

TEXT SERMONS

SERIES: *THE RICHES OF SALVATION*

MESSAGE #14

“THE PREPARATION OF SALVATION”

I Peter 1:20-21

“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

As we have studied this chapter, our theme has been, “The Riches Of Salvation.” As each verse unfolds we discover more and more about our great and grand salvation. The verses upon which we focus in this message are foundational to everything we have covered in the chapter to date.

Here we have, in these verses, what the Latin calls the “Sine qua non” – the “without which not” – “that which is essential.” Here is the heart of God’s plan to save sinners who are lost and undone without God and His Son. Here, almost at the end of the chapter, we find the roots of our salvation.

The Quaker philosopher, Elton Trueblood, described modern day Christianity as “cut-flower” Christianity. He said, “The average Christian has been disconnected from his roots.” Many Christians do not know what God has done in the preparation of their salvation. They think that John 3:16 is the totality of God’s involvement. Their attitude is, “We’ve heard it all before, there is nothing new under the sun.” Their problem is that they have lost the wonder! Paul had not lost the wonder. He uses the words, “*much more*” seven times in the book of Romans alone, to describe the riches of grace in Christ Jesus. Just one example: “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, *much more* those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” (Rom.5:17)

There is “much more” to what God has done in preparing salvation that should enthrall all who are truly born again. We should never let it become holy hum-drum! Let us look at His work as revealed in the verses before us.

The preparation of salvation involved four great events in what we might call the drama of redemption. The four events are:

I. THE FOREORDINATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

He “was foreordained before the foundation of the world...” (v.20)

Let those words ring in your ears and register in your mind; do you hear what is said? We are part of a grand scheme that is older than the world! We are the objects and recipients of the overwhelming grace of God decided upon before this sphere called earth ever spun in space! It says that before we were created:

- The divine Trinity had planed it all;
- Included in that plan was the creation of mankind;

- Included in that plan was the full knowledge of sin and its consequences;
- Included in that plan, before one thing was ever made, was the plan for Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice.
- In fact, other scriptures show that before the foundation of the world God foreknew us individually, and planned for our salvation. "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world" (Eph.1:4)

Can you understand that? I can't. But I believe it because God said it right here in v.20! There are some who have said that God sending His Son was an afterthought – that God got caught by surprise by Satan's temptation and man's fall. Never! "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world." Let's put it in plain language, God was thinking about you and about me before God said "let there be light"!

The Almighty God not only fore-knew, but He determined and decreed, that His Son should die for mankind, and this was decided before the foundation of the world. Can we truly understand how marvelous our salvation is?

II. THE INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

"But was manifested in these last times" nkjv

"But was revealed in these last times" niv

"Appeared in these last times" nasu

When was Jesus Christ "manifested", "revealed"; when did He appear? Of course the answer is: when He, God, became human;

- When Spirit became flesh;
- When immortal became mortal;
- When the Creator became creature;
- When God stepped out of eternity into time. And when was that? At His incarnation! "Carnis" is Latin for "flesh" – the incarnation of Jesus Christ was God taking a human body. "Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me." (Heb.10:5)

For centuries there were stories of the gods becoming humans. Now it actually happened! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14)

The classic passage that describes in more detail the incarnation is Philippians 2:6-8 which states:

(Jesus Christ) "Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

Illust. One of my favorite "Incarnation" hymns is:

“Down from His glory, ever living story,
My God and Savior came and Jesus was His name.
Born in a manger, to His own a stranger,
A man of sorrows, tears and agony.
Oh, how I love Him, how I adore Him,
My breath my sunshine, my all in all.
The Great Creator became my Savior
And all God’s fullness dwells in Him.”

III. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

“.....who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead...”

There is no mention here of the actual crucifixion – and it need not be mentioned for it is so well authenticated in the New Testament record. However, suffice it to say that if no crucifixion, there would be no resurrection. Peter has just referred to the crucifixion in v.19 where he writes that we were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ.”

In his great sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter “spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. (Acts 2:31-32)

If Christ had been crucified and had not risen, as Paul puts it so pointedly in 1 Cor. 15, then “our preaching is useless and so is your faith. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.”

Let us not forget, that our resurrection is guaranteed by Christ’s resurrection. Paul continues in his classic treatise on the resurrection with these comforting words: “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Cor 15:20-23)

Foreordination, incarnation, resurrection; here is one more act in the drama of salvation:

IV. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST

“and gave Him glory” or “glorified Him.”

Paul also articulated the truth of the ascension of Christ: “He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.” (Eph.4:10)
Here is what he wrote to the Philippians: “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Eph.4:9-11)

Down from his glory, and now he is back in the glory – glorified! Here in these two verses we have the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Here is the story of stories in four dramatic scenes. Fulton Oursler called it “The Greatest Story Ever Told”– and truly it is!

If someone heard this story for the first time, they would undoubtedly have one nagging question and that would be: W-H-Y? Why did He do it? The answer is in the last words in v.21 - "so that your faith and hope might be in God."

The order of the words, "faith" and "hope" is purposeful. The Holy Spirit, the Author of the Holy Scriptures, makes no mistakes. The order is as it must be – first faith, then hope. Faith produces hope. I have met many hopeless souls seeking for hope, but when presented the Good News of Jesus Christ, reject it. There is only one way to have the endless hope that God provides and that is to put your faith in Jesus Christ and you will have hope!

Illust. John Piper graphically illustrates our hopelessness apart from Christ. He writes: "If we only knew it, every one of us is stranded on an ice face in Greenland, and the wind is blowing fiercely. Our position is so precarious that even if we inhale too deeply our weight will shift and we will plunge to our destruction. God comes to us and says in that moment, "I will save you, and protect you from the storm. But there is a condition." Your heart sinks. You know you can't meet conditions. Your face is flat against the ice. Your fingernails are dug in. You can feel yourself giving way. You know that if all you do is move your lips you're going to fall. You know that there is nothing you can do for God! Then he speaks the gospel command: "My requirement," he says, "is that you hope in me." Now I ask, is this not good news? What could be easier than to hope in God when all else is giving way? And that is all he requires. That's the gospel."

CONCLUSION

These four truths that we have briefly reviewed deserve much more of our attention and contemplation. They are pivotal truths. Take away any one of these pillars of the salvational structure and the panoply of divine provision for man's lostness collapses. Indeed, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb.2:3) We stand on these foundational truths or we stand on nothing!

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