

## God's Salvation

Ex. 14: 13, 14; 2 Chr. 20: 17; Luke 2: 27-32.

F. A. Hughes.

MAY/JUNE 1972

Salvation is a theme running throughout Scripture, the word itself appears over 160 times, and there are other words of kindred meaning. In many instances salvation is introduced in circumstances in which enemies exist. Indeed the first mention of the word is in the presence of the adversary's attack with its consequent retrograde effect. In Genesis chapter 49 Dan is spoken of as "a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backwards." In the face of this Jacob exclaims "I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD" (v. 18). The Psalmist exclaims — "Princes have persecuted me without a cause," and then finds rejoicing and peace as he adds "LORD, I have hoped for Thy salvation" (Psalm 119: 161 and 166). Again the theme is seen in Isaiah 25. The "blast of the terrible ones;" "the noise (tumult) of strangers" will be silenced and subdued; victory over death (the "last enemy") is assured and the rebuke of God's people taken away. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (v. 9).

In Revelation 19 we have the last mention of this word "salvation," and here we see the complete judgment of that unholy system which has persecuted the saints of God. "Hallelujah; *the* salvation and the glory and the power of our God" (v. 1 New Trans.). The chapter is one of absolute triumph and victory with its universal Hallelujahs, and the manifestation of He who is "King of kings and Lord of lords." "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him" (v. 6).

There are three occasions upon which the attention of God's people is specially engaged with the blessedness of salvation and He from whom it comes. There are, of course, many other Scripture references in similar strain, but we refer to these special occasions and to the *conditions involved in each case*.

In Exodus 12 - 15 we have the account of Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh and from Egypt, and their subsequent crossing of the Red Sea. Morally their state was as that of the Egyptians. They were equally under the sentence of death and guilty before God; if they were to be established in righteousness before Him the "lamb" must be slain and they sheltered by blood. God Himself took account of and valued the blood, and they were set free. The New Testament (and in particular the Epistle to the Romans) is replete with this precious theme — the righteousness of God has been manifested, it is "by faith of Jesus Christ *towards* all, and *upon* all those who believe." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," but the blessed God has brought in "redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in His blood" (Romans 3). In type this was Israel's position, and in precious reality it is ours too!

Out from Egypt and its bondage, moving on towards their inheritance, this redeemed people (Ex. 15: 13) were not yet in complete liberty, not yet able to respond to God in the song of Scripture! The enemy pursued and they were helpless before him — they needed salvation! The precious blood had settled the question of their standing before God — they did not need *salvation from God* — *He* was *not* their enemy — He had "come down to deliver them" (Ex. 3: 8). But they *did need salvation from their enemy*, and we are to take account of the way in which that salvation reached them — "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will

shew to you this day." The whole position was under the eye of God, the people's helplessness, the enemy's power; and His arm brought salvation. Their part was to "stand still," and take account of the way in which God dealt with the situation and then in faith to "go forward."

We too have need to appreciate more fully the greatness of God's movements towards us. The precious blood of Christ has freed us from our guilt, and in His death the power of Satan and of the world has been judged and broken — we are free! The truth of those grand early chapters of Romans, if assimilated and enjoyed, would enable us to say from the heart, "If God be *for* us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8: 31). Our sins; the law of sin and death; the power of Satan and the world of which he is god have all been dealt with by God, and we can joyfully exclaim "I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously . . . and He is become my salvation."

In 2 Chronicles 20: 17 we find these words again — "Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD." The position of God's people is different here from that of Exodus — they are in the land to which God had intended to bring them. Subsequent to the reigns of David and Solomon their history was a chequered one. Division amongst themselves, idolatry and disregard of the rights of God and of the truth resulted in weakness and moral decline. Nevertheless there *were* bright periods and a few kings of Judah who "did what was right before the Lord." Jehoshaphat was one such ruler and in 2 Chron. 19, having heard the solemn words of the seer, the king, evidently regretting his previous condition of compromise, sought to encourage his people to "follow the LORD." Judges were "set" and exhorted to "judge not for man, but for the LORD." Likewise Levites were also "set" with instructions to "do in the fear of the LORD faithfully, and with a perfect heart;" and "all matters of the LORD" were in priestly hands. When all had thus been established the king's word to the people was "Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good." All this betokened a happy condition, in which the blessed God doubtless took pleasure.

Can we not rejoice, dear brethren, in every feature obtaining amongst the saints today which gives pleasure to the heart of God? There are those, albeit weak in themselves and obscure, who seek in the power of the Spirit of God and in faithfulness to His Word — to act for the Lord and not as before men. Levitical and priestly service — not now official nor marked by ecclesiastical pretension — but in moral suitability before the Lord is yet to be found in the gatherings of believers. Such conditions will attract the attack of the enemy as surely today as in the time of Jehoshaphat. Worldly and unholy elements, which the Moabites and Ammonites are typical of, will intrude in an endeavour to prevent the saints enjoying the inheritance — the heavenly portion which is theirs in Christ Jesus. 2 Chron. 20: 3-30 is a heart-warming description of the way in which the enemy was foiled. "The battle is not yours, but God's" — was the Spirit's word to the company. God would act for His people — they *should* see the "salvation of the LORD." But it is interesting and instructive to see again the condition of heart which the enemy's threat produced. "And Jehoshaphat *feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast* throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, *to ask help from the LORD*": even out of all the cities of Judah *they came to seek the LORD*" (vv. 3, 4). How gladly and how quickly the blessed God would respond to such features. Beloved brethren, may we take this to heart! This, and this alone, is the way the present practical gain of salvation is found. How often we attempt to face assembly exercise as though *we* were those primarily affected, not realising the "the battle is *not yours*, but God's ". The true and sustained fear of God, the bringing of Him in in prayer; the exclusion of fleshly activities by means of the fasting, will most certainly eventuate in a fresh experience of the "salvation of the Lord." A spirit of worship will ensue (v.18); saints will be established and the prophetic word shall prosper among them; the singing from joyful hearts and "praise in holy splendour" — (the beauty of holiness) will gladden the heart of our beloved Lord, and

the triumphant testimony before men will be "Praise the LORD; for His mercy endureth for ever" (v. 21). Spoil (spiritual gain) beyond measure is the consequent happy portion of those who find themselves together in Berachah — "the valley of blessing," every feature which had attempted their disruption completely overthrown. Beloved, may we truly experience the conditions which bring in so blessedly "the salvation of the Lord."

Finally — a reference to the New Testament. In Luke 2 Simeon is brought before us as a "man in Jerusalem" — he was in his own locality! He was privileged beyond many — he took "Him (the Child Jesus) up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; For mine eyes *have seen Thy salvation*" (vv. 28-30). With adoring hearts let us "stand still" in holy wonder and contemplate the greatness and the glory which was enshrined in that Holy Babe. There was in Him that which could not be restricted or confined. The marvellous unfolding of the truth of the mystery by the Apostle Paul was not yet extant, but do we not get some precious indication of what was contained in the vessel of *God's salvation*? "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (v. 32). Putting the Gentiles first is truly an Ephesian touch, see Ephesians 2: 17 and other verses.

How blessed indeed if our hearts are open to such a view of our beloved Lord. One competent to bring to fruition and into display every thought of the eternal heart of God Himself. How necessary to take account of the *conditions* involved! This precious presentation of our beloved Lord is beyond all *human* perception; the education of the mind, even religious zeal itself, is unable to perceive such hidden glory. Simeon's abstraction from things of earth and his waiting attitude as he watched for divine intervention is reflected in the words "the Holy Ghost was upon him." It was to this attitude of heart that the same Holy Ghost revealed to him the coming in of Christ and it was in the leading of the Spirit of God that he moved to the temple.

These are the conditions, beloved brethren. We *have* the Holy Spirit, His normal function is to reveal the preciousness of Christ to our hearts and as moving in His power we shall find such beauty and worth in that precious Vessel of God's salvation that the world and all its glory will fade from view.