

**Are You Saved?:
New Testament Doctrine of Salvation**

Introduction

When Latter-Day Saints, especially full-time and Stake missionaries, come into contact with persons of other Christian denominations the topic of salvation is frequently discussed, sometimes heatedly. Our church is frequently accused of believing in "works-based" salvation when others claim it is only by Grace we are saved. The problem is not a Theological or doctrinal one, it is semantic. The word "saved" is used several different ways in the New Testament. Therefore it has different particular meanings according to the context of that particular scripture. When involved in a religious discussion it is important to make sure there is a mutual understanding of the words being used. Failure to do so results only in confusion.

The most generic definition of the word "saved" is to be protected or delivered from that which is harmful or undesirable. Obviously, there are many things that are harmful to us in our environment, hence the different usages of the term. From here we move on to the first degree of specification: physical salvation versus spiritual salvation. Physical salvation is then divided into two additional categories: temporal and eternal. And, spiritual salvation has three major divisions: justification, sanctification and exaltation.

Types of Salvation

Temporal Physical

Temporal physical salvation represents protection from mortal danger. Usage of the term "saved" in this context is exhibited when Jesus and the apostles are at sea in a ship when a great storm arises. The apostles in fear of capsizing, wake Jesus from His sleep and say, "Lord, save us: we perish" (Matt. 8:25). Peter repeats a similar plea, while sinking as he walks on the water, "Lord, save me" (Matt 14:30).

This concept is also conveyed when Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). And when Jesus is discussing the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel he states, "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation...and except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved" (Mark 13:19-20).

Eternal Physical

The second type of physical salvation is more commonly referred to as resurrection, which is synonymous in the scriptures with immortality. Peter symbolically equates baptism with the resurrection and says it is to salvation when he states "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (cf. 1 Peter 3:21, also cp. Rom. 6:4 where Paul employs similar symbolism). Baptism does not save us by literally washing dirt from our bodies. Rather it saves us by permitting us to participate in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the resurrection of life.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes our salvation from physical death: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

Christ taught "all that are in the graves shall hear [the Father's] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). Thus, resurrection saves our spirits from an eternal separation from our bodies after physical death.

Justification

Justification, or the merciful act of having the punishment of your sins waived, is merited on the basis of faith alone. We cannot perform any work that will undo justice's demand that we be punished. Nothing we do on our own can free us from the punishment we rightly deserve from committing sin, for once it is committed it cannot be undone. Fortunately, Grace and Mercy come into play on our behalf. To be justified means to be made righteous.

Jesus proclaimed His divine right to justify the believer as he sat among a group of critical Pharisees and a woman entered and anointed His feet with oil. For her act of love, Jesus told her "thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50).

Paul's often quoted, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is a the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8) is talking about justification. This is made plain by Paul's statement concerning works performed under the Law of Moses: "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16). And also when he states "Therefore being justified by faith, we

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2).

Lehi is saying precisely the same thing when he says "by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever...there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah...he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved" (2 Ne. 2:5-9).

Sanctification

The second type of spiritual salvation is the process of individual purification whereby believers in Christ are made holy through repentance. Paul ties sanctification and being saved together when he says, "we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). Paul implies repentance and other good works are part of the sanctification by his statement, "being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness" (Rom. 6:22). He also states that those who are "called to be saints" are "them that are sanctified" (1 Cor 1:2).

Repentance is the major work of the sanctification process, and is referred to by James in his statement "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). Repentance is part of the Sanctification process because it is a condition placed upon us by the individual who offers the freedom from punishment, namely Jesus Christ. Repenting in and of itself does not release us from the demands of justice, as it is an attempt to make amends for sins previously committed and to try to avoid them in the future.

Sanctification is synonymous with the baptism of the Holy Ghost (John 1:33), the baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11) and being born again (John 3:3-5). As we chose to repent, the Holy Spirit will give us greater understanding of the particular faults that we need to work on. It will also help us avoid and resist temptation as long as we seek after and heed its guidance. The Holy Spirit helps us purge our sinful natures and start anew by figuratively turning up the heat on us.

Exaltation

To be exalted, means to be lifted up. In this case, lifted up into the heavenly kingdom of God. Exaltation is the endowment of glory, knowledge and power equivalent to that of Jesus Christ upon a resurrected person.

The term "eternal life" found in the scriptures is

synonymous with exaltation, and is different from resurrection as is noted above. It is described in Christ's parable of the sheep and goats as "inherit[ing] the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34). Paul taught that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if it so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). And, Peter says of those who are faithful "when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4).

Enduring to the end is the condition for exaltation. Jesus, in warning the apostles that wicked men would persecute them, stated "ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). The Lord states to a more general audience, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). Paul gives a good description of enduring to the end when reflecting upon his impending death he says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7).

Conclusion

When Latter Day Saints use the term salvation they are typically referring to exaltation. Whereas most people of other denominations are referring to justification when they use the word "saved". This makes it easy to get locked in arguments originating over simple semantics. Be sure to clarify terms and discuss the different usages of the word "saved" using the Scriptures. Doing so will help eliminate misconceptions on both sides. And, it can turn potentially contentious situations into teaching experiences.

Latter-Day Saint doctrine of salvation is entirely in agreement with New Testament doctrine of salvation, as it should be. Doctrine and Covenants section 20 verses 29-31 state, "we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in his name, and endure to the end, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God. And we know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true; And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds and strength."

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Temporal	An act of Providence	Matt. 14:30-31
Eternal	Automatic for mortals	1 Peter 3:21 Rom. 6:4 John 5:28-29

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Justification	By grace through faith	Eph. 2:8-9 Rom. 5:1-2
Sanctification	Works and the Spirit	2 Thess. 2:13 James 2:26
Exaltation	Endure to the end	Matt. 10:22 Matt. 25:34 Rev. 21:7