

Fifth Stage: Saved



Secure in God's Choice (Part 8)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing on this week's inspiring theme, "Secure in God's Choice."

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests. Each month our listeners write in to tell us of prayer requests that have been wonderfully answered.

Now, back to our theme, "Secure in God's Choice."

I've been explaining in this series of talks the seven stages of God's plan to be worked out in the life of each one of us. I've spoken in the previous talks on the first four stages: God foreknew us; He chose us; He predestined us; and then He called us. That was what I spoke about yesterday, God's call. I explained how the eternal purpose of God emerges out of eternity into time and He impacts our individual lives when the call of God confronts us. Now we have to respond at this point. We didn't have to respond to the first three phases, they were eternal. But at this point we are required to respond. And if we respond aright the result is salvation. This is stated by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, where he says:

> "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation... And it was for this [that is, salvation] He called you through our gospel..." (NAS)

So responding to God's call brings us into salvation. And then I pointed out once we are saved, we are saved to fulfill the calling which God had from eternity. Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:9:

> "God saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before time began."

So out of eternity God's plan emerges into our lives with His call and once we respond to His call affirmatively, we enter into His salvation and His salvation opens the way for us to fulfill our calling.

Today I want to speak about what it means to come into salvation through responding to God's call. First of all, let me give you the very simple requirements of the New Testament for salvation. They are stated by Paul in a single verse in Romans 10:9:

> "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (NIV)

You see, there are just two things you need to do. First, with your heart you need to believe the record of the New Testament that God raised Jesus from the dead. Then, that's not enough. To give assent to what God says you have to submit to the lordship of Jesus in your life. You have to confess personally Jesus is Lord. So, the two together, believing in the heart, confessing with the mouth, bring you into salvation.

Now, what does salvation do for you? What are you saved from? Let me suggest at least four things, all of which are related to sin. Basically, we are saved from sin but we are saved from its guilt, its condemnation, its power and its defilement. That is so important, I'll say it again. Salvation is from sin, from its guilt, its condemnation, its power, its defilement.

Now salvation is a process that takes place within us and in Titus 3:5, Paul describes this process of salvation. He says:

> "[God] saved us, [notice that] not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, [we do not achieve salvation by all the good deeds we think we have done. That is set aside, that doesn't bring salvation. Then it says:] but according to His mercy, [salvation comes out of God's mercy, not out of our righteousness. And this is how it happens. Paul goes on:] by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." (NAS)

So the process of salvation embraces three things: washing, regeneration and renewing. Let's look at all three briefly in turn. First of all, washing or cleansing. Sin defiles. We are dirty, inwardly dirty. We need to be cleansed. There's only one thing that can cleanse the sinner, that is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which cleanses us from all sin. How can we receive that cleansing? The apostle John tells us in 1 John 1:9:

> "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (NAS)

Notice, He not merely forgives the past, that's wonderful; but He also cleanses us from all the defilement of sin. And in the same chapter, John says its the blood of Jesus, God's Son, which cleanses us.

Then Paul said, the second phase of this process was regeneration or another word for that is rebirth. We'll look at some words that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in John 3:3:

> "Jesus answered and said to [Nicodemus], 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" (NAS)

Another translation is "born from above." This is a birth that comes from above, from God's realm.

And a little further on in John 3:6, Jesus says:

> "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (NAS)

So, when you were born of your mother, that was a birth of your fleshly nature, your physical body and all that goes with it. That's not the kind of birth that brings us into salvation. This is a birth of the Spirit, the capital "s," Spirit, the Holy Spirit. We have to receive a totally new life born into us by the Spirit of God from above. That's regeneration or rebirth.

And then the next phrase that Paul used there was renewing. We have to become a new creation. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

> "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (NIV)

That word "creation" is important. You see, there's only one who creates, that's God. Man can manufacture, man can repair, man can produce, but one thing man cannot do is create and our hearts and our whole inner beings have been so defiled and distorted by the effects of sin that repairing is no good, patching up is no good. There's only one thing that will be any good and that is a new creation.

In the Old Testament, in Psalm 51, after David had fallen into adultery and committed murder and had been confronted with the awful condition of his own heart, he cried out to God in agony, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord!" He knew it had to come from God. It couldn't be any human process that

would bring that about.

So that's the three aspects of the process of being saved. It's a washing or a cleansing, it's a regeneration or a rebirth and it's a new creation. God does something that man absolutely cannot do. And all this is God's mercy, not his justice. It's not according to the deeds of righteousness which we have done, that won't achieve it, it has to come from God's sovereign mercy.

Now salvation is a decisive transition in a person's life. First from death to life. Jesus said in John 5:24:

> "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who has sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (NIV)

That crossing over out of death into eternal life is salvation. And then it's a transition from darkness to light. Paul says in Ephesians 5:8:

> "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." (NIV)

And then it's a transition from being a child of wrath to a child of God. Paul says in Ephesians 2:3:

> "We all [including himself, Paul] we all... were by nature children of wrath..."

But in John 1:12-13 it speaks about those who receive Jesus, it says:

> "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God... " (NIV)

That's the transition from a child of wrath to a child of God and the decisive act is stated there, it's receiving Jesus. It's not joining the church, it's not turning over a new leaf, it's not making good resolutions, it's not trying to start all over again, it's receiving Jesus.

And so we're left with two classes of persons. We often talk in the world about the "have's" and the "have-not's," talking about material wealth, but in the spiritual realm we also have the "have's" and the "have not's." John sums them up in 1 John 5:11-12:

> "And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son [Jesus, only in Jesus]. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (NAS)

So where are you? Do you have Jesus? In Him you have eternal life. If you do not have Jesus, if you have not received Him, you do not have the life. Are you a "have" or are you a "have not"? That's a vital decision, a vital issue that you have to resolve for yourself.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be explaining the sixth stage in God's plan: justified, one which many Christians have never really understood.

My special offer this week is a book of recipes. Does that surprise you? Well, it's a book of recipes for success, proven recipes that have worked in my own life and in countless other lives. The title of the book is: If You Want God's Best. All the recipes in it are practical and down-to-earth, and they work! The title again: If You Want God's Best.

Also, my complete series of talks this week on "Secure in God's Choice, Part 2" is available in a single, carefully-edited cassette. Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R137-103-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

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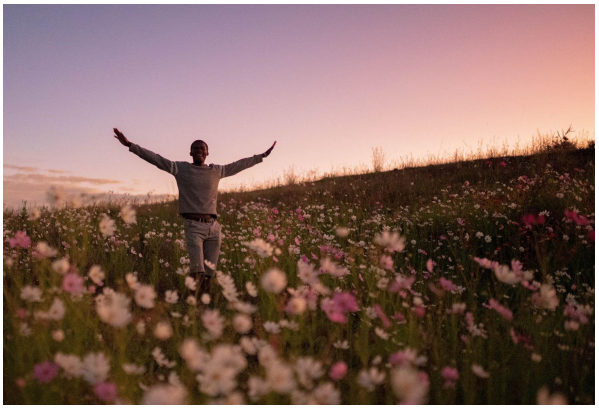

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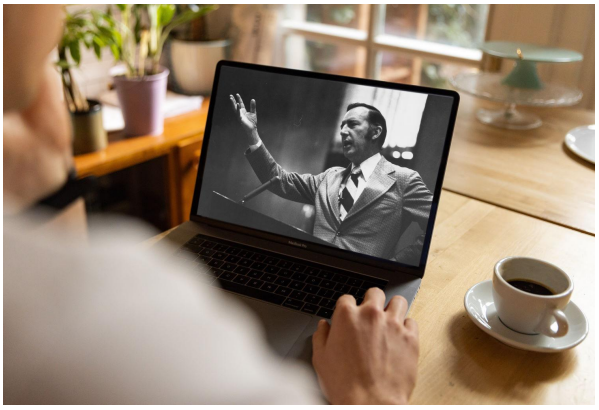

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