



The Three Tenses of Salvation



A New Beginning (Part 15)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you as we draw near to the close of another week. Our theme this week has been: A New Beginning.

In my talk yesterday, I presented Noah's Ark to you as a vivid picture of the new beginning and the new life which God has provided for us in Jesus. Actually I said that in the Old Testament there are two main Arks. One is the big Ark which Noah and his family constructed. The other is the smaller Ark which was placed by Moses in the tabernacle which God instructed him to build. So there's the one the little Ark in the tabernacle, the other the big Ark which provided salvation for Noah and his family. I've suggested to you that each Ark is a picture or a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The big Ark represents you in Christ. The little Ark represents Christ in you. And then I focused on the first picture in my talk yesterday the big Ark, the Ark of Noah. I pointed out that this

Ark of Noah's provided salvation in three phases. First of all, it was complete and perfect from the time of construction onward. Nothing ever had to be done to it after that. It never had to be improved or adjusted or recalled. It was just completely right from the moment it was finished. Then at a given moment Noah and his family had to enter the Ark. That was a transaction in a space time world. And without that transaction the Ark would still have been perfect, but it would have been no benefit to Noah and his family. They had to make a decision. They had to carry out a simple action. They had to move out of the outside world into the Ark. And then from the moment that they entered the Ark, then it provided a continuous ongoing salvation. All the time it was protecting and preserving them from the waters of the flood that were God's judgement on an ungodly world. And eventually through being in the Ark and through passing through the water, they emerged into a new world, a new life the very theme of our Talks A New Beginning.

Today, we're going to turn to the New Testament and I'm going to show you how these three phases of the Ark apply exactly to the salvation which God offers us in Jesus. I'll be speaking about what I call the three tenses of salvation the three tenses of the verb "to save." Now some of you may not be grammarians by nature so let me say just a word about "tense." The word "tense" is used by grammarians to define the time which is denoted by the form of a verb. And there

are three main times past, present, and future. So we speak about a past tense, a present tense, a future tense. Now I'm going to take those grammatical terms and show you how they're used in connection with the verb "to save," and how they are extremely illuminating. They help us to understand just how salvation can work in our lives.

First of all, I want to take the perfect tense of salvation. The perfect tense denotes something that happened in the past which remains the way it happened. It is not then subject to further change. So it describes something from the past that still persists in the same form on into the present. And that tense is used of the verb "to save." For example in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8 where Paul says:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (NIV)

"It is by grace you have been saved," that's the perfect tense. It describes something that happened in the past, but that thing having once happened remains. It's there. It's settled. It's complete. It's final. And that's how salvation is. That's like the Ark after it was built. It was complete, perfect, nothing more ever needed to be done to it. That's the salvation that has been provided once for all by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The New Testament emphasizes Jesus is never going to have to die again. He's never going to have to offer the sacrifice of Himself once more. Once for all He died. He paid the total penalty for the sins of all men. He sealed off the evil inheritance from Adam. He opened the door to the new inheritance the eternal and immortal inheritance the inheritance in which we are heirs of hope. That's the perfect tense of salvation. It's very very important we understand that on God's side nothing more ever has to be done. When Jesus cried out in His last moments on the cross, "It is finished," that was good news. It meant all that God will ever have to do was done from that moment onwards. So never think in terms of God having to do anything more to provide salvation. God's salvation is as complete and perfect as the Ark was from the day construction was finished on it.

Then we move from the perfect tense to what's called the simple past. The simple past describes an event that happened at a given moment in past time a transaction in a space time world. Now this simple past tense is used in a passage that we've read many times in the past three weeks. In Titus chapter 3 verse 5 and in the version that I'm reading the translators use it twice in the one verse, which I like. It's good news. It says:

"He [God] saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us

through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." (NIV)

Now that's the simple past tense. That's a specific event that took place at a given moment in the past. Now that has to be repeated in the lives of each one of us. Salvation is there as far as God is concerned, but for you and me it has to happen. There has to be a point when God saves us.

I can look back now just over forty years and I can remember very vividly the time and the exact place where God saved me. There's not the faintest doubt in my mind. I was there when it happened. People can argue. They can theorize. They can dispute. But for me it's a fact. It's a fact of my personal history God saved me. That corresponds to Noah and His family entering into the Ark. The Ark was there. It was complete. It provided the salvation they needed. But they would never have benefited from the Ark unless they themselves had made the personal decision carried out the simple action of moving out of the world and into the Ark. So Paul says, "God saved us," simple past tense.

Now I'm gonna move on to the third tense of salvation. The continuous present. The continuous present tense describes something that is going on happening all the time. Like, "It is raining." That's describes something that's going on. It doesn't just happen at one moment. It isn't complete in the past. It's continuing Or, "The sun is shining," whatever example you want to take. Now, salvation also is presented in the New Testament in the continuous present tense. And I'd like to show you one very vivid example in first Corinthians 1:18. Paul says:

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (NIV)

That's the continuous present tense of salvation, "to us who are being saved." And it's said in opposition to the continuous present tense of the opposite, "those who are perishing." That's those who are outside the Ark. They are perishing. Those who moved across into the Ark, they are being saved. The Ark continually protected them. They didn't have to make a lot of further efforts once they were in the Ark. They were inside it's protection. It came between them and the waters that would have drowned and destroyed them. As long as they remained in the Ark, they were continuously being saved. So Paul says the message of the cross to us who have believed it embraced it, acted upon it - it is salvation. We are being saved by the power of God. And then a passage in the New Testament described the transition to a new world 1

Peter chapter 1 verses 3 through 5:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he had given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.” (NIV)

That's entering into the Ark. Once we've entered into the Ark, then we are continually being shielded by the power of God. And we are being preserved unto that new inheritance of which Peter there speaks so vividly. An inheritance that cannot spoil or fade or perish. That's what's for us in Christ.

Now if these messages of mine have touched you, and you've sensed in yourself a need for that vital transaction a moving into the Ark why not write and tell us. And we'll be praying for you and holding you up before God so that that becomes a reality in your life.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another inspiring theme from God's word.

My special offer this week is my book *Laying on of Hands*. This book explains the simple scriptural means by which you can both receive God's supernatural power in your own life and also transmit it to others. It may be the vital link that is missing in your quest for God's power.

Also my complete series of talks this week on “A New Beginning (Part 3)” is available in a single carefully-edited cassette.

Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

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