



Salvation Headgear

Ephesians 6:17 NIV
Take up the helmet of salvation...

What Is Salvation Worth to You?

It is impossible to quantify the value of salvation to you! Our passage tells us to, **Take up the helmet of salvation...** (Ephesians 6: 17) It is in fact commanded...Receive the helmet of salvation, take it, and hold on to it immediately is the order. Remember, this entire passage known as the armor of God in Ephesians 6 is a discourse on the battle we face against Satan, that he is attacking us, and we are in danger from him. Just because Satan is spiritual and the demons in his alliance are too doesn't mean it is allegorical or unreal. We are a part of a pitched battle and our fight is with beings who hate us and God. To ignore them is to invite anger, bitterness, depression, discouragement, worry, addiction, and broken relationships. Satan wants your mind so he can turn you away from God and the transformation of your life which salvation offers. Satan brings you bondage to your emotions and desires so that you think and act like Him rather than the Prince of Peace who has given you salvation. Salvation and its effect upon you is the topic we shall examine.

Take a moment to ponder the depths of our Lord's explanation of how salvation operates. **I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.** (John 12:24 NIV) Salvation requires death. It never comes to pass without dying. The seed must be dropped in the ground and as it settles into death, it suddenly comes to life. The seed breaks apart and down go roots and up springs a sprout and magically, the wheat explodes into glory and hundreds of new seeds are generated; each with the promise of new life built in it. Death comes first, then life. The equation is always the same, much like a subtraction or division problem. The order is exacting, and it cannot be flipped around the other way.

Death, then life is the way salvation operates and it all starts with Jesus. Crucifixion, then resurrection. Burial, then living Savior. Whatever else may be said about the salvation of Christ, this aspect is front and center. He died to give you life. Since the fall of Adam and his sin, death always descends from life. Only Christ could miraculously reverse the order. Salvation is the work of God, resurrecting the dead. Hopeless made overcomer. Defeat made victory. Life rising from death. Once you accept that your salvation is from Christ and it was finished when He died on the Cross, what is left to you is life, everlasting life. Jesus put it this way.

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24 NIV) Death first, then life. There is permanency to this crossing over from death to life. He has crossed over is more precisely, "he has crossed over and remains there, having gone from death to life." The moment you put your faith in Jesus

Christ as your Savior, you take the leap from death to life and that is where you are forever. What once was dead in sin, becomes alive and God has done that for you.

A most fascinating account is found in the Old Testament book of 2 Kings. Chapter 13 gives the strange miracle of the very bones of Elisha the prophet bringing to life a dead man. While some Israelites were in process of burying a friend, Moabite raiders appeared and in a panic, they just tossed the dead body into the tomb of Elisha. As soon as the corpse landed on Elisha's bones, the dead Israelite sprang to life. An amazing yet a seeming bizarre miracle if you don't realize that it was a foreshadowing of what Jesus came to do for you. It was by death that life came to you. The dead Jesus brings you eternal life. Crucified, He raises you into salvation. The dead Elisha represents the crucified Jesus and the raised to life Israelite is you, alive in Christ's salvation. In Christ, the buried seed has resurrection power and life flows out of death.

The axiom of death creating life is not just found in eternal matters, but also in the battlefields of our common experience here facing the attacks of Satan. Can we find anyone as broken psychologically as Leah, the first wife of Jacob, the patriarch of the nation of Israel? When her dad promised her younger sister Rachel to Jacob in exchange for his seven years of labor, Leah's dad used Leah to entrap Jacob. He had Leah secretly get in the tent rather than Rachel on Rachel and Jacob's wedding night and pretend she was Rachel. It was infuriating to Jacob when he discovered who it was he had slept with and that now they were married, and it was certainly humiliating for Leah to realize how rejected she was as Jacob's wife. This relationship continued to sour. Jacob loved Rachel who he soon married in addition to Leah and Leah he tolerated. Leah even had to pay his sister for the right to sleep with Jacob at least on one occasion and probably more. Leah was so broken-hearted by the lack of love she received from Jacob that God compassionately gave her three times as many sons as her sister Rachel. That was small consolation for her though as she in her misery tried her best to gain just a bit of her husband's affection.

The heart-rending account of Leah and her pitiable home-life shifted in due time. Out of death comes life. Out of sorrow comes joy in God's society. It turns out that Leah's fourth son was Judah, through whom God would produce the line of David and eventually would come Christ, the Messiah. What seems so useless and wasted, in God's hand bears great fruit. We far too quickly give up on what God is just beginning to unveil; to raise from the dead. In a poignant turn for Leah, eventually Rachel died in childbirth and Jacob and Leah started over as husband and wife. Leah also passed away, and it was with Leah that Jacob chose to be buried. What seems so hopeless and unattainable may in fact be a seed that is buried and below the surface roots are burrowing down and steadily a shoot is rising. Your plans and dreams may be a buried seed that is awaiting its time to spring forth. God has not forgotten about you, He has not overlooked your heartache, your hardship, your struggles. He is the Savior, the one who brings you salvation. Your time is coming when you will see just how perfectly God is working out your life so that it has the look of heaven to it.

We often don't consider just how bad it was for Mary Magdalene before Jesus entered her life. The Bible tells us that she had seven demons in her. If it were not for how insistent the Bible and Jesus is that demons really do ruin lives, we might not take this account so seriously. Yet, that was Mary's condition and we can hardly imagine just how bad it was for her. Probably her personality was wrecked, and her behavior was humiliating to her and uncontrolled. Much like an addict who can't stop drinking or a critic who can't stop hurting others, Mary was trapped within her broken inner world. She was dead, a hopeless soul stranded in an unloving and uncaring world. Yet, then Jesus came to her and the demons were cast out of Mary and that buried seed came to life. Salvation is not just for life to come; it is for now too and Jesus is your Savior today as well as tomorrow. Consider just how wonderfully God took what seemed like such a dead-end life and made it one of the most amazing persons described in the Bible. Out of all the people in the world who could have met Jesus early that first Easter Sunday resurrected, Mary Magdalene was the third, before even any of the disciples, to whom Jesus revealed His glorified new life. Imagine that! Such a

life, broken and lost, finding herself as one of the most important people in the very first Easter Sunday morning.

I recently heard a quote from Justin Bieber that caught me by surprise. He has openly professed his faith in Jesus Christ and has been seen actively joining in worship services. It is easy to question the validity of his new Christian life as just another publicity grab, but it is certainly not chic in the social circles that he and his wife participate to claim a desire to follow Jesus. I cannot endorse his true life in Christ but something he said recently bears witness of the salvation seed planted in him. Bieber told the world that he wished he had remained sexually pure until marriage. That is an extraordinary admission by someone with such an openly debauched previous lifestyle. We don't know how far he will go with God or how mature his faith in Christ will develop, but for each of us, an outsider might have the same wait and see attitude. We do know this. He could not have come to the conclusion of wishing he had lived a sexually pure life without the seed of faith coming into him. Salvation works miracles in us, and it is in salvation that we fend off every effort of Satan to ruin us.

If the seed of salvation has been planted in you, then Christ your Savior has entered, and He will not let you fail to become perfect in all your ways. Salvation comes to us all at once when we put our hope in Christ to give us eternal life and then it never stops working in us. Take up the salvation that comes from Jesus and wear it. Make it the guardian of your mind, the covering of your thoughts so that Satan cannot overwhelm you with doubts and fears and worry. The enemy wants you to quit, to give up, to stop trying. You have the salvation of Jesus though and God is not finished with you. He has more to accomplish through you, more critical works to get done with you. He has a world to change, people to remake and lives to be put together and you are a part of His plan to do just that. Salvation makes you an unstoppable force and in Christ, you have the power, the dynamic, explosive power of God worked within you and whatever God has you do, it will come to pass in His time and by His means.