

Salvation – God’s part and our part!

In Titus 2:11-14 we find God’s plan of Salvation for all the world, making the same demands on every soul who accepts God’s plan of Salvation by the Grace of God.

Verse 11 states, *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”* Salvation comes to us by the Grace of God, not by our own righteousness or the works of our own hands. The Grace of God takes us, as we are – a good sinner or a bad sinner, no matter how we were bound by sins, fetters, or habits, or how low we had fallen in a life of sin. We were not required by God to cleanse our self or to *“fix our self up”* but to merely come to God as a sinner and accept His Salvation through His Grace.

This is the part of Salvation many accept as a freedom from their sins and assurance of heaven after death, having a desire to escape Hell. Let us not forget that the Grace of God in Salvation takes us as a sinner, *“just as we are.”* God saves us just like we are – for in this manner works the Grace of God in Salvation towards sinners.

Verse 12 states that after we are saved by God’s Grace, the same Grace of God changes its relationship to us and *“becomes a teacher,”* – *“teaching us”* after we are saved. It reads, *“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”*

This is where the trouble begins for many Christians. They are willing to take or embrace the grace of God in Salvation, but are not willing to take the Grace of God as a *“Teacher”* and enter into God’s school to be taught by the same Spirit how we must now live after we are saved. The Grace of God teaches us, *“we must deny un-God-like-ness and Worldly lusts”* – or refuse these things now since we have been saved by God’s Grace, for Salvation tells us how we should live **NOW** as saved people or Christians in this present world.

We are to *“live **soberly**,”* having our members of the body under control. God will hold us responsible for what we allow the members of our bodies to do after we are saved, if there has been no true repentance and confession -- and some day He will make us give account as Christians, at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We must *“live **righteously**”* – or right in the sight of God. The Grace of God teaches us since being saved that we are **NOW** to live right -- a change from the way we lived as a sinner. Many things seem all right to do as a sinner that cannot be done after we are saved, for salvation teaches us to live right.

We must live *“**Godly**”* – God-like is **NOW** the pattern we must follow after being saved, and the Grace of God will teach every soul who is willing to embrace Him as their teacher as well as their Savior.

Verse 13 states, *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”* -- Note that the Grace of God gives us a holy incentive to holy living in this present world. It is the *“**blessed hope**”* – the soon return of our Lord

and Savior, Jesus Christ! This blessed hope is the greatest incentive to holy Christ-like living as well as to our separation from this present evil age.

Many are asking, *“How can a person live holy in a world like this?”* a Christian says that everyone in their family is unsaved – or – there are no real Christians where I work or in the school I attend – and it is so difficult for me to live a holy life. However, salvation offers to every Christian a *“Helper”* to help them over these places, like the railroads have to help the trains over the mountains.

When a train is traveling on the level straightaway the engine doesn't have much trouble pulling the load it carries, however, when it comes to a steep mountain, it needs help because one engine by itself cannot pull the load up the hill. So railroad companies provide an extra engine at these strategic positions to – either behind or in front – to help the train to be able to arrive to the top of the mountain.

In like manner, the Holy Spirit is the child of God's great Helper, (Incentive) offered to every Christian to help them to live as the Grace of God teaches them to live in this present world!

This 13th verse of Titus 2 -- also teaches that some day, we have an appointment to meet *“The Great God,”* who in times past was our Savior -- for He was born of us, died for us, was raised from death for us; He is **NOW** in heaven for us, from which He will soon return to call us before Him.

As the Great Judge, salvation seeks to tell every Christian of the coming change in Christ's position.

Verse 14 states, *“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”* The Grace of God also teaches us that we should remember the One who made all these things possible -- and also made them complete. He gave Himself for us so that He might redeem us (buy us back, set us free!) from all iniquity -- from the driving power of every inbred sin.

By doing so, He would purify unto Himself a peculiar [a *“treasured”*] people or a people who are different since being taught in the school of salvation by the Holy Spirit, Who teaches from the text book, God's Holy Word -- and not the doctrines of man.

Any Christian that will follow this teaching will be a peculiar person in this present world. We are taught to be zealous of *“good works”* for some day we will be judged by works, whether they be good or bad. What we do after we are saved by the Grace of God is very important to us in the light of Eternity. We cannot escape the effect of how we live after being saved by God's Grace.

Christ Jesus, referring to His return to earth, gives a solemn warning in Revelation 16:15, *“Behold, I come as a thief, Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”*

Christ return is likened to the coming of a thief, whose coming is sudden. His coming is when we least expect and for a purpose, not to finish our undone work, but rather to receive those things of real value in His own sight, and leave as quickly as He came.

I learned early in my pastorate experience that people – especially women – do not like unexpected visits. I recall, in my first pastorate started call on various families, just to get acquainted with those of the church. After knocking on doors I would hear the commotion and noise going on throughout the house before the door would finally open and they would respond with something like, *“Oh, pastor, we were not expecting anyone.”* I’m sometimes a slow learner – but I learned early to phone first before I made any visits to parishioners – to warn them of my coming for a visit.

One pastor said that a member told him, *“If you ever visit our house without giving us a 24 hours warning, we’ll leave the church and go somewhere else.”*

Jesus said, *“Blessed – [happy] – is he that watches...”* You cannot watch and sleep at the same time. Watching is the opposite of sleeping. -- Blessed are they who watch for the Lord’s return to earth again! Like a little child, with her face pressed against the window, wide-awake, anxiously watching for her father to come home from work because she is so eager to see him.

Then Jesus added, *“...and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”* What could that *possible* mean? What does this phrase in this verse -- that appears to be misplaced in Scripture -- found here in the midst of the judgments of God, really mean?

It is a message of warning to the family of God, living in the end of time, as to preparation for our Lord’s return. It relates back to the tribe of Levi that was the holy tribe that took care of the Temple and its services.

There was a group of Levites known as *“Temple Watchers”* who took care of the many things within the Temple. One thing every Temple Watcher knew – he was never to go to sleep or be found asleep in the house of his God. While the other eleven tribes believed these Temple Watcher to be busy inside the Temple walls, they were never to fall asleep. They could sleep at their own homes; they only had so many hours to work – because God never asks anyone to do anything they cannot do. God placed over these *“Temple Watches”* a Chief Temple Guard who had power to come into the Temple at anytime! The only thing he looked for were *“sleeping Levites”* – *“Temple Watchers.”*

These Chief Temple Guards had the power to take the garments, even to their loin-cloth, if they found any Temple Watcher asleep, and take them to the Temple door and push them out and keep their garments. As the Levites went naked from the Temple to their homes, all the rest of Israel and they who saw knew one thing – They, as God’s servants, as *“Temple Watchers,”* had been untrue to their God and trust, and gone to sleep in the House of God.

There was no set time for the Temple guards to come; it was not announced beforehand. If a certain time was set, the Temple Watchers would get ready, but it was sudden and unexpected.

Health inspectors, to keep certain health laws in force, arrive at a place of business unannounced and unexpected, without any advanced announcement -- because if the restaurant, dairy farm, or food packing business knew of the inspector's coming they would put forth extra effort to be clean and received a clean bill of health.

Places of businesses usually have some kind of underground "a grapevine" warning the employees when the "big boss" will be coming around to inspect how things are going and what kind of work is being done. Those who spend a great deal of time in the restroom smoking or on frequent coffee breaks, suddenly are at their jobs working diligently as the big boss comes in -- so he gets the impression that is the way they always do their work.

Jesus said, "*Behold, I come as a thief, Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame*" (Revelation 16:15).

An interesting passage of Scripture, illustrating readiness in view of His coming is found in Matthew 24:43-51, "*But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

How many Christians today are living as if, "*The Lord delays His coming?*" What one believes in his heart will manifest it their actions or in the manner in which they conduct their life. This passage of Scripture states that "the servant says in his heart" - he doesn't necessarily say it with his mouth - he probably wouldn't say it out loud, even to himself - but he *lives like* he does not believe the Lord will return soon. His lifestyle and manner of living says, "*My Lord delays His coming.*" What one "*believes in his heart*" he acts accordingly - even "*smiting his fellow servants*" - (that is, treating others with contempt). This is something one would not do, if they believed their Master would come while they were acting in such manner.

It is true that we can sing about Christ's return and quote many Scriptures and give great swelling testimonies about His soon return to earth -- but these things do not prove what is really in the heart. The way we act and are controlled prove what the heart really believes.

A lifestyle the “*smites one’s fellow servants and eats and drinks with the drunken*” – does not necessarily mean one has gone back into the world and lives a life of sin – but, no doubt, refers to one who is controlled by his “*flesh*” and not his new “*spirit-life*” in Christ Jesus. It is a “*I WILL do as I please and live as I please*” frame of mind and attitude toward one’s Christian living. Just like a drunken person – who no longer does or can control the actions of the members of his own body.

This universal attitude throughout the Church is one of the greatest sins of the near return of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Lord will come “*in an hour when we look not for Him!*”

Faith is a living thing! That which we believe in our heart, we will demonstrate. We cannot believe in our heart that our Lord is coming soon without living evidences of that belief.

*“And every man that **hath this hope in him** purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).*

If we say that we believe in the soon return of our Lord, Jesus Christ, then we would allow the Holy Spirit to “*purify*” us, by God’s Word – *even as He (Christ) is pure!*”

I can recall vividly how, in the early days of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the demonstration of those saints who lived in the light of the expectance of the soon return of our Lord. They fully believed that they were prepared for the return of the Lord, Jesus Christ and spoke boldly to those living in sin of their need to prepare for the return of the Lord. I

An image is inscribed indelibly in my mind of those saints who believed the “*Coming of the Lord*” was so real that they lived lives in relationship to the course of this world, testifying that they were ready to leave at anytime, day or night. They lived, as Hebrews 11:13-16 states, “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and **confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.** For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”*

If Jesus were to come today,
 where would He find us
 in our relationship
 to this present evil world and age?