

Title: **The Sure Salvation of God's Elect**

Text: Zechariah 8:7-8

Date: Sunday Morning — September 24, 2006

Tape # Zechariah #39

Reading: *Isaiah 46:3-13*

3. Harken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne *by me* from the belly, which are carried from the womb:
4. And *even to your* old age I *am* he; and *even to hoar* hairs will I carry *you*: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.
5. To whom will ye liken me, and make *me* equal, and compare me, that we may be like?
6. They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, *and* hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.
7. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, *one* shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.
8. Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring *it* again to mind, O ye transgressors.
9. Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me,
10. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:
11. Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.
12. Harken unto me, ye stouthearted, that *are* far from righteousness:
13. I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

Introduction

Why have you come here? What is your desire? What is your need? What do you expect? — A Religious Ceremony? — Some Religious Entertainment? — A Lecture in Doctrine? — A Lecture about History — A Lecture on Morality? — A Word from God for Your Soul

- I do not take the business of preaching the Gospel lightly.
- You should never look upon the privilege of hearing the gospel as a light thing.

I stand before you either as a servant of Christ or as a servant of the devil. I must be one or the other. Our Master said, “*He that is not with me is against me,*” (Matt. 12:30). It is written, “*Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel*” (1 Cor. 9:16). In another place Paul says, “*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*” (Gal. 1:8).

If I do not preach the Gospel that Paul preached, a curse hangs over my head. That puts me in an awful position of responsibility. No wonder the prophets of old spoke of the message they carried and the responsibility of delivering it as “*the burden of the Word of the Lord.*” God’s servants are set by him as watchmen over the souls of men, responsible to God for faithfully instructing eternity bound sinners in the way of life and salvation by Christ. As we hear the Word at his mouth, so we must speak (Ezek 3:17; 33:7). “*To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Isa. 8:20). We must add nothing to it and take nothing from it (Deut. 4:2). The Lord God declares, “*He that hath my Word, let him speak it faithfully*” (Jer. 23:28). He who dares to stand in this place to speak to eternity bound men and women, as a steward of the mysteries of God, must be faithful.

- To The Gospel
- To Glory of God
- To the Souls of Men

I call upon you who hear me to compare every word I speak with the Word of God. I urge you, for your souls’ sake to do so. If what I have to say is of God, hear me, bow to his Word, believe it and rejoice in it. If it is not of God, do not hear me, never hear me again, lest you perish in delusion and darkness. That is how serious this matter is.

I make you this promise: — That which I have to preach to you is that which has been inscribed upon my heart by the finger of God, experienced in my soul by the operation of his grace, and proved by the faith God has given me. It is not a theory, an opinion, or a conjecture. It is the very truth of God.

Before we look at our text together, I have a request. — Will you here who know Christ, lift up your hearts to God and ask his blessing upon his Word. O that God might speak through this worthless, empty pipe to your hearts and to the hearts of lost sinners in this house for the glory of Christ, the comfort, edification, and everlasting salvation of your souls, for Christ's sake! It is my prayer and my heart's desire to God that you who believe Christ may be instructed, comforted, and strengthened by the Gospel, and that you who are yet dead in trespasses and sins may this very hour be born of God and granted the blessed gifts of eternal life and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. — O Spirit of God, come upon us! — Fill us! — Teach us! — Revive! — Refresh! — Cause these bones to live, for Christ's sake!

Now, let's look together at our text. — Zechariah 8:7-8. I want to preach to you that which is plainly declared in these two verses by God himself, — **The Sure Salvation God's Elect**.

(Zechariah 8:7-8) “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; (8) And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”

“**Thus saith the Lord.**” — That which we have before us is the very Word of God himself. This is not Zechariah's word, my word, or the word of the church. This is not the word of a creed or confession of faith written by men. This is God's own Word.

“**Behold**” — When God says, “Behold,” he means for us to pause and thoughtfully hear what he is about to declare. He is about to state something wondrous, something needful, something that no one naturally expects.

“Behold, **I will save my people!**” — How I love to hear our God say, “I will.” That means “he shall.” The Lord God declares that there are some people in this world who are distinctly and peculiarly his people. He emphatically asserts that he will save them, all of them, without exception. Nothing can prevent it, or even hinder it. It shall be done.

“Behold, I will save my people **from the east country and from the west country.**” — Without question, the Lord here promised that he would fulfill his Word, that he would bring the Jews back from their Babylonian captivity, restore the nation, restore the city of Jerusalem, and restore the temple. But that is not the full scope of the prophecy. We know that because in Zechariah's day there were no Jews scattered into the Western world. This word from our God is a prophecy and promise relating to the salvation of God's elect, “*the Israel of God,*” out of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue.

(Isaiah 43:1-6) “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. (5) Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee

from the west; (6) I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.”

(John 11:52) “And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

(Romans 11:26) “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

“**And I will bring them.**” — Though many may try to prevent it, I will bring everyone of my people. I will lead them and guide them. I will be their Strength and their Shield. “*I will bring them.*” That means they are sure to be brought! He will breathe life into their dead bones and make them live!

“**And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.**” — “*I will...they shall!*” — Don’t you love the way God speaks! His promises are all “yea and amen” in Christ! He will bring all his elect into his church and kingdom, into the household of grace and faith (John 10:16). They shall be no more foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens in the household of God, enjoying all the immunities and privileges of the Jerusalem that is above, the mother of us all.

“**And they shall be my people.**” — He has already declared that they are already his people. Here he tells us that they shall be his manifestly, in the blessed experience of his saving grace, when he causes them to return to him by effectual calling and irresistible grace. When sinners are called of God the Spirit, when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord God declares in our hearts, by the gift of faith in his Son, that we are his people, and heirs of his covenant. It is faith in Christ that makes our calling and election sure.

“**And I will be their God.**” — Yes, the Lord God is ours just as truly as we are his. He makes himself ours, just as he makes us his. All that we are is his. And all that he is is ours!

“*I will be their God **in truth.***” — Perhaps the Lord is saying, “I will surely be their God,” verifying his promise. Probably, he is saying, “They will be my people in sincerity and truth” (Phil. 3:3; Hosea 2:19-20).

(Hosea 2:19-20) “And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. (20) I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.”

“*I will be their God in truth **and in righteousness.***” — The Lord God will be our God, but only in strict accordance with righteousness, justice and truth, only in Christ our Mediator, the Lord our Righteousness.

- Imputed Righteousness
- Imparted Righteousness

“My People”

Who are these people who are called by the God of Glory, “*my people*”? His people are his elect, those whom he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.

I call your attention to the fact that God does not here promise that he would make some people to be his people. He says, “*I will save my people.*”

(Psalms 110:3) “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

(John 10:16) “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.”

Then he says, “*They shall be my people.*” They were his people before he saved them. Yet, they become his people after he saves them. In other words, they were saved before they are saved, and they are saved when they are saved. Is this a contradiction? Of course not! Let me show you.

Eternally His

All who are now God’s people, and all who ever shall be God’s people in the blessed experience of his saving grace have been his people secretly from eternity, his by his own choice and decree from eternity. There never was a time when his people were not his people.

- We were loved by him with an everlasting love, as his people (Jer. 31:3).
- We were chosen by him unto salvation before the world began (2 Thess. 2:13-14).

But there is more to this matter of God’s election and God’s decree than most seem to realize. The fact is, this Book plainly declares that God’s eternal decree that we should be saved was the accomplishment of salvation for us in Christ our Surety, that all who are saved in time were saved in eternity (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-6; 2 Tim. 1:9-10).

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(Ephesians 1:3-6) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

What do these three passages tell us about God’s elect? What do they tell us the Lord God accomplished for us from eternity in Christ?

1. God **foreknew** us. God loved us in Christ from eternity.
2. He **predestinated** us to be conformed to the image of Christ in everlasting Glory.
3. He **called** (named) us as his own dear children (1 John 3:1).
4. He **justified** us by the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
5. He **blessed** us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.
6. He made us **accepted** in Christ, to the praise of the glory of his grace.
7. He **glorified** us in Christ with the glory given to Christ as our Surety before the world was.
8. He **saved** us by his grace.
9. All God’s salvation, all his grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.
10. He did it all “*according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.*”

Experimentally His

In a word, all his people were eternally his people by the mighty operations of his grace before the world began, saved from everlasting. And all his people shall become his people experimentally in time, by the mighty operations of his grace in time. We were his from eternity; but we did not know it until he revealed that fact to us by sending his Spirit to us in time (Gal. 4:4-6; 2 Tim. 1:9-10).

(Galatians 4:4-6) “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (5) To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (6) And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

All men and women are Arminians and will worshippers by nature. All naturally assume that God wants to save and tries to save everyone in the world. All men think, and all false religion teaches, that God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ died at Calvary for all men, to save all people without exception. All people vainly imagine that God the Holy Spirit tries to quicken, tries to regenerate all, that he calls all to faith in Christ. But that simply is not the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

What does the Bible teach? What does God almighty say in his Word about this matter? Remember, if a man speaks not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in him. Those false prophets who declare that the blood of Christ was a waste, that he died in vain for multitudes who yet perish in their sins have not so much as a single ray of spiritual light in them. To teach such doctrine is to deny the very deity of the Son of God. **He cannot be God if...**

- He fails to do what he came to do.
- His love can be turned to wrath.
- His blood does not fully satisfy the justice of God.

(Matthew 1:21) “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

The Son of God did not come here to save all people. If he had, all would be saved. He came to save his people from their sins, his own peculiar, distinct people. **Who are his people?** The Word of God describes them like this.

- **His people are his seed** (Ps. 22:30-31; Isa. 53:10-12; Heb. 2:16).

(Psalms 22:30-31) “A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. (31) They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.”

(Isaiah 53:10-12) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

(Hebrews 2:16) “For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.”

- **His people are his sheep** (John 10:11, 15, 26).

(John 10:11) “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

(John 10:15) “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

(John 10:26) “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

- **His people are his chosen bride, the church** (Eph. 5:25-27).
- **His people are his own elect** (John 15:16; Eph. 1:3-7).

In a word, those people who are called by God “*my people*” are the objects of his love! His people are those who were chosen in Christ to salvation before the world began, whom he loved with an everlasting love, whom he predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will.

Four Questions

The entire religious world (Baptists and Papists — Charismatic and Non-charismatic — Protestants and Pentecostals — Fundamentalists and Liberals — Russellites and Campbellites — Mormons and Methodists) asserts dogmatically that “God loves all people without exception, wills the salvation of all without exception, Christ died to redeem all without exception and the Holy Spirit calls all without exception.” If these things, so commonly and so universally embraced, believed, and taught throughout the religious world, are accepted, here are four questions that must be answered.

1. **If God loves everyone without exception, What does the love of God have to do with anyone’s salvation?** — **Absolutely nothing!**

If God loves all men alike, when you tell me that God loves me, you’ve told me nothing. The love of God is totally insignificant and absolutely meaningless. — If that is the case, then there is **no distinction** between God’s love for the saved and his love for the lost. — He loves people who are suffering his wrath in hell just as fully as he does those who are glorified in heaven! — Either that is the case, or God is mutable, changeable, and fickle, like man’s!

There is **no power** in the love of God to save and keep his own. His love really doesn’t matter. — It is nothing but a helpless, frustrated, defeated passion in the heart of poor God!

There is **no comfort** in the love of God. — How can anyone derive even the slightest measure of comfort from a love that is helpless and useless? If God loves the damned, it is impossible for anyone to find comfort in his love.

And there is **no motivation** in the love of God. — If God’s love for me is the same as his love for Judas, Pharaoh, and Cain, why should I love, serve, and seek to honor him? — Indeed, if the difference between me and those who are damned is me, God ought to serve me! He ought to praise me!

Such notions concerning the love of God are as absurd as they are unscriptural and blasphemous. God's love is special, distinguishing, and saving (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 9:13; 1 Cor, 4:7).

2. **If the Lord God wills the salvation of all and some are not saved, as is the case, what does the will of God have to do with anyone's salvation? — Absolutely nothing!**

If that were the case, God's will would be just as irrelevant and meaningless as yours' or mine. But that is not the case. He declares, "*I will do all my pleasure!*" — "*Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased!*" — "*Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places!*"

3. **If the Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood for all alike, if he died to redeem and save all men and some go to hell anyway, what does the blood of Christ have to do with anyone's salvation? — Absolutely nothing!**

If, as is universally asserted, Christ died to save all men and some are not saved, then that blasphemous absurdity must follow that Christ died in vain for some, his blood was a meaningless waste, he suffered and died for nothing, his death really has nothing at all to do with anyone's salvation! — Horrid blasphemies these are; but they are inescapable conclusions that must be made, if we entertain the notion that Christ died for the multitudes who are in hell.

If Christ died for all men without exception, if he shed his blood to save the entire human race, then the shedding of his blood must be an atonement that does not atone! — A redemption that does not redeem! — A ransom that does not ransom! — A deliverance that does not deliver! — A sin-offering that does not satisfy! — A propitiation that does not propitiate!

Thank God, our Redeemer is not such a failure, but glorious and successful! He, with his own blood, "*hath obtained eternal redemption for us.*"

4. **If God the Holy Spirit is gracious alike to all, if he calls all alike, if his power is exercised upon all alike for the saving of their souls and some yet perish in unbelief under the wrath of God and are forever lost, what does the power, grace, and call of the Holy Spirit have to do with anyone's salvation? — Absolutely nothing!**

If the Spirit of God strives to regenerate and save all men alike, if he seeks to bring every man and woman in the world to life and faith in Christ, and some are not saved, then it must be concluded that he has no power to give life to anyone, no grace to regenerate anyone, and no ability to save anyone!

To say that God loves all people alike, that he wills the salvation of all, that Christ died to redeem and save all, and that the Holy Spirit strives to save all is to declare, "Salvation is not of the Lord at all, but rather it is the response and work of man that saves!" It is to declare, "God has done all that he can do, but salvation is altogether up to you!"

The Word of God teaches otherwise. It is written, "*Salvation is of the Lord!*" "*So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*" The Lord God

declares, “*Behold, I will save my people.*” That means that the salvation of his people is a matter of absolute certainty. **Because the salvation of God’s elect is a matter of absolute certainty...**

· **We preach the gospel with confident expectation, knowing that God’s Word will never return to him void** (Isa. 55:11).

(Isaiah 55:11) “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.”

· **We proclaim eternal life and full salvation to sinners everywhere, assuring them that if they believe they are numbered among his people.**

· **We live in confident hope, in the confident expectation of eternal life,** “*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*”

How?

How does the Lord God save his people? This much I know. — Whoever his people are, they shall be saved. That fact cannot be disputed. But how does he do it? Here are three distinct and distinguishing works of grace by which the Lord God saves and shall save all his people (1 Cor. 4:7).

Redemption — God has saved all his people by the particular, effectual redemption of our souls from the curse of the law by the sacrifice of his own dear Son (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:12).

Regeneration — God saves each and all his people, at the appointed time of love, by the almighty power and effectual, irresistible grace of his Holy Spirit in regeneration and effectual calling (John 5:25; Eph. 2:1-5; Ps; 65:4).

· Ezekiel’s Infant (Ezek. 16:6-8)

· The Valley of Dry Bones (Ezek. 37) — “Where the blood don’t flow, the wind don’t blow.” — (Pastor Jesse Gistand)

· Lazarus (John 11)

Resurrection — The Lord Jesus Christ shall soon save all his people from the very being of sin and all the evil consequences of sin, in the resurrection of the just (John 5:28; 1 Thess. 5:13-18).

There shall be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust. The wicked shall be raised to suffer all the consequences of their sins. But the righteous shall be raised to be forever freed from all the consequences of their sins, and delivered into “*the glorious liberty of the sons of God!*”

I want to know the answer to this one question. — **Do I have any reason to believe that I am one of his people?** Indeed, I do!

(John 3:36) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

(Acts 16:31) “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

(1 John 5:1) “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

(1 John 5:9-13) “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. [10] He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. [11] And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. [12] He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. [13] These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Amen.