

WHAT HE DID FOR US

by Arthur R. Crawford

1 Introduction

Although the Holy Spirit uses very precise terms to describe what God has done for us in Christ, much of the wonder of His grace is concealed by the usual practice of using the word “saved” almost to the exclusion of all of the other words so that many Christians believe the words all mean the same thing and seem unaware of much of what God has done for them.

For example, assuming that “saved” means being born again and headed for heaven, it is not unusual for Christians to use the word so that:

- Redeemed = saved
- Reconciled = saved
- Propitiation = saved
- Righteous = saved
- Justified = saved
- Forgiveness = saved
- Sanctification = saved
- Repentance = saved
- Believe = saved
- Believer = saved
- Saved = saved

It is true that the “doctrine of salvation” encompasses all of these terms but putting them into one word “saved” and giving little or no notice to the meaning of the other words the Holy Spirit uses not only dims the wonder of His grace but can result in serious doctrinal error.

Consider some of these words:

2 Redeem, redemption.

This is the aspect of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ as far as sin is concerned.

Two main Hebrew words and several Greek words are used by the Holy Spirit to reveal the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ as far as sin is concerned. The sin question for the child of God is settled forever, not because of our faith in Him, but because of His finished work as our kinsman.

גאל (gaw-al) The word is translated both “kinsman” and “redeemer.”

It is not only the first redemption word used in the Hebrew but is also the most common. It is used by the Holy Spirit to encompass the Biblical concept of the kinsman redeemer.

Under the Law when one could not pay his debt a kinsman who was both able to pay the debt, free from the guilt of the debt, and willing to pay the debt, could pay the price and set his kinsman free.

The book of Ruth is a beautiful picture of this process as well as a picture of what Christ has done for us. He must be man to be our kinsman as well as God to pay the debt of sin. This is covered in more detail in the chapter on the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

טנה (paw-daw) This is the word “ransom” and is used of the payment of the price.

ἀγοράζω (agorazô) The word comes from the Greek for the market place and means to purchase in the market place.

The Holy Spirit uses this word to reveal that the price has been paid for Adam’s condemnation which passed on all men. Some refer to this as “unlimited atonement” although atonement is not the best word. “Unlimited justification” would be Biblical.

Ro 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Ro 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

ἐξαγοράζω (exagorazô) This word means to be taken out of the market place, that is, as a prized possession never to be bought and sold again. Taken out of marketability.

He has purchased us as His prize and we will never be bought and sold again. This is the word the Holy Spirit uses of His elect, His own. Some call this “limited atonement.” “Limited redemption” would be the Biblical term.

Ga 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Ga 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

ἀπολύτρωσις (apolutrôsis) Here the word means to ransom in full, to pay the price completely, once and for all.

Ro 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

λυτρόω (lutroô) To pay the price and to set free.

Lu 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Heb 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Here is the wonderful truth of redemption; that as far as sin is concerned the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ has completely paid the price for Adam's sin which passed on all men, completely paid the price for the sins of His elect, taken His own to Himself never to be bought and sold again, and set them free from sin.

Since this is accomplished by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ in our place and since He died unto sin once and only once, our redemption must result in a new creation that is the righteousness of God and thus cannot sin. If the new creation could sin it would be evident that Christ did not completely pay the price, that we were not made the righteousness of God, and it would thus be necessary for Him to die again in order to redeem us again.

However we know this is not the case:

Ro 6:10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once (and only once): but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

2Co 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Col 1:22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

Col 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

1 John 3:9 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.

This redemption, probably the better English word would be ransom, is not by our faith in Him but all by His Grace and His Grace alone because of His great love for us.

Although it is Biblical to say that one is saved by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it would not be correct to say that one is redeemed by personal faith in Him. Redemption is totally a work of the Savior for His own. The way the Holy Spirit uses the words it is not possible to be saved without being redeemed but it is possible to be redeemed without being saved. More on this in a moment.

3 Reconcile, reconciliation.

This is the aspect of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ as far as man is concerned. God is not reconciled to us, we are reconciled to God.

ἀποκαταλλάσσω (apokatallassô) To reconcile completely, to restore to a former state.

Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Col 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Col 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

Col 1:22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

καταλλάγή (katallagê) To change, to restore.

2Co 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

2Co 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Here is another wonderful truth of grace. We are restored, completely restored by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ to a position before God which is based upon His righteousness alone. Again, we are not reconciled by personal faith in Christ rather we are exhorted to accept the fact of our reconciliation.

4 Propitiation.

This is the aspect of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ as far as God is concerned. We are not propitiated, God is.

ἱλαστήριον (hilastêrion) The place of expiation, satisfaction for sin.

Ro 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Think of it! God is satisfied, He holds nothing against us, there is no judgement for those who are in Christ Jesus, Rom 8:1. Again, God is not propitiated by our personal faith in Christ, but by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isa 53:11 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.

5 Righteous, justification.

δίκαιος (dikaios) To make or to declare righteous.

The same root word can be translated “righteous” or “just” or “righteousness” or “justification.” It seems as though little emphasis is placed upon this aspect of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not uncommon to hear that although we are not righteous, God looks upon us as righteous. This suggests that God is willing just to declare us sinners righteous even though we are not. However, God has made it clear that it is an abomination to Him to call evil good or good evil.

Isa 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Pr 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

That is, he that declares the wicked righteous is an abomination to the Lord. Thus in order to call us righteous He must first of all make us righteous. This is another wonder of His grace.

Rom 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.

2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

It is clear that we were not made sinners by our faith in Adam, or for that matter, not by anything we did, but simply because we were in Adam. It is also clear that we were not just declared to be sinners but were, in fact, sinners. In the same way, we were not made the righteousness of God by anything we did or by personal faith in Him but solely because we were in Him and our heavenly Father made Him to be sin in our place.

Once we have been made righteous we can then be declared to be righteous because, in fact, we are righteous. To suggest that He did not make us completely righteous is not only unbiblical but belittles the finished work of our Lord and defines the "righteousness of God" to be something less than righteous. This righteous "new creation" does, and only does, righteousness.

Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things [are] pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [is] nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

I John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

I John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

I John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

To suggest that righteousness can do unrighteousness is to suggest either that God did not make us the righteousness of God by the death of Christ in our place, or that the righteousness of God can do unrighteousness which He says is impossible.

Matthew 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Matthew 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Luke 6:43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

This truth is pointed out again by the Holy Spirit in 1 John 3.

1 John 3:9 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.

The “is born” is perfect in the Greek, meaning “completely born in past time with the result that he remains eternally born” and the “cannot sin” is “has no power to sin.” It is clear that the one made righteous, the new man, no longer has the power to sin for if he did he, of course, would not be righteous. It should be pointed out again that we are not made the righteousness of God in Him by personal faith in Him but because God made Him sin in our place. It is the new man that is righteous not the old man who stills sins, and only sins.

Stop for a moment and consider what these words tell us of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for us. The price for sin, our sin, and all our sin, has been completely paid, we have been reconciled to God, he has been propitiated, and we have been made righteous. All by the finished work of our Lord, absolutely by nothing we have done. Not by belief, not by sorrow, not by repentance, not by baptism, not by

6 Forgiveness.

Here the Holy spirit uses two primary words, one to point out the complete forgiveness of all sin by His grace, and the other to deal with the restoration of fellowship with Him when we walk after the flesh.

χαριζομαι (charizomai) To forgive graciously and completely. This is legal forgiveness.

Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Thus there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus our Lord. Notice that He has already forgiven all trespasses, all in the past and all in the future, this was done when we were made righteous.

ἀφιῆμι (aphiêmi) To leave, to put away.

Rom 4:7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This is fellowship forgiveness, confessing, that is, agreement with what God says about our sin so that it does not burden us with guilt and mar our fellowship with Him.

Here are some of the things He says about our sins:

Psa 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Isa 38:17 Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

Jer 50:20 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Mica 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Heb 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

7 Sanctification.

As used by the Holy Spirit, sanctify in its various forms means to be set apart to and for God.

ἁγιάζω (hagiazô) To consecrate.

The word is never used to suggest an improvement in condition, sinlessness, or improvement in understanding, etc. etc. The word can be used of inanimate objects such as pots and pans in the temple as well as people.

The more we understand that we have been, are, and will be always set apart unto God the more we come to understand all that He did in making us righteous. It has been well said that sanctification is the process of coming to understand that He has made us righteous, not that He is making us righteous.

Simply stated, sanctification is the process of realizing more and more that we have been justified.

The basis of our sanctification is primarily the work of God. Consider:

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Rom 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Heb 2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Think of it, we are from the same source, we have always been His.

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Our perfection and sanctification is for ever because He did it all. "For ever" can not mean less than for ever.

8 Repentance.

The Holy Spirit uses two Greek words which are translated "repentance" even though they have quite different meanings.

μεταμέλομαι (metamelomai). To be sorry, to have regret.

This is not the word used of our repentance before God. To be sure, we may be sorry for our sin, we may regret that we have done something which is not pleasing to God, but that is not the repentance that is part of the doctrine of salvation.

μετανοεώ (metanoëô). To change the mind.

Because of all that God has done for us in Christ we are asked to change our mind, to understand that God has nothing against us, that sin shall not have dominion over us, that we are righteous, dead to sin and alive unto God, etc., etc.

9 Believe, believer.

These words are the most common words used by Christians to describe what one has to do in order to be “born again” or “saved.” However, we have already pointed out that the redeemed, ransomed children of God are invited to believe what He had done for them, to trust their loving heavenly father, and rest completely in His finished work.

It is a fundamental law that two concepts which contradict each other can not both be true and no place in life is this more important than in the study of His Word. We are commanded to compare Scripture with Scripture and search the Scriptures daily to seek the truth.

Concept 1. To say “any one can believe and in so doing will go to heaven” would be in agreement with what many Christians consider to be true.

Concept 2. Christ says in John 10:26, 27 that only His sheep can believe.

Since these concepts contradict each other, both can not be true. The truth is that only redeemed, ransomed, reconciled sheep that belong to Him can believe. Everyone agrees that an individual steals because he is a thief, he does not become a thief by stealing. It seems absolutely clear to everyone that if he were not a thief he would not steal. Only thieves steal. This same principle can be applied to murder, rape, etc. The Lord Himself uses this same principle in John 10.

Joh 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

And this is also true of belief, one believes because one is a believer.

10 Saved, salvation.

These are the words used by most Christians most of the time to indicate that one has been born again and is going to heaven. However, as the Holy Spirit uses the words they really have little to do with a new birth. The reason the Spirit chose birth as a picture of God’s work for us is that the one born had absolutely nothing to do with that birth even including the choice of the parents.

σώζω (sozô) To deliver, rescue, or protect.

The Holy Spirit uses this word over 100 times in various ways. In most cases the primary idea is of deliverance or rescue. To be sure God has delivered us from the power of sin, from death, and from hell by means of the finished work of Christ. He did this before the

foundation of the world. We did not initiate this by personal faith in Him, our faith comes as a gift from God to the new creation.

The grand truth of the gospel is not that God would do something if you asked Him to, but that God is propitiated, has redeemed you, reconciled you, and made you righteous. The acceptance (belief) of this truth is what delivers from the law, from the guilt of sin, etc, and opens up marvelous fellowship with Him. The propitiation, redemption, reconciliation, righteousness of God are purchased for us by the death of Christ in our place but we are saved, not by His death, but by His life, Rom 5:10.

Look for example at 1 Cor 15:

1 Cor 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

1 Cor 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

“Received” (redeemed, only a redeemed one could do that which is pleasing to God) and “stand” (made righteous) these truths are the very heart of the gospel. “By which also ye are saved”?? The redeemed, reconciled child of God is “saved” by believing (keeping in memory) what God has done for him in Christ. Why should we suggest if he does not keep it in memory he also loses what has been done for him in Christ? Did Christ die in vain?

It is apparent that a redeemed, reconciled child may not be delivered. Think for a moment of the account of the prodigal son. He was a son when he left, a son all the time he was gone, but not in fellowship with his father and not delivered from the bondage of the “far country”, and he was a son when he returned. His sonship never changed but his relationship with his father did.

The Holy Spirit was teaching this truth in type with Israel in bondage in Egypt. They were His children, His sheep, even though they were in bondage and not in fellowship with Him.

They did not ask to be redeemed, did not want to be redeemed, and complained when they were redeemed, but God said they were His and He redeemed them. However, they were not delivered from the wilderness because they did not believe. Notice in Num 20:12 that Moses was not permitted to lead the children of Israel into the promised land because even he had times when he did not believe.

In the same way, He redeemed us when we were His enemies, did not ask Him to redeem us, and were not seeking Him. Yet He did, and that is the glorious gospel. If we believe, we have peace that passes understanding, we have joy unspeakable, we are delivered from the law, from the fear of death, from worry and concern, etc., etc. Over 20 times God declares that He redeemed His people from bondage. Do not miss the lesson, they never did accept this in the flesh so God declares He will put within them a new heart and a new mind. That He has done for us when He made us a new creation in Christ. It is the new creation that believes.

Or consider 1 Tim 4:

1 Tim 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

It would be folly to suggest that Timothy was not redeemed or that he was not born again, but he is saved by taking heed to doctrine (truth). This is also true of all those who are His sheep, that is, those who hear, in fact the only ones who can hear, John 10:27.

Many Christians have been led to believe that “saved” means being “born again”, moving from death to life, and that this is accomplished by putting personal faith in Christ. In so doing the flesh is magnified and the person and work of Christ is minimized. Thus virtually no thought is given to the serious truths of the Word. The truth that God has completely ransomed His own and made them righteous by His grace and by His grace alone and, being redeemed, we are invited to believe what He has done in order to be saved. The Scriptures teach the total depravity of the fleshly man, his total inability to please God, to come to God, to receive the things of the Spirit of God, to hear the Word of God, etc. It was absolutely necessary that He make us new creations before we could believe since it was impossible for the old creation to believe.

How wonderful that He has completely ransomed His own, made them new creations in Christ, and drew them to himself. This is what we are invited to believe and with that belief comes the peace that passes understanding and the joy that is unspeakable. Perfected forever!