

The Complexity of Salvation Terminology

This is obviously not an exhaustive list of terms related to salvation in the New Testament; it is merely a sufficient sample to demonstrate that a theology of salvation cannot be easily divided by categories of “time.” It’s also important to note that these words themselves as found in Scripture don’t necessarily entirely encompass the theological topics they touch upon (i.e. to understand “justification” one is also dealing with words like “judgment”, “wrath”, “righteousness”, “covenant”, etc.) and therefore finding every occurrence of a word won’t give a comprehensive biblical theology of that topic – related concepts and the words used to communicate them must be discussed as well. In looking up the verses listed below one may notice that these do not always appear as technical systematic-theological terms in Scripture, always denoting exactly the same breadth of content as every other occurrence; *this is another important illustration of how the theological categories commonly employed to describe a group of ideas can’t always be associated with the biblical occurrences of such terms* (i.e. the word “sanctification” in 1 Co. 6:11 doesn’t always mean the same thing as other occurrences in Paul, much less the same thing as the word “sanctification” when being used in Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology*).

The word “salvation” is a general term for God’s saving activity, though the emphasis is on the final deliverance from judgment which will take place at the Last Day; but note that in every term, there is an “already—not yet” pattern of salvation. All of the words used to describe a particular aspect of God’s saving activity describe it as beginning at a point in time, carried through the present and brought to final fulfillment or realization at the end.

Unless in brackets, all lexical entries are from: Arndt, William, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaption of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch Zu Den Schrift En Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Ubrigen Urchristlichen Literatur*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, c1979.

Salvation – v. = *save or preserve from eternal death*, fr. judgment, and fr. all that might lead to such death, e.g. sin, also in a positive sense *bring Messianic salvation, bring to salvation*; n. = *deliverance, preservation*; quite predom. *salvation*, which the true religion bestows

1 Past

- Acts 2:40
- Acts 2:47
- Acts 15:11
- Eph. 2:8
- 2 Tim. 1:9
- Tit. 3:5

2 Present

- Mt. 1:21
- Luke 19:9
- Luke 13:23
- Acts 4:12

- Ro. 1:16
- Ro. 10:10
- 1 Co. 1:18
- 2 Co. 6:2
- Phil. 2:12
- Ja. 2:14?
- 1 Pet. 2:2
- 1 Pet. 3:21

3 Future

- Mt. 10:22
- Mt. 24:13
- Luke 18:25-26
- Acts 13:47
- 1 Tim. 4:16
- Ro. 5:9
- Ro. 8:24
- Ro. 13:11
- Phil. 1:28
- 2 Tim. 2:10-13
- 2 Thess. 2:10
- Heb. 9:28
- 1 Pet. 1:9

Redemption – v. = *free by paying a ransom, redeem*; gener. *set free, redeem, rescue*; n. = *ransoming, releasing, redemption*

4 Past

- Ro. 3:24?
- 1 Pet. 1:18
- Gal. 3:13

5 Present

- Col. 1:14
- Tit. 2:14

6 Future

- Luke 21:28
- Ro. 8:23
- Eph. 1:14
- Eph. 4:30

Regeneration – [Though there are few verbal equivalents to “regeneration” or “conversion” in the NT (e.g. Tit. 3:5, Mt. 19:28); most of the passages that contain this concept use the language of new birth, the bestowal of a

new nature, the renewal of corporate humanity in Christ, renewal of creation, new heavens/earth etc.]

7 Past

- Tit. 3:5
- Jn. 3:3, 7
- 2 Co. 5:17
- 1 Peter 1:3, 23
- Eph. 2:14-16
- Eph. 4:22-24
- Col. 3:9-11
- Ga. 6:15-16

8 Future

- Mt. 19:28
- Ro. 8:18-25
- Rev. 21:5

Forgiveness – v. = *cancel, remit, pardon* n. = *pardon, cancellation* of an obligation, a punishment, or guilt

9 Past

- John 20:23
- Col. 1:14
- 1 John 1:9

10 Present

- 1 John 1:9
- Col. 1:14

11 Future

- Mt. 6:15
- Mt. 18:34-35

Adoption

1 Past

- Eph. 1:5
- Ro. 8:15
- Gal. 4:5-6

2 Future

- Ro. 8:23

Justification – v. = *justify, vindicate, treat as just*; Paul, who has influenced later wr., uses the word almost

exclusively of God's judgment; to be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous and thereby become δίκαιος, receive the divine gift of δικαιοσύνη, as a theological n. = justification, vindication, acquittal [Note that the very idea of justification must inherently refer to the future in some sense, since it speaks of an "acquittal" and a saving from the penalty of God's wrath, which God will pour out on the coming day of judgment. That is not to deny the ongoing assurance of the past declaration pronounced on the basis of faith alone, but to demonstrate the already-not yet dimension of salvation].

12 Past

- Mt. 12:37
- Ro. 5:1, 9
- Ro. 8:30, 33
- 1 Co. 6:11

13 Present

- Acts 13:39 (NASB = "is freed"; lit. *justified*)
- Ro. 6:7 (NASB = "is freed"; lit. *justified*)
- Ro. 3:24-26
- Ro. 4:25?

14 Future

- Mt. 12:37
- Ro. 2:13
- Ro. 3:20
- Ro. 3:30
- Gal. 2:16

Sanctification –v. = of pers. *consecrate, dedicate, sanctify*, i.e., include in the inner circle of what is holy, in both relig. and moral uses of the word; also to *purify*; n. = *holiness, consecration, sanctification*; the use in a moral sense for a process or, more often, its result (the state of being made holy) is peculiar to our lit.

15 Past

- John 17:19
- Acts 20:32
- Acts 26:18
- 1 Cor. 1:2
- 1 Co. 6:11
- Heb. 2:11
- Heb. 10:10
- Heb. 10:14

16 Present

- 1 Thess. 4:3-7

- Heb. 13:12
- 1 Tim. 2:15
- 1 Pet. 1:2

17 Present—Future (Eternal Life comes by “sanctification”)

- 1 Thess. 5:23
- Ro. 6:22
- Heb. 12:14

Glorification – v. = *clothe in splendor, glorify*, of the glory that comes in the next life

n.= The state of being in the next life is thus described as participation in the radiance or glory

1 Past

- Ro. 8:30

1 Present

- 1 Co. 6:20
- 2 Co. 3:18

2 Future

- 2 Thess. 1:10-12
- Ro. 8:17-21
- 1 Pet. 5:4