

The Basis of Deliverance

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon emphasizes the basis of deliverance through Christ's work and the sealing of the Holy Spirit, highlighting the believer's new identity and freedom in God.

Scripture: Romans 5:1, 2 Corinthians 3:17

Topics: "Deliverance", "The Work of Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes that true deliverance comes through the work of Christ and the sealing of the Holy Spirit, which grants believers liberty. He explains that while we live on earth, we must reckon ourselves as dead in Christ, understanding that our redemption is complete through His blood. Darby illustrates the journey of believers from redemption to glory, highlighting the importance of recognizing our position before God and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He warns against relying on personal experiences rather than focusing on God's grace and love, urging believers to maintain a clear conscience and to judge themselves regularly. Ultimately, he reassures that through Christ, we are free from judgment and can approach God with confidence.

Transcript

The Bible Herald, 1879, pp. 62-67, 102-105.

It is the seal of the Spirit which sets free; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). But, further, the basis of deliverance is the work of Christ. By faith, and the Holy Ghost, we reckon ourselves as dead, although living on the earth. As a matter of fact, I am not dead, but I reckon myself as dead. During the forty days that Jesus was on earth, after His resurrection, He was a risen man on the earth; and such ought we to be also, although our bodies are not yet risen.

The epistle to the Romans makes me understand redemption: the blood is therefore before God. I have crossed the Red Sea, that is, in the death and resurrection of Christ. The Holy Ghost makes this plain for the believer. In Ephesians we are seated in heaven. I need to cross Jordan to find that I am dead with Him -- in type. The desert forms no part of the counsels of God; it is the occasion of exercises through which we pass, and where we discover what we are and what God is for us. The desert is a school. You see from passages in Ex. 3:8; Ex. 6:7, 8; Ex. 15:16, 17, that the desert is left out when the counsels of God are treated of. The Israelites are redeemed from Egypt to be introduced into Canaan; the desert is not spoken of. This happened to the thief on the cross; from his conversion he passed into paradise without having the experience of the desert. He had the experience of that passage: -- "Ye have seen what I did to the

Egyptians . . . and have brought you to myself" (Ex. 19:4). We also from the first have been brought into the presence of God; although we have not yet got the glory. In this sense, as to salvation, there is not progress.

We are between these two positions, redemption, and the glory, having the Holy Ghost in us. The Israelites were thirty-eight years in the desert for chastisement, because they would not go up into the land of Canaan (see Num. 13, 14:25). And then God said: "You do not want to go up? Very well, turn back." The thief was fit for paradise, the very moment that he had believed: God "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). The desert commences at Sinai -- as making part of the ways of God -- and finishes with the death of Aaron; for, up to Sinai, all was grace. If you want to know what the desert is, read Deut. 8, and you will see two things: man put to the proof, and besides, the care and patience of God towards the redeemed people. It is what God does towards us.

When we have understood that the blood is between us and God, God presents Himself to us as a judge; and when death and resurrection is treated of, God is a deliverer. "See the salvation of the Lord which He will show to you today, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you." By the deliverance of Christ God puts man in an entirely new position before Him, although not yet in the glory. Not only is God no longer against me, but He puts me beyond death and judgment. No sooner have I known and believed that Christ died for me, than I at once get the Spirit; and I am sealed of Him in virtue of the blood. Then I am free in my relations with the Father. Christ was sealed on account of the excellence of His own person; but we, as we are sinners, are sealed on account of the blood of Christ. The seventh chapter of Romans gives the experiences of a man who is imprisoned; and the eighth, those of a man set free. There are souls who think that they are delivered, saying that they are dead and risen; but as a matter of fact, they are not.

Rom. 5:1-11 goes farther than the whole epistle, because it goes as far as the end of all (v. 11); as it was said to the Israelites that they were brought to God: it is impossible to go farther than that, it is the end of all. When we are at this point, we know what God is in Himself, in His nature as God, and we rejoice in Him. In Rom. 7 comes the experience of what we are; and in Rom. 8 it is rather my position, and my privileges which are spoken of, and not of what God is in Himself for us. It is one thing to know what I am, and another thing to know what God is.

In the religious systems they are taught to say, "I feel this, I experience that," in such a manner that I is always found at the beginning of the sentence, instead of its being God.

This was the case with the prodigal son before he got to the father: "I perish with hunger: . . . I will arise . . . I will say . . . I have sinned"; but when he is with the father, he is no longer taken up with his I, but only with the father, -- with what the father did and said: what in short the father was. The prodigal son ought indeed to be happier; but it is only a question of the father, of His love, of His grace, and of His joy. Go and say to many Christians that they are the temple of the Holy Ghost; you will frighten them.

From v. 12 of the fifth chapter of Romans begins a completely new thesis. First, it was a question of individual sins, of the conduct of man; but, after that, of the state of man, of the sin of Adam -- that is, of the disobedience of one.

When I think of my sins, I fear the judgment of God; and when I think of sin, I recognize that I am lost. If the Spirit is in a believer, the fruit will be seen. You know the Father, as a child knows its father and counts upon him for everything, although it will not know how to explain what father may be. Since Pentecost the

new life ought not to exist without the Holy Ghost; but I myself was seven years without the Holy Ghost, and I knew a person who was thirty years without it. But I do not give myself as a good example. If there is not liberty with God, it is a sign that I have not understood the gospel, or that I have let my hands fall down, -- "the shield of faith"; that is, that I have given place to Satan.

It is important to judge oneself constantly: those who do not do so are not free, or happy, when they think of the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

Paul did not fear it for himself; he feared it for others, for those who are not converted; for unbelievers. This is the normal state of the Christian life. He walked as if he were already before the judgment-seat of Christ; he was already manifested. You must have a good conscience in order to be manifested before the judgment-seat. That urges you to evangelize others. My soul is in the light, as God is in the light, and before the judgment-seat all will be manifested in the light. The doctrine is, that we shall be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, and therefore Paul set himself before it constantly. But the heart may not be clear about its position before God; it may be uneasy at the thought of the judgment-seat, because it is frightened for those words, "that everyone may receive the things done in his body." If I were sure of receiving a handsome reward, I should not be frightened. Are we happy in thinking that we shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? If I know that then I shall be like Him, I cannot do less than be happy. It is possible to understand the doctrine; but if the conscience is not good, you are not at liberty. The conscience must be exercised. There are, it is true, souls that tremble all their lives, and then are very happy when at the point of death. Fear at the thought of the judgment-seat may come from two causes; either from a want of deliverance, or from the lack of a good conscience.

It is necessary to do as the Apostle did -- buffet the body, and lead it captive (1 Cor. 9:27), if we want communion not to be interrupted. If we judge ourselves, the Lord will not take pleasure in chastising us; otherwise He will chastise us. And it is not enough to judge the evil deed: we must see what was the occasion of it, as the Lord did with Peter (John 21).

If we do not investigate the source, and if we do not judge the root, it will produce the same evil things. The Lord does not say to Peter, "You have denied Me," but "Lovest thou me more than these?" The root was, that Peter had had confidence in himself.

There are ifs in the word; but not when our salvation is treated of, for this is perfect, and we possess it. This we have; all is completed; but we find the ifs when life for heaven is spoken of, as in Col. 1:23, Heb. 3:6, etc., although we have the promise that God will keep us to the end. With my responsibility, I have the certainty that I shall get to heaven, although I may be often in danger. It is the faithfulness of God up to the end of our course. The wolf takes away the sheep, but not from the hands of the Lord. The ifs bring out the fact of my constant dependence on the Lord, who never takes His eyes off the just, as He acted with Job even when he walked badly.

The priesthood of Christ for Christians is exercised in two ways. In the Hebrews, it is for our weakness; a provision to maintain us in the joy of His presence. Besides, in 1 John 2:12, we have an advocate with the Father when we have sinned. The Lord prayed in order that Peter's faith should not fail, not that he should not fall; and the result was that he did not despair. He did not go and hang himself as Judas did. The throne of grace is for want, for succour; and I can always go there, and always draw near to God (Heb. 4:16). As to mercy, we always have need of it; it is always necessary for us weak creatures. (See Jude 21; 2 Tim. 1:18; and all the epistles written to individuals).

Many brethren are not clear as to the difference between the operation of the Holy Ghost and the seal of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and we are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

That which distinguishes Christianity is not the fact that there are converted souls, for there have been such always since Abel's time; but that there is a divine person, the Holy Ghost, sent from heaven to seal the believer, and to dwell in him. "Ye are sons," there are converted ones; then "he has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts" (Gal. 4:6). It is not right to ask for the Holy Ghost; it would be like a man who was looking for his hat, not knowing that he had it on his head. It is another thing to ask to be filled with the Holy Ghost. There is an important word in Rom. 8:9, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." It is not the Christian position, if he has not the Spirit. God does not recognize such a state.

You are taught, in the Catechism, to say, "Our Father": but suppose these are not the relationships? You must have the pardon of sins in order to have the Holy Ghost. Scarcely had Peter said, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins," when they "received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 10:43; 44); and also in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

If you are well instructed, you soon pass through the seventh chapter of Romans provided that your conscience has been exercised; otherwise, sooner or later, you must pass through it.

The law judges of God according to what we have done, but grace reasons from what God is, as from above, downwards; on the other hand, the conscience reasons from below and upwards -- that is, according to what I am.

As in 1 Cor. 3:15, so in 1 John 2:28, it is a question exclusively of the dealings of the Lord with respect to their labours, and not in respect of their righteousness. To those who fear that pure grace, and the certainty of salvation, would give free course to their own will, to the flesh to do what it listed; you would answer thus: Suppose a father said to his son, "You are my son; you will always be my son, and you never can absolutely be anything but my son, whom I love tenderly"; do you believe that he would add, "Well, in consequence, you can do what you wish?" Nay, he would rather say to him, "You ought to behave yourself as my son."

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:16).

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