

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

Thy guardian care and love we sing;
And hail that grace both rich and free,
That brings Thy wand'ring sheep to Thee.

Glory to God, till this takes place,
Bulwarks of fire and walls of grace,
Keep all His blood bought flock secure,
Till calling proves election sure!”

(John Kent)

There is a day appointed by God for the salvation of his elect, a day fixed from eternity when grace will come to the chosen sinner, an hour determined before the world began when the Good Shepherd will seek out and find his lost sheep. There is a time fixed before time began, called “*the time of love,*” when the predestined child, the elect sinner, redeemed by the blood of Christ, must be saved. At that hour, salvation must and shall come to the soul loved of God with an everlasting love.

It is my heart’s prayer that this is the hour appointed of God for some of you. O Spirit of God, come here, and gather sinners to the Savior by your almighty, omnipotent, irresistible grace, for Christ’s sake!

Some of you, I am sure, are in such a state of mind that you are already asking yourself, perhaps you have been asking for some time, — “If God is pleased to save me, if he is pleased to grant me life and grace in Christ, how will I know? **How will I know when the Lord has saved me?** How will I know that God has performed his work of grace in me?”

A WORD OF CAUTION

If you will turn with me to John chapter four, I will show you. But before I give you my message, a word of caution is needful. **While there clearly is a pattern of grace revealed in Holy Scripture, it is only a pattern.** There are several, specific things God does in and for sinners when he saves them by his grace; but **our experience of grace differs widely.** With some of God’s elect, conversion is a climatic, revolutionary experience. With others, it is a very gradual thing. We must never attempt to judge the validity of a person’s faith by the yardstick of our experience, or the validity of our faith by the yardstick of another’s experience. We examine our faith by the Word of God alone.

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

Illustration: *“I found myself believing.”*
– Pastor David Simpson

One more word of caution. – **It is a mistake to make the order in which we experience the various aspects of God’s grace a matter of great concern.** Our perception of things in the experience of them is often very different from reality. For example: There is no question that the new birth is the cause of faith; but we know we are born again only after we believe. Repentance and faith are so closely mingled that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other, though they are separate graces.

So, as I show you what happens when God saves a sinner, while I will give you five distinct things, do not concern yourself with the order of these things, just with the reality of them.

Proposition: When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to save a sinner by the power and grace of his Spirit, he does for that sinner exactly what he did for the Samaritan woman in John 4.

IF GOD EVER SAVES YOU...

I do not know whether you will ever be saved or not; but I do know this – If ever you are saved, you must and shall be saved by God’s work, not your own, by God’s will, not your own, by God’s doing, not your own (Romans 9:16). And if God almighty ever saves you by his grace, some how or another, he will do these five things for you and in you.

1. If the Lord Jesus Christ ever saves you by his grace, he will cross your path.

(John 4:3-7) “He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. (4) And he must needs go through Samaria. (5) Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. (6) Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. (7) There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.”

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

What a wonder! – The Son of God came to Samaria to seek out a fallen woman from Sychar! This woman could not and would not come to Christ. He came to her! The name of God’s church is “*Sought Out!*”

(Isaiah 62:11-12) “Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him. (12) And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.”

Salvation does not begin with man seeking God, but with God seeking man. You will never be saved, unless and until God almighty steps in your way, crosses your path, and stops you in your mad rush for hell.

2. I do not know whether you will ever have an interest in spiritual things or not, whether you will ever be concerned about sin and righteousness, grace and eternal life, salvation and the things of God. But I do know this – **You will never have an interest in these things unless the Lord God creates an interest in you.**

That is what our Lord did for this Samaritan woman. When she came out to Jacob’s well, she had no interest in him, in the glory of God, or in eternal life. Oh, she was interested in religion and in staying out of hell; but she had no interest in the things of God, until the Lord Jesus made her interested.

In verses 7-15, the Master got her interested in water. No doubt, she was at first only interested in water for selfish, carnal reasons. Yet, there was such spiritual truth in what the Master said that she could not put it out of her mind. I can almost hear her thinking...

- “Who is this man?”
- “What is this living water?”
- “Where does he have this water?”
- “How can he give it to me?”
- “I sure would like to have whatever it is he is talking about.”

3. Still, something else must be done. If God ever saves you, if the Lord ever has mercy on your soul, if ever the grace of God that brings salvation comes to you, **the Lord God will expose your sin.** – “Go, call thy husband.” – “I perceive that thou art a prophet.” (vv. 16-19).

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

Painful as it is, (And it is painful!), you are going to have to face, deal with, and honestly confess your sin before the holy Lord God. It is painful business for God to stick his finger in your heart and rip it open; but if he never rips it open, he will never bind it up.

- He wounds first. Then he heals.
- He strips. Then he clothes.
- He slays. Then he makes alive.
- He takes away. Then he gives.
- He creates a thirst. Then he quenches it.
- He makes you hungry. Then he feeds you!

4. I do not know whether you will ever flee to Christ for refuge or not; but I do know this – **You will never flee to him for refuge, until he destroys your false refuge.**

I do not know what your refuge of lies is; but I know you have one; and you will never forsake it until God destroys it.

(Isaiah 28:14-20) “Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. (15) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: (16) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (17) Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. (18) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report. (20) For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*.”

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

Before the Lord saved this Samaritan harlot, he destroyed her religious refuge (vv. 19-24). Now, I want you to look at verses 25-30. Here is the thing I have been working up to.

(John 4:25-30) “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. (26) Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*. (27) And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? (28) The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, (29) Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? (30) Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.”

5. I do not know whether you will ever be saved or not; but I do know this – **If ever the Lord God saves you, if ever you come to know and trust the Son of God, he must reveal himself to you and in you.**

Salvation comes by revelation. You cannot trust an unknown Christ. And you can never know him until he makes himself known to you.

(2 Corinthians 4:4-6) “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

(Galatians 1:15-16) “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called *me* by his grace, (16) To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

(John 4:25-26) “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. (26) Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.”

“I AM HE”

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

Never did the Lord Jesus, while he walked upon the earth, make himself known to anyone more clearly and fully than he did here to this Samaritan sinner. Here, Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled. The Master declares to this woman his great name — “*I AM HE.*”

(Isaiah 52:6) “Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* he that doth speak: behold, *it is I.*”

Three things are obvious here. Let me give them to you, and I will be done.

1. When the Savior said, “*I AM HE,*” he was saying to this woman, **I am he of whom the Scriptures speak.**

We must never underestimate the faith and knowledge of God’s saints in the Old Testament. God’s elect were saved in the Old Testament in exactly the same way they are today. God has only one way of saving sinners. That way, as you know is Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. Christ was the Object of all true faith in the Old Testament, just as he is today. What amount of knowledge those Old Testament believers had, I cannot tell. It is not clearly revealed. Yet, we do know that...

- Eve understood the promise that the Redeemer would be a man of the woman’s seed (Genesis 3:15).
- Abel knew about blood atonement (Genesis 4).
- Abraham knew that the Redeemer would be God incarnate (Genesis 22:8).
- David clearly understood that forgiveness is sure through the blood atonement of a crucified Substitute (Psalms 22; 32, 51).
- Enoch even spoke plainly about the Lord’s second advent (Jude 14).
- Even Job, in that which is probably the first book written in the Inspired Volume, describes Christ as our Redeemer and speaks of the resurrection at the last day (Job 19:25-27).
- Isaiah understood that the sinner’s Substitute is both God and man in one person, whose work of redemption and grace must be effectual to the salvation of chosen sinners (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-9; 52:13-53:12).

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

(Isaiah 7:14) “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

(Isaiah 9:6-9) “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (8) The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel. (9) And all the people shall know, *even* Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria.”

(Isaiah 52:13-15) “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. (14) As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: (15) So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.”

(Isaiah 53) “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? (2) For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (5) But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (8) He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (10) 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.”

Numerous other references could be given. These are, truly, only a few; and they were randomly selected. Yet, they will suffice to make my point irrefutable. **Old Testament saints knew and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their effectual, almighty, crucified, risen, reigning Savior.**

It is also clear, to even a casual reader of Holy Scripture, that the saints of the Mosaic era clearly understood and rejoiced in **the doctrines of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ.** –

- Divine Sovereignty (Psalms 115:3; 135:6; Daniel 4:35-37; Isaiah 46:9-11)
- Total Depravity (Psalms 14)
- Unconditional Election (Psalms 65:4; 2 Samuel 23:5)
- Limited Atonement (Isaiah 53:8-11)
- Irresistible Grace (Psalms 65:4; 110:3)
- Perseverance of the Saints (Psalms 23:6)

In a word, God gave those saints in the Old Testament faith just as he gives us faith, by supernatural revelation, by revealing Christ to and in chosen sinners. Obviously, the Revelation of God in Scripture was not as full in Job’s day as it was in Moses’, or in Moses’ day as it was in Malachi’s, or in Malachi’s day as it was in John the Baptist’s, or in John the Baptist’s day as it was in Paul’s.

Yet, I must personally acknowledge that I have never begun to experience the quality of faith that Noah exhibited in building the ark,

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

Abraham exhibited on Mt. Moriah, or Moses exhibited in dealing with Pharaoh and Israel. Those men believed God. They knew, worshipped, and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the Scriptures of the Old Testament speak.

(John 5:39) “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

The Book of God is all about the Son of God.

2. When the Lord Jesus said to this Samaritan woman, “*I AM HE,*” **he was declaring himself to be God incarnate, the great “I AM” in human flesh.**

We lose much in our English translation of this 26th verse. It would be far more accurate to translate the Master’s words, “*I AM.*” **Young’s Literal Translation** translates John 4:26, “*Jesus saith to her, ‘I am he, who am speaking to thee.’*” “*I AM*” was the Old Testament name by which God revealed himself to Moses, — “*JEHOVAH.*” This was a name no Scribe would write, without first bathing himself. Yet, here is a man, standing in front of a sinner in need of mercy, declaring himself to be the “*I AM.*”!

Our Lord Jesus Christ made this claim no less than fourteen times in John’s gospel. Fourteen times he publicly took to himself this title which belongs to none but God (4:6; 6:20; 8:24,28,58; 13:19; 18:5). He said “*I AM...*”

- “*the Bread of Life.*” (6:35)
- “*the Light of the World.*” (8:12; 9:5)
- “*the Door.*” (10:7,9)
- “*the Good Shepherd.*” (10:11, 14)
- “*the Resurrection and the Life.*” (11:25)
- “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*” (14:9)
- “*the Vine.*” (15:1,5)

This name – “*I AM*” – is our Savior’s declaration that he is God come to save! He made himself known to this sinner as the One of whom the Scriptures speak, and as God in human flesh.

3. And when our Master said, “*I AM HE,*” he was declaring to this woman that **he is the Messiah promised long before.**

“THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE.”

The word Messiah means “Anointed.” It means exactly the same thing as the word “Christ.” Both the Jews and the Samaritans expected the Messiah to be a man, anointed, chosen, set apart, consecrated by God and to God, in whom all the divinely appointed offices of the Old Testament would be fulfilled. Prophet, Priest, and King. — The Lord Jesus declared to this woman that he is that man, and that he is God as well!

- A Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18) – To show us all things.
- A Priest Like Melchizedek – To bring us to God.
- A King Like David – To deliver us from all our enemies, to rule us, to protect us, to provide for us.

(John 4:28-29) “The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”

Application: This man, the man who died at Calvary, the man who is the Christ, the man who now sits in glory, this man who is the Savior of the world, says to you and me – **“I AM HE!”**

- He of whom the Scriptures speak.
- God incarnate - the I AM!
- The Christ – The Messiah, the Salvation of Israel!

(Isaiah 25:9) “Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Amen.