

SALVATION

A SERMON

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“That you may be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” Isaiah 49:6

How clear are the scriptures of the Old Testament upon the ingathering of the Gentiles, and upon the nature of that salvation by which the Gentile as well as the Jew should be saved. And yet, clear as the Old Testament scriptures are upon these vital and eternal matters, how the Jews were blinded to these truths, and supposed that the favors of heaven were to be shut up with them as a nation in their shadowy dispensation.

And although, again, the order of this salvation is so clearly revealed as being all of grace, as says the apostle Peter, we believe that it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved as well as the Gentiles, and the Gentiles as well as us; how clear this is, and yet how much hidden from the eyes of the professing world; there are after all but few brought in reality to know that salvation from first to last is of grace. Now our text this morning I may notice, as far as the Lord in mercy, shall enable me, under two main departments: first, *the Order*, and, secondly, *the Extent of Salvation*.

First then, *the ORDER of this Salvation*; which we gather from the preceding verses wherein we have *the infancy of the Savior, the power of his word, also that glory which he brought to the Lord*, and wherein also we have *those respects in which the Savior labored in vain, and spent his strength for nothing; and his acceptance with God*. The Savior is the speaker, and he goes on to say: “The Lord has called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name.” Here you have the Savior named from his infancy; he has named me from my infancy. How was he named? “You shall call his name Jesus.” It was done, you see, in purpose, and by-and-bye done in fact, and so, “You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.”

So, there is a people given to him that no man can number, and he stood as the Surety and as the Savior; all their sins imputed to him; “he shall save his people from their sins.” And then again, when he is named, as you are aware, in his infancy, matters are entered into with more detail in the 1st of Luke, where it is said of him not only that his name should be Jesus, but that also he

should be great, and should be called the Son of the Highest; and that the Lord God should give unto him the throne, meaning the antitypical throne, of his father David, and that he should reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there should be no end. This then is the subject, that "You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." In truth, just as the priests stood between the accumulated waters of Jordan that come down against them on the right hand; the priests stood there with the ark and with the mercy seat, and by commandment of the Lord; so, just as the priests stood there between the accumulating waters of Jordan and the people, so that by that position of the priests the people were safe, and went over safely into the promised land; just so it is with the blessed Redeemer; he stands between us and our accumulated sins, and I may add also accumulating sins; he stands between us, or stood between us and the wrath of God; so that our sins accumulated against him, and the wrath of God accumulated against him. And, as I have lately somewhere said, it certainly is one of the most striking displays perhaps in the scriptures of the strength of faith, as that shown by the priests in Jordan, for certainly the accumulating waters on the right hand coming down that mighty river, they must have accumulated very much; and certainly such a large host must have been some hours passing over Jordan; and yet the priests stood fast; it does not appear that they moved; they stood fast in Jordan. See what faith they must have had, what confidence they must have had; they must have seen the people passing over while they themselves were left behind; and the priests must not only stop there till the last Israelite had passed over, but even then they must not come up out of the river until they are commanded so to do, until everything is completed. Are they not a beautiful type thus of Him whose name is called Jesus, and who stands between, stood between his people and their sins? and Jesus stood there until every one of his people were relatively and mediatorially passed over from the wilderness of the first Adam, from the wilderness of Sinai, from the wilderness of sin, from the wilderness of drought, from the wilderness of desolation, into the promised land. And just as the Savior stood, fast in his humiliation, in the Jordan of this world, until his work was completed, so he has stood fast from that day to this; he is indeed a merciful and a faithful High Priest. And that faithfulness which the priests showed in standing fast in Jordan is a sweet figure, I think, of the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, poor sinner, where would you creep to but to the feet of Jesus? What would you place between yourself and your sins? Your own works would be but a cobweb wall; your own works would be as nothing; your own works between you and your sins would be as a heap of chaff, would be worse than nothing. But let Jesus come in as your mediator; stand far enough off, as Bunyan says, to leave room for a mediator; let Jesus come in; then I am sure, if you understand this great truth, and he who is brought to receive this Jesus Christ that is made mention of from his very infancy as a Savior, I am sure you will then say that this chapter does not commence with emphasis too strong: "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, you people, from far." And are we not as sinners afar off? And so, it is written that good tidings come from afar; and one said, "I will fetch my knowledge from afar." Thus then, in this matter of salvation, the sinner must be convinced of his accumulated and accumulating sins; he must be convinced of the accumulating wrath of God against him, for where there is not this conviction there is no appreciating the Lord Jesus Christ. And I am sure that if the people had tried to go through Jordan without the priests, they could not; but by the Lord's own way they went safely through. It may well be said, and Peter nicely expresses it when he says, "Unto you that believe he is precious." I like the idea, the form of my text; the Lord says, "That you may be my salvation unto the end of the earth;" "you shall call his name Jesus;" "that you may be my salvation;" a salvation worthy of God, a salvation worthy of

Immanuel, a salvation worthy of the testimony of the Almighty Spirit of God; a salvation every way adapted, and every way sufficient, and every way suited to a poor lost sinner, to demonstrate the truth of the dear Savior's mission, that he came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Again, we have, in the next place, in the order of his salvation, not only Jesus standing between us and our sins, and between us and God's wrath, and we shall pass over unhurt, finally, into the promised land; but we have, in the next place, set before us here the power of his blessed word. Hear what the Savior says, in prediction: "He has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand has he hid me and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver has he hid me." "He has made my mouth like a sharp sword." Now this is explained for us in several parts of the scriptures as you are aware. For instance, the apostle in the last chapter to the Ephesians says, "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;" there is the explanation, you see. Therefore, to make his mouth like a sharp sword means that power which should attend his holy word. And how descriptive is this; and I shall just now descriptively bring you down into the dust, then I shall leave you there for a few minutes, and then come, back again to show how such are raised up. Now in the 4th of the Hebrews there is a beautiful description of the work of this sword of God's word, that his word "is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Now a man thus cut up and cut down, and cut to pieces, must be killed; there is no question about that; no man could undergo what is there described and live: he must be killed. But this is a figure of that spiritual death, or that kind of death which the soul is made to undergo which the apostle describes when he says, "The commandment entered;" the word of God cut him down, and he died to his own holiness, his own righteousness, his own wisdom, his own irreligion, his own fleshly religion, and he became as dead; there I am, a poor dead creature; I am cut up and cut down. And you observe that Saul of Tarsus remained down; he remained down till the Lord lifted him. And so if you are convinced of your state, you will remain down until the Lord shall lift you up; you will not get up high enough to read your title clear to a better world till he shall lift you up. Just mark that, that when Saul was cut down, he remained down till the Lord lifted him up. I am particular here, because of the importance of this matter. And you observe in the 4th of Hebrews, when the apostle described this work of the sword, in cutting the sinner down, he then shows what the result is; though it is rather anticipating another part of my subject to bring it in here; but I may just name this, that the apostle, after showing that a sinner is by the power of the word brought into the solemn presence of God, and brought to feel that all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do; see how the apostle dealt with this matter then; "Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Ah, there is the remedy, there is the life from the dead, there is the pardon from the guilt, there is the sanctification from the degradation, and there is the justification from the condemnation, and there is the salvation from the lost estate; "seeing that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession;" let us hold fast this wondrous Person; for I am sure we shall hold fast this hope if we know what it is to be cut down. And thus, the Savior's mouth is like a sharp sword. Ah, happy that man who is cut down by the word of God and brought to feel that he is that poor, miserable creature that there can be no hope for him but in the mercy of God by Jesus Christ.

"Made me a polished shaft;" polished, to denote it is one that will not corrupt; polished surfaces do not easily corrode or rust. And therefore, it conveys the idea of the durability of his truth; the

arrows of his truth are as pointed as ever, the sword of truth is as sharp as ever. Some of us are very awkward swordsmen, I admit; and yet we have never yet been able to blunt the point or the edges with all our awkwardness; and we are very awkward sometimes in drawing the bow and shooting aright; but ministers must always draw the bow at a venture, and leave the Lord to direct the arrow, and he will direct the arrow, for the Lord God himself shall blow the trumpet, that is, shall give vitality to it; and his arrows shall go forth as the lightning, so that he will find out those that he means to deal with as described in the 45th Psalm, "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under you;" can no longer fight against him. So, my hearer, if the Lord has thus dealt with you, could you now fight against Christ's atonement, his complexity, his righteousness, his salvation? Why, so far from that being the case, this is the very object you are seeking, his salvation, his mercy. Ah, if you are thus brought down, and not yet raised up, the Lord in his own time will raise you up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

But here is another point I would not pass by here, and that is this; the Savior says, "In the shadow of his hand has he hid me;" and so it was. There is Jesus of Nazareth, nowhere to lay his head? Why, what will that feeble man do? apparently feeble, I mean. There are a few unlettered men with him; what will they do? Ah, he is hidden. The Savior went forth, and the disciples went forth, and there was a secret about the matter; the power of God was hidden from, the world. "I thank you, O Father, that you have hid these things from, the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes." And so, when the disciples went forth and preached, as a little specimen of what it should be afterwards, they said, "Even devils are subject unto us through your name." And when he sent them forth finally, he said: "Go and preach the gospel; I send you as lambs' among wolves; and they will bring you into the synagogue, and scourge you, and put you into prison;" and laugh at your attempt to turn the world upside down, but you shall turn the world upside down, they will laugh at your attempt to turn the mighty tides of the world's religion, rolling on, and carrying their multitudes with them; they will laugh at your attempts to turn these mighty tides, but as Mordecai instrumentally turned the tide of a hundred and twenty-seven, provinces, you shall do so spiritually; "I send you forth as lambs among wolves; but lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And oh, what thousands, have from that day to this bowed to apostolic testimony, bowed to the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. The power was hidden. Wherein lies the power of these poor apostles? Not in silver and gold, for Peter, when, the man looked on him, and expected something, I daresay the poor man's countenance fell very much when Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none." What, none at all? No, none at all. But I have something that silver and gold could not do; such as I have give I unto you; I have the name of Jesus Christ, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and the authority of Jesus Christ to say unto you, in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk; and the man rose and walked, and leaped, and rejoiced, and glorified the God of all mercy, and of salvation. So how true it is that the Lord has chosen the foolish things, weak things, base things, despicable things, things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are. Hence then, Christ's power was hidden from the world, and our power is hidden from the world; hence we are to pray to our Father in secret, and our Father that sees in secret will reward us openly. You see what power the Old Testament saints had with God; and so, bless the Lord, here, let us be as weak as we may in one sense of the word, if the Lord be our strength, then we may say, "Greater is he that is for us, than all that can be against us." Thus then, here is a Savior; here is the power of his word; and the simplicity of the means.

But then, in the next place, here is the glory Christ was to bring to God. "He said unto me, You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Jesus Christ is here called Israel; Israel signifies a prince with God and Jesus Christ truly is a Prince with God and a Prince with us: the Prince of Life, by him we live; and the Prince of Peace, by him we have peace; and the Prince of Salvation, by him we are saved; and the Prince of Glory, by him we shall be glorified. But I will not stop to notice that part. "Then I said," says the Savior, "I have labored in vain, I have, spent my strength for nothing, and in vain." This has a meaning, and while we do not hold that the Savior labored in vain or spent his strength for nothing in the sense that some people say he does, we must not deny God's Word, and say that there was no sense in which he labored in vain, we must not say there was no sense in which he spent his strength for nothing; if we say this, we run directly counter to his own testimony. "Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing." When did he say this? Why, after he had glorified God/: He said to him, "You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Then when Christ had done this, he said, "I labored in vain, and spent my strength for nothing." How then shall we understand this? By the admission of what cannot be denied by the right-minded. Some people get hold of one idea, and they do not suppose that the Scriptures can mean anything but just the one little idea they get hold of, they get hold of that, and they make everything bend to that one notion. Do not let us bring a theory to govern the Scriptures by, but let us come to the Scriptures, and be governed by them. Now the admission we must make is that the Savior had a twofold mission, the one was the certain salvation of all that were given to him of the Father, the certain salvation of the whole election of grace, whether Jew or Gentile, the certain and eternal salvation of all the new covenant Israel of God. This is the chief mission Jesus Christ had; but he had another mission, and that was this, he was to testify of the truth to the Jewish nation as God's people, that they might repent, not savingly, but morally, and that they might cease from persecuting him, and leave him alone in that respect, and that they might act in that way that should preserve their nation and land, then they might, have remained a prosperous nation to this day. But that mission was conditional, Christ was not commissioned to give them repentance, only to exhort them to it; he was not commissioned to reform them, only to expostulate with them to that end, he was not commissioned to give them new hearts, not to constrain them to come into his dispensation, but to speak to them as rational men, to speak to them as intelligent creatures, and leave them upon that conditional ground upon which he found them standing, and upon, which they were originally placed by their national covenant. Now Christ did all this; and he said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kills the prophets, and stone them that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not." And God foresaw that they would not, but then God's foreseeing a thing does not make him the author of a thing. If God foresaw their murderous propensities, that does not make him the author of those propensities; if God foresaw, which he did, and predicted, that Judas should betray Christ, that did not make God the author of the murderous act of Judas, it was Satan that entered into Judas, it was not God. Therefore, God's foreknowledge of what men would do, and his suffering to do it, does not make him, shall I say, a partner in crime, nor give him any fellowship with the works of darkness. I think, then, we can distinguish between what God sovereignly suffers to take place, and that of which he is the immediate author. Now the Savior then, as to that nation, in one respect labored in vain; that is to say, they did not repent. He gave them space to repent, but they did not repent; he gave them space to reform, but they did not reform, they had forsaken God's covenant, and the spirit of apostacy was in their midst; they had dug down God's altar, and the spirit of antipathy to God's sacrificial altar, God's prophets, and enmity against his truth was the spirit which they possessed;

in that spirit the Savior found them: he expostulated with them, but all his expostulations in that respect fell to the ground, so that instead of their haying the advantages of his instruction, instead of their doing as the Ninevites did, repenting and coming over by reformation to the Messiah's dispensation, they persevered in their murderous conduct; and hereby brought upon themselves that very thing which they thought their plan would avoid. Hence they said, "If we let him thus alone, the Romans will come and take away our place and nation;" no, they will not, if you meddle with him they will, if you go on persecuting him they will. Oh no they will not, not if we crucify him, for he is a dangerous character, if we crucify him that will so please God that we shall be saved. Alas, alas, many among them thought that they ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. Here then as to the welfare of that nation Christ labored in vain, and spent his strength for nothing, as to any real benefit that they, nationally speaking, derived from it. And yet, bless the Lord, while he labored in vain in this respect, and while his ministers come after him in this respect, and labor in vain in many respects, yet he did not labor in vain in his essential work, nor even in that department, in one sense, in vain, because it demonstrated the blindness and depravity of human nature.

And I gather from the very fact of the Jews thus persevering in their impenitence, the deep necessity of the great truths of the gospel: I can gather from this the fact that if regeneration were not the sovereign, absolute work of God, in spite of sin, and of the creature, not a soul under heaven would ever be regenerated. Talk of human efforts! why, you might as well talk of sin helping to save you. That is the sense, then, in which I understand the Savior labored in vain, and spent his strength for nothing. I can see the meaning of it very clearly myself, and I am trying to get you to understand it; for if ever there was a day in which it was needful that the people of God should well understand the truth, it is in our day; for counterfeit gospels now, like a great many other kinds of counterfeits, are brought to such perfection that unless you do know your own heart, and know in your own soul what you are as a sinner, and are brought vitally into a realization of God's mercy and an understanding of his truth, nothing but this can keep you firm; as says the Savior, "If it were possible, they should deceive the very elect." I wish, for we wish ill to none, wish well to all men. I wish my old friends the Wesleyans, and my old friends the duty-faith people; I wish them to see when we meet with a scripture like this that we are not at a loss to understand it; that we can see its meaning without doing as they do, bringing it into vital matters, salvation matters, and thereby setting up a yea and nay gospel, disturbing the counsel of God, and making out that the salvation of a sinner in part lies with himself; which is a doctrine, of course, that we conscientiously reject, and separate ourselves from all those who hold it. We do pray that the eyes of our fellow creatures may be opened to see the depths of their sinner-ship, and to see more and more the necessity of the grace of God; and then they will distinguish between that great principle of accountability which is merely moral, and the other great principle of regeneration which is vital: the two principles are distinct; the one stands upon the basis of human responsibility; the other stands upon the basis of God's purpose of eternal mercy.

I told you just now that I should bring the sword to cut you down, and having brought you down I should leave you there a few minutes, and so I have; and now I will come back again, if I can find my way. Now what was the Savior's consolation in this moment? He falls back upon his own faithfulness, his own integrity, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord;" my Father will judge if I have not been faithful, I will leave it with him; "surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." And the Savior takes in the whole range of the twofold mission, his work,

when he says, "I always do those things that please him." Israel be not gathered? that could not alter the Savior in the estimation of the Father: "Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." Why so? Why, though the literal Israel rejected him, and though many expostulations were yet to come, cautioning them, yet they were not gathered, "Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." Why so? First, because he carried out the mission faithfully; but, secondly, chiefly, and above all, because of the perfection of his life and of his death, and because of his keeping all that were given to him; "all that you have given unto me I have kept, and have lost none;" and therefore he is glorious in the eyes of the Lord.

For leaving, which I now do, this mere reformation matter and coming to salvation concerns, there is no failing, there Israel is gathered; there are two Israel's; Israel after the flesh is not gathered; just the same as there are two Israel's now; there is a free-will Israel now, they are not gathered into a free-grace land; they call it a free-grace land, but it is a free-will land, there is a duty-faith Israel, a Roman Catholic Israel, formality Israel, must not say Church of England Israel, I suppose, or else I shall have some Church of England people upon me again, but so it is, none of these are gathered into the land that flows with milk and honey, the land of the Gospel. But though this Israel after the flesh be not gathered, yet the true Israel is they shall come into this free-grace land, therefore, says the, Savior shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. I feel a great pleasure in being able to understand a scripture like this. I do not wonder at free-willers hating my Moral Government? there is no book in the world they hate, more than they do that, because they see that I have in that work taken every leg from them that they have to stand upon. Why? they say, if what this fellow says be true, there is not a man among us really converted; he has laid down a principle in that book of his, and swallowed up every scripture that we make use of to constitute the chief part of our religion, and to enable us to offer salvation to all, and the duty-faith people dislike it as much, and let them dislike it. I say there is a distinction to be drawn between the moral accountability of man, and that vital principle of regeneration that makes the soul one with Christ, brings Christ in as the great Surety by whom the sinner is saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

But again, the Lord said to the Savior, "It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, I will also give you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." You see there are three things here, raising up, restoration, and illumination. Just, now in the second verse they are cut down, but here in the 6th verse they are raised up. Just so, my hearer, it is by Jesus Christ we are raised up in our hopes, our prospects, our affections, our souls raised up above everything that stood against us. There is no height so lofty as the height of Zion, there is no mountain so high as the mountain of the house of the Lord, for that is above the highest mountains, and exalted above the hills. Here then they are raised up and restored. We went away from God in the first Adam, but in Christ Jesus we are restored to God in an infinitely better position than that we had by creation.

Now just notice here are the tribes of Jacob raised up; the tribes of Jacob raised up and the preserved of Israel restored, do not mean the Israelites as a nation at large, literally. Take first the Epistle of James to explain this. James writes to the twelve tribes, that is to say, he writes to those Jews who out of the twelve tribes were brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ; he names them by the twelve tribes, but it was not to the twelve tribes at large James wrote, but to those Jews out of the twelve tribes that were brought to know the Lord. So that the tribes which the Savior should

here raise up and restore means not the twelve tribes at large. Now go to the 7th of Revelation, and you get a beautiful explanation of the 6th verse of this chapter; there you meet a hundred and forty and four thousand, out of all the tribes of Israel; and then you go to the end of that; why, John says, here are some more; why, here is a multitude that no man can number, out of all kindreds, and nations, and peoples, and tongues; there you have the explanation.

Now I have occupied all your time, and I had four more points to advance, and I will just name them and close. "My salvation unto the end of the earth" means, in the first place, the amplitude of this salvation. The Lord could never speak so liberally as this, if there were not a vast abundance of mercy and of grace. The Lord will never call more than he can sustain: if he calls a multitude of people, he can sustain them, he has provision for them. Take the blessing of Joseph in the 33rd of Deuteronomy to explain this, and how does it close? "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock;" there is his sacrificial excellency; "and his horns are like the horns of unicorns;" there is his power: "with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." Ephraim signifies fulness, and Manasseh signifies forgetfulness; and so, when we are brought into the fulness of God, we forget this world, we forget the things that are behind, we forget our fears, our troubles. "And he called his name Manasseh; for God, said he, has made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." So that here is the vast abundance then of salvation, that can extend to numbers, to millions, a number that no man can number.

Then it means, secondly, a convinced sinner: here is a sinner convinced of his state, driven to the end of all fleshly hope, all fleshly help, brought to see that vain is the help of man; vain am I myself, vain is the help of others; vain is the help of angels, God alone can have mercy upon my soul, God alone can pardon my sin. He is driven to the end of the earth in his own feelings; he ceases from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and rejoices that Jesus is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Then the third thing meant is the Christian when he is in trouble: 61st Psalm, how often we get afar off; the Lord is the confidence of the ends of the earth, and them that are afar off upon the sea; oh, how tossed about sometimes; we stagger like a drunken man, and at our wit's end, hardly know what will become of us; and one of old, you find, said in the 61st Psalm, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto you, when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Ah, if it is a sweet privilege, friends, amidst temporal cares and troubles to have something to look to that is certain, bless the Lord, there is no uncertainty here.

Then the last idea is that of a chronological kind: "my salvation unto the end of the earth;" that is, to the end of time. Ah, how many names are gone; the fathers, said one, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? No. but Jesus Christ lives forever; his name shall endure as long as the sun: yes, the Savior's name down to the end of time will be just what it is now, down to the last moment just what it is now. Ah, how sweet the thought then, what a prospect we have, according to that blessed declaration in this book, that Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.