

THE UNSEEN WORLD OF THE BIBLE

Session 15: 'Partakers of the Divine Nature'

05 February 2023

Learning Objectives

Understand: What it means to be saved.

Explain: How Jews and Gentiles gain salvation.

Believe: Our adoption as God's children.

Affirm: Our destiny as members of God's council.

Lesson Theme

"We are and will be God's new divine council." Michael S Heiser, *Supernatural*, page 154.

Divine council in Middle-Eastern beliefs

- Sumer, 4500 - 1900 BCE
- Old Babylonia, 2nd millennium BC
- Ancient Egypt
- Canaanite (Ugaritic) 3rd & 2nd
- Neo-Babylonia, 620-539 BCE
- Hebrew / Israelite, 2nd & 1st millennia BCE



A meeting of gods on the Tablet of Shamash. It dates from the 9th century BC and shows the sun god Shamash on a throne, before kings and gods. British Library room 55. Creative Commons.

What is it to which we have been saved?

8 It is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2 NIV

31 Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." Acts 16

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that we go to heaven. Check it out.

Theology of salvation (in the Latin West)

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Election | 8. Adoption | 15. Perseverance |
| 2. Creation | 9. Inclusion | 16. Translation |
| 3. Conviction | 10. Sanctification | 17. Resurrection |
| 4. Enlightenment | 11. Maturation | 18. Transformation |
| 5. Regeneration | 12. Endowment | 19. Glorification |
| 6. Recreation | 13. Employment | 20. Exaltation |
| 7. Conversion | 14. Reproduction | 21. Revelation |

Tenses of salvation: We were saved, we have been saved, we are being saved, we shall be saved.

Before the great flood

4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days— and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them... 5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth. Genesis 6

After Babel

8 When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons [angels, LXX] of [God, DSS, LXX]. 9 For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob [Israel] his allotted inheritance. Deuteronomy 32:9

Gentiles become part of Israel

2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. Genesis 12

25 Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and in this way all Israel will be saved. Romans 11

Salvation is to become God's children

By faith in Israel's messiah:

11 His own [Israel] did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1

By receiving God's Holy Spirit:

14 Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God 15 ... The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. Romans 8

True Israel consists in all God's children

6 Through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3

26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile... 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3

Weak views towards Israel

- Yahweh is done with Israel, because it failed.
- Israel was only an example to teach Christians.
- Israel predicted the Messiah, then went apostate.
- Israel was temporary, waiting for Messiah to come.

Better views towards Israel

- Yahweh has an eternal plan to glorify Israel.
- Israel remains Yahweh's children, his inheritors.
- Israel includes faithful Jews and Gentiles.
- Israel is becoming Yahweh's new divine council.

Jesus is Yahweh's appointed inheritor

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. Hebrews 1

Ancestors: Readers are still Israel.

Prophets: Mortal human beings.

Last days: From Jesus' birth till now.

Son: Creator and inheritor.

Jesus possesses Yahweh's glory

3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 1

Radiance: 2x in the Greek Bible

26 For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. Wisdom of Solomon 7:26

Glory: 'deserving of honor' BDAG

Representation: Visible, tangible.

Being: Divine 'nature ... reality' BDAG

Majesty: Invisible Father

Yahweh will glorify Christians

29 Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. Romans 8

Conformed: 'morphed with' = share in Jesus' glory
Brothers: (adopted) family members
Glorified: 'cause ... greatness' BDAG
Aorist verbs have no time element.

Meanwhile ...

19 We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3

23 We ... who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8

We wait not to go bodiless into a vague, ethereal 'heaven', but to receive our new body.

In a new divine council

10 In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. 11 Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. 12 He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises." Hebrews 2

Assembly: Yahweh's great family council

Partakers of the divine nature

2 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1

Greek: become 'companions, partners, sharers' BDAG
Divine: *theios* 'of deity ... supernatural' BDAG
Nature: We will be new creatures, starting now!

Our salvation includes much more than ...

- Stay out of hell
- Attend church services, potlucks and prayers
- Try to be good all the time
- Bemoan the evil deeds of the wicked
- Vote for conservative or liberal candidates
- Wait for a rapture that never comes
- Dread going to heaven
- Sing hymns forever

Assignment for next week

Read chapter 16, "Ruling Over Angels" in the book *Supernatural*, along with cited bible references.