Title: WHAT IS SALVATION?
THE LIFE OF GOD IN YOU!

<u>Text</u>: Colossians 1:27

Subject: Salvation

**Introduction**:

What is salvation? Never was a more important question asked. Yet, never was there a question about which there is so much ignorance and confusion, ignorance and confusion among those who talk most about it. If you could ask a dozen people coming out of church doors today, "What is salvation?" you would likely get a dozen answers.

<u>I cannot speak or think of salvation without lamenting the fact that so many who vainly imagine that they possess it are utterly ignorant of what it is.</u> Multitudes in churches all over the world, and multitudes who attend no church, are fully convinced that God's salvation in Christ is theirs, though they haven't a clue what it is or how it is obtained. I'm talking about professed Christians, not...

- Papists
- Mormons
- Campbellites
- Barbarians
- Hindus
- Muslims
- Jews

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Reading: Colossians 1:27

I'm talking about our own families, friends and neighbors. I'm sure I'm talking about some of you. Do you know what salvation is, as it is revealed in this Book? **WHAT IS SALVATION?** 

## MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE

Without question, there is no salvation without knowledge. Christ must be revealed and known (John 17:3). God does not save sinners in a vacuum of ignorance and a cloud of darkness. <u>All who are born of God are taught of God</u> (John 6:45).

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3)

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6:45)

But salvation is more than knowledge. Salvation is not performed in your head, but in your heart. It is not a head work, but a heart work. <u>Understanding orthodox notions and opinions is not the same thing as being born again.</u>

- Salvation is not being a Calvinist or an Arminian
- Salvation is not being a Fundamentalist or a Liberal.
- Salvation is not being a Baptist or a Protestant.
- Salvation is knowing God! Knowing Christ!

Judas knew much; but he didn't know God. He knew the man Christ Jesus, and knew that he is the Christ; but he didn't know Christ!

## **MORE THAN REFORMATION**

Others vainly imagine that salvation is a change of life, a religious **moral reformation**. They think it is in the outward man, in a constant course of **external duties**, and an exemplary life of moral uprightness. If they live peaceably with their neighbors, maintain moderate, temperate diet, observe a sabbath, pay their tithes, pray before meals and go to church with some regularity, all is well with their souls. But that is not the case. **What multitudes content themselves with a form of godliness**, while denying the power of godliness! That was the problem with **the rich young ruler** (Mark 10:17-22). He had everything, except the one thing needful, everything but Christ, everything but God's salvation.

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." (Mark 10:17-22)

## **MORE THAN EMOTION**

Others make salvation nothing but feeling, emotions and excitement. What multitudes there are! They foolishly aim at nothing more than rapturous feelings of excitement, ecstatic sensationalism, praying with feeling and passion. If they can work up excited, pleasurable thoughts of heaven, they presume that all is well with their souls. They love to talk about loving Jesus and following Jesus. But salvation is more than excitement and emotion. — <u>The worshippers of Baal</u> were very emotional and very excited (1 Kings 18); but they knew nothing of the Triune God and his salvation.

## **MORE THAN AUSTERITY**

Still others imagine that salvation is practicing a life of austerity, rigid discipline and self-denial. What multitudes there are who think that salvation is theirs because they rigidly practice those things that all men presume are indications of true devotion and spirituality — The Pharisees.

- Separatism
- Touch Not, Taste Not, Handle Not
- Plain Dress
- Show of Humility
- Legal Works
- "Bein' Agin It"

## Salvation Is...

Many of the things I have mentioned certainly do accompany God's salvation; but just as you may have all that another person has without being that person, so you may have all those things that accompany salvation and never have God's salvation. — Salvation is THE LIFE OF GOD IN YOU, nothing less than the very life of God in the soul of man! It is the union of the soul with God in Christ, a real partaking of the divine nature, the very image of God in the soul of a man. — Let's see if I can make good on that. That is a huge statement. I know it is. — Salvation is the life of God in you, nothing less than the very life of God in the soul of man! It is the union of the soul with God in Christ, a real partaking of the divine nature, the very image of God in the soul of a man. — Let's see if I can make good on it.

(Colossians 1:25-27) "Whereof I am <u>made a minister</u>, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is <u>made manifest to his saints</u>: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:25-27)

(2 Peter 1:2-4) "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine

<u>nature</u>, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:2-4)

Read the Scriptures carefully. The first four verses of this chapter are one sentence, all dealing with one thing. In these four verses, in this one, magnificent sentence, Peter declares the wonder of the new birth, the glorious work of regeneration. The first word of verse 4 refers us back to the call of God the Holy Spirit. It is by the call of God the Holy Spirit that God bestows those great and precious promises of his grace, making us partakers of the divine nature.

It is God the Holy Spirit who, by his regenerating grace giving life to spiritually dead sinners, <u>discovers to us and reveals</u> God's eternal, electing love and Christ's redemption of our souls by his precious blood. <u>The promises of God</u> which have resulted in us being born again are the promises of God declared in the gospel, the promises of the sure and everlasting covenant. Let me show you (Tit. 1:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:18-21; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:25-26; 37:12-14).

(Titus 1:1-3) "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; (2) In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (3) But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."

(1 Peter 1:18-21) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from

your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; (19) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (20) Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, (21) Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

(Jeremiah 31:31-34) "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (33) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

(Ezekiel 36:25-26) "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. (26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

(Ezekiel 37:12-14) "Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. (13) And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, (14) And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD."

Peter is telling us that when the Lord God raises a sinner from death to life by the power and grace of his Spirit, when he sprinkles our hearts with the clean water of his grace an puts a new spirit in us, when he makes us new creatures in Christ, when the sinner is born again by his omnipotent grace, we are made "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." God made his covenant promises to us in Christ our covenant head before the world began, so that we might, at the appointed time of love, be made partakers of the divine nature. — WOW! THAT'S GRACE! Until this great work of grace is wrought in us we cannot claim, or even know, anything of God's mercy, love and grace, though all was given to us in Christ before the world began, when he "made us accepted in the Beloved!"

## THE DIVINE NATURE

What does God the Holy Spirit intend for us to understand, when he tells us that in the new birth he has made us "partakers of the divine nature"? Obviously, he does not mean

that we have become God! He does not mean that we have become partakers of the divine essence. And he does not mean that we now possess the attributes of divinity. So what do these words mean? Let the Scriptures answer.

I cannot think of a poorer way to study Scripture than by doing what is commonly called "word studies," studies in which you find a word, look up its meaning, and try to interpret every passage where the word is used in the same way. The word that is here translated "partakers" is the word from which we get the word "fellowship." It basically means "fellowshippers," or "partners," or "companions." In fact, that is the way this word, in its many different forms is most commonly use; but it must not be limited to such. Let's look at a few other passages in which this same word is used in a much broader way (2 Cor. 1:5-7; Phil. 1:7; Heb. 2:14-15).

- In <u>2 Corinthians</u> <u>1</u>, we are told that we are partakers both of the sufferings of Christ and of the consolation that comes to chosen sinners by the knowledge of redemption (2 Cor. 1:5-7).
  - (2 Corinthians 1:5-7) "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. (6) And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation. (7) And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation."

The word "partakers" here speaks of two connected, but different things. We are partakers of the sufferings of Christ as we suffer in fellowship, or partnership with him. But we are partakers of the consolation flowing from those things in the sense that we actually possess the consolation, the comfort of redemption by Christ.

- In <u>Philippians</u> <u>1:7</u> Paul assured the believers at Philippi that they were partakers with him of the grace of God. There the word "partakers" clearly means "possessors."
  - (Philippians 1:6-7) "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: (7) Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." Marginal translation "Partakers with me of grace."
- In <u>Hebrews 2:14</u> the word is again used to speak not merely of fellowship, or partnership, but of actual possession. Just as we actually possess flesh and blood, our blessed Savior took part of the same. "*The Word was made flesh!*"
  - (Hebrews 2:14-15) "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

What, then, is the meaning of this phrase, "partakers of the divine nature"? This divine nature is the nature of Christ, and the holiness of God. It is to have Christ himself imparted to us and formed in us by the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:27). It is Christ in us, this divine nature of which we have been made partakers (possessors) that makes us fit for heaven. B. B. Caldwell wrote...

"Without it, heaven would be hell. If an unregenerated person should go to heaven without bring born again, without this divine nature, heaven would be a hell to him, and not only that, but he would make heaven a hell for everybody else. How do you think an ungodly person would feel in a holy heaven, in the presence of a holy God, and in the presence of holy angels with all of the saints and the angelic hosts singing 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts'? You see we must have a nature to befit us for heaven. This nature is given us in the new birth!"

We are members of the body of Christ, — "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." The same blood that flows in the head flows in the hand, and the same life that quickens Head, quickens his people; for, — "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." We are married to Christ. He has betrothed us unto himself in righteousness and in faithfulness; and as the spouse must, in the nature of things, be a partaker of the same nature as the husband, so Jesus Christ first became partaker of flesh and blood that he and his people might be one flesh; and then he makes his Church partakers of the same spirit, that we may be one spirit; for "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

Oh, wondrous mystery! We look into it, but who can understand it? One with Jesus Christ our Lord, by eternal union one, married to him, so truly one with him that the branch is not more truly one with the vine than we are a one with our Lord, our Savior, our Redeemer and our God! Rejoice in this, children of God, you are "partakers of the divine nature!" That is precisely the teaching of our text and the teaching of the entire volume of Holy Scripture (John 14:22-23; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:14-19; 4:21-24; Col. 1:27; 1 John 4:4; Rev. 3:20).

(John 14:22-23) "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? (23) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

(Galatians 2:20) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but <u>Christ liveth in me</u>: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

(Ephesians 3:14-19) "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; (17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (19) And to know the love of Christ,

which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

(Ephesians 4:21-24) "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: (22) That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

(Colossians 1:27) "To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory."

(1 John 4:4) "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because **greater** is he that is in the world."

(Revelation 3:20) "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

# How sweet, how blessed, how glorious is that almighty violence of grace that has put Christ in us! — (Mark 3:27)

(Mark 3:27) "No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house."

#### **SURE ADDITIONS**

After telling us what God has done for us in the new birth, making us "partakers of the divine nature," Peter admonishes us to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and brotherly love, telling us that those who lack these things are blind, that their religion is nothing but lip service to God (vv. 5-9).

(2 Peter 1:5-9) "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; (6) And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; (7) And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. (8) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (9) But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

These things are the fruit of grace, not the cause of grace. We have already been told that by the gift of regeneration, making us "partakers of the divine nature," God the Holy Spirit has given us "all things that pertain to life and godliness." And that which is God's gift cannot be a matter of human merit. These additions to faith are things that flow from faith. In a word, those who trust Christ, all who believe, "shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (John 15:16).

(John 15:16) "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye

shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

## AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE

Now, let me remind you and stir up your remembrance of one more obvious thing in which we ought to delight, as those who have been "*made partakers of the divine nature*," having the life of God us (vv. 10-11).

(2 Peter 1:10-11) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: (11) For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

If you can prove your calling, you have proved your election, and your redemption too. Do you ask, "How can I know that I am called of God?" The Scripture gives us the answer to that question in unmistakable words (Heb. 11:1; 1 John 5:1, 11).

- (Hebrews 11:1) "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
- (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 5:11) "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Faith in Christ is the proof of God's call, proof of the new birth, proof that we are "partakers of the divine nature." Being born of God, having "Christ in you the hope of Glory," being "partakers of the divine nature," these two things are as glorious as they are obvious. May God the Holy Spirit give us grace ever to delight in them...

- "Ye shall never fall!" "We are kept by the power of God through faith," kept in his grip!
- "So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress; 'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in Thy great day; For who aught to my charge shall lay? While through Thy blood absolved I am From sin and fear, and guilt and shame.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood, Which, at the mercy seat of God, Forever doth for sinners plead, For me, e'en for my soul, was shed.

When from the dust of death I rise To take my mansion in the skies, Ev'n then shall this be all my plea, Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.

This spotless robe the same appears, When ruined nature sinks in years; No age can change its glorious hue, The robe of Christ is ever new.

Jesus, be endless praise to Thee,
Whose boundless mercy hath for me—
For me a full atonement made,
An everlasting ransom paid.

O let the dead now hear Thy voice; Now bid Thy banished ones rejoice; Their beauty this, their glorious dress, Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness!"

What gives such confidence? What can give sinners like you and me an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? — Our works? Perish the thought! That which alone can and alone does give such assured confidence and will minister to us an abundant entrance in that day is...

- The righteousness of Christ performed for us, finished at Calvary, and imputed to us in free justification.
- The righteousness of Christ imparted to us in the new birth, sanctifying us in the blessed experience of grace in regeneration, by which we have been made "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped forever and completely the corruption that is in the world through lust" and have the life of God in us,

(Colossians 1:25-29) "Whereof I am made a minister,

according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; (26) Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (27) To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (28) Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (29) Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

- (2 Peter 1:12) "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth." You are "partakers of the divine nature."
- (2 Peter 3:17-18) "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. (18) But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."

## **A PERMANENT THING**

This life of God in the soul, this great salvation wrought in us by God's omnipotent mercy is a permanent thing (Ecclesiastes 3:14). Though it may, at times, raise us to rapturous, joyous, heavenly experiences, salvation is not a spasm, or a passion, or an emotional

fit. No. God's work in you, my brother, God's work in you, my sister, is a permanent thing.

# Our perseverance is not a work we perform, but a work God performs in us (Philippians 1:6; 2:12).

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Philippians 1:6)

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-13)

**Bro. Darvin Pruitt** wrote, "The perseverance of the saints is not that wearisome servitude of duty to which law religion calls; but the life long cherishing of our beloved Savior who loved us and gave himself for us. It is finding in him the sufficiency of life and entering into his rest."

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

## **UNRESTRAINED FREEDOM**

Salvation, God's salvation is called "Life — Eternal Life," because it is more than a notion, a theory, a creed, a confession, saying a prayer, doing good works, baptism, religious duties, etc. It is unrestrained freedom. <u>Life is freedom. Until a man is free, he is not alive!</u> And, blessed be his name, in Christ we are free! — "Loose him and let him go!"

Christ in you is life! It is inward, free and self-motivating life!

Those who have life are not actuated by external motives, driven by threats, bribed by promises, nor constrained by laws; but "the love of Christ constraineth us!"

Love is commanded by God; but it cannot be produced by any natural power. And the love of Christ which constrains and controls our behavior is not something we muster for ourselves. It is the fruit of **the Spirit of Life within**. It is the freedom of life!

- We pray, not because we should, but because we need to pray and want to pray.
- We read because we want to know God.
- We give because we want to give. "The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand" (Isaiah 32:8).

Henry Scrougal (1650-1678) wrote, "I may well say with St. John, Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. Though holy...persons do much eye the law of God,...that divine love wherewith they are actuated, makes them become a law unto themselves.

In a word, what our blessed Saviour said of himself, is in some measure applicable to his followers, that *it is their meat and drink to do their Father's will*: and as the natural appetite is carried out toward food, though we should not reflect on the necessity of it for the preservation of our lives; so are they carried with a natural and unforced propension toward that which is good and commendable."

Forced religion is artificial. It's fake. The life of God in the heaven born soul is unrestrained freedom and liberty, "the glorious liberty of the sons of God!" Oh, may God the Holy Spirit form Christ in you and make his salvation yours, for Christ's sake!

Perhaps you are asking, "Bro. Don. What does it take for a poor, lost, ruined, doomed, damned, dead sinner like me to have this salvation, this life of God in my soul?"

- A Divine Resolution Election and Predestination!
- A Divine Restitution Righteousness and Satisfaction!
- A Divine Regeneration A New Creation!

Amen.