

# Simple Salvation

by Curtis Hutson

In the book, *Life and Works of Spurgeon*, published in 1890, Mr. Spurgeon gives the following account of his conversion:

It pleased God in my childhood to convince me of sin.... My heart was broken in pieces. Six months did I pray—prayed agonizingly with all my heart, and never had an answer. I resolved that, in the town where I lived, I would visit every place of worship in order to find out the way of salvation. I felt I was willing to do anything and be anything if God would only forgive me.

I set off, determined to go round to all the chapels; and I went to all the places of worship; and though I dearly venerate the men that occupy those pulpits now, and did so then, I am bound to say that I never heard them once fully preach the Gospel. I mean by that, they preached truth, great truths, many good truths that were fitting to many of their congregation—spiritually-minded people; but what I wanted to know was, How can I get my sins forgiven? And they never once told me that. I wanted to hear how a poor sinner, under a sense of sin, might find peace with God; and when I went I heard a sermon on "Be not deceived: God is not mocked," which cut me up worse, but did not say how I might escape. I went again another day, and the text was something about the glories of the righteous: nothing for poor me....

At last, one snowy day—it snowed so much I could not go to the place I had determined to go to, and I was obliged to stop on the road, and it was a blessed stop to me—I found rather an obscure street, and turned down a court, and there was a little chapel....I wanted to know how I might be saved....At last a very thin-looking man came into the pulpit and opened his Bible and read these words: "Look unto me, and be ye

saved, all the ends of the earth." Just setting his eyes upon me, as if he knew me all by heart, he said, "Young man, you are in trouble." Well, I was, sure enough. Says he, "You will never get out of it unless you look to Christ."

And then, lifting up his hands, he cried out..., "Look, look, look! It is only look!" I saw at once the way of salvation. Oh, how I did leap for joy at that moment! I know not what else he said; I did not take much notice of it—I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, they only looked and were healed. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard this word "Look!" what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh, I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away! And in Heaven I will look on still in my joy unutterable.

That was Spurgeon's experience of salvation—the man who became one of the greatest preachers of all times. In fact, he may have been the greatest preacher since the Apostle Paul or since New Testament preachers.

He preached when just a teenager at Park Street Church. A thousand came to hear him, then twelve hundred. He made a move to Exeter Hall, and ten thousand came. Later when that place burned, they moved to Surrey Gardens. Thirty thousand came to hear him there.

The people said, "He's a teenager, a novelty. When he gets older, this will wear off, and such crowds will not come." But they kept coming. Finally the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle was built which seated five thousand. You had to have a ticket in order to get into the Metropolitan Tabernacle to hear Spurgeon preach, and these had to be gotten two to three weeks in advance. On many occasions Spurgeon would ask the church members to stay at home to make space for all the visitors. And

these visitors would pack the five-thousand-seat building to hear Spurgeon preach.

When I read his salvation experience, I knew my experience was not too much unlike Charles Spurgeon's. I went to church. A preacher said, "Ye must be born again," but I had no idea what he meant. I even heard him say, "You ought to be saved. If you are not saved, you are going to Hell." I knew Hell was a lake of fire—an awful place—but I didn't know what "saved" meant. And no matter how much I wanted to be saved, I couldn't have been because I didn't know how to be saved. I prayed, I did everything else I knew to do, but I didn't know I had to trust Jesus Christ as my Saviour. Nobody had ever explained it to me.

Multiplied thousands of religious people go to church Sunday after Sunday, week after week, month after month, year after year; many know about Jesus and know something about the Scriptures, but they don't know how to obtain forgiveness of their sins. So they face death still unsaved.

I think many preachers take for granted that people know how to be saved, and so they never bother to explain it. They think it sounds too simple.

At the risk of sounding too simple, I take the text Spurgeon heard and give you a simple salvation sermon so no one listening to my voice can ever say, "I went to church, heard what he said, but didn't know what he meant. I didn't know how to be saved, nor did I know how to obtain forgiveness of my sins."

*"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."—Isa. 45:22.*

Looking at the text, I call your attention to four things:

### **I. THE SOURCE OF SALVATION**

You have the Source of salvation in the text: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Doesn't it seem strange that we have to emphasize "me"? Salvation is not in a church, not in any denomination, not in sacraments, not in ceremonies, not in rituals, not in works, not in reformation; salvation is in a Person—the Lord Jesus Christ. "Look unto me, and be ye saved."

My most difficult job as an evangelist is getting people to look to Christ alone for salvation. Some very sincere people look to Jesus and the baptistry. "It is not enough to look to Jesus," they say; "you must also be baptized."

Now everybody who gets saved ought to be baptized by immersion in a local church, but no one gets baptized to be saved. It is not looking to the baptistry; it is looking to Jesus.

I have been baptized, and I try to live right. But if I had to die right now and stand at Heaven's gate and were asked, "Curtis, why should we let you in?" I would not say, "Because I lived right." I believe I would stand tall and say:

**My hope was built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dared not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly leaned on Jesus' name.**

And that angel would say, "Come in, Curtis. You have the magic word that gets one into Heaven!"

Jesus will not share saving people with any church, with any denomination, with any individual—not the pope, not the Baptist

preacher, no sacrament—nothing else. He only is the Saviour, not one of the saviours.

In Acts 4:12 Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

A missionary visiting on a mission field led a little boy to Christ. He already had religion and knew about Jesus, but he had added many other things for salvation.

A few days later when she saw the little fellow, his countenance had changed. She asked, "Son, something has happened to you. You don't look the same. What happened?"

He answered, "Miss Missionary, I always knew Jesus was necessary, but I didn't know until the other day that He was enough."

I am here to tell you and the whole world that Jesus Christ is not only necessary, He is enough.

It is not what a man does that saves him; it is not what a man promises to do that saves him; it is not what a man quits doing that saves him; it is what a man has that makes him a Christian.

If a man must have a million dollars to be a millionaire, what must a man have to be a Christian? CHRIST! In I John 5:12 we read, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." That is it!

I'm not going to Heaven because I'm a Baptist, or because I've been baptized, or because I have tried to live good. I'm going to Heaven because I'm trusting Christ and Him alone for salvation.

There is no promise to those who partially believe on Jesus. The promise is to those who wholly believe on Him, the Source of salvation.

I belong to a church, I tithe to a local church in Murfreesboro, not in order to be saved, but because I am saved and want to help propagate the Gospel throughout the world through my local church program. But I did only one thing for salvation: I looked to Christ alone.

If there were any other way to be saved, why would God let His Son die on the cross? Yet this religion and this religion and this religion are trying to go to Heaven through baptism, through keeping the Commandments, through sacraments, through ceremonies, through lighting and burning candles and every other way. But Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

## **II. THE SCOPE OF SALVATION**

We have the Source of salvation, but we have also the scope of salvation: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Who can be saved? Everybody!

I get a little impatient with those who teach hyper-Calvinism and say that some are elected to be saved, some are elected to be lost, and some couldn't get saved no matter what because they weren't elected.

I have never met a non-elected Calvinist. They are all elected. It is the others who are not.

Ask any little first-grader what "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" means, and he will tell you, "Everybody in the world."

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world...." Ask any third-grader what that means, and he'll tell you, "God loves everybody in the world."

Hebrews 2:9 says He tasted "death for every man." Ask any third-grader what "every man" means, and he'll say, "Nobody is excluded: it means everybody."

But once you get to college and seminary, you learn that "every man" doesn't really mean every man; that the whole world doesn't really mean the whole world, but the whole elected world. Hogwash! Why don't you take it for what it says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved"?

What is the scope? "All the ends of the earth." Salvation is for everybody.

If I sell automobiles, I have to find a prospect because everybody is not a prospect. If I am selling real estate, I have to find a prospect because everybody is not a prospect. But when I am preaching the Gospel, everybody I meet—rich or poor, educated, uneducated, dumb, handsome, good-looking or ugly—is a prospect for salvation. "Jesus died for the whole world" is the scope of salvation.

Nobody in Hell will ever look up to Heaven and say, "Jesus, I wanted to be saved, but You didn't die for me." He will be in Hell because he would not trust Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

### **III. THE SIMPLICITY OF SALVATION**

We not only have the Source of salvation and the scope of salvation, but we have the simplicity of salvation in our text.

Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., once said, "Truth's most becoming garment is simplicity." People are not confused because preachers have been too simple, but they are confused because preachers have been too

complicated. Good preaching is not complicating a simple matter, but simplifying a complicated matter. Billy Sunday used to say, "Put the cookies on the lower shelf so everybody can reach them."

Whether this is true, I do not know, but I have been told that Charles Finney really didn't start out to preach. But he went to hear other preachers preach, and they used such words that the average man couldn't understand. Being a lawyer and an educated man, he could understand them. I am told that Charles Finney would gather people together and explain what the preacher had said from the pulpit. And he drew larger crowds explaining what the preacher had said than the preacher drew when he preached the sermon! Make your message so simple that anybody can understand it.

Salvation is so simple that we stumble over it. We can't believe it is that easy. Does our text say, "Look unto me, and be baptized and join the church"? No. Does it say, "Look unto me, and live right"? No. Does it read, "Look unto me, turn over a new leaf, and promise never to sin again"? Oh no! We do one thing to get saved: we look to Christ.

When Moses raised that brazen serpent in the wilderness, he said to those who were bitten and doomed to die, 'Look and live.' He didn't say, "All you who have 20/20 vision, look and you will live, but you who are blind in one eye don't have a chance." He just said, "Look." You could have been blind in one eye and hardly have had sight in the other, but with what sight you had, if you looked at that brazen serpent, you lived.

People say to me, "I don't think I have enough faith to be saved." It is not the measure of faith but the object of faith who saves. You can have a little bitty faith and a great big Saviour. If, with what little, quivering faith you have, you will look to Jesus, then you will be saved.



Not a man in this room put his breakfast through a chemical analysis before he ate it. You just sat down and started eating. You don't know that your spouse wouldn't put rat poison in that food! Blind faith. You trusted her.

When you eat in a restaurant, you eat by faith. I have sat down in a restaurant and noticed bread left on plates and nice pieces of meat. I wonder: Do they throw out that good, uneaten stuff? That seems like such a waste. Everyone has faith.

The simplicity of salvation—"Look unto me" is all He is saying. With the little faith you have, even if it be just the least bit, say, "I cannot save myself. I believe Jesus died for me, and I'm looking to Him, trusting Him to take me to Heaven," and you will be saved.

The word look means "to depend on, to rely on." That same expression is found in Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Martin Luther translated that, "Oft looking unto Jesus," which has the idea of looking away from everything else and looking only to Jesus—looking away from our baptism, our works, our good life, our promises to do better, our reformation—looking only to Jesus.

Do I make myself clear? I'm struggling. I don't want you to trust anything but Jesus. I want you to live right, go to church, get baptized, tithe. But when it comes to salvation, I want you to say, "My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I am trusting Him and Him alone to get me to Heaven."

The Source of salvation—Jesus.

The scope of salvation—"all the ends of the earth."

The simplicity of salvation—just look.

Isn't that simple? Jesus made it that easy for us. He did the hard part two thousand years ago when He suffered Hell at Calvary for the whole world. I won't get into trying to explain that, except to say that He was infinite. He could suffer infinitely. And He did it in those few hours when He was suspended between Heaven and earth, as if rejected by both.

We have seen the Source of salvation, the scope of salvation, the simplicity of salvation. One is saved by simply trusting, simply believing, simply depending on Jesus.

#### **IV. THE SURETY OF SALVATION**

Now, the surety of salvation. "Look unto me, and be ye saved." We use that word all the time. Sometimes an unsaved world doesn't understand our terminology, especially those who don't go to church. If you say, "So-and-so got saved," they think he was in a house on fire and was pulled out of the back bedroom window. Or he was drowning, and somebody threw him a lifeline and dragged him in. To the world, saved means saved from something. If you save a man from a burning building, you save him from burning to death. If you save a man from drowning, you drag him out of the lake before he goes under for the last time. And when a man is saved in the Bible sense, he is saved from the penalty of sin, which is Hell.

To be saved means I am saved from Hell, the lake of fire. And when I get to Heaven, I'll be saved from the very practice and presence of sin. But right now, I am saved from the penalty of sin, for Jesus paid the penalty at Calvary.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved."

The Bible tells us that, but most religions teach that you are not saved when you look to Jesus. They say you are put in a position to be saved, provided you don't mess up again, or provided you endure to the end, or provided you keep the Ten Commandments. You have looked to Jesus and are trusting Him, but if you mess up, too bad. But all of us know we are going to mess up.

We are not saved by not messing up; we are saved by looking to Him. "Look unto me, and be ye saved"—not put into a position to be saved provided you do this and do that; but look unto Him, and be saved.

Do you know that if you are in danger of being lost, you are not saved? You were just put into a position to be saved, provided something doesn't happen. If I swim out into the middle of the lake to rescue you, then drag you ninety yards and leave you ten yards from shore, then brag after I get back to shore that I have saved you—I didn't save you. I put you in a position to be saved provided you could swim ten yards.

And if you look to Jesus and He says, "You will go to Heaven if you don't do this, or if you do that," He doesn't save you; He puts you in a position to be saved if you can do this or if you can refrain from doing the other.

No, when you looked to Jesus, you were saved right then and there. And you couldn't go to Hell if you tried. Justification is an act that cannot be reversed nor followed by condemnation.

The Source of salvation—Jesus.

The scope of salvation—"the ends of the earth."

The simplicity of salvation—just looking, just trusting.

The surety—and be saved.

I am saved. I am going to Heaven. Why? Because I'm looking to Jesus. I'm trusting Jesus. And if you will look to Him, you too will be saved. Trust Him alone and nothing else.