

Salvation & It's Effect: Jesus' Death & the Holy Spirit's Involvement with Your Life

Dr. F. Alan Pickering

Salvation is unprecedented both as an objective reality and subjective experience.

Objective, in that it is the greatest factual event in human history, bringing humanity into a restored relationship with God. Subjective, in that it is an experience greater than any other, for it alters the quality and destiny of a person's life. The entire Godhead, God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in a coordinated effort procured salvation for all humanity. We will focus on the work of Christ, Christology and the work of the Holy Spirit, pneumatology.

Work of Christ

Christ's death on the cross and resurrection is without question the greatest event in all of human history and resulted in altering the destiny of humanity forever. What actually happened as a result of his work may be understood with a kaleidoscopic metaphor.¹ The center or vortex is the death of Christ in a penal (forensic) satisfactory and substitutional atonement (Rom. 5:9). For those who would embrace salvation, it is breathtaking to considered all that happened as a result of His death, for Jesus:

- brought us into the greatest environment we could ever anchor our lives—the Kingdom of God (Col. 1:13);
- defeated the greatest enemy of humanity—death (Jn. 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:141);
- made us alive—resuscitated us from a state of death (Eph. 2:5);
- set us on a path of doing good works with our life (Eph. 2:10);
- gave us His righteousness, perfected us, and made us holy and blameless (2 Cor 5:21; Col. 1:22; Heb. 10:14);
- demonstrated God's love for us (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8);
- reconciled us to the Father (2 Cor. 5:18, 19; Col. 1:22);

¹ Christopher Moody, "Kaleidoscopic View of Atonement," Liberty University lecture, 2016 (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University School of Divinity, 2016).

- shifted a person’s life away from the things of this world into a whole new orientation of being (Gal. 6:14);
- brought about a deep existential peace with God (Col. 1:20).

Plethora are the points that could be made with respect to the work of Christ through the cross.²

In this Christology, one must surely get to the point with Paul who declared: “God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interests in this world have died long ago, and the world’s interest in me is also long dead.”

(Galatians 6:14, New Living Translation, 1996).

Work of the Holy Spirit

There is a beautiful symmetry and synergism between the work of the Holy Spirit and Jesus’ work culminating with His death on the cross. His endurance on this path of suffering involved connection with the Father and the Spirit. We see the work of the Holy Spirit concomitant *with* and *out of* the death of Jesus in many ways.³ Because of Jesus’ death the Spirit would proceed ahead to:

- come along side of believers after Jesus’ death—a planned sequence of things for the further benefit of humanity (Jn. 16:7-15);
- indwell and illuminate a follower of Christ (Jn. 14:16-17);⁴
- transform a disciple into the likeness of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18);
- intercede for us in our weaknesses (Rom. 8:26-27);
- cultivate a quality of life through “fruits” (Jn. 15:1-8; Gal. 5:22-23);
- gift us in special ways to function in the church (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:41-11; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:11);
- cultivate an authentic “spiritual euphoria” on this journey of life (vs. the “phony high” of the world) (Eph. 5:18-20);
- strengthen the disciple (Eph. 3:16);
- cultivates a “chemistry” and intimacy with God (Rom. 8:15, 16);
- lead, guide and direct a disciple (Rom. 8:14).

² I commend, John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1986).

³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 795-98.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 796.

Again, much more could be pointed out regarding the work of the Holy Spirit emanating out of the work of Christ.

Results of Salvation

As a Christ-follower journeys on this path of life, there is an assurance of salvation, evidence of salvation and security of salvation. The *assurance* comes from the One who died, was buried and resurrected—the most credible One to ever utter a word (Jn. 7:46), said, “...he who hears my words, and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (Jn. 5:24, New American Standard Bible, 1995, cf., Rom. 8:1). The *evidence* that one is saved is demonstrated through: a break with the world (Jam. 1:27; 1 Jn. 2:15-17); repenting and turning from the world and no longer living and habituating in a sinful lifestyle (1 Jn. 3:6); demonstrating spiritual “fruit” (Jn. 15:1-5; Gal. 5:22-23); a passionate pursuit of the things of God, vs. the things of this world (Mt. 6:33; Jn. 3:21). With respect to security of salvation, one is utterly secure—nothing can separate a believer from God’s love or grasp (Rom. 8:39). If one has truly been saved, then the person *could* fall away from grace, but *would surely not* depart from this glorious faith.⁵

Conclusion

In the backdrop of these realizations, a verse from the classic hymn, “How Great Thou Art” comes to mind—“and when I think that God His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, *I scarce can take it in.*”⁶ The reality of it takes your breath away!

Submitted September 2022

⁵ Ibid., 919-24.

⁶ Carl Boberg, “How Great Thou Art,” Stuart K. Hine, Trans. *Great Songs of the Church* (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 1969).