

# 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 sac-

rifice 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 based on Christ's past, finished work. The Spirit has breathed life into the one previously having no life, and the Spirit could perform this work only because of 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).

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