

Tenses of Salvation: A Gospel outline

- The past tense is an event - **justification**. If we are in Christ, then we *have been saved*.
- The present tense is a *process* - **sanctification**. We *are being saved*.
- The future tense is an event - **glorification**. We *will be saved*.

How do these tenses relate to each other?

- Justification and glorification are the work of God alone with no work of our own (Eph 2:8-9, Jn 6:40).
- Our justification in this life guarantees our glorification in the next. (Rom 5:9, 8:30, Jn 10:28).
- Sanctification involves our work partnership with God (1 Cor 15:10, Phil 2:12-13, Col 1:28-29).
- The extent to which we partner with God's work of sanctification in this life influences the reward and glory we experience in the next (1 Cor 3:12-15, 9:24, 15:41-42,58).

Tenses of Salvation: A New Testament survey

This is only a selection of verses. Check out the tenses of salvation in your own Bible and watch how they weave together and influence each other in amazing ways. Praise God for His amazing gospel!

Some key verses are marked according to the following colours:

Justification, Sanctification, Glorification

The teaching of Jesus

Luke 18:9-14 ⁹ He also told this parable **to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous**, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰ "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, '**God, be merciful to me, a sinner!**' ¹⁴ I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other**. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus introduced the definition of the word "justify" (Greek: δικαιώω dikaioō = to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent) as an act of God's mercy. Here, it is the humble person who trusts in God's mercy will be justified, not the one who trusts in their own righteousness.

Mark 10:28-30 ²⁸ Peter began to say to [Jesus], "See, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, *there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,* ³⁰ *who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.* Reward/inheritance for the work we do for the sake of Jesus and the gospel comes both in this life and in the life to come.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, *that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

John 6:4 [Jesus said] For this is the will of my Father, *that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

From the Parable of the Talents: **Matthew 25:23** *His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

The teaching of Paul, the apostle of Jesus

Paul adopts Jesus' teaching on justification while preaching in Psidian Antioch:

ACTS 13:38-39 ^{38b} *through [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed [Greek: justified] from everything from which you could not be freed [Greek: justified] by the law of Moses.*

This is an important theme of justification: It's not by our work at all! Paul then builds on this throughout his letters.

GALATIANS: 2:16 *yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ (or the alternative translation, "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ"), so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ (or, "the faithfulness of Christ") and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*

3:7-11 ⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that *God would justify the Gentiles by faith*, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith... ¹¹ *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."*

EPHESIANS: 2:4-10 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, *made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—* ⁶ *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,* ⁷ *so that in the coming ages he might show the*

immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

4:1-3 ¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

2 TIMOTHY: 1:9 [God,] who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

TITUS: 3:5 He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.

1 CORINTHIANS: 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved (note the present-continuous tense) it is the power of God.

2:9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”

3:10-15 ¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. **Let each one take care how he builds upon it.** ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ **If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.** ¹⁵ **If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.**

15:51-58 ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast,

immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

2 CORINTHIANS: 3:18 *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*

4:16-18 ¹⁶ *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

5:8-10 ⁸ *Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due [eternal rewards, or the suffering of loss - 1 Cor 3:10-15] for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

COLOSSIANS: 1:28-29 ²⁸ *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*

3:4 *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

PHILIPPIANS: 2:12-13 ¹² *Therefore [because of Christ's death, resurrection and exaltation], my beloved... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

3:20-21 ²⁰ *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

A pathway through ROMANS

1. Paul lays the foundation of justification by grace alone, not works:

3:23-28 ²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law*

4:5 *And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,*

4:24-25 ²⁴ *It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

2. Then Paul brings in the link between justification and glorification, that—because they are both the work of God and not our work—the one guarantees the other:

5:1-2 ¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

5:8-11 ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

5:18 Therefore, as one trespass [Adam's] led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness [Jesus'] leads to justification and life for all men.

8:18-33 ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ... ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved... ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified... ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

10:9-10 ⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

3. Finally, after Paul has set the foundation of the unshakable grace of God in salvation, that he moves on to our work of partnering with God in sanctification.

12:1-2 ¹ I appeal to you therefore [because of God's work in the gospel laid out in Rom chapters 1-12], brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

After the foundation of grace is laid in Romans 1-11, chapters 12-16 are full of instructions for living a godly life and descriptions of what this transformed life looks like in those who are working out (and not for) their salvation in and through Christian community, empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit. For example:

13:11-14 ¹¹ Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far

gone; the day is at hand. So then *let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.* ¹³ *Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.* ¹⁴ ***But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.***

Other New Testament writers

2 PETER 1:1-8 ^{1b} *To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ ...* ³ *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence...* ⁵ *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith [Which you “have obtained... by the righteousness of... Jesus”(v1)] with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ ***For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.****

1 JOHN 3:2 *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

HEBREWS 12:1-2 ¹ *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (those who have finished running the race before us in the great Hebrews 11 “list of faith”), let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ^{2a} looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.*