

Understanding Theology in 15 Minutes A Day for 40 Days

Day 30

What Are the Results of Being Saved?

The Bible calls salvation a gift ([Ephesians 2:8](#)), and salvation contains many aspects; it's a gift box full of all sorts of wonderful things. We have already seen some—for example, all the ministries of the Holy Spirit for Christians (indwelling, filling, spiritual gifts). Here are just a few of the many more:

Forgiveness. Probably the most well-known benefit of salvation, but precious nonetheless, is forgiveness of sin ([Ephesians 1:7](#); [Colossians 2:13](#)). Even though we have wronged God in so many ways, because Jesus paid the legal penalty for our sins, God's gracious forgiveness of them brings us from a negative moral condition to a neutral moral condition. This is phenomenal in and of itself, and it gets even better, which brings us to salvation's next result.

Justification. This legal concept means "a declaration of righteousness." Picture a courtroom in which you, the sinner, stand before God, the judge, and due to your faith in Christ, he slams down his gavel and declares, "Not guilty—righteous!" Paul unpacks this truth in [Romans 3:20–31](#), where he makes clear this is based on God's grace demonstrated through the sacrificial death of Jesus ([vv. 24–25](#)) and happens when the sinner believes ([vv. 22, 25–28](#)). Declaring a guilty sinner "not guilty" is not a perversion of justice. Rather, God shows himself to be just ([vv. 25–26](#)) because he does punish sins—Jesus bore them and died on the cross in our place.

Having satisfied his justice, God is free in grace to justify believers. This includes forgiveness, but beyond leaving believers morally neutral, God grants them a positive standing, thus the declaration of *righteousness*. How? By God giving us his righteousness ([v. 22](#)), through *imputation*, which refers to a transfer: "God made [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

In Christ, believers become God's righteousness. What an unspeakably great deal: Jesus gets our sin; we get his righteousness. The result is that when God looks at Christians, he sees not just forgiven people but also righteous people. Another vital result of this is that we

are at peace with God (**Romans 5:1**). Only righteous people can be accepted by a righteous God.

Sanctification. The term *sanctify* literally means “to set apart,” so sanctification means “setting apart to holiness” or “making righteous.” This is similar to justification, but builds on it. Even after justification, sin continues to dwell in the Christian. Sanctification refers to the ongoing work (mostly God’s) to rid the Christian completely of that sin, once and for all.

Various New Testament contexts reveal three tenses and types.

There is a **past-tense** sanctification (closest to justification) usually called:

1. *positional*, which results in God seeing us as righteous (**1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:10, 14**). We become “saints” —a form of the word *sanctify* that means “holy ones” (**1 Corinthians 1:2**)—instantaneously when we trust in Christ.

A **future-tense** sanctification, referred to as:

2. *perfect* or *complete*, takes place at the end of life when we stand in Christ’s presence and all remaining sinfulness is removed forever (**1 Thessalonians 3:13; 5:23**). The Bible also uses the term *glorification* for this (**Romans 8:30; 9:23**).

In between, there is a **present-tense** sanctification known as

3. *progressive*, because our holiness progresses as we grow in Christ and sin less. It is also called *experiential*, for we can experience or sense it as we grow in him (**2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:16; 7:1**). We will never become sinless in this present life, but we can sin less, with God’s help. While past and future sanctification are entirely works of God, progressive sanctification is a cooperative effort between him and the believer. This is where all biblical commands to Christians come in. When we faithfully obey them in dependence upon God, we contribute to our progressive sanctification; we mature in Christ.

Freedom from the power of sin.

This is a part of what makes progressive sanctification possible. Paul describes it in **Romans 6**: Before salvation, we are slaves of sin, which means we must obey sin; we can do nothing

but sin. But when we believed, we died with Christ—died to sin’s absolute control—and are now free to live holy lives (**vv. 6–7**). Sin still dwells within us and tries to exert control, but now, once again, we are commanded,

Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

vv. 11–13

Being “in Christ” and having Christ in us.

These concepts, favorites of the apostle Paul, are amazing realities. Christians are placed “in Christ” (**Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 2:6**), which implies that God sees us and treats us as he does his own Son. And not only are we in Christ, but Christ also is in us (**Romans 8:8–10; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 3:17**). This makes it possible for us to live like him, to be Christlike.

Adoption.

Believers become God’s own sons and daughters (**Romans 8:15–16; Galatians 4:4–7; Ephesians 1:5**)! Not only is God our King, because we are in his kingdom, he is also our Father, because we are in his family.

Inheritance.

Because we are in God’s family, we are heirs to all that is his and have an inheritance (**Galatians 4:7; Ephesians 1:14, 18; 1 Peter 1:3–4**), which we share with Jesus Christ (**Romans 8:17**). This means there is more to the gift of salvation than what we enjoy instantly after we trust in Christ as our Savior or even throughout the rest of our lives on this earth. We also will enjoy the complete package in the presence of our Savior. That brings us to the next result of salvation.

Hope.

Christians are given hope in Christ (**Romans 8:20–25; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:5; Titus 1:2**), which means something different from how we often use the term. (I *hope* to be a professional basketball player one day [even though I’m in my fifties].) Biblical hope is a *confident assurance* that what God has promised to us in Christ (our inheritance) will *most*

certainly be our possession (in the future). Hope is basically future-oriented faith. This includes the completion of our salvation and sanctification (see above). It also includes Christ's return, our resurrection, eternity in the very presence of our God, enjoying his blessings forever, and so much more. For believers, the best is indeed yet to come.

INTERESTING FACT

In chapter 29, we noted that good works have nothing to do with *becoming* a Christian (salvation is by faith alone). But good works have much to do with *being* a Christian. They likewise are a necessary result of salvation (**Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14; 3:8**). Believers do not disparage good works; they just get them in the right order—flowing from salvation, not contributing to it.