

# **The knowledge of salvation**

*"To give his people the knowledge of salvation"  
(Luke 1:77)*

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## Introduction

Salvation is the divine love story declared on the cross and whose acts are completed all along time. We can simply say that salvation means rescue. For example when we say "salvation from drowning" we mean being rescued from drowning.

In this concept, we understand Christ's salvation to us in its three folds:

- 1-Saving from the punishment of sin
- 2- Saving from sin's reign
- 3- Saving from sin's body

Let us, Dear Reader, explain the meaning of this saying in a very concise way.

I want you to know that the aim is not merely knowledge but first foremost we aim at the spiritual gain from these words. This is by applying it to your personal life and transforming it to a talk between you and God asking him to let you enjoy every truth you read to live accordingly.

If you like more of these subjects read:

**The book of salvation in the Orthodox concept and The Heresy of salvation in a moment** by H.H. Pope Shenouda III, whose prayers will endow our life with blessings. Amen.

# Chapter 1

## Saving from Sin's punishment

If one of us commits a certain sin, he blames himself and suffers because he sees the extent of God's anger because of his sin. He feels that he deserves death because he did evil in the eyes of God.

This is a sound feeling because the Scripture says:

***"For the wages of sin is death"***

***(Romans 6:23)***

If this is our feeling we should be able to understand the meaning of salvation. Salvation is saving us from sin's punishment and its condemnation.

Accordingly, it is being saved from guilt complex, which we feel because of sin. The scripture declares it explicitly:

***"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."***

***(Romans 8:1)***

Lord Jesus Christ, by dying on the cross, redeemed us from the sin's penalty and suffered in this body the punishment of our sins to release us justified. The scripture says:

***"And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all"***

***(Isaiah 53:6)***

Do you trust and believe, my brother, in the adequacy of Christ's blood that was shed for you to lift up the punishment that you deserve?

The scripture says:

***"Since we have now been justified by his blood how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him"***

***(Romans 5:9)***

Or do you live in sadness and shivering form the eternal punishment and not sure of God's justification with His blood?

In reality, if you do not trust that, you are cheapening the value of Christ's blood and his expiating action on the cross.

Isn't it on this strong basis of faith that we accepted the sacred mystery of baptism and are performing the mystery of repentance and confession to obtain salvation from our sins?

Baptism is death, burial and resurrection with Christ for a new life totally different than that of the worldlings who live for themselves and their people. The new life is limited to Christ, for Him and to glorify His name. As for the mystery of repentance, it is regretting wrong behaviour and deeds in which man falls out of weakness, ignorance or laziness then gets up to go on with his spiritual life after getting rid of the sin's disgrace .

The scripture says:

***"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"***  
***(1 John 1:9)***

But, does this mean that we indulge in sins and wickedness on the account of Christ's blood? No, I want you to notice very well that when the Scripture says:

***"Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death"***  
***(Romans 8:1)***

It goes on saying:

***"who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the spirit"***

Lord Christ said Himself to the sick of Bethesda after healing him from the disease of the body and sin:

***"See you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you"***  
***(John 5:14)***

Apostle Paul confirms this statement by saying:

***"What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer"***  
***(Romans: 6:1,2)***

Salvation from the punishment has already been fulfilled through Christ's blood and His atoning deed on the cross . It is transferred to us through the mysteries of the church.

H.H. Pope Shenouda III said:

***"Truly, the salvation was fulfilled on the cross through the sacrifice of Christ's blood, but the transfer of this salvation to the people is done by the church through priesthood and the mysteries.***

Book : the Heresy of Salvation in One Moment

This was concerning the first fold of salvation but the second one is:

## CHAPTER 2

# Salvation from sin's reign

This is the second meaning for salvation or the second fold of salvation. Saving from the domination of sin and its loving is not less important and valuable than saving from the vengeance for sin and its punishment.

The repentant, in his weakness, may find himself unable to get rid of the domination and power of sin and he may reach the point of despair.

But thanks to God , with Jesus Christ our God about whom was said::

*"Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always live to intercede for them"*  
(Hebrews 7:25)

Salvation or liberation from the domination of sin has two forms:

### **1- The divine role:**

It is sure that Lord Jesus did not only pay our debt but also gave us His spirit which frees us from the domination of sin and its love and enslavement.

Our teacher Apostle Paul talks about his experience in this matter. After crying in pain:

*"But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin in work within my members"*  
(Romans 7:23,24)

He also said:

*"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength"*  
(Philippians 4:13)

The secret in your successive defeats, my brother, is that you do not allow the Holy Spirit to fill all your entity to free you from the slavery of sin. Go on praying with faith and full desire as the church taught us to say:

Oh, Heavenly consoling King, The Spirit of truth present every where and filling everyone, the treasure of righteousness and life-giving, come and reside in us and purify us from every impurity you righteous and save our spirits. (Agbia) .

Apart from that, the power of Christ flows in us basically through the Myron mystery (or the mystery of confirmation) and the mystery of communion to become confirmed in God and He in us. When we are confirmed in Him we can perform our human role.

## **2: The human role:**

The human role includes the necessity of struggle against the world, the devil and the old corrupt self.

(1) Struggle against the world:

Our teacher Beloved John invites us to fight against the world's love by saying:

***"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world the father is not in him. For everything in the world : the carvings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does- comes not from the father but from the world."***

***(1Johnd 1:15-17)***

Therefore, a believer should continuously be in war to reject the world's offers and with his thoughts that separate his association with his Redeemer and Saviour Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) Struggle against the devil:

Our teacher Apostle Peter says:

***"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him standing firm in the faith..."***  
***(1 Peter 5:8, 9)***

Therefore, we must resist the devil in a sacred war all the days of our life.

A- Struggle against the old self:

Our teacher Apostle Paul says:

***"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done with that we should no longer be slave to sin ..***

***Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires"***

***( Romans 6 :6, 12)***

In this saying we notice two facts:

+ The first fact: is that our old self was crucified with Christ through baptism

+The second fact is that this mortal body has still got desires which we should not obey

How can that be?

How can the mortal body have lusts?

This complicated problem can be solved by this example which explains it and solves the problem.

A criminal who has been sentenced to death is not executed immediately in the courtroom just after judgment but he is returned to prison to wait for the execution time. During the time from the issuance of the judgment till his execution, is this criminal considered dead or not?

In fact, he is dead and at the same time he is alive.

Legally he is dead but alive on the ground of reality.

So is also the old corrupt self. He is considered legally dead since the baptism where the baptized accepted the death penalty on his old self but in reality is still alive until the penalty of death is executed at the second arrival of Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the struggle against the lusts of that body is obligatory and this is the concept of spiritual struggle against the old corrupt self.

H.H. Pope Shenouda III said:

*I am saved Oh God through your death and I am saved through your life in me. And this is the sound idea of salvation in the orthodox concept. We have been saved by the death of Christ when we died with Him in the baptism and are saved also by the living of Christ in ourselves by completely surrendering to His will in our lives.*

**Book of Salvation in the Orthodox Concept Page 31**

We still have to elaborate the third fold of salvation which is saving from the body of sin.

## CHAPTER 3

# Salvation from the sin's body

This is the third fold of the concept of salvation. The believer remains all the days of his life in a vicious war against the devil, the body and the world.

Therefore, he awaits the arrival of Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to free him from the body of sin. This is why the completion of our salvation is by the transformation of our earthly bodies to spiritual bodies when our God appears in His glory.

Our teacher Apostle Paul says:

*"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed "in a flash" in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet . For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed"*

*(Corinthians 15: 51, 52)*

In this H.H. Pope Shenouda III says:

*This is the other salvation when we take off this deadly body and put on the glorified body after Christ's second arrival*

**(Book of salvation in the Orthodox concept Page 108)**

Saint Augustinos elaborated the concept of salvation very clearly as he said:

*If somebody asks me whether we have been saved by baptism- then I cannot deny that as the Apostle says:*

*"He saved us through washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit"*

*( Titus 3:5)*

*But if he asks me whether we have been completely saved from all sides by means of baptism- I answer that it is not like that the same apostle said:*

***"For In this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. We hope for what we already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently"***  
***(Romans 8: 24,25)***

Then Saint Augustinos explained saying:

*Because baptism erases all the sins generally but it does not remove human weakness which the renewed goes on withstanding in his sacred struggle.*

He continues saying:

*But this weakness that he fights between a fall and a raise until death will end with another renewal about which God says*

***"When the Son of man sits on His glorious throne you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones"***  
***(Matthew 19:28)***

God's calls the last resurrection renewal and Apostle Paul called it

(adoption and redemption) as he said:

***"..but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies"***

Then Saint Augustinos asks himself saying:

*Haven't we been renewed? We obtained the adoption and redemption for which we have to wait patiently.*

**( Nicene and Post Nicene fathers First series Vol.5 page 404)**

Finally I wish you, Dear Brother reader, all grace in your spiritual struggle to enjoy the eternal life to which you have been invited.