ which yields the reality of Heaven. We went through the cross of Christ, prepared to land, the God man in the Garden, the sweet suffering, the targeted tears, forgiving of ignorance, paradise promised, darkness falling, why hast Thou forsaken Me, woman behold your son, I thirst, it is finished, Father into Thy hands I commit My spirit, the Trinity at the cross, doing as best we could under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to take the sum of His Word and see the presence of the Trinity and its engagement at the cross of Christ. And then the resurrection, the exclamation point at the end; so that we do not have a dead hope and a dead Savior.

The Kingdom of God—the doorway of salvation. So today, we're going to address that to begin by looking at salvation. What is it? And then as we go forward, we'll go into salvation, working it out. Now the handout that you have contains the posters which will be used in this session and the next session. I want to deal with vocabulary as we go forward, because if we don't come to grips with a little bit of vocabulary, then I may say words in a way that's different from the way you're accustomed to using them. In other words, if I take that chair and that table and reverse the words, and call what we would call a table a chair, and vice-versa, then you wouldn't understand except I explain beforehand how I may be using the words. And then you would have no trouble understanding. Now Susan and I are southerners. So when we went to California out of medical school, we had a little problem with semantics and it had to do with the top part of the diagram where on the west coast where we were, the majority of people use the terms, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. So if somebody wanted to invite you for the evening meal, it would be dinner. Well, Susan and I grew up in the south where we were accustomed to breakfast, dinner, supper. So, if we invited somebody for dinner, and they thought it meant the evening meal and we meant the noontime meal, there's a problem. But if we told them what we meant when we used the term dinner, then the misunderstanding would be prevented. You notice that in that model, both systems use the term breakfast for the morning meal. But one calls breakfast, lunch, dinner, the next breakfast, dinner, supper. So the words are just symbols to convey a reality and the reality is "What meal at what time of day are you talking about?" And teach me what word you use for that and then we can communicate. So it's in that light, then that I begin with this talking about vocabulary.

Now don't expect me to unravel any mystery about these various words such as soul and spirit. I don't stand up before you as a seminary grad, as a polished Bible student, as one who has the final answer. But I'm just going to explain a little bit about how in my eleven years of Christianity I've seen these words used, and sometimes, I think, used a little differently by different people, and then follow through after that with how I may be using the words as we go forward to the next two sessions. Using the breakfast, lunch, dinner and breakfast, dinner, supper model, if you drop to the bottom, you see a similar dilemma in the usage of words such as soul and spirit. Everybody agrees whatever their system, with what the body is; the body being that material part of ourselves, that physical part, the part that has atoms and molecules and responds to gravity and all that sort of stuff. It's mortal, that is, it has a finite lifespan here on planet Earth. Everybody agrees that there is an immaterial, that is, nonphysical part of ourselves that represents the real us. Now on the top line on that scheme, you see body, mind, soul. Many people will use these terms using what I call a bipartite system. That means two divisions; so that there's material and immaterial. So they might use the term body and soul with the soul meaning everything that is not material. They would use inside the red brackets things like mind; they would include in the thing like soul, because the mind is immaterial. That is to say, the mind is not made up of atoms and molecules and so on. Some people would split the two and split mind and soul as separate functions. On the bottom line, you see the usage of the term body again to indicate the material part of ourselves. You see the words soul and spirit without using mind. Now in that context, people who are using soul that way would tend to be using it like the mind in the upper system. Those who use spirit would be using it to mean that part which is our true identity. Who we are at the lowest level; that is to say the level at which you cannot go lower than...the most basic level. We are spirit.

Now the lumpers, the bipartite system would use on the top line, body and soul. The lumpers on the bottom line would use either body and soul or body and spirit. So they would effectively use soul and spirit as interchangeable words. The splitters on the top line would use body, mind, and soul and on the bottom line would use body, soul, spirit. So I'm going to run through a few Scriptures, not to clear up the dilemma, but to really bring into consciousness the dilemma of these different words and how different people use them and even how they're used in Scripture in ways that seem different that I don't fully understand. So I'm not bringing it up to have a debate on the words; because I don't know that that's proper for what we're trying to accomplish here in this noon Bible study. But if you all wanted, as we go forward out there, to have a session where there's no teacher, speaker, whatever, where we just bounce these things around, we could obviously do that.

Now, Matthew 22:37 – Love the Lord, your God with all of your heart, soul and mind. In other words, three divisions—not two, even not accounting for the body. Now they are making a distinction between soul and mind in that verse. I Thessalonians 5:23 Paul writes – May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, dividing into three parts, not two—body, soul, and spirit. So, what I would call a tripartite—that is to say, three parts semantics. Likewise, Hebrews 4:12 – The Word of God pierces as far as the division of soul and spirit. Well, in a verse like that, how could soul equal spirit if the

Word of God splits the soul from the spirit? In other words, a tripartite system. Verses that relate to the body alone in the Old Testament: Genesis 3:19 – From dust you came and unto dust you shall return. That’s the body, the physical body, the stuff that makes up the body. In the New Testament, a verse that would relate to that frame of reference about the body is Hebrews 9:27 – It is appointed unto men once to die. That’s the physical death of the body. Well, how about the usage of the word soul in the Old Testament? Genesis 2:7 (in the King James Version) – God breathed into man and he became a living soul, not spirit. In the New Testament, Matthew 10:28 – Fear Him (that is God) Who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell. In other words, using the bipartite system of just two things: material body, immaterial soul; able to destroy both soul and body in Hell. Like that would be Revelation 6:9 – I saw under the altar, the souls of those who had been slain. Not spirits, souls. Well in regard to the usage of the word spirit, in the Old Testament, it says in Genesis 1:27 – And God created man in His own image. Well, what is God if He’s going to create man in His own image? Well, in the New Testament, John 4:24 says – God is spirit—not soul. In the Old Testament, Proverbs 20:27 says – The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, not soul. In Romans 8:16 it says – the Spirit Himself (the Holy Spirit), bears witness with our spirit, not soul. So there are times you see a bipartite system—a body/soul; there are times you see a bipartite system—a body/spirit; there are times you see a tripartite system—a body, mind, soul; there are times you see a tripartite system—a body, soul, spirit. So I’m not able in a scholarly way to sort all that out. But I want to make you mindful of these different usages of words in Scripture that could come down to the interpretation and how people viewed it, not to clarify, but to point out some things that in my mind, are still kind of ambiguous about Scripture, and then communicate to you how I’m going to be mostly using the words so that there’s no confusion as I stand up and speak.

Next poster. Now I’ve drawn this, using the terminology that I will mostly use as we go forward and I call it the anatomy of a Christian on Earth. In other words, in medical school, to learn anatomy, we would take a cadaver (permission had been granted) and then we would dissect it. And we would learn all the parts that went into making the whole of the body. So when we take the Christian on Earth, someone who is saved before physical death, and look at the different parts, well, who am I? What word would I use for that? Well, I’m going to use the terminology that I am spirit, I have a soul and I live in a body. So I’m going to use a tripartite system. On the second line, well, what is my spirit, soul, and body then? My spirit is my nature. That is me. That’s the me that you can’t get to a deeper level. Well, what is my soul? Well, my soul is mind, emotion, and will. Well, what’s the body? Well, we talked about how it’s the physical part of ourselves; but the physical body is also what I call the harp of the soul. That is your mind, emotion, and will, with all its interplay, prints out an action. So I’m here at noon today because my mind, emotion, and will interplayed in order to be here, at noon, to present this. So my body simply became the instrument on which my mind plays its music, so to speak. So it’s not only physical, it is the way that my immaterial self projects itself into the material realm. So that we’re all here at an appointed time, our bodies are here; but they’re not here because of something about atoms and molecules that brought us here. It’s the immaterial part of self called mind, emotion, and will in its interplay that played its music and told the instrument to be here.

Then in regard to time, my spirit is eternal. My soul is eternal. These are the two parts that make up the immaterial part of self that does not undergo physical death. The body is, of course, temporal—that is functions in time and space. The input into my spirit (as a Christian, remember) is through God and it begins, of course, with faith. By grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift from God. So when we have that faith, then we are saved, when that faith is in Jesus Christ, as our Savior, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, Who came to Earth as a man, paid the price for our sins and so on. So the spirit receives input from God that begins with faith, which of course, includes in a way you can't separate truth and life. God is truth, remember? And the Holy Spirit indwells us, the Spirit of Truth. And Scripture tells us in John 6:63 – the Spirit gives life. So when I put faith up there, that faith is not standing alone. It can be distinguished, but not separated from truth and life.

Well, skip over to body. What is the input to the body? Well, the input to the body comes through the five senses—that is all the sensory information contained in our physical domain that comes in through the body.

Well, then the soul representing mind, emotion, and will now gets input from two different directions. It gets input from my spirit which is that which is coming from God; and it gets input from the physical realm. That is to say through the sensory input into my body. Well, what's the destiny of a Christian on Earth? Well, the destiny of my spirit has already been fulfilled. My spirit is oneness, in oneness with God. My spirit cannot become better. My spirit cannot become holier. It is indwelled by the Holy Spirit of God. It is righteous; it has no sin, you see. So it has already fulfilled its destiny on Earth of oneness with God. Well, what is the destiny of my soul here on Earth, using soul to mean mind, emotion, and will. It is the process called renewal. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind. So I still have impure thoughts that have to be captured. So my mind cannot be said to be in oneness with God; ungodly thoughts cannot be one with God, you see; so, the process of being transformed by the renewal of your mind.

Well, what about the body? Well, its destiny here on Earth is death. It is appointed unto man once to die. So taking that, I'm not insisting that you accept my diagrams as doctrinal; but to just try to get on a common wave length as we communicate so that we are not misled by having me say one thing and have you think I mean something else. A couple other Scriptures that might apply would be in I John where it says the one who is born of God cannot sin. Well, I'm fully capable of sinning, and yet I'm born of God. Well, how can both statements be true? Because I believe that the man who is born of God cannot sin, is talking about the spirit which is in oneness with God; which is righteous, filled with the Holy Spirit, and cannot sin. But I have an unrenewed mind that can still produce ungodly thoughts which lead to sin. So, the man who is born of God cannot sin; the man who says he has no sin deceives himself. So, if you have only the bipartite system of soul or spirit, I'm left struggling with what to do with verses like that.

But, using the tripartite system, not insisting that it is perfect or that my understanding is perfect, it lets me begin to see possibly what Paul was addressing when he wrote, that you

be sanctified, body, soul and spirit; and the Word of God splits soul from spirit. Where the Word of God splits and shows me what is the perfect truth of God from what is my unrenewed mind. So that, in my frame of reference, is the splitting of soul from spirit. And the process, then is for me to use my walk on planet Earth, receiving the revelation of these components of myself and beginning to walk out by using the will to turn to the spirit realm, to receive the truths of God and to engage in that process as opposed to walking by the habits that are in my unrenewed mind that still have yet to be transformed.

So, don't walk away thinking, well Buddy's trying to hammer a system to us. I'm not. What I'm trying to do is establish the struggle I have with certain fundamental verses and fundamental words; and I await the greater revelation which may come from some of you all. But letting you know what words I'm using to mean what, and why I'm using them that way. When I have asked (not to defend a position, but asked to receive greater revelation, and I've asked the people who believe in the bipartite system that soul equals spirit, they're interchangeable terms and they're only the two parts), I have never yet received a meaningful explanation of what Paul meant when he twice wrote (or at least he wrote) and then the author of Hebrews wrote, splitting soul from spirit or sanctified body, soul, and spirit. There is something there that the bipartite system has not yet clarified to where I have peace about it. But I'm acknowledging the difficulty of it even in the use of words that I use, you see.

Salvation is the act or process of saving us or rescuing us. So Jesus is our Savior; but we need to remember that the Trinity is at work. So this poster is just put up to remind us. The Father draws; nobody comes unto Me, except the Father draw him – John 6:44. The Holy Spirit will bear witness of Me – John 15:26. So the Father draws; the Spirit bears witness; and Jesus says, John 6:37, I will in nowise cast him out. The one the Father draws, the Spirit bears witness to, Jesus does not cast him out and then the Spirit gives life; born again, by the Spirit of God. So what are we saved from? Well, of course, we could go into a discussion about many things, but primarily the thing that we think about is Hell. Saved from eternal spiritual death, which is to be separated from communion with God, while receiving the fullness of the wrath of God. Even the word salvation is used to mean different things to different people in different conversations and different contexts. Used in a global sense, it can include everything on the poster. Used in a focal sense, it can be divided into different components. Now one frame of reference that salvation can be divided into is using time as the frame of reference. One part of salvation is past—that is to say, for the Christian, it is historical; it is a done deal. And that occurs, of course, at the moment of saving faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior. The Holy Spirit enters us; we are born of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit. At that moment we are justified. Justified means declared righteous. We're declared righteous by God the Father.

Now that occurs by what I call the divine exchange. A verse you know well – II Corinthians 5:21 – He (God) made Him (Jesus) Who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. So obviously Jesus took our sins upon Himself, paid the price for those sins, by dying physically on the cross, and using the terminology the way I use it, dying spiritually on the cross, meaning the forsakeness

by the Father, the One with Whom He had always been one. And the horror of the cross is the substitutionary death deemed by the Father to be fully adequate to pay for all of our sins. Can the mind comprehend all that? I don't think so. But we know the Spirit testifies to our spirit, the truth of that. But that's only one-half of the divine exchange that took place. At the same moment that we placed, by saving faith, our sins upon Jesus, He placed His righteousness upon us. He was without sin, perfectly righteous, His righteousness was perfectly demonstrated by us in the test beyond which there is no test; and that, of course, as you remember is the test of the cross. Where He endured the fullness of the wrath of the Father in the absence of communion with the Father to a point where, the Hell that we owed for all of our sins was paid. How could there be a test beyond that test?

Now we have that perfect righteousness credited to us. The Father judges us as perfectly righteous before our Holy God; and that is what is meant by the term justification. So justification is obviously for the born again Christian, a past historical component of salvation.

Well, now fast forward to the last part—glorification. The fundamental Scripture is I Thessalonians 4:13-18 – Glorification—glorification is what happens to our bodies at the Rapture, of course, prior to the Tribulation, prior to the second coming of Christ. The Scripture tells us that those who are alive at the time will be raptured immediately into the air to meet Jesus Christ; and thus, receive their glorified bodies without passing through physical death. Those who are dead at that time will have their bodies resurrected from the grave; likewise, ascend in the air to meet Jesus in the air. That's why it's not called the second coming because Jesus doesn't come and put His feet on planet Earth; we meet Him in the air. Their bodies are then glorified and ascend into Heaven with Jesus also. Well, what is a glorified body? Well, I don't know that Scripture gives a specific definition; but it's one that obviously we live in Heaven with for eternity future or at least till (I should say to be precise), temporarily in Heaven until the New Earth, where we come back to live thereafter. A glorified body, at a minimum, is one not bound by physical laws. That, in part, was hinted at by the body of Jesus after the resurrection. Recall that Scripture says, He appeared in the upper room. It doesn't say that He knocked; it doesn't say that He had to have a door unlocked; He didn't have to crawl through a window; He simply appeared. And a glorified body could do that. It is not bound by physical laws. One way you know is to say it can exist in the presence of God without being consumed. There is something about the glorified body that can do that. Here we couldn't do that. Moses had to be hidden in the protective cleft of the rock, see only a part of God, couldn't see God in full; else he would have been consumed. So there's something about the glorified body that allows us to be in the presence of God without being consumed that way. A glorified body is not subject to physical degradation. So our bodies are, therefore, saved in their glorified form, rescued from all the adverse forces that act upon us here on planet Earth. So the future part of salvation, for the born again Christian, is the glorification of our bodies which will occur at the Rapture, preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ. Well, you might say, how can that be? Well, recall that God is sovereign. In His sovereignty, He can reach into the physical realm and choose to override how things generally run according to the physical

laws that He set up. So our bodies here are subject to injury, to sickness, to wearing out, to degeneration over decades. But God, to suit His divine purposes restrains His sovereignty over all things and allows those degradation processes to take place here on Earth. That's the price of sin. That's the corruption of the body, corrupted by sin. But God also, in His sovereignty to suit His divine purposes can specifically intervene and override those physical processes, and thus, more fully manifest Himself in that display of His sovereign will and power. Now remember, that's what we as natural beings walking around in unglorified bodies tend to call a miracle. In fact, we tend to divide the activities of God into two parts: physical law or a miracle. God, I think, would call these two activities sovereignty hidden or sovereignty manifest. To God, there are no miracles, remember? That's a word that is really useful only to man. The only true miracle would be if God's will could not be imposed upon the spiritual or physical realm. Now since God is sovereign, that cannot occur; thus, to God there are no miracles. So what we call a miracle, is simply God reminding man that I am; I am here; I am sovereign; I am involved; and this is My will. God doesn't need reminders; but man does. So we call them signs and wonders; but they're signs and wonders to man; because I don't think that an Omniscient Being ever wonders.

We're so close to time being up that I think I'll stop at that point because the next little section would take a little longer than we have left to proceed.