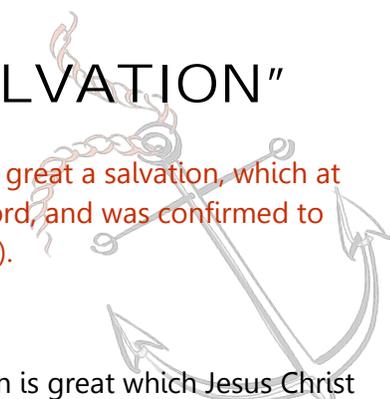




"SO GREAT A SALVATION"

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him" (Heb. 2:3).



WE continue to observe and catalogue reasons why the salvation is great which Jesus Christ brought to humanity. We have previously noted salvation's greatness in the fact that God called it great, that it originated with God, and that it was spoken by the Lord and His apostles. Let us anchor in a fourth reason why our salvation is great. It is because it saves our greatest possession ever—our soul! Jesus asked,

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

By asking this question, Jesus shows that a person's soul is greater than the whole composition of the world. We would not know this unless the Lord revealed such to us. Man mistakenly lives his life here without valuing what his greatest possession is. He often focuses on self-preservation. "Self-denial" and "self-control" are therefore viewed with dimness by the worldly mind unless such can be seen to be beneficial to the longevity and preservation of his earthly existence.

Man exhausts his energies on that which profits nothing in eternity. He may lose sleep and vex his mind over the lack of or surplus of material possessions. But as Solomon said, "...he shall take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand" (Eccl. 5:15; cf. 1 Tim. 6:7; Job 1:21).

He may become obsessed with the preservation of his physical body. Yet seeking to maintain the body in an optimal condition is a vain pursuit in the larger picture and definition of true life. This is not to suggest that people should care less about their bodies, for we should use our bodies to the service of God! Hence, bodily exercise profits little (1 Tim. 4:8). Yet godliness profits in all things, both now and in the life to come!

Likewise, man may have an unhealthy fear of others who may harm his body. If this life is all there is, then one would be correct in seeking to extend his physical life as long as possible and fill it up with as much pleasure as imaginable. He who makes his body an idol, however, is in for a *grave* disappointment. With the sobering understanding that life here is temporary and that there is a judgment which determines the nature of our eternity, man will cease to live a lopsided, undisciplined, and empty life. This is why Jesus counseled, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Sin mars the soul, and yet Jesus came to redeem it and make it whole again. This will lead us into our next article.

