

## Paul's Salvation

*"For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Christ ..."* (Phil. 1:19). In the passage Paul speaks of *"my salvation"* and the things which would bring it about. What *"salvation"* did Paul refer to: salvation from the Roman prison or eternal salvation? And, to what did he allude when he said, *"I know this shall turn out to my salvation"*?

Some think the salvation Paul spoke of was release from prison. The context does not support that for Paul expressed uncertainty as to what his fate might be. The verses immediately following show Paul torn between a desire to depart and be with Christ and to abide in the flesh for the sake of the Philippians (1:23f). In the second chapter he said he hoped to send Timothy to them *"so soon as I shall see how it will go with me"* (2:23). Paul *"thought"* he might be released but he was not certain. But of his *"salvation"* he wrote, *"I know this shall turn out to my salvation."* The salvation Paul spoke of was his eternal salvation. Paul believed he would be saved but he knew that to attain that would require constant vigilance and persistence. He said, *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway"* (1 Cor. 9:27).

He was confident *"this"* would turn out to his salvation. What is the *"this"* he was confident would bring about his salvation? Is *"this"* the things he wrote about after he made this statement? Is the *"this"* something he had just written? The things which followed did have part in his salvation, but they are an addenda; *"through your supplication and the supplying of the Spirit of Christ."* That which would turn out to his salvation was something he earlier wrote. What had Paul written before that would *"turn out"* to his salvation? The verse immediately preceding vs. 19 says, *"What then? only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and therein I rejoice, yea and will rejoice."* It was the preaching of Christ *"which would turn out to"* his salvation. But, how could preaching of Christ turn out to the personal salvation of Paul?

First, Paul was a debtor to preach the gospel (Rom. 1:14). Preaching was no option of his. He had to preach to be obedient to the call he had received from Christ. And, although he was restrained by his bonds, he still preached Christ -- by word -- by example. The preaching of others stirred him also to preach, not to lose heart, but to set forth boldly Jesus crucified; risen, reigning, returning. Woe was Paul if he preached not the gospel (1 Cor. 9:16)!

However, Paul mentioned two other factors which would turn out to his salvation: the supplication of Christians for him and the supply of the Spirit of Christ. When Jesus revealed to Peter that he would briefly leave Him, nay not just leave Him, but deny Him, Jesus assured Peter: "... *Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not ...*" (Lk. 22:31f) Years later brethren also gathered together to pray for Peter (Acts 12:5). The prayers of brethren would turn out for Paul's salvation. Prayers of brethren will turn out for our salvation. This is why we need to pray constantly for each other.

Paul's salvation would "*turn out*" through the supply of the Spirit of Christ. Think ye not that this is the "*supply*" the apostle had in mind when later he assured the Philippians, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13)? God has a great reservoir of strength to help us overcome and reach the golden city. Do we pray often for Him to renew our strength and give us power to stand?

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