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Beverly E.C.C., Chicago, IL

**“SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD”**

Revelation 2:1-3:22; 7:10

■ Revelation 7:10:

**“Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb.”**

The Greek word for **“salvation”** appears a measly three times in Revelation. Nowhere in these pages does John write a lengthy exposition about it as Paul does in his epistles. John doesn't even give us a nutshell definition.

Still, the Apocalypse is all about salvation. Not salvation as a concept to be understood, a principle to be accepted, or a doctrine to be defended; salvation as our identity in the present and our hope for the future.

And so these words, **“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb”** come to John's readers as a message of affirmation, accusation, admonition, and assurance.

■ Revelation 2:1-7: To the Church in Ephesus:

● In verses 2-3 Christ affirms the Ephesian identity as the present substance of their salvation: You are full of good deeds, sound doctrine, moral integrity, perseverance, and endurance. This is the manifestation of God's salvation among you, {Eph 2:10} **“For [you] are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”**

● But salvation is for them not only a message of affirmation. In verses 4-6 the Lord accuses them: **“You have forsaken your first love”** (your αγαπε for God and each other). {1 Jn 4:8} **“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love”**; how, then, can you claim to be receiving salvation!?

● In verse 5 the Lord mercifully admonishes them: Remember who I am saving you to be, and live accordingly. Αγαπε is not optional! He continues: **“If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place,”** I will disown you. You will not be my church.

● Yet in verse 7 he assures them that if they overcome their lack of love he will give them **“the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God,”** fulfilling their hope for the future.

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■ Revelation 2:8-11: To the Church in Smyrna:

● In verse 9 Christ affirms the Smyrnan identity as the present substance of their salvation: You are spiritually rich, despite your tribulations and material poverty. You are standing firm in the face of hostility from your Jewish neighbors. This is the manifestation of God's salvation among you, for the one {Mt 10:22; 24:13} **“who stands firm to the end will be saved.”**

● The Lord has no word of accusation for Smyrna, but in verse 10 he warns that they will soon be

targeted for tribulation, imprisonment, and even murder because they will not worship the emperor. He admonishes them, be **“faithful, even to the point of death.”**

- And in verses 10-11 he assures them that if they overcome fear and the pressure to compromise, he will **“give [them] the crown of life”** and protect them from eternal damnation, fulfilling their hope for the future.

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- Revelation 2:12-17: To the Church in Pergamum:

- In verse 13 Christ affirms the Pergamite identity as the present substance of their salvation: You are astonishingly devoted and courageous, even though **“Satan has his throne”** in your city and one of your members was recently executed by the local government for his witness. This is the manifestation of God’s salvation among you, {Php 2:28-29} for suffering for Jesus is **“a sign... that you will be saved...by God.”**

- But for them salvation is not only a message of affirmation. In verses 14-15 the Lord accuses them: You tolerate false teachers who say God will excuse participation in pagan worship if it will save you from persecution. {1 Jn 3:6, NIV/ Message} **“No one who lives in [me] makes a practice of sin. No one who [makes a practice of] sin has either seen...or known”** me; how, then, can you claim to be receiving salvation!?

- So in verse 16 the Lord mercifully admonishes them: Remember who I am saving you to be, and live

accordingly. Undivided devotion is not optional! He continues: **“If you do not repent, I will come to you and will fight against [those teachers and their followers] with the sword of my mouth.”**

- But in verse 17 he assures them that if they overcome religious and moral compromise he will receive them into eternal life and satisfy their deepest longings, fulfilling their hope for the future.

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- Revelation 2:18-29: To the Church in Thyatira:

- In verse 19 Christ affirms the Thyatiran identity as the present substance of their salvation: You are full of good deeds, love, faith, service, perseverance, and you are **“doing more” “now” “than you did at first.”** This is the manifestation of God’s salvation among you, for {Mt 13:23} when the seed of my word falls on good soil it produces a crop **“yielding a 100, 60 or 30 times what was sown.”**

- But salvation is for them not only a message of affirmation. In verses 20-23 the Lord accuses them: You are tolerating a false prophetess who encourages sexual immorality and idol worship. Yet {Acts 4:12} **“salvation is found in no one else”** but Jesus: **“there is no other name...by which [you shall] be saved”**; how, then, can you claim to be receiving salvation!?

- So in verse 22-25 the Lord mercifully admonishes them: Remember who I am saving you to

be, and live accordingly. Faithful obedience is not optional! He adds: **“I will repay each of you according to your deeds.”** **“Hold on to what you have”** that is from me.

- Then, in verses 26-29 he assures them that if they overcome disobedience he will give them himself and a place of honor in God’s kingdom, fulfilling their hope for the future.

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- Revelation 3:1-6: To the Church in Sardis:

- Christ has no affirmation for this congregation. Not one word!

- In verses 1-3 he accuses them in scathing terms: You think you are alive? You are dead! You think you are awake? You are asleep. When anyone {Jn 4:14} **“drinks the water I give”** it becomes **“in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life”**; how, then, can you claim to be receiving salvation!?

- Amazingly, in verses 2-3 the Lord of the Church mercifully admonishes them: Remember who I am saving you to be, and live accordingly. Living faith is not optional! He continues: If you do not repent, **“I will come like a thief, and you will not know”** when.

- Then, in verses 4-6 he tenderly **assures them** that if they overcome death God the Father will acknowledge them and Christ will walk with them in glory, fulfilling their hope for the future.

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- Revelation 3:7-13: To the Church in Philadelphia:

- In verses 8-10 Christ affirms the Philadelphian identity as the present substance of their salvation: You are a small church, weak, and poor; yet you are full of good deeds, obedience to the Word, and faithfulness to the Name of Jesus. You are patiently enduring your material struggles and insistent hostility from the Jewish community. This is the manifestation of God’s salvation among you, {Heb 6:9} for these are **“things that accompany salvation.”**

- The Lord levels not one word of **accusation** against Philadelphia. In **verses 11-12** he assures them that if they overcome the challenges of poverty and hardship he will give them absolute security in heaven, and even their enemies will know that they are deeply loved by God the Father, Son, and HS thus fulfilling their hope for the future.

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- Revelation 3:14-22: To the Church in Laodicea:

- Christ has no affirmation for this congregation!

- In verses 5-17 he accuses them in chilling terms: You think your material wealth makes you rich, your fancy clothes make you stylish, your social status

makes you enviable? You don't even realize that **“you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”** {MT 6:22} **“If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light”**; how, then, can you claim to be receiving salvation!?

- Incredibly, in verses 18-20 the Lord of the Church **admonishes** them: Remember who I am saving you to be, and live accordingly. Spiritual wealth, newness of life, and sight are not optional! He continues: If you do not repent, {3:16} **“I will spit you out of my mouth.”**

- Then, in verses 21-22 he gently assures them that if they overcome their lack of earnestness he will give them the right **“to sit with [him] on his throne,”** thus fulfilling their hope for the future.

**“Salvation belongs to our God,  
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When our love grows cold, salvation depends on God and the Lamb.

When we are ridiculed, rejected, threatened or even harmed because of our faithful witness, salvation depends on God and the Lamb.

When we are bedeviled by poverty on the one hand and wealth on the other, salvation depends on God and the Lamb.

When we are beset by excessive hardships or extreme ease, salvation depends on God and the Lamb.

When we are falling into the trap of worldliness, salvation depends on God and the Lamb.

When we are spiritually dying, salvation depends on God and the Lamb.

When we are self-satisfied and complacent, salvation depends on God and the Lamb.

Thank God it does!