

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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Salvation: "Common" Implies "Uncommon"

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3, KJV 1900)

My writings regularly acknowledge the obvious diversity with which Scripture uses the word "Salvation" in its various forms. In studying this topic, we must examine each context carefully and fully to grasp the inspired writer's intended use of the term. The dominant contemporary view of Biblical "Salvation" is sadly myopic and void of contextual interpretation. The typical contemporary Bible student sees the word in Scripture and immediately thinks "Going to heaven when I die." Factually, Scripture uses the word to refer to any number of deliverances or "Salvations," including the Lord's deliverance of His people from the damning guilt of their sins and to their eternal inheritance with Him. Some of these deliverances in Scripture have temporal consequences or outcomes, while, in other contexts, the Bible uses the word to refer to God's sovereign work that redeems His people from their sins and conveys upon them an eternal blessed outcome. I believe it is wise for Bible students to distinguish Scripture's use of the word based on the consequences or outcomes identified in the context of the word, some temporal and some eternal. Any other effort to sensibly and contextually explain the word as Scripture uses it fails to acknowledge and to respect the various contextual uses that we find in Scripture. If we confine the word to one and only one meaning, we face dreadful confusion at the most basic level of the word's meaning. Consider.

1. Acts 2:40b, "...*Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*" In this verse, who does the "Saving"? It is the individual who believes and is baptized. What does he save himself from? Not from final and endless separation from God, but from a twisted generation of unbelievers who denied that Jesus was their Messiah. The consequences of this saving are temporal, not eternal. Belief and baptism are not essential prerequisites to the new birth or to eternal security.
2. 1 Timothy 2:15, "*Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing....*" If Paul intended eternal saving in any sense in this verse, we must foolishly conclude that all childless women cannot go to heaven when they die. Obviously, Paul intended a

temporal saving, a saving that, in fact, he clearly explained in the same verse, "...*if they continue....*" The godly mother's salvation in bringing children into the world appears in her children learning godliness by her compelling example, so that, in adulthood, they continue in the faith. This "Saving" relates to wise, godly child-rearing, not to going to heaven when you die.

3. 1 Timothy 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.*" Paul lays a heavy burden on Timothy. His conduct and teaching in his ministry holds the potential of saving his hearers. If going to heaven when we die was Paul's point, this verse teaches an abominable injustice. Consider. If the preacher fails to take heed to himself and to his teaching, he thereby fails to save himself and his hearers. If this failure means that his hearers go to hell when they die, I suggest that a terrible injustice has occurred. If the preacher's failure caused the problem, should not the hearers receive mercy and the irresponsible preacher pay the consequences? The problem intensifies. If the preacher is faithful to his conduct and to his teaching, he becomes the savior of those who hear him! That is what Paul distinctly states. Now we have Jesus and the preacher competing for the title of Savior. Confusion personified! However, if Paul's intent relates to the effect of godly knowledge and a godly example uniting to influence those who observe the godly preacher and hear his sound and faithful words, the verse accurately and wisely states a truth. People who choose to hear and to observe an unfaithful preacher are doomed to think that the faith is as loose and inconsequential as they observe in the man's conduct and teaching. They thereby fail to experience the joyful deliverance of the gospel in the here and now, while those who hear and follow the godly example of a sound and faithful man reap the present joys of the

gospel. This verse deals with the temporal consequences of a man's ministry.

...I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation. The word "common" in this verse defines something that is common to all. Jude refers to something that he has previously written to these same people in which, as in his present letter, he writes of that common salvation by which all whom the Lord loved and all for whom Jesus died securely and certainly receive the saving of Jesus' atoning sacrifice for sins. That salvation is held in "Common" by all of God's elect who shall spend eternity with Him in glory.

The fact that Jude refers to a "common" salvation strongly implies the counterpoint. There is such a thing as an "Uncommon" salvation, a true salvation that is enjoyed by some, but not all of the Lord's elect. And Jude writes emphatically of that salvation, the point of exhorting his readers to *"...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints."*

We read of this "Uncommon" salvation, not enjoyed in common by all regenerated elect, throughout the New Testament. Consider this verse from Paul.

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. (2 Timothy 2:10)

In this verse, Paul specifically distinguishes "...the salvation which is in Christ Jesus" from eternal glory. Here we have heirs of eternal glory yet in need of "Salvation." Make no mistake. While, in our temporal salvation, we must act in synergy with the Holy Spirit who takes the things of Jesus and teaches them to us, including His holy example in living, we can never realize that temporal salvation apart from Him. Occasionally, folks who reject this temporal salvation will offer the straw man logical fallacy argument (Which is a non-argument because of the fallacy) that those of us who believe this doctrine hold that we may enjoy this temporal salvation apart from Jesus, a total misrepresentation of the belief. The synergy of our temporal salvation, meaning that we must work according to the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit, appears throughout Scripture and is strongly taught by those who hold to the Biblical distinction between temporal and eternal consequences in the various deliverances that we find in Scripture. In fact, the noting of synergy versus monergy (God acting wholly and exclusively alone to accomplish our eternal salvation) in the context of a salvation passage often serves to distinguish the deliverance of the passage. Scripture never presents salvation with eternal consequences, our true "Eternal salvation," as a synergy of action with both the Lord and we acting to reach the goal. And, likewise, Scripture never presents the temporal

consequences of our discipleship, our temporal salvation, apart from clear indications that we must work *"...together with him."* (2 Corinthians 6:1 and context; emphasis added)

...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you. We cannot understand or know how to serve the Lord apart from the "needful" enlightenment that we find in Scripture. It is this needful instruction from Scripture that some elect hear and, like the seed sown in problematic soil or growing conditions in Jesus' parable (Matthew 13:3-9 with Jesus' explanation of the parable in Matthew 13:19-23). Three out of four seeds sown failed to produce fruit. There was no flaw in the sower; he faithfully sowed the seed in the field where he should have sown it. There was no flaw with the seed; the seed sown in the good ground proves that the seed was good. The problem in the three unfruitful cases has to do with the ground. Jesus associates this unfruitful ground to people who have too little self-control, *"...hath no root in himself,"* or too much worry or love for money and the things it can buy, *"...the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches,"* to keep their priorities right and to bring godly fruit to their Lord and Savior. Yes, indeed it is as needful today as when Jude wrote these words for believers to understand the "...needful" requirement of their knowing and living the teachings of Scripture if they hope to discover that "Uncommon" salvation and thereby live a godly, fruitful life to their Lord's glory.

...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. "...the faith" nudges a body of truths or sound doctrines. As Scripture commands that we study to clearly understand "The faith," it also reminds and commands us to identify, refute, and avoid ideas that contradict that body of truth. Our humanity seeks out differences and often cultivates differences or disagreements over harmony. Often, especially after a season of disagreements and schism in churches, we are inclined to leap to the opposite extreme. A contemporary—but definitely not Biblical—cliché reads, "Doctrine divides; love unites, so let's forget all doctrine and just love each other." The whole cliché contradicts Scripture. Jude doesn't suggest that we should ignore different opinions or interpretations of the original faith that Jesus and the apostles taught. He **commands** us to earnestly contend for it. In fact, this body of truth is to serve as the bedrock foundation for our love of the Lord's people and for our unity in the faith. (Ephesians 4:13-16)

This faith, this body of truths, was *"...once delivered unto the saints."* Once delivered, the Lord promises in Scripture that He shall preserve that truth. Will we exit this world earnestly contending for it, or will we exit under the corrupt banner of love versus doctrine? We either contend earnestly for it, or we do not contend for it at all. The Lord gave it to His saints once. How well are we keeping it, earnestly contending for it?

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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor