

Factors in Man's Salvation

To those ... who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. (1Peter 1:2)

The word “factor” is an interesting one. In English, it can be used when speaking of mathematics, computing, music, biology, physiology, business, and law. Perhaps most interesting of all is its etymology; it comes from a Latin word meaning, “who acts” or “doer.” This essay seeks to define the factors—the actors, doers—involved in man's salvation. There is a particular, concise verse in Scripture that efficiently provides a thorough answer. **1Peter 1:2** is that verse. It is one of those great verses of the Bible that contains so much truth in such little space. All four factors involved in man's salvation are found in its text.

God the Father

The first factor in man's salvation is God. Saved people are chosen “*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.*” This word “chosen” or “elect” is from a Greek word which means to select or choose. This choosing or election, on the part of God, was according to foreknowledge or previous determination. By inspiration, Paul explains what God had previously determined. He says that the one God foreknew were the ones to His preset boundaries—namely, being conformed to the image of His Son. “*Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren*” (**Romans 8:29**). The word predestined is from a Greek word which means “following preset of foreknown boundaries.” Individuals aren't chosen by name, but by fitting within the preset boundary of God—conforming to the Son. Although many have claimed otherwise, this election is conditional (**Matthew 11:28-30; 7:21; Luke 13:3; 2Thessalonians 1:7-9**). Furthermore, it could not be otherwise, for Peter tells us, even in this chapter, that God is no respecter of persons and judges every man's works without respect of persons: “*If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth*” (**1Peter 1:17**). God provided for this choosing based on the Son and man's response to Him (**John 3:16**). Men should be so thankful that God has “acted” so much in regard to salvation.

The Spirit

Peter continues on beyond God the Father. The second factor, or “actor,” in man's salvation is the Spirit. Salvation involves “*the sanctifying work of the Spirit*”—the Spirit sanctifies. “Sanctify” is from the same word as “holy,” “consecrated,” “sacred” and means “set apart, separate, or call out.” Something that the Spirit has done calls mankind out to be separate and set apart. The word of God also sanctifies. remember, Jesus said to the Father, “*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth*” (**John 17:17**). The Spirit calls people to salvation through the word. The Spirit's work was that of revealing (**John 14:26; 16:12,13; 1Corinthians 2:9-13**). When we follow that word which the Spirit revealed, we are purified or sanctified. “*Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have*

been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God” (1Peter 1:22-23). How wonderful that the Spirit acts in this way for man’s salvation.

Jesus Christ

Peter continues by mentioning a third factor in man’s salvation—Jesus Christ. Peter indicates that this was done involving the sprinkling of His blood or in the shedding and applying of His blood. This is an allusion, no doubt, to the sprinkling of the blood under the old covenant given through Moses to Israel. This is old covenant vocabulary: it begins with the application of lamb’s blood while in Egypt (**Exodus 12:1-7**) and continues through the setting apart of the sanctuary, the altar, and the priesthood (**Exodus 29**). Application of blood from sacrifices is also seen throughout the commandments contained in **Leviticus** and **Numbers**. Like that blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled, so the blood of our sacrifice was sprinkled. Jesus, the anointed One, shed His blood through the sacrifice of Himself on the cross. This act consummated or completed the ages since the foundation of the world as *“He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26).*

Man’s Own Obedience

Many would like to omit another factor, but Peter is clear—there is a fourth factor in man’s salvation—man’s own obedience. Peter has already established that the man who is sanctified is the man who obeys. Likewise, before the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse, it has to be used. Man must come to the blood for cleansing. There must be an action on man’s part that is commensurate with the Son. Remember, God’s preset boundary is to be conformed to the image of His Son. Man cannot forgive or shed blood for his own sin, but he can be obedient to the word—as was the Son. Man can avail himself of the blood which the Son already shed by engaging in a likeness of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son. This is done in baptism: *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3,4).*

So much has already been done for salvation. So little is required of us, but something is required. God the Father is a “doer” in man’s salvation. The Spirit is a “doer” in man’s salvation. Jesus the Christ is a “doer” in man’s salvation. Are you a “doer” too?