

How Can a Man Know That He Is Saved?

by Rolfe Barnard

Salvation is in the hands of Almighty God and is based on His mercy and sovereignty, requiring men to experience the horror of being forever forsaken by God.

Duration: 52:30

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:35-36, Deuteronomy 32:42, Matthew 27:46, Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-9, Revelation 20:11-15

Topics: "Assurance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Deuteronomy chapter 32 and specifically verses 35 and 36. He suggests that these verses can be interpreted in different ways, either as a message about God delivering the Jewish nation in the future or as a recipe for how God purges, delivers, and revivifies his church. However, the preacher chooses to focus on the individual and asks the question, 'When is a man saved?' He argues that God's way of delivering anything or anyone is through judgment. The preacher also emphasizes the need for a re-study of man and a deeper understanding of his nature and the work God must do to save him.

Transcript

Tonight, the book of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 32, and this chapter has to do with the last sermon God's man Moses preached upon the occasion of the second giving of the law. Deuteronomy, the second giving of the law, and I want to seize upon just two verses of scripture out of this sermon for the message tonight, verses 35 and 36. I believe these two verses could be preached, three messages from them, according to your theology.

I want to pick out one of them. I believe that you could take these verses, this chapter, and especially these two verses, and bring a message of how God shall deliver his elect nation, the Jews, in the future. If that doesn't fit your theology, I believe these scriptures give us the recipe for how God shall purge, deliver, and revivify his church.

Tonight, I want to get down to the individual. I believe in these two verses we have the answer to the question, when is a man saved? When is a man saved? God says through his servant here in verse 35, to me belongeth vengeance and recompense. Therefore shall slide in due time, for the day of thy calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

For the Lord shall judge his people. I believe you'll get the meaning of that a little nearer to what the scripture actually is trying to say, if you rub out the word judge and put the word deliver. For the Lord shall deliver his people.

The only way on earth the Lord has ever been able to deliver his people, a nation, an individual, a church, a movement, the only way God knows to deliver anything or anybody is by judging it. We are professing Christian world is, of course, deeply divided over the teaching of the word of God about what's going to take place in the last days. I am such a novice on that big word eschatology that I don't touch it much.

But there is one thing about the interpretation of the return of the Lord that the people who call themselves primulinarian, you're aware there are different kinds of them, but it seems to me the heart of that interpretation is true in this respect, that God will bring things to a crisis. K-r-i-s-i-s is the Greek word that God delivers and saves, not by a gradual process, but by crisis. In that sense, I think the scriptures speak here.

I think that it's almost a forgotten note today that God's judgments come from the hand of a God of all grace. We would have to completely change our whole thinking today, for the greatest need of theology today is a restudy of man. What kind of an animal is man? Is he to be pitied, or is he willful? Did somebody push him in the ditch he finds himself in now that he'd dig it and then jump in it himself? Is he a man that is in the hands of an arbitrary despot called God? Is he the kind of an individual that is screaming and searching for the right way? What kind of a person is man? How would even Almighty God have to do and work in order to save men? That's where there's study.

I believe that man is this kind of a person, that if God Almighty doesn't bring him to judgment in this life, to crisis, that he'll have to send him to hell and judge him at the great white throne. Now, that's a very pessimistic estimate of us folks, but I believe it's the Bible estimate. For the Lord shall judge.

He'll deliver by way of judgment his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left. And the scriptures continue the dissertation about how God Almighty has to kill the gods people trust in, and how without apology he identifies himself as being a God who kills and then makes a life. A God who wounds and then heals.

And then he threatens about his judgment, for I lift up my hand to heaven and say I live forever, and if I quit my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I'll render vengeance to my enemies, and will reward them that hate me. And I'll make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh, that was the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenge is upon the enemy. It's sight on earth, read the Old Testament, and get God's estimate of mankind.

He regards them as being his enemies. He regards them as being haters of him. Now since you were born, the greatest head person here, we've absolutely refused face kind of folks we are.

Every media of propaganda and education and pulpitering and everything else built on the doctrine of evolution was born in hell. It's in our schools, everywhere, and we're getting gooder and gooder all the time. And so we fitted our gospel where now we've got a God without wrath, delivering men by a Christ without a cross, the kind of men who have no sin.

But that isn't the Bible picture. I think these two verses, 35 and 36, I say I think, I don't know, it's my best judgment. I think they say one thing in three different forms of language, but I want to lay them out before

you now.

When is a man saved? Well, of course a man is saved in the Bible sense of the term, when he's brought under the authority and rule of Jesus Christ, where he willingly serves a new master, he's under new management, we know that. When he is married, can I use that word, Paul did, in a vital union, the Holy Spirit performing the ceremony with the living Lord, who is the Lord in the sense of being the Son sent by virtue of his blood poured out on a tree. But when do men come to that place of willing glad surrender to and submission to the Lord Jesus? I believe our scripture tells us when.

Not in the order given in the text, but I mention first that a man is saved when it pleases God. When he shall repent himself for his service. Surely the two most miraculous things that have happened in the history of the world thus far are the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And both were accomplished by the hand of Almighty God. Did you get it? When is a man going to get saved? When it pleases God. Now, is this fatalism? No, it's the only antidote to the fatalism of this hour.

What does this mean? This is holy ground. Maybe we ought not to even talk, just pull off our shoes. And pray.

But when the pulpit lost this note, and it began to lose it at least 130 years ago in America, then is when it declined. Until now we have salvation by people who have made decisions, instead of people who have become seekers of the Lord. And there is a vast difference, and thus you ring a doorbell, and you don't find anybody saying, oh, I'm so glad you came.

I've just been here in my Bible praying. Maybe somebody will come and interpret it for me. You know, America is an apostate nation.

Now, if this isn't good to see, I'll just forgive the old man the best I know. As I understand the apostasy of the book of Hebrews, isn't it people who have quit going through the motions? Isn't it people who have lost their religion? The apostasy of Hebrews, the book of Hebrews, is departing from a living God. And I'll tell you, a fellow who has still got his faith and his belief and his opinions and his doctrine and his creed and his experience, but he has no relationship to a living God, that guy is hard to talk to.

But we just, well, face it now. Either we are going to have to join Brother Rogers, who is telling me tonight that the Lord is going to let him go to India and maybe to Indonesia, and I'm fixing to join him if I can get my wife to let me go. I'd love to go over there and just sit where people are begging God for mercy.

He told me, listen to a man today, this little old two-bit preacher, saw 8,000 people pleading for mercy, just one week's time. Begging God to have mercy on them. Whew! People go with you.

People go with you. Nobody is interested in America where everybody has been converted from one to a dozen times. Nobody feels a need for a seeking of the Lord, because we just, well, face it, the gospel of our hour has placed salvation in the hands and at the caprice of men instead of Almighty God.

Now, if that's what you mean by Calvinism, I'll fight you for it. I won't fight you over your interpretation of the doctrines. You don't know enough about it, and I know less.

But this is what we must, if hell frees us over, come back to. Not to prove something, but unto God, to turn men's attention to the grave. Paraventure! Will a thrice holy God have mercy on me? Now, if the

salvation of man is in the hands of the same God of whom Saul of Tarsus will say when it please God, to reveal his son in or to, I think it means both of them to me, that's the only God the Bible talks about.

If I believed that, I'd come down off of my little profession and decision and my little doctrines and my little creeds and my little experiences, and unto God I'd become a candidate for the mercy of God. And I'd know that I've got no price to bring to him and no bargain to offer him and no deal to make with him, that I'm utterly obnoxious to his mercy. We can do one or two things.

We can get back with broken hearts to shutting men up to this. I'll tell you when God's going to save you, when it pleases him. And the God of the Bible says, I will be inquired of.

You ain't interested enough to become a candidate, not much hope for you. How do you reckon God could do anything in this rat race we call Christendom America, where on Sunday mornings most of the churches come and get a little shot of religion in their arms, and sort of help them sleep through the next week, not go crazy? That's called spiritual fornication in the Bible, and that's the medicine Christendom gives people. Is there anything on earth you reckon God can do, Brother Rogers, this outfit around here, us, get our attention? Because the reason nobody's seeking God, ain't nobody heard from him lately.

He'll be inquired of. He never has been found except at the end of a supreme search. He never has.

I wonder whether God's through with us in this country. You got the blue, Brother Barnard? No. I'm just trying to be as honest as I know how, and how honest that is.

Honey, we're going to have to throw our little old nice gospel away. It's not the answer for this religious nation. We're going to have to change our praying.

We're going to have to start praying for God to bring his judgments upon his church. I don't believe we're ever going to listen to him anymore in our lives, if he's not good enough and merciful enough. To reign in his judgments, let them begin at the house of the Lord.

I don't know whether this is heresy or not, but I thought for a while maybe God was going to be merciful and let the Communists get us. I think it would be a wonderful thing if Communism would take over in America. It might be some people get saved.

It don't look like anybody's going to get saved until some terrible monster takes charge. The Communists killed several hundred thousand people over in Indonesia, and now they're being saved by the thousands. Of course, it just tears my little theology all to pieces, but I've talked to godly missionaries who've seen God raise people from the dead in the last year in Indonesia.

Most of my theology went out the back window. Of course, I know that long since the theology of us fundamentalists ruled God out of the universe and says, now, we're getting along fine, don't you interfere. I'm telling you now that nothing short of a supernatural intervention will have to be judgment.

It's the only way God ever has intervened, bud. We ought to start praying for her. You want your kids to go to hell? Well, be fat like you are now.

We'd better start praying for God in mercy to do something to get the attention of men to whom he's been praying. When man is saved, when it pleases God, when it pleases God, I'll be inquired of. When it pleases God, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

When it pleases God, he's rich unto all who call unto him. When it pleases God, when men and women come down off of their little nest and start following around like the leper, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole. When's a man saved? I've been sort of praying since I won't have nothing to lose much, that maybe God will bring financial bankruptcy on us.

That'd be an act of mercy. Now, of course, he wouldn't do nothing like that, you know. For if God's so good, he'd rather let us all go to hell than have a little hard time.

Isn't that right? You wouldn't get a preacher that may be a calamity howler, but in my judgment he isn't. I don't know whether that's worth a dime or not, but the only way on earth God could get your attention is mine, is to make us hungry for bread. I just don't believe we've heard from God in so long, and I don't think we're fixing to pay any attention to him.

And, by God, I understand you're a big financier now. At least you are dealing with businessmen, and I believe you'll say every man knows what he's talking about now. But everybody in the business world is deeply conscious of the fact that there isn't even a hair's breadth separating America from bankruptcy right now.

That's right. And if you understand the United States' policy toward South Africa, where most of the gold that yet hasn't been mined is, and how we're just determined to turn them over to Russia, and if Russia ever gets control of the gold of South Africa, if God doesn't intervene, you've got the gold in your pocket. You've got the market absolutely controlled by anti-God Russia and anti-Christ Israel.

All they've got to do is pull the switch, and you'll lose everything you've got. Wouldn't that be awful? That'd be better than going to hell. Maybe we'd better quit bragging on ourselves and wake up to the kind of folks we are.

Let me tell you what kind of person you are, honey. If it wasn't for the influence of the gospel and the power of the common grace of God and the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, you'd get into the presence of God now, you'd spit in his face. That's the kind of folks you are, and me too.

That's right. Oh, God, men are going to be saved when it pleases God. If God don't do something to turn men and women into seekers and candidates for his mercy, there's no hope for us.

When's a man going to be saved? Well, the same thing in a little different language. God's going to save a sinner when God sees that that sinner's power is gone. And there's none shut up for that.

I'll tell you what kind of folks we are. This is awful. There ain't no living human being ever going to be saved if he can help it.

That's awful, but so. There's no person ever going to be saved if he can help it. That's the kind of folks we are.

Of course, we don't believe it. We think that we're nice, but God says that our hearts, the thing that makes us tick, are cesspools of hostility to Almighty God. We are God-haters! That's an awful heart.

Talking about it. Well, if I could always consider, I'd be with that fellow preacher, I'd be with that damnable doctor, any man that wants to be saved, go save him. That's fine, but it's silly.

Who wants to? Nobody. Nobody. You try to cram that, oh, I believe in the who-shall-will gospel, who-shall-will come.

Fine. Silly to preach it in a world of whosoever won't. When's a man saved? When he surrenders to Jesus Christ.

When's a man surrender to Jesus Christ? He ain't never going to do it until he's been made up bankrupt spiritually. Awful when God sees that the last wiggle is out. And when God sees that a man has lost all hope in anything he's ever done or ever will do, in his power within himself, in his strength within himself, then God will take charge.

How's God going to rob you and me of our utter trust in our own ability when he sees that that power is gone? And as none shut up or laugh, when every refuge is gone, when every avenue of escape has eluded us, when every mouth is stopped, guilty, guilty, guilty, unless God can make a beggar out of you, rob you of all that you trust in, you'll never be saved. When is a man saved? In a little different language, say the same thing, number three. When in the presence of God's judgments, as they become real and manifest to his heart, that's when a man will be saved.

Let me repeat it. Not when the judgments of God come to a man, but until that man realizes this is the judgment of God. Until it becomes real and manifests in you, all judgments are figures of hell.

They're just previews. Is that the right word for it? All that see the judgments of God are not saved, but all that are saved see the judgments of God. Ladies and gentlemen, the light of the horrors of hell must come to men, or they'll never see the glory of God in salvation.

Until men become keenly conscious of their total ruin and their total separation in God's time from Almighty God, they'll not be saved. This is terrible doctrine for this enlightened age. They'll just well face it.

The cross and hell are both just exercises of the sovereignty of God. And they stand and they fall together until an individual has some sense of what Jesus Christ experienced on that tree. You needn't worry about becoming a Christian.

Let me explain. You read the record that God been pleased to leave of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read it, read it, read it, read it.

Never cry from the lips of the Lord Jesus until he was utterly forsaken by God Almighty. They whipped him, he didn't cry. They placed crowns on his head, he didn't cry.

They stuck a spear in his side, he didn't cry. They offered him gold, he didn't cry. They said terrible things about his mother, he didn't cry.

They sneered at him, made fun of him, teased him and mocked him. But you'll never hear a sane human cry out of even him, because he'd been made sane there, folks. And it wasn't a play-like thing, it was so.

And when it dawned on the Son of God on that cursed tree what had taken place. There came forth a cry of desperation and agony. It must be in some sense your experience or you'll never be interested in being saved.

He experienced being utterly forsaken by Almighty God. I hope you'll experience a little of it. I hope God will seal you out and rob you of everything until some of the hope of being abandoned by and forsaken by

your Creator shall dawn on your soul.

For this is the cry of Emmanuel, this is Emmanuel's orphan cry. This is the awful judgment of God. Oh, to be brought to where the horror of being forever forsaken by the One who put breath in you.

That's when you're going to be saved. We don't need to be saved very much unless this is so. But if it is the fate of men and women to experience exactly what Jesus Christ experienced on that tree and to experience it throughout eternity, we desperately need to be saved.

Any of you started your Bible with the literal fire and hell, I suppose it is. But it won't hurt much. I'll tell you what will hurt in hell.

To be utterly forsaken by Almighty God. And God grant that some of the horror of what it means to be L-O-S-T, lost, will not become real to you. I think you'll do everything you'll curse God, or you'll become a candidate for mercy.

A candidate for mercy. I think I've told it before, but I'll tell it again. I was in Decatur, Texas, holding a meeting many years ago.

My little baby girl, Patty Sue, took sick. And wife would phone. I hung on the meeting.

And one night while I was preaching, a boy rushed up from outside the tent, came up to the pulpit, brought me a message from the telephone. A message by a good man where I lived. Said, tell the preacher, he phoned the message, that he's waited as long as he can.

He wants to be home before his baby dies. He must come right now. And I borrowed a fellow's car and drove through the night.

And when I got home, the doctor was gone, the nurse was out of the room, my wife was in the room with my little girl, sitting on the side of the bed. And I went and sat on the other side. My little girl was nearly dead.

But she became conscious that daddy was in the room. I'm not a doctor, I don't know just exactly how to describe it, but she was hemorrhaging inside and blood vessels were breaking. And she lost the power of her speech.

She looked at me and she was a daddy girl. And I could see her lips try to move. And I know what she was saying.

I knew it then. She was appealing to her daddy to help her. And I had to sit there and hold my baby in her arms.

And I heard the rattle of death in her throat when her little body jumped. Well, my girl wife saw. And I had to sit there and watch my only child die.

I would have reached down and rebuked the monster and released my little girl, but I couldn't. And one day on a tree outside the holy city of Jerusalem, this is a fact, it actually took place. The only begotten son of almighty God, the one we talk about in the scripture, is the son of my Lord.

Under God, he looked up. He couldn't say, my father, because he'd been made sin. But he said, my God, my God help me.

Why hast thou forsaken me? And the God who could have released his son from that monster that engulfed him, wouldn't. For therein was wrought out the price of my redemption. Redemption from what? Total, final separation throughout eternity from almighty God.

When are you going to be saved? When something of the horrors of what damnation really is become real to you. You'll become a seeker after the Lord. Star hits.

Oh, God tonight. I don't even know how to pray to you. I just pray.

If I knew how, I'd do it. Lord, come upon the scene. Penetrate inside people.

Turn the spotlight on the utter horror of what it means to be forever forsaken by God. Cause men to plead for God's mercy, not for his abandoning of them. Lord, God help us tonight.

I don't even know how to pray tonight. There's an awful sense. I don't think there's a spot in the world where people have been warned, fled with, wept over, impertuned to see the coming wrath of God's holy abandonment.

More than the people who come to this building. I hope nobody will go on until one day their cry shall be, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Wouldn't it be awful to go to hell from this preaching place? If you want to be saved, I beg you to scream down this aisle. Get on your face and plead God for mercy.

Just plead for mercy. While we sing, that's the only intention I know to give. And let's sing while we stand.

I hear the Savior say, Hope you will win if you want to be saved. If you desperately need God's hand of mercy and Jesus Christ. Well, come and become a candidate.

Humble yourself and become a seeker. Cry unto the Lord for his mercy.

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